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## **GUIDANCE NOTE #1:**

### **GETTING STARTED WITH CONFLICT SENSITIVITY IN **LEBANON****

# Guidance Note #1:

## Getting Started with Conflict Sensitivity in Lebanon

This guidance note aims to provide partners with tips for starting to use conflict sensitivity within the unique context of Lebanon. If you're new to this topic, and wondering about the first steps, this document is for you!

This is part of a series of three guidance notes developed in early 2021 for implementing partner organizations under the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP). This guidance note contains examples drawn from humanitarian and stabilization interventions, but the principles that it illustrates are equally relevant to any short- or medium-term aid intervention being implemented in Lebanon.

### How to use this guidance note

It is not necessary to read the entire guidance note from beginning to end. Section 2 on Understanding the Context is recommended for all readers. After that, you can jump to any section that appears to meet your needs.

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This guidance note does have some limitations. It reflects generalized intergroup relationship analyses at a snapshot moment in time, during which the Lebanese operational environment is changing rapidly due to multiple compounded crises. Some details will vary in your local context and/or change over time. Thus, there is guidance in section 4 on how to maximize your own project-level conflict sensitivity analysis.

This guidance note cannot provide fully customized conflict sensitivity solutions for every unique LCRP partner and local community. However, it does provide a wide range of 'options' for improving your impact on social stability. These options can be considered, carefully selected, tested, modified and built upon. Soon you'll have your own options to share with other learners

# 1.What is Conflict Sensitivity?

Aid saves lives and aims to help communities thrive – but it can also do unintentional damage. Delivering assistance in a context where there is underlying fragmentation, social tensions or violent disputes can potentially worsen those 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.

Conflict sensitivity is a practice that can help your organization to pursue the ethic of 'doing no harm.' Conflict sensitivity provides processes and tools to help you do three things:

- Understand the context of conflict in which you are operating;
- Understand the interaction between the context and your actions; and
- Act upon this understanding to improve your impact on social stability.

Conflict sensitivity is a cross-cutting approach that applies to all programs operating in conflict zones. It is related to - yet distinct from - other cross-cutting program quality approaches such as gender responsiveness and anti-corruption mainstreaming.

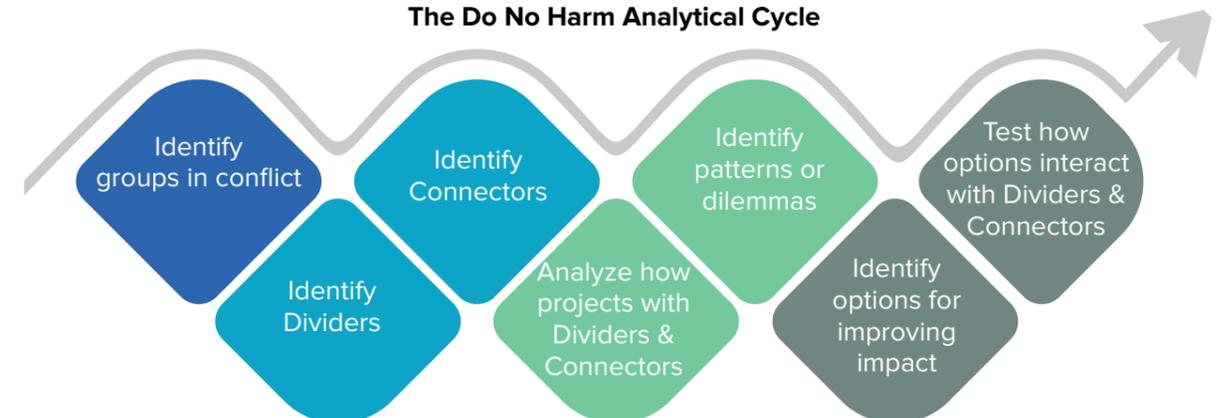
This guidance note uses primarily the foundational Do No Harm (DNH) conflict sensitivity tool, which is widely known for its practical emphasis on identifying intergroup

Dividers and Connectors, recognizing programming dilemmas and identifying adaptive options to improve how a project affects intergroup relationships.

DNH can be summarized in a 7-step analytical cycle.

1. Identify which groups are in conflict or tension with each other. (If there are many intergroup conflicts, then focus on the one most likely to lead to violence or destructive behavior.)
2. What **Dividers** (or sources of tension) exist between the groups?
3. What **Connectors** (or factors that bring people together) exist between the groups?
4. How do the elements of your project interact with the Dividers and Connectors?
5. What patterns or **dilemmas** are evident in this interaction?
6. What are the **options** for improving your impact on social stability by...?
  - decreasing the negative effects of our program and increasing its positive effects?
  - weakening Dividers and strengthening Connectors?
7. Think and test: How do these new options affect the existing Dividers and Connectors?

The Do No Harm Analytical Cycle



## 2. Understand the Context

Do No Harm focuses on specific relationships between social groups, and those are explored in the sub-sections below. However before moving to the specifics, it is important to consider the broader national context. Lebanon has enjoyed relative stability, despite continuous socio-political issues and the influx of a large refugee population since 2011. Since October 2019, the situation has shifted into a new phase marked by increasing citizen pressure for governance reform with an increased division in the vertical relationship between the citizens and the state. At the same time, political elites are still taking actions that reinforce the presence of inter-communal divisions. Broader regional shifts in contextual dynamics also continue to influence - and sometimes be influenced by - political factors within Lebanon.

This situation comes on top of the already growing socio-economic competition, within Lebanese communities as well as between Lebanese and refugees, and is further complicated by the COVID-19 pandemic and the acute nationwide economic crisis. The vulnerability of all populations in Lebanon is increasing rapidly. Poverty levels amongst displaced populations and Lebanese are sharply on the rise and have crippled people's ability to cope. Some 91 percent of displaced Syrians are living on less than \$3.8 a day. For Lebanese, it is estimated that approximately 23.2 percent of Lebanese have been plunged into extreme poverty<sup>1</sup>, though further data is needed to fully understand the extent of the situation. In response to these contextual changes, LCRP partners are providing expanded and increasingly inclusive support to vulnerable people across all social groups in Lebanon.

### 2.1. Relationships between Lebanese and refugees from Syria

For the purpose of this guidance note, the top contextual priority is the relationship between Lebanese and refugees from Syria<sup>2</sup> which remains tense despite other recent changes in the context and a priority concern for partners.

**Partner example:** One organization was attacked in a village while distributing aid based on nationality, in keeping with the donor requirement. This also led to further tensions between social groups within the village.

The perception of aid bias amongst all communities remains high but has grown among increasingly vulnerable Lebanese, suggesting communication gaps as well as misconceptions about aid modalities and distribution. As of January 2021, 77% of the Lebanese population agreed to the statement "vulnerable Lebanese have been neglected in international aid/assistance programmes."<sup>3</sup> Concurrently, just 38% agreed that "International aid/assistance goes to the people who most deserve it."<sup>4</sup> This indicates the need to continue to ensure that assistance and services are also reaching vulnerable Lebanese host communities, without excluding the already vulnerable refugee populations.

This guidance note's understanding of Dividers, based primarily on the UNDP Tensions Monitoring System<sup>5</sup>, is deep and strongly evidence based. On the other hand, the understanding of Connectors is still emerging.

This is important because Connectors matter! They exist in every context, even when the Dividers seem stronger. Connectors are innate in any community, regardless of the presence of humanitarian actors. However, well designed partner activities can play a role in helping Connectors grow stronger.

As an overarching observation, the strongest Dividers between Lebanese and refugees from Syria are socio-economic, relating to perceived competition for resources such as jobs and services, while the strongest Connectors are mainly cultural in nature. For instance, 24% of a representative sample of Syrians and Lebanese cite pre-existing relationships, and 17% cite social bonds including intermarriage as factors that help facilitate relationships between Syrians and Lebanese in Lebanon.<sup>6</sup>

The table below presents a selective summary of some particularly strong and important Dividers and Connectors in the relationship between Lebanese and refugees from Syria. The strongest Dividers are socio-economic, relating to perceived competition for resources such as jobs and services. In contrast the strongest Connectors are mainly cultural in nature.

Relations between Lebanese & refugees from Syria (early 2021)	
Selected Dividers	Selected Connectors
Perception that refugees from Syria receive more aid than vulnerable Lebanese	Shared history of relationship, family interaction, mixed marriage and/or economic ties across the border (especially northern Lebanon)
Fear / perception that presence of refugees from Syria contributes to crime and damages the economy	Shared aspects of culture, language, music, values
Competition for low skilled jobs	Buffering role played by longer-term, more accepted Syrian immigrants (varies by location)
Legal inequalities, particularly in labor law	The efforts of local mediators, community leaders, and elders to resolve conflicts when tensions escalate
Widespread discrimination and exclusion	Community centers that allocate time and space for dialogue
Intermittent attacks in refugee settlements and forced evictions	Shared experiences of certain types of suffering (varies by issue and by location)
Push for non-voluntary return of refugees	
Different levels of access to cash and cash disbursement mechanisms, and different experiences of currency exchange loss	

**Dividers and Connectors can vary from location to location across Lebanon. They can also change – sometimes quickly! For a more complete table of Dividers and Connectors, see guidance note #2.**

**Dividers and Connectors can vary from location to location across Lebanon. They can also change – sometimes quickly! Please test this guide against the insights and experiences of local people in the context where you are working. If you have analysis findings to share, please send them to the LCRP Conflict Sensitivity Mainstreaming Focal Point at [fadel.saleh@undp.org](mailto:fadel.saleh@undp.org). Your contribution will help in updating and expanding this series of guidance notes.**

<sup>1</sup> Poverty in Lebanon: Impact of Multiple Shocks and Call for Solidarity, *United Nations Economic and Social Commission for West Asia*, 2020.  
<sup>2</sup> Most refugees forced to flee the Syrian civil war are in fact Syrian – but not all of them. There are Palestinians and people of other nationalities among them. Nonetheless the guidance note's analysis of Dividers and Connectors reflects primarily refugees who are in fact Syrian.  
<sup>3</sup> Perception Survey Wave IX, ARK & UNDP, January 2021.  
<sup>4</sup> Ibid.  
<sup>5</sup> The Tensions Monitoring System is set up to monitor social tensions both inter-communal (Lebanese-Syrian) as well as Intra-Lebanese through quantitative and qualitative units of analysis in order to provide the operating environment in Lebanon with evidence for informed and conflict sensitive programming.

## 2.2. Relations between Lebanese sub-groups

Horizontal relationships between Lebanese social groups are a secondary priority in this guidance note. They are fast becoming a significant intergroup rift influencing the stability of Lebanon as a whole. Given the LCRP's founding emphasis on the impact of the Syria crisis on refugees and host communities, some partners are less familiar with the fast-changing relationships between Lebanese sub-groups. The socio-economic challenges contribute to communal insecurity and risks of social instability. As of January 2021, 61% of residents in Lebanon agreed to the statement "violence is sometimes necessary when your interests are being threatened."<sup>7</sup> Recent community insecurity incidents have included armed clashes, theft and smuggling on an increased trajectory from previous years.<sup>8</sup>

In recent decades Lebanese social groups have formed along religious identity lines, with sectarianism and politics tightly intertwined. Disputes between these groups drove the 1975-1990 civil war, so consociational democracy was written into the peace accord securing sectarian representation. This resulted in a long-term commitment to avoiding violence (a Connector), but also created a divided political system. Lebanon was stable, but divisions persisted at all levels, with Dividers including unequal access to resources and services.

Since the beginning of the protests in October 2019, horizontal Dividers and Connectors are changing rapidly. Sectarian divisions are fading in some social sectors as people, particularly young people, cooperate across religious lines to pursue governance and economic reform. In the aftermath of the Beirut Port explosions, Lebanese civil society (including formal and

informal groups) united across divides to respond to the needs. This is an important and promising shift. However, there is room for wider inclusion and pushing this agenda beyond politics to also influence cooperation in the economic sphere. Other rising cross-sectarian Connectors among Lebanese women appear to include the movement against sexual harassment, and the motivation to develop social connections beyond the household. At the same time, widespread rising Dividers include different experiences of currency exchange losses and access to cash, due to the economic crises.

The vertical relationship between citizens and the state is also changing rapidly. Trust in the central government is decreasing fast. On the other hand, municipal authorities and NGOs/UN are still trusted for their services. Specifically, 59% and 50% of residents in Lebanon agreed that NGO/UN and municipalities respectively have improved their lives to some extent.<sup>9</sup> This guidance note takes the perspective that it is important for partners to collaborate with relevant authorities and institutions on the basis of transparent, conditional criteria, and to help reinforce the accountability to the people.

**For best results, Dividers and Connectors should be identified in relation to each sub-group relationship (rather than the Lebanese population as a whole). This analysis is still emerging. If you have analysis findings to share, please send them to the LCRP Conflict Sensitivity Mainstreaming Focal Point at [fadel.saleh@undp.org](mailto:fadel.saleh@undp.org). Your contribution will help in updating and expanding this series of guidance notes.**

<sup>7</sup> Perception Survey Wave IX, ARK & UNDP, January 2021

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

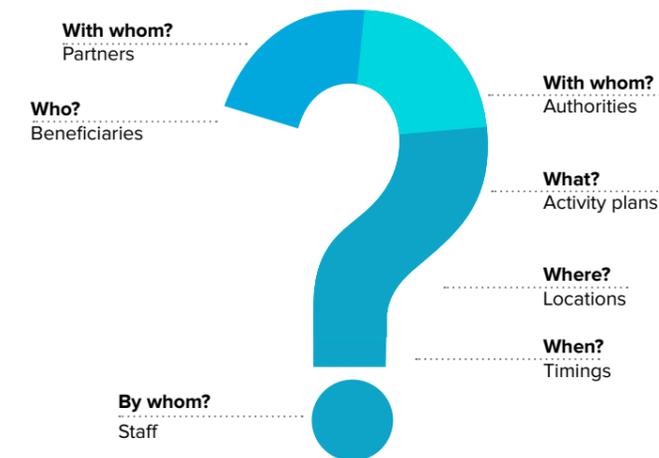
<sup>9</sup> Ibid

## 3. Understand the Interaction & Then Act

After understanding the context, the next step in conflict sensitivity practice is to understand how your actions and decisions interact with that context, and then take action to improve your impact on social stability. LCRP partner decisions can make a real difference in the level of intergroup social cohesion and stability within Lebanon. Many of the key issues center around how partners acquire and use resources in a context of increasing scarcity and intergroup tension. Additionally, the behaviors and words of staff send implicit messages on the values that matter most in intergroup relations, such as: discrimination vs. inclusion, inequity vs. fairness, and vagueness vs. transparency.

Each section below highlights key considerations summarized from other LCRP conflict sensitivity guidance notes and offers principles and options to help improve your organization's impact on social stability. One central theme that runs throughout is the identification of critical decisions that shape the impact of your project on social stability, as seen in the diagram below. (For a worksheet on critical decisions, see guidance note #2 Conflict-Sensitive Project Preparation in Lebanon: Beneficiary Outreach, Needs Assessment & Project Design Cycle, section 4.1.)

### Critical Decisions that Shape Impact on Social Stability



### 3.1. Outreach & Needs Assessment

**Is your organization concerned about the potentially divisive effects of the competition for aid resources within communities? If yes, check out the full-length version of guidance note #2 Conflict-Sensitive Project Preparation in Lebanon: Beneficiary Outreach, Needs Assessment & Project Design Cycle [hyperlink]. Selected key points from that guidance note are summarized below.**

The focus here is on improving LCRP's impact on intergroup relations and social stability by 'leaving no one behind.' This involves **expanding the overall availability of assistance within Lebanon** in response to increasing vulnerabilities, and to **distribute that assistance inclusively across all social groups** to reduce the perception of aid bias. For much more detail, see guidance note #2 on Conflict-Sensitive Project Preparation in Lebanon: Beneficiary Outreach, Needs Assessment & Project Design Cycle.

“Leaving no one behind involves reaching the most underprivileged to ‘reach the furthest behind first’ but also to combat discrimination and rising inequalities within a country and their root causes.”<sup>10</sup>

### 3.1.a. Decisions about *who* to serve

- ▶ **Target inclusively.** There are multiple ways to target vulnerable individuals, households, and communities under the LCRP. Each Sector targets its activities based on the assessed needs of each population group, and partners deliver activities at the individual, household, **community** and institutional level depending on the type of activity and the needs.<sup>11</sup>
- ▶ **Avoid absolute exclusions.** Some donors exclude certain communities because of their affiliation with particular political parties. Since the parties are sect-based, this means excluding a particular social group from assistance, and it reinforces dangerous intra-Lebanese tensions. Options include diversification of funding streams, collaboration with partners that operate in the excluded communities, and multi-agency advocacy with donors who practice exclusion.
- ▶ **Dialogue with your donors.** Share your recent vulnerability assessments and conflict sensitivity analyses, so that the donor can understand why inclusion is so important in the current context of Lebanon. Encourage and advocate with the donors to increase aid and support inclusion based on their own commitments to ‘do no harm.’

### 3.1.b. Decisions about working *with* authorities and partners

- ▶ **Principled coordination with local authorities.** Coordinate deeply and respectfully with Municipalities and other local authorities. At the same time, guard against the possibility of local authorities over-influencing aid locations, selection criteria or beneficiary lists in ways that disproportionately benefit

people of their social group. Bring your own needs assessments and conflict sensitivity analyses to the table, instead of indiscriminately following local authorities’ requests.

- ▶ **Collaboration with other NGOs and UN agencies.** Gaps in coverage and duplication of efforts can lead to inefficiency, confusion, frustration and exhaustion among potential beneficiaries, and some groups being left out. Options include working with other NGOs and UN agencies on service mapping, consolidated needs assessments, coordination in making key decisions, and effective use of referral systems. Challenge yourself to create a humanitarian culture of collaboration and synergy.

### 3.1.c. Decisions about *what* your interventions will do

- ▶ **Analyze critical decisions.** All the ‘wh-’ questions listed here at the conceptual level should also be asked at the detail level when designing each activity. Who? With whom? What? Where? When? By whom? Every one of those details can affect intergroup relations in either positive or negative ways. For a worksheet to help with this analysis, see guidance note #2 Conflict-Sensitive Project Preparation in Lebanon: Beneficiary Outreach, Needs Assessment & Project Design Cycle, section 4.1.)
- ▶ **Consider ‘doing some good.’** Beyond the core obligation of ‘do no harm,’ considering also trying to ‘do some good.’ For example, be aware of any potential to support existing bridging initiatives within the community, or to use your own activities to encourage person-to-person contact between Lebanese people and refugees displaced from Syria. If both groups feel they are treated justly and respectfully, the Connectors of shared values, experiences, and cultural similarities may help to improve mutual perceptions and relationships.

### 3.1.d. Decisions about *where* you will operate

- ▶ **Places represent people.** Be aware of the settlement patterns of different social groups, and who lives where. Because social groups often cluster, the selection of a particular geographic area often implies the inclusion of some social groups and the exclusion of others. Don’t be content to describe a project only in terms of a place name. Explore transparently: Who lives there? Who has access?

### 3.1.e. Decisions about *when* you will operate

- ▶ **Timing matters.** The timing of a project or activity can affect diverse social groups in differentiated ways, which may affect their intergroup relationships. When a process is hurried, the rush is likely to lead to errors such as serving one social group faster than another or skipping the participatory consultation processes that are necessary for intergroup cohesion.

## 3.2. Conflict Sensitivity in the Project Design Cycle

Does your organization ever struggle with practicing conflict sensitivity consistently from project start to project finish? If yes, check out the full-length version of guidance note #2 Conflict-Sensitive Project Preparation in Lebanon: Beneficiary Outreach, Needs Assessment & Project Design Cycle [hyperlink]. Selected key points from that guidance note are summarized below.

This section summarizes key conflict sensitivity practices during each phase of the project design cycle, with an emphasis on inclusive targeting of vulnerable people and households across all social groups. For much more detail, see guidance note #2 Conflict-Sensitive Project Preparation in Lebanon: Beneficiary Outreach, Needs Assessment & Project Design Cycle.

Conflict Sensitivity throughout the Project Design Cycle		
Concept	Project Goal	-Consider the project’s overarching goal and its supporting theory of change. Is it inclusive in both its intentions and its likely effects?
	Project Location	-Based on the proposed location, which social groups are likely to be included? Excluded?
Outreach & Assessment	Co-Planning with the Community	-Develop quality communication with and learn from the perspective of each social group in the area. -Work with community-based committees for participatory planning. This may begin with one committee to represent Lebanese and another to represent refugees from Syria; over time they may develop trust and work together.
	Conducting Conflict Sensitivity Analysis	-Project-level analysis runs either as a stand-alone exercise or integrated with other context themes. -There are ‘good enough’ approaches for situations of time pressure.
	Selecting Implementing Partners	Implementing partners should be accepted by the community, free of affiliations with political parties and armed groups, and committed to practicing non-discrimination.

<sup>10</sup> Leave No One Behind: For an Inclusive and Just Recovery Process in Post-Blast Beirut, UNDP, 2020.

<sup>11</sup> Populations are also targeted through support to public institutions which strengthens service delivery, policy development, capacity building and institutional stability in the public sector.

Conflict Sensitivity throughout the Project Design Cycle	
Activity Design	<p>Selecting Beneficiaries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Blend vulnerability criteria with an effort to diversify participation.</li> <li>-The community will look for fairness - equitable allocations based on levels of vulnerability among all social groups.</li> </ul>
	<p>Making Critical Decisions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Examine every design detail for its impact on intergroup relations. For whom (beneficiaries)? With whom (authorities and partners)? What? Where? When? By whom (staff)? How?<sup>12</sup></li> </ul>
	<p>Communicating your Project Plans</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Communicate your aid allocation decisions, and the fair criteria behind them, widely and transparently.</li> <li>-Be sure to reach Lebanese audiences, as they may assume they are not eligible.</li> </ul>
Implementation & Monitoring	<p>Supporting Front liners and Implementing Partners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Create space for regular team discussion and support around Dividers, Connectors and conflict sensitivity dilemmas.</li> <li>-Demonstrate care for staff and partner wellbeing.</li> </ul>
	<p>Monitoring Conflict Sensitivity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-At minimum, track your organization's compliance with its own conflict sensitivity commitments, and the changing status of key Dividers and Connectors within the context.</li> <li>-Apply community feedback to organizational decision making.</li> </ul>
	<p>Adapting through Options</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-There are always options for improving your impact on social stability – and they are best identified through inclusive teamwork.</li> <li>-Test the options to observe their impact on Dividers and Connectors and adapt accordingly.</li> </ul>
Eval.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Ensure that evaluations identify unintended effects, and that those learnings are applied to inform future programming.</li> </ul>

<sup>12</sup> For a worksheet tool to help with this point, see guidance note #3 on the Conflict-Sensitive Project Design Cycle[hyperlink], section 3.3.b.

### 3.3. Procurement, Recruitment and Accountability

Do your procurement and recruitment decisions ever stir up controversies that become difficult to manage? Do you worry that the conduct of staff and contractors could do harm within the community? If yes, check out the full-length version of guidance note #3 on Conflict-Sensitive Procurement, Recruitment and Accountability[hyperlink]. Selected key points from that guidance note are summarized below.

Your procurement system obtains the supplies and services that an organization needs to do its work, through bidding and outsourced contracting. Your recruitment system seeks employees through application and hire as internal team members. Procurement and staffing are two very different systems, but they share some conflict sensitivity issues in common, as described below.

The focus is on ensuring that the benefits of your procurement and recruitment benefit diverse local populations, and your contractors and staff use their influence in conflict-sensitive ways. Volunteers also matter, and they can be addressed through adapted versions of the options that apply to staff. The tips below require coordination between your local office and headquarters, and between your programs, finance and human resources teams. For much more detail, see guidance note #3 on Procurement, Recruitment and Accountability.

#### 3.3.a. Decisions that shape by whom your project will be implemented

►► **Inclusive screening criteria.** Partners rightfully emphasize technical requirements when screening candidates. However, focusing *only* on technical requirements often leads to an imbalance in the social identities of contractors, benefitting large vendors from central cities and excluding small local vendors with extensive experience in the operating context. Revise

any criteria that unnecessarily exclude candidates of certain backgrounds. For example, is English language fluency truly required to do this job? If not, then change that criterion. Consider knowledge and experience of the local operating context as an important criterion. Consider on-the-job training as an alternate way to address some requirements.

►► **Risk awareness.** Some large vendors are linked to particular political networks and therefore not perceived as neutral. This can cause community members to believe that your organization has ‘taken sides’ among Lebanese sectarian sub-groups. Further, if you award a contract to a vendor that is directly affiliated with an actor, it can strengthen the influence of that actor. Therefore, use the screening tips detailed above to spread your contracts equitably across vendors of different sub-groups. Vet the vendors with great care, including non-negotiable requirements such as government registration and discretionary checks of background, ownership, etc. Prize diversity of social backgrounds among your local vendors.

►► **Principled, transparent decisions.** Local community members, authorities or vendor networks may expect your selections to benefit people of certain social groups. Therefore, do prioritize local procurement and recruitment, but do not compromise your other selection principles. Communicate broadly the principles that guide your decisions – such as fairness, transparency, equity and anti-corruption – as well as the criteria being used in each selection process. Be honest about any ways in which your system currently falls short, and how you are working to improve it. If the pressure seems unusually tense, engage your security team to minimize the risk of retaliatory threats. As a last resort, withdraw from the area rather than submitting to pressures that benefit one social group over another.

**Partner example:** One partner organization has realized that its Palestinian and Syrian personnel cannot open bank accounts. If the organization pays via bank transfer to the Lebanese volunteers and pays in cash to the Palestinian or Syrian personnel, the Lebanese will feel treated unfairly due to the deduction of banking fees. Likewise paying one group in Lebanese pounds and the other in US dollars would result in serious inequities. Therefore, the organization decided to pay in cash only using the same currency all across Lebanon.

- ▶▶ **Flexible payment mechanisms.** For local vendors and personnel that do not have US dollar or ‘fresh’ bank accounts, develop temporary coping mechanisms to help them get paid despite the obstacles of the current currency and liquidity crisis. Current coping mechanisms include paying in petty cash, bank ‘letters of payment,’ or funds transferred from international headquarters. Choose a mechanism and a currency that does not advantage one social group over another in terms of how much they ultimately receive, or how quickly they receive it.
- ▶▶ **Anti-discrimination.** Staff or contractors may practice discrimination, both intentionally and unintentionally, giving preferential treatment to one social group over another as they work, including their interactions with beneficiaries. Ask all contractors and staff to sign a code of conduct that acknowledges the core principles and values of the organization and includes commitments to inclusive behaviors and anti-corruption standards. Embed in contracts a statement that harassment or abuse on the basis of nationality, religion, gender, etc, is grounds for termination. Embed specific conflict sensitivity requirements in job descriptions, terms of reference and performance monitoring systems, and provide training accordingly.

- ▶▶ **Zero tolerance for financial impropriety.** Contractors or staff may be tempted by bribery, theft, fraud, etc. These behaviors can channel resources and opportunities towards one social group and away from others, inflaming intergroup tensions. As above, use signed codes of conduct. Embed in contracts that evidence of financial impropriety is grounds for termination. Provide new staff with a strong orientation process, including anti-corruption training. Use a full range of accountability tools, ranging from verbal reprimands to lawsuits. If necessary, engage your security and legal teams to minimize the risk of retaliation.
- ▶▶ **Encourage and protect ‘whistleblowers.’** Staff may be reluctant to report wrongdoing because they fear reprisal, or they do not trust the whistleblowing process to produce a worthwhile result. Minimizes the risk to the whistleblower by offering multiple alternative channels for reporting, with the option of anonymity and identity protection. When someone reports, demonstrate decisive investigation, and communicate disciplinary actions within the organization, so staff can see that whistleblowing has an effect.
- ▶▶ **Constructive relationships among staff.** Once you diversify your staff, develop an ongoing process of staff formation, cultivating inclusive mindsets and constructive relationships. Ensure equitable pay, working conditions, advancement opportunities and access to grievance procedures.

## 4. Maximizing your own Conflict Sensitivity Analysis

The conflict sensitivity analysis found in this guidance note reflects generalized intergroup relationship analyses at a snapshot moment in time, during which the operational environment is changing rapidly due to multiple compounded crises. Therefore, some details will vary in your local context and/or eventually go out of date. For best results, your organization should work towards conducting its own conflict sensitivity analyses at the project level. This sub-section provides general guidance on how to make the most of it.

### 4.1. Considerations when planning conflict sensitivity analysis

Conflict sensitivity is a cross-cutting program ethics and quality issue that is relevant to all projects operating in situations of intergroup tension or conflict. You already know that a conflict sensitivity analysis is a practical evidence-based way of doing three important things:

- Understand the context of conflict in which you are operating;
- Understand the interaction between the context and your actions; and
- Act upon this understanding to improve your impact on social stability.

As you deepen your understanding, it is also important to recognize that **what a conflict sensitivity analysis is not:**

- It is *not* a generalized context analysis. A good context analysis includes many different aspects, while conflict sensitivity ‘zooms in’ on just one of those aspects.

- It is *not* an assessment of humanitarian or development needs. Instead, it is a way to identify and mitigate the unintended negative effects of humanitarian or development initiative.

Here are some considerations to keep in mind when planning an analysis:

#### 4.1.a. Levels

Consider at least two socio-political levels.

- A macro-level analysis helps you to understand ‘the big picture.’ It usually reflects the Lebanon-wide national context. If your organization is large or part of a consortium, you may be able to conduct the macro-level analysis yourself.<sup>13</sup> If your organization is small, you may wish to borrow it from another organization, or even use a Lebanon-specific guidance note like this one to help you get started.

**Partner example:** One partner reports that their project operating zone is quite large, so they sub-divide their analysis into smaller clusters of villages that share contextual similarities. They also take care to employ some staff who are local to the cluster where they are working, because those staff are quick to notice any changes in context and share that information with the organizational management.

- A project-level analysis – which is the focus in this guidance note – aims to capture the unique conflict sensitivity nuance of the area(s) in which you are operating. It covers one or more local communities. Your organization can usually do its own project-level conflict sensitivity analysis.

<sup>13</sup> For participatory macro-analysis tools, see: [Making Sense of Turbulent Contexts \(MSTC\)](#) or [Good Enough Conflict Analysis for Rapid Response \(GECARR\)](#), both developed by World Vision International.

#### 4.1.b. Tools fit for purpose

Clarify your purpose(s) in order to help choose the most appropriate conflict sensitivity tool. The table below considers several important purpose questions, alongside comments on relative strengths and limitations of the DNH tool used in this guidance note. There are other excellent tools and approaches referenced in Annex A.

Purpose Question	Strengths / Limitations of DNH
<b>Focus:</b> Do you wish to focus solely on the impact of the project upon the context of conflict? Or also on the impact of the context upon the project (e.g. organizational risks)?	DNH focuses mainly on the impact of the project upon the context of conflict. (However, important insights about organizational risk do arise).
<b>Purpose:</b> Do you aim solely to avoid harm? Or also to identify opportunities to do some good?	DNH does both. It is best known for avoiding harm, which is the emphasis in this guidance note. However, DNH is also used for integrating peace-promoting practices into humanitarian work.
<b>Social groups:</b> Do you wish to focus primarily on two social groups in conflict/tension with each other? Or on a large number of groups?	DNH is designed to focus on two social groups. For this reason, DNH works best at the project or local level. If there are more than two groups, you may need to prioritize, and you must always specify which groups are affected by a particular Divider or Connector.
<b>Participants:</b> Will you conduct the analysis mainly among staff? Or do you aim to also involve the community?	DNH works well at the community level. Dividers and Connectors tend to be easily understood and applied by community members.

#### 4.1.c. Balance

It is natural for a conflict sensitivity analysis to reflect the biases that already exist in the surrounding context, unless you take precautions to help ensure balance. Here are some tips:

- ▶▶ Keep in mind that the analysis itself is an intervention that carries a risk of worsening conflict. Apply conflict sensitivity to your analysis process in selecting and organizing participants, choosing facilitators, framing questions, identifying places and times, providing translation if needed, local level sensitivities etc.
- ▶▶ Compose an analysis team that includes both contextual insiders (e.g. local people) and contextual outsiders (e.g. international staff). The insiders and outsiders will see and understand different aspects of the conflict sensitivity reality. Both are needed.
- ▶▶ Seek out the perspectives of every social group through data collection. Additionally, in the case of high priority relationships such as Lebanese and refugees from Syria or intra-Lebanese, it may be important to include representation of both groups within the analysis team.
- ▶▶ Make sure that the safe space is protected for everyone involved in the analysis exercise. Keep eyes and ears open for inputs not shared in plenary. For example, refugees may be reluctant to share their opinions about political parties for fear of retaliation.
- ▶▶ Include local people and their voices to the highest extent possible, using participatory processes. To avoid disappointment, be sure to communicate transparently that your purpose is not needs assessment, and it will not lead directly to receiving assistance. People under extreme stress may not wish to participate under those circumstances, and their decision should be respected.

#### 4.1.d. Developing options to improve your impact on social stability

**Partner example:** It sometimes requires significant experience on the ground to discover the conflict sensitivity issues in a local community. One partner organization worked for nine months in a community before they understood that one social group was hindering their water access intervention because they didn't want the other social group to benefit. The learning curve can be often shortened through good conflict sensitivity analysis in consultation with local people – but nonetheless it takes time.

The purpose of conflict sensitivity analysis is to improve your project plan by potentially redesigning (changing) it. Most changes occur at the level of project details – because small details can have big effects on intergroup relationships. Some changes occur at the higher levels of program strategy or even organizational policy. Be prepared for change by building flexibility into your project plans and budgets.

- ▶▶ In DNH, the lesson learned is that *there are always options* (or alternatives) for improving impact. However sometimes it is difficult to see the options at first, especially when you are immersed in operational challenges. Gather a group of diverse, creative people, and brainstorm together to identify options.
- ▶▶ If you find that it's not possible to do no harm whatsoever, think about ways to mitigate harm. Mitigation actually includes four different possibilities, in order of preference:<sup>14</sup>
  - Avoid the harm (most preferred)
  - Reduce the harm
  - Repair the harm
  - Compensate for the harm (least preferred, but better than doing nothing)

<sup>14</sup> Business & Human Rights Resource Centre, *Global Compact Business Guide for Conflict Impact Assessment and Risk Management*. PP.26, 2002. Retrieved from: ['Global Compact Business Guide for Conflict Impact Assessment and Risk Management.'](#)

#### 4.1.e. Stay updated

**Partner example:** Given the fast pace of change, some partners currently do informal updates of Dividers and Connectors as often as once a week in the context of front-liner team meetings. Their formal updates are less frequent perhaps once per quarter led by conflict advisors or MEAL staff and including colleagues from operations, security, finance and/or human resources. Formal updates are also done in response to major changes in context – such as the protests of October 2019.

Intergroup Dividers and Connectors can change, and your project is also evolving. Therefore, the conflict sensitivity analysis will need to be updated at regular intervals. The frequency of updating depends on the speed with which the context is changing – which is rapid in Lebanon in early 2021.

Analytical updates are closely related to monitoring, so please see also Section 3.4 on Implementation, Monitoring and Adaptation (below).

#### 4.2. Time and budget constraints in conflict sensitivity analysis

Partners often encounter time and budget constraints. Here are the dilemmas mentioned frequently by partners, along with options for how to address them.

**Dilemma:** A thorough conflict sensitivity analysis requires extended time with local stakeholders ... yet you may be facing time constraints, especially in humanitarian assistance situations.

Conflict-sensitive **options:**

- ▶▶ Preparedness. When initiating a project in a new location, always have a recent macro-level conflict sensitivity analysis available, created or borrowed in advance. Draw on that macro-analysis while taking the time to mobilize project-level analysis in your new location. This may be the first time you

have worked in a new district, so you need to understand the unique aspects of that local context...but at least you will already have an understanding of how to work in a conflict-sensitive manner in Lebanon.

- ▶▶ Good-enough analysis. In the first phase of a humanitarian emergency, or any other situation that truly demands a quick start-up, consider a 'good enough' conflict sensitivity analysis<sup>15</sup> to help you identify and mitigate the biggest risks of worsening conflict during the first phase of the project. If you are using Do No Harm, a quick analysis of local Dividers and Connectors within your staff team can help a lot, because simply understanding the context of relationships can protect against some (though not all) conflict sensitivity errors. Later on, plan a more in-depth conflict sensitivity analysis to inform the project's next phase.
- ▶▶ Collaboration. Is there another partner or coordination forum working in the area who might have a conflict sensitivity analysis to share? Ask them. Offer in return to share future conflict sensitivity resources when you have them available.
- ▶▶ Outsourcing to specialists or NGOs with a focus on conflict sensitivity to facilitate the process of the analysis with your team.

**Dilemma:** Conflict sensitivity is a unique type of analysis that is essential in Lebanon ... yet you may also have other important cross-cutting themes to consider, such as gender responsiveness, protection, anti-corruption, etc. Often all the cross-cutting themes need to be analyzed within the same limited timeframe.

**Conflict-sensitive options:**

- ▶▶ Gender considerations are frequently integrated into conflict sensitivity analysis. This is important because the causes and effects of conflict are 'gendered' meaning they involve females, males and sexual and gender minorities in unique and different ways. For information and how-to, [Do No Harm & Gender](#)<sup>16</sup> focuses on conflict sensitivity using the DNH tool that is featured in this guidance note.
- ▶▶ Conflict sensitivity analysis can either be

run as a stand-alone exercise or integrated with the analysis of other cross-cutting themes. The benefits of integrating these analyses are speed and understanding the inter-relationships between the themes. The risks of integrating these analyses are decreased depth and focus. For best results when conducting an integrated analysis:

- » include only cross-cutting themes that relate to contextual awareness and responsiveness (such as gender, protection, acceptance approaches to security, etc.) because they are related and help to inform each other.
- » create distinct questions for each theme to ensure that none are left out
- » alternate stand-alone and integrated analyses at different points in the project cycle, so that you can benefit from the advantages of both approaches

**Dilemma:** Sometimes donors often do not offer enough budget for conflict sensitivity analysis.

**Conflict-sensitive options:**

- ▶▶ Always include conflict sensitivity analysis in your proposed budget and timetable. If the donor is reluctant, discuss and negotiate. Most donors have an existing policy commitment to 'do no harm,' so find out if this is true of your donor and ask them to fulfil that commitment within your project budget.
- ▶▶ Conflict sensitivity analysis can sometimes be budgeted as a project activity if it is done in the community in a participatory way.
- ▶▶ Consider sharing the CS analysis costs with another organization operating in the same area.
- ▶▶ Decide in advance, as a matter of organizational policy, what your organization will do if a donor absolutely declines to fund conflict sensitivity functions. You may wish to supplement the budget with your own discretionary funding or decline to accept the project.
- ▶▶ As a multiagency possibility, if a particular

donor consistently declines to fund conflict sensitivity functions, collaborate with other partners to advocate for a change in their policy and/or practice.

### 4.3 How to ensure that your analysis influences decisions

Conflict sensitivity analysis is not meant to be a checkbox; it is meant to shape and influence your programming.

**Dilemma:** Some conflict sensitivity analyses provide important recommendations that do not get implemented. Nobody wants an analysis report that sits in a file; we want a living process that improves programming.

**Conflict-sensitive options:**

- ▶▶ Plan ahead to schedule the conflict sensitivity analyses to coincide with your organization's moments of openness and capacity. For some organizations, this means doing the analysis immediately before a key point of change in the project cycle, such as project start-up, or shifting into a new phase. For other organizations, this means doing the analysis at regular intervals, such as every six months, so that you always have a relatively up-to-date analysis available when you need it.
- ▶▶ Devote time and effort to identifying clear, practical and 'actionable' recommendations based on the conflict sensitivity analysis. Allow the analysts to collaborate with the staff and/or community leaders who are closest to the conflict sensitivity issue in question, to co-develop recommendations that are relevant and useful.
- ▶▶ Define a process with timelines for decision makers to review each recommendation and make a decision: yes, no, or let's consider other alternatives. The reality is that not every recommendation will be approved, but every recommendation should receive a consideration and a response. If there is strong disagreement, the analysts and/or staff can appeal a 'no' decision to request further consideration.

**Dilemma:** Sometimes conflict sensitivity analyses are considered only by certain individuals within the programs department, and they fail to influence the broader organization.

**Conflict-sensitive options:**

- ▶▶ Include some procurement, human resources and security staff in every conflict sensitivity analysis team. They may see issues and options that program-focused staff do not see, and their ownership will help to ensure those recommendations get implemented.
- ▶▶ Develop an organization-wide commitment to conflict sensitivity at the strategy level, supported by policies that enforce conflict sensitivity commitments. For instance, a CS training for all departments; a mandatory conflict sensitivity double-check before any project begins implementation, a requirement that every mid-project review include an identification of unintended project effects, etc.
- ▶▶ A conflict sensitivity audit<sup>17</sup> can help to identify conflict sensitivity process needs and challenges in every aspect of the organization.

See also guidance note #3 on Conflict-Sensitive Procurement, Recruitment and Accountability for insight on integrating Human Resources and Finance considerations into conflict sensitivity practice.

<sup>15</sup> See for example the project-level 'good enough' conflict sensitivity analysis in the [CARE Emergency Toolkit](#), or World Vision International's macro-level [GECCAR](#).

<sup>16</sup> Garred, M. et al., *'Do No Harm & Gender: A Guidance Note.'* Cambridge, MA: CDA Collaborative Learning Projects, 2018.

<sup>17</sup> See for example: DFID. 2010. 'Conflict Audit: How to Note.' DFID: London.

# Annex A: Resources for Further Learning

## On conflict sensitivity by LCRP partners

- [Perception Survey Dashboard.](#), ARK Group, DMCC & UNDP.
- 'Qualitative Research on Social Tensions in Lebanon', Empatika & UNDP, Beirut, 2019. Retrieved from: [Qualitative Research on Social Tensions in Lebanon](#).
- Sadkni, E., 'Conflict Sensitivity: Stories that Shape the Concept' Their Voices Paper #4, House of Peace, Beirut. Retrieved from: ['Conflict Sensitivity: Stories that Shape the Concept'](#).
- Annual Report, UNDP, 2018. Retrieved from: [Annual Report 2018](#).
- Lebanon / LCRP Information Hub, UNHCR. Retrieved from: [Lebanon / LCRP Information Hub](#).

## On the 'Do No Harm' conflict sensitivity tool (used in this guidance note)

- Anderson, M.B. *"Do No Harm: How Aid Can Support Peace – Or War."* Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1999.
- Anderson, M.B. *'Options for Aid in Conflict: Lessons from Field Experience.'* Cambridge, MA: CDA Collaborative Learning Projects. 2000.
- CDA Collaborative Learning Projects. *'Do No Harm Workshop Trainer's Manual.'* Cambridge, MA: CDA, 2016.
- CDA Collaborative Learning Projects. *'Do No Harm Workshop Participant's Manual.'* Cambridge, MA: CDA,
- CDA Collaborative Learning Projects and Disaster Ready, *'30-Minute Introduction to Do No Harm: A Conflict Sensitivity Tool.'* 2017. (This is a video. You will need to open a learning account, but the video is free).
- Garred, M. et al. *'Do No Harm & Gender: A Guidance Note.'* Cambridge, MA: CDA Collaborative Learning Projects, 2018.

## On other related conflict sensitivity tools

Check out the online library at [conflictsensitivity.org](#), or the selected core documents below.

- Conflict Sensitivity Consortium, *'How to Guide to Conflict Sensitivity.'* 2012.
- Goldwyn, R., and Chigas, D, *'Monitoring and Evaluating Conflict Sensitivity: Methodological Challenges and Practical Solutions.'* London, UK: Care International UK, CDA Collaborative Learning Projects, and DFID, 2013.
- Handschin, S., Arbitol, E., and Alluri, R., eds. *'Conflict Sensitivity: Taking it to the Next Level.'* Swisspeace and Conflict Sensitivity Community, 2016.
- International Alert et al. *'Conflict-Sensitive Approaches to Development, Humanitarian Assistance and Peacebuilding: A Resource Pack',* 2004.
- Zicherman, N. et al. *'Applying Conflict Sensitivity in Emergency Response: Current Practice and Ways Forward.'* London: Humanitarian Practice Network, 2011

## Communities of practice

- [Conflict Sensitivity Community - Hub](#). A global network for organizations and individuals working on conflict sensitive approaches in their own fields and seeking to advance conflict sensitivity practice.
- [Conexus](#). A global networking platform and resource hub for people responding to coronavirus in conflict-affected and fragile contexts.

# Annex B: Background & Methodology

The conflict sensitivity guidance note series is a product of the LCRP conflict sensitivity mainstreaming initiative led by UNDP Lebanon in collaboration with House of Peace.

Tensions between communities in Lebanon (Intra-Lebanese & Lebanese-Syrian) remain pervasive. Tensions are growing more complex and localized, while propensity for violence is rising nationally. This scenario requires LCRP response actors to be equipped with data and analysis on the evolution of tensions to ensure that their interventions are adapted to the context and conflict sensitive to reduce tensions between communities on the intra-Lebanese as well as the host community-refugee fronts.

The Tensions Monitoring System is built to better inform Social Stability partners and decision-makers within the LCRP framework with data and analysis on the state of tensions between communities. It is designed to ensure that rigorous and relevant data is collected and analysed, and to ensure that tailored information is made accessible to key interlocutors. The overarching aim is to best inform these actors with specific analysis to prevent manifestations of violent conflict.

This is done through developing the understanding of the nature, geographic variation, and trajectory of tensions between communities using innovative methods as well as enhancing engagement with the LCRP coordination structure on that understanding of tensions to ensure a response that works to prevent violence in a conflict-sensitive manner. As such, this is a direct contribution to the Social Stability sector's Outcome 3, as per the Social Stability Sector Strategy: Outcome 3: Enhance LCRP capacities on tensions monitoring and conflict sensitivity.

The initial guidance notes were shaped by four online consultations held with LCRP partners in October and November 2020. Over 150 diverse partner staff participated. In the first consultation, the participants discussed their conflict sensitivity experiences and needs, and then collaboratively determined the key themes of the initial guidance notes. After that, one focused consultation was held on each of the key themes that participants had identified:

- Overview of Conflict Sensitivity in Lebanon
- Beneficiary Outreach, Needs Assessment & Project Design Cycle
- Procurement, Recruitment and Accountability

This report was written by Dr Michelle Garred (Ripple - Peace Researching & Consulting, LLC) with the support of Safaa Shahin on the research through online surveys and Key Informant Interviews. Elias Sadkni (House of Peace) facilitated the workshops and the overall implementation of the project. Fadel Saleh drafted the overall design and methodology of the project in addition to the facilitation of consultations and the overall project implementation. This project was generously funded by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of the Government of Australia, Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) of the United Kingdom, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Denmark.

All of the partner examples found in the guidance note were shared during these consultations, under the Chatham House Rule and therefore anonymous.

This guidance note was also informed by LCRP tensions monitoring system research, and by supplementary surveys, interviews and inquiries to which numerous colleagues in Lebanon and around the world have contributed generously. The guidance notes have also been reviewed by expert stakeholders.

We want to hear from you! If you have conflict sensitivity learnings to share, or feedback on our work to date, please contact the the LCRP Conflict Sensitivity Focal Point at [fadel.saleh@undp.org](mailto:fadel.saleh@undp.org). Your contribution will help in updating and expanding this series of guidance notes.



UNDP is the leading United Nations organization fighting to end the injustice of poverty, inequality, and climate change. Working with our broad network of experts and partners in 170 countries, we help nations to build integrated, lasting solutions for people and planet.