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THE WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME'S CONTRIBUTION TO IMPROVING THE PROSPECTS FOR PEACE

Preliminary Report

CAROLINE DELGADO, SUYOUN JUNG, GARY MILANTE
AND DAN SMITH

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Acknowledgements

Abbreviations

CBPP	Community-based participatory planning
CDD	Community-driven development
CDR	Community-driven reconstruction
CFM	Complaints and feedback mechanism
CRF	Corporate results framework
ENSAN	National Food and Nutritional Security Survey
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FFA	Food Assistance for Assets
FFT	Food Assistance for Training
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GFD	General food distribution
IDP	Internally displaced person
IFAD	International Fund For Agricultural Development
mVAM	Mobile vulnerability analysis mapping
NGOs	Non-governmental organizations
PBF	United Nations Peacebuilding Fund
SDGs	United Nations Sustainable Development Goals
TOC	Theory of change
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VAM	Vulnerability analysis and mapping
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization

1. Introduction

Background

After decades of progress in reducing world hunger, the number of undernourished people worldwide has been increasing since 2014. The two main drivers of this change are violent conflict and climate change.[1] Today, an estimated 2 billion people live in fragile and conflict-affected areas of the world where they are extremely vulnerable to the impact of conflicts and disasters.[2] In addition, there are more crises that affect more people and last longer than a decade ago. While most humanitarian crises have a number of causes—extreme weather events, compounded by social inequalities and inadequate governance structures being prominent among them—violent conflict is part of the cause of an estimated 80 per cent of humanitarian needs.[3]

The World Food Programme (WFP) is the specialized food assistance organization of the United Nations. It is the largest humanitarian organization fighting hunger worldwide, delivering food assistance in emergencies and working with communities to improve nutrition and build their resilience. It is well-used to meeting human needs in conflict-torn settings and well-equipped to that end. The WFP is dual-mandated to support social and economic development to ensure long-term food security while also addressing humanitarian crises. Even before the launch of its policy on how to work in peacebuilding settings in 2013, it had begun to explore how food assistance could complement broader efforts to prevent violent conflict and achieve peace.[4] As the global context of humanitarian need has become more demanding over the past half-decade, there has been pressure to achieve greater efficiency. At the same time, responding to the complex character of many of these emergencies, the UN Secretary-General and member states have called for more integrated interventions that address root causes and offer better support for long-term, sustainable solutions and building resilience.[5] These have been picked up by the current Secretary-General in an ambitious agenda for the prevention of violent conflict.[6]

Recognizing the linkages between development, peace and the humanitarian action needed to achieve this, WFP signed up to the 'Peace Promise' in 2016. This promise defines the need for collective action across the humanitarian, development and peace spheres as essential for 'ending human suffering by addressing the drivers of conflict and vulnerability and reducing subsequent humanitarian needs'.[7] Studies such as the 2018 UN and the World Bank report *Pathways for Peace* demonstrate that investments in resilience can ultimately yield greater progress on achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and less expenditure of time and resources on crisis response and recovery.[8]

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[1] Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), International Fund For Agricultural Development (IFAD), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), World Food Programme (WFP) and WHO (World Health Organization), *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World, 2018* (FAO: Rome, 2018).

[2] United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), *Global Humanitarian Overview, 2019* (OCHA: New York, 2019), p. 6.

[3] World Bank, 'Fragility, conflict & violence: overview', updated 2 Apr. 2019.

[4] WFP, 'WFP's role in peacebuilding in transition settings', WFP/EB.2/2013/4-A/Rev.1, Rome, 2013; and WFP, 'Update on WFP peacebuilding policy', WFP/EB.2/2014/4-D, Rome, 2014.

[5] United Nations, General Assembly, 'Review of the United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture', A/70/L.43, New York, 1 Apr. 2016.

[6] Guterres, A., 'Remarks to the Security Council open debate on "Maintenance of International Peace and Security: Conflict Prevention and Sustaining Peace"', 10 Jan. 2017.

[7] See United Nations, General Assembly, Report of the Secretary-General, 'Progress Report on the Prevention of Armed Conflict', A/60/891, 18 July 2006; and UN Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO), 'The Peace Promise: commitments to more effective synergies among peace, humanitarian and development actions in complex humanitarian situations', [n.d.].

[8] UN and World Bank, *Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict* (World Bank: Washington, DC, 2018).

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">Box 1.1. Timeline of the World Food Programme/SIPRI Partnership (Phase 1)</td></tr>
<tr><td>February 2018</td><td>Memorandum of Understanding signed and first joint event in Stockholm</td></tr>
<tr><td>June 2018</td><td>Side event at WFP Executive Board</td></tr>
<tr><td>September 2018</td><td>Phase 1 Kick-off workshop in Rome</td></tr>
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</table>

While it was ready to play its part in the Peace Promise and the integrative approach across the humanitarian, development and peace nexus, WFP had questions about its capacity to do this, to do it efficiently and to do it without undermining its core mandate. Against this background, in 2018 WFP and the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) established a knowledge partnership. Its overall goal is to provide a basis in knowledge for strengthening WFP's contribution to improving the prospects for peace. This report is the first product of this partnership; it reflects pilot phase research and the interim findings derived from studies of just four countries where WFP works: El Salvador, Iraq, Kyrgyzstan and Mali.

Overview of findings

The four case studies reveal that significant components of WFP's programming in the four countries do indeed contribute to improving the prospects for peace. Whether this finding can be generalized to WFP as a whole is not clear: the sample is too small for that kind of assessment to be made. In some of these cases where WFP is helping to improve the prospects for peace, it is clear that this was part of the intention behind the project. In other cases, that is not so clear; it could be that some members of the project teams or country offices had peace in mind as they developed or implemented the project, but it is hard to be sure. This is because a key element that is normally found in programming on peace and conflict issues is missing in WFP's work. This missing element is what is known as the theory of change, which explains why a peace-positive outcome is expected from the project.

When working in conflict-affected countries, it is possible for external assistance to have negative as well as positive effects. It is axiomatic that interventions in conflicted-affected countries should do no harm. The four case studies therefore explored whether WFP's programming in the four countries had had an identifiable effect in exacerbating conflict or increasing the risk of conflict. The results are mixed and there are some instances of WFP programming having a marginal negative effect, or risking one, as well as cases where WFP staff could not be sure whether there were increased risks or did not know how to find out. This is because while WFP staff proficiently and professionally analyse many key issues of need and of impact in designing programmes and projects, they do not generally take the conflict context specifically and explicitly into account. In this sense, WFP programming often shows a lack of conflict sensitivity.

The four case studies also revealed that many WFP staff are aware of much of the basis for this sort of concern about their work. In fact, information and insights from

WFP staff in-country form a significant part of the research evidence, on the basis of which this report is able to outline issues of concern. This suggests a willingness—at least in these country offices—to take on the challenge of contributing to improving the prospects for peace, figuring out what is needed in order to be well-equipped for meeting that challenge, and making the requisite changes.

On the basis of these four case studies, the research suggests that WFP will need to make changes in its practice if it is to fulfil its own stated ambitions and commitments under the Peace Promise and in other policy statements. These changes may be only partly about changing what it does, and focused more on the question of how it does its work. Based on these case studies, the clear indication is that these changes would affect the background analysis WFP carries out to support its programming, how it plans, what partnerships it has and how it treats them, and how it assesses its work, impact, achievements and deficiencies. This report closes by proposing five areas of change.

The knowledge partnership between SIPRI and WFP

SIPRI and WFP established their partnership in order to build a basis in evidence for assessing whether, and if so how, WFP's programming contributes to improving the prospects for peace and identifying where, if anywhere, it has unwanted negative effects. The partnership will support future operational refinement based on the research conclusions and it is expected that this work will inform the evaluation of WFP's policy, planned for 2021.

Phase 1 began by identifying three key questions, the answers to which could build the evidence base needed to assess WFP's programming from a peace perspective, refine practice and develop policy. The questions are:

1. What is WFP's contribution to improving the prospects for peace?
2. How could WFP enhance its contribution to improving the prospects for peace?
3. How can WFP measure its contributions to improving the prospects for peace?

The validity of research questions needs to be tested in practice. Thus, one of the aims of Phase 1 was to assess whether these were indeed the right questions to be asking. As indicated above, four case study countries were chosen. The aim was to research WFP programming in diverse situations, ranging from conditions of outright violent conflict to cases where a transition from violence to sustainable peace is under way. In this way, looking across a variety of contexts, it would be possible to identify common factors that contribute to or detract from the capacity to improve the prospects for peace. This analysis involved desk research and field research.

The desk research reviewed the literature on the link between food security, conflict and peace to establish the state of evidence and analysis to date. This would form the foundations on which the research could build and enable the research team to outline a theoretical framework for the work. The literature review will be included in a later report.

The field research began with a review of country office and programme documentation. This formed the basis for deciding which programmes to focus on. Field research also featured assessment of current data sets, to identify how far they help to understand whether there has been a contribution to peace or conflict, to assess the data gaps and to see how best WFP could plug these. However, the core of the field research and the activity on which most time was invested was qualitative assessment

through focus group discussions, research interviews involving key stakeholders within and outside WFP, and visits to project sites. Detailed findings from the field research will be included in four country case study reports to be published at a later date.

WFP programming and the prospects for peace

Peace and conflict are both complex phenomena and both have many different forms and qualities. Not all conflict is violent and some conflict is necessary and beneficial; social progress, for example, is often driven by conflict. Similarly, not all kinds of peace are equally desirable, and a robust and resilient peace can persist even while conflicts are pursued as long as there are institutions that can manage them. Policies and activities in conflict-affected countries need some degree of clarity about what kinds of conflict at what stage in their evolution are to be addressed, and similarly what kind of peace is the objective. An intervention that aims to reduce the harm being inflicted in the middle of a hot war is likely to look completely different from an intervention aimed at contributing to a sustainable, long-term peace. Some care is therefore required in identifying at what points in the evolution of a conflict or the unfolding of a peace process WFP programming is most likely to make a positive contribution.

There is evidence that food security interventions can help to address potential long-term drivers of conflict—often referred to as root causes—and thus to mitigate and prevent violence.[9] Such interventions include livelihood support to increase agricultural productivity, programmes to rehabilitate and improve access to relevant natural resources and measures to reduce food price volatility. These interventions contribute to peace in the long term, not to stopping the violent escalation of conflict in the short term.

Two further forms of linkage between food security and peace are worth exploring. The first is the positive impact of improving social cohesion and reconciliation on reducing violence. The second is the equally positive effect of creating capacities and institutions to deliver essential services and thereby manage future shocks. Both highlight possible contributions to creating a climate that is favourable to improving the prospects for peace. The evidence for this is less developed. However, there have recently been growing attempts to understand food security not just as a stand-alone sector that addresses nutrition and livelihoods, but rather as a broader social aim that is relevant to each of the humanitarian, development and peacebuilding sectors alike. A number of impact evaluations on food security programming have shown that equitable and inclusive processes of food assistance can help build resilience and social cohesion at the community level and there is evidence to show that these outcomes are positive for peaceful development.[10] Similarly, supporting the provision of basic social services, such as health, education and social safety nets, can instil greater confidence in governments.[11] It may also help build government capacity, accountability and legitimacy.[12] This reinforces the case for recent peacebuilding initiatives launched by

[9] Frankenberger, T. R., 'Can food assistance promoting food security and livelihood programs contribute to peace and stability in specific countries?', Paper presented at the High-Level Expert Forum on Food Insecurity in Protracted Crisis, Rome, 13–14 Sep. 2012; and FAO, 'Sowing the seeds of peace for food security: Disentangling the nexus between conflict, food security and peace', *FAO Agricultural Development Economics Technical Study* 2 (FAO: Rome, 2017).

[10] Hendrix, C. S. and Brinkman, H., 'Food insecurity and conflict dynamics: Causal linkages and complex feedback', *Stability: International Journal of Security & Development*, vol. 2, no. 2 (2013), pp. 1–18; and Breisinger, C. et al., 'Building resilience to conflict through food-security policies and programs: Evidence from four case studies', *2020 Conference Paper 3* (IFPRI: Washington, DC, 2014).

[11] Breisinger (note 10).

[12] World Bank, *World Development Report: Conflict, Security and Development* (World Bank: Washington, DC, 2011)..

the UN Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) that include a food security component as one of the basic social services.[13]

However the international actors that seek to contribute to greater peace in the world express their ambitions, it is fair to ask what they mean by peace. The response to the question is not purely theoretical by any means. It directly affects operational decisions and realities. Peace is perceived in different ways by different people at different times in different cultures and political systems. For peace is not just the absence of violence, although achieving that is important.

It may be helpful to think of peace as a spectrum that extends from what is often called 'negative peace'—the absence of violence—to 'positive peace', an environment in which disputes and conflicts can be pursued and resolved without physical violence that harms people and communities, by finding collaborative solutions to the issues at stake.[14] A negative peace can be a necessary precondition for peacebuilding— the breathing space that makes the transition to new forms of social and political relationships possible in a country hit hard by violent conflict. However, a lasting negative peace can also be undesirable and a block to the pursuit of positive peace. Even in the absence of direct, physical violence and repression, the social and political order is sustained in some countries by inequitable systems and institutions that keep people in states of vulnerability and marginalization. This is a form of structural violence.[15] A positive peace is a shift of actors away from structural violence and towards collaborative solutions and development, and thus towards self-sustaining peace.

Peacebuilding seeks to achieve changes within individuals (e.g. attitudes, behaviours, capacity); in relationships between people (e.g. communication, interaction); in the way institutions operate (e.g. institutional policies and practices that exclude certain groups); and at a fundamental cultural level (e.g. discriminatory attitudes that cut across communities).[16] Peacebuilding can contribute to either a positive or a negative peace. Its contributions can be calibrated to different timescales—to contribute to a relatively short-term stabilization in a country coming out of recent armed conflict, or equally to contribute to long-term stability and a transition to a positive peace.

Attempts to contribute to building peace of any kind go astray if they are treated as technical solutions to technical problems. Peace is complex. If regarded as a system it should be thought of as an ecosystem rather than a machine. A multiplicity of different aspects are involved and when they are in balance with each other, peaceful progress is the result. When the balance is disturbed, however, something may go wrong. Workable approaches depend on how the problems are understood and framed, on the capacity of the stakeholders to solve the problems (or parts of the problems) and on the vision of those driving the peacebuilding process.

International organizations, being external to all the conflict-affected and peacebuilding situations they address, cannot be the ones that ultimately drive the peace process. They can, however, offer vital assistance. In this role of attempting to help to make a lasting, self-sustaining peace possible, the response to the complex challenges of the task requires a holistic approach. That is to say, each actor needs to understand its place in a process that is far larger than its own activities. The least of the risks entailed in not paying proper attention to the bigger picture is that the efforts of one counteract the efforts of another. To contain these risks and ensure they do no harm, international

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[13] UN Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO), *Peace Dividends and Beyond: Contributions of Administrative and Social Services to Peacebuilding* (UN PBSO: Washington, DC, 2012).

[14] Milante, G., 'Sustaining peace and sustainable development in dangerous places', *SIPRI Yearbook 2017: Armaments, Disarmament and International Security* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2017).

[15] Galtung, J., 'Violence, peace, and peace research', *Journal of Peace Research*, vol. 6, no. 3 (1969), pp. 167–91.

[16] Lederach, J. P., *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies* (United States Institute of Peace: Washington, DC, 1997).

actors may need to undertake, for example, more consultation or collaboration with partners than they are used to, or more piloting and experimentation, or they may require increased feedback loops and monitoring.[17]

Because of these complexities, assessing progress in the long-term enterprise of building peace and gauging the impact of external assistance can be difficult. Because of the multiplicity of factors shaping the prospects for peace, and in the absence of counterfactuals, it is always difficult and can be impossible to attribute progress to the impact of an individual actor or programme.[18] In addition, it can be difficult to know whether the peace that is being built is resilient to shocks and, therefore, whether it is sustainable.

It is in response to these issues that this research, in considering how WFP as a dual-mandated humanitarian and development organization works in conflict-affected environments, has focused on WFP's *contributions to improving the prospects for peace*. This entails compiling evidence on how work by WFP may have reduced the likelihood of violence or increased the prospects for positive peace. Understanding whether the prospects for a desired outcome have been increased necessarily entails a considerable degree of judgement, and we come to how such judgement can be made in the course of this report. At this point, it may be worthwhile to offer a reminder to the reader that there could be instances when WFP contributes to the prospects for peace, yet violence occurs, or when peace is realized without a contribution from WFP.

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[17] Enshrined in the humanitarian principles in UN General Assembly resolutions 46/182 of 19 Dec. 1991 and 58/114 of 17 Dec. 2003, and the first principle of the OECD Development Assistance Committee's principles for good engagement in fragile states, see Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), *Principles for Good International Engagement in Fragile States and Situations* (OECD: Paris, 2007).

[18] OECD, *Evaluating Peacebuilding Activities in Settings of Conflict and Fragility: Improving Learning for Results* (OECD: Paris, 2012).

2. The World Food Programme's contribution to improving the prospects for peace

This chapter reviews the areas that appear to be the most promising for WFP's contribution to improving the prospects for peace. For this review, this study employs the concept of theories of change (TOCs) as a tool to facilitate analysis and support future programme design.

Theories of change

As discussed above, peacebuilding is a complex undertaking, where the causal pathway is emergent or adaptive, and many interventions are based on experimental designs. As a result, its programming is often built on numerous assumptions about how interventions contribute to peace. Furthermore, such assumptions are often unstated and embedded in the approaches of individual practitioners or organizations and their interventions. This complicates evaluation of peacebuilding activities and building an evidence base. The use of TOCs has been developed within the field of peacebuilding to address this problem.

A TOC spells out an understanding of how a specific activity will result in the achievement of desired changes in a particular context.[19] In its simplest form, a TOC can be stated as *If we do X (action), the effect will be Y (result)*. The core of this is a simple cause-and-effect statement, although the if-then formulation is not always used. As utilized in the peacebuilding field, a TOC is not a theory in the same way as the term is used in social science. It is something much crisper and more straightforward than most social science theories. It provides a testable hypothesis that makes explicit the assumptions that underpin the planned activities, setting out the expectation of what they will achieve. The TOC contributes directly to the evaluation of activities. If the expected results are achieved, the TOC offers a causal pathway that can be explored, assessed for validity and potentially replicated with appropriate modifications in another context. If the results are not achieved, the TOC enables an assessment of whether this was due to implementation failure or design failure, and helps to identify additional necessary activities or actors that should be engaged.[20]

While TOCs can be helpful in articulating and testing complex peacebuilding interventions, it needs to be acknowledged that it can be hard to collect data for their validation, especially in conflict-affected contexts. In addition, since evaluation based on a TOC focuses on how the process of change occurs, it needs to be complemented by other forms of measurement of outcomes in order to fully understand the results. It is also a potential weakness of TOCs that they can inadvertently encourage an overly linear approach by oversimplifying the contribution an initiative will make and missing some or all of the co-factors and other actions that are also essential. These limitations mean that TOCs must be linked to a robust conflict analysis to ensure that programming is sensitive and tailored to context. Despite their limitations, the use of TOCs is now acknowledged good practice in peacebuilding and for organizations working in conflict-affected environments.

The research team did not find TOCs in most WFP programme planning documents, reports and evaluations. This is not surprising. In some of WFP's usual programming

[19] OECD (note 18).

[20] Woodrow, P. and Oatley, N., 'Practical approaches to theories of change in conflict, security and justice programmes', Part I, 'What they are, different types, how to develop and use them', *Practice Products for the Conflict, Crime, and Violence Results Initiative (CCVRI)* (UK Department for International Development and CDA Collaborative Learning Projects: London, 2013).

Box 2.1. Five meta-theories of change

Supported by the evidence:

Livelihoods investments
If livelihoods are enhanced and/or diversified, **then** this will contribute to improving economic opportunities and prospects for the future.

State–citizen link
If government service delivery is inclusive and/or enhanced, **then** this will help strengthen state–citizen links and contribute to stability and the prospects for peace.

Enhancing access to and supply of contested natural resources
If the supply of natural resources is enhanced and/or the equitable use of natural resources is guaranteed, **then** this will create resilience to shocks that, without resilience, might leave communities vulnerable to violence.

Community-based participatory approach
If all sections of the community participate in the planning, implementation and monitoring processes of community programming, **then** this will help to (re)build trust and social capital among communities.

Potential (not enough evidence to back it up):

General food distribution and stabilization
If general food assistance is provided to people affected by crises to respond quickly to their urgent food needs, **then** this will contribute to restoring stability and re-establishing a sense of normalcy among affected populations.

areas, such as nutrition, there is a strong body of evidence that shows the impact of programmatic intervention. A specific TOC for a specific nutrition programme would be of marginal utility. The field of peacebuilding, by contrast, is relatively new and there is a limited (albeit growing) body of evidence about what does and does not work. It will make sense for WFP to draw on acknowledged good practice in that field. This will make possible, among other gains, a basic unit of comparison across programmes and contexts, with a view to the aggregation and synthesis of findings from different country contexts.

Although explicit TOCs were largely lacking, a number of WFP programme staff with whom the research team met had a relatively clear sense of why an activity contributed to improving the prospects for peace or might be expected to do so. Because the purpose of this research is not just to find out what WFP has done but to understand how it might in future enhance its contribution to improving the prospects for peace, it was appropriate and advantageous to use the TOC approach as a way to understand both current activities and their possible enhancement. Accordingly, drawing on a limited amount of documentation, and more broadly on interviews about project aims and results, the research team imputed TOCs to WFP programming activities. In essence, the effect is to propose that had there been TOCs, this is what they would have looked like. Overall, 24 imputed TOCs were identified in the four case study countries (see annex A).

Meta-theories of change derived from this study

Drawing on the 24 imputed TOCs, there are five broad or meta-TOCs that cluster in patterns in WFP activities and outcomes together (see box 2.1). These are employed fairly consistently, albeit differently in different contexts, across programming in the four country case studies. For four of the five TOCs, there is adequate evidence to back them up. The fifth is treated as a potential theory of change, in the sense that there is not enough evidence to back it up. That is not to say that it should be regarded as disproven, only that further inquiry is needed.

The specific outcomes and TOCs in each country case study are different because of the diversity of contexts in which they apply. In some cases, multiple activities that could each be seen as being supported by a different TOC combined to produce broader

outcomes. Especially in complex settings, a holistic approach along these lines may be required, which systematically takes different interrelated factors into account. The next four sub-sections explore each meta-theory of change and their differences, with examples.

Livelihoods investments

If *livelihoods are enhanced and/or diversified,* **then** *this will contribute to improving economic opportunities and prospects for the future*

Livelihoods are generally defined as the activities undertaken to translate resources—whether natural or human—into means for living for groups or individuals, including the production of goods and services. In fragile and conflict-affected situations, supporting livelihoods through development assistance is widely used to build the capacities of individuals and communities to enhance their resilience to shocks, engage in sustainable livelihood strategies and contribute to long-term development.[21] Thus, livelihood outcomes are more than jobs and income generation and include increased well-being, reduced vulnerability and a more sustainable use of resources.[22]

WFP implements a wide range of programming to improve the socio-economic opportunities of vulnerable people who have limited income opportunities and to provide additional pathways to break the intergenerational cycle of poverty and hunger.[23]

Among the four case studies, a promising example of a livelihoods intervention contributing to improved prospects for peace was the Gastromotiva project in El Salvador (see box 2.2). The critical success factors for this project were strong planning, intensive follow-up and private sector involvement, with a specific emphasis on overcoming stigma. Bridging between the private sector and beneficiaries was intended to reduce the vulnerability to individual recruitment into gangs by providing other livelihood options. It should be noted that this is a highly labour intensive and small-scale intervention, requiring minimum critical investment per beneficiary at a higher level of maintenance than is typical for a WFP programme.

State–citizen links

If *government service delivery is inclusive and/or enhanced,* **then** *this will help strengthen state–citizen links and contribute to stability and the prospects for peace.*

In all four country case studies, WFP is supporting the state with service delivery, in particular in the provision of social safety nets and in strengthening broader national social protection systems. The possible contributions of these activities to improving the prospects for peace take two forms: strengthening the legitimacy of the government because its performance on service delivery improves; and enhancing the inclusivity of government-led social safety nets.

It is a widely held assumption that improving service delivery to make it more effective and equitable can improve the quality of contact between government and citizens, enhance a government's accountability and improve its legitimacy.[24] WFP's work in this area in the four case study countries involves supporting performance

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[21] Twigg, J. and Calderone, M., 'Building livelihood and community resilience', ODI-Cesvi Working Paper 545 (ODI: London, 2019).

[22] UK Department for International Development (DFID), 'Sustainable livelihoods guidance sheets', DFID, London, 1999.

[23] These interventions include resilience-building programming through Food Assistance for Assets (FFA), Food Assistance for Training (FFT), income generating activities (IGA) and Smallholder Agriculture Market Support (SAMS), as well as climate services and rural insurance, or connecting school meals programmes to the local production, such as through locally grown school meals.

[24] UN PBSO (note 13).

> **Box 2.2.** Enhancing socio-economic status and empowerment: The Gastromotiva project in El Salvador
>
> *Theory of change: **If** urban youth at risk of stigma, violence and displacement have opportunities for socio-economic inclusion and access to safe spaces, **then** they connect and develop, become agents of change in their communities and support themselves and their families without becoming caught up in conflict dynamics.*
>
> Gastromotiva is aligned with the government's response to assist migrant returnees and break the vicious circle between food insecurity, violence and migration. It aims to promote productive livelihood incentives for vulnerable youth, victims of gang violence and deported migrants. Participants acquire skills in professional cooking, gain hands-on practice in restaurants and an education at a university, with the aim of gaining formal employment. The World Food Programme (WFP) intends to scale up the programme by increasing the number of participants and private sector partners in 2019.
>
> This project could contribute to improving the prospects for peace in El Salvador in a range of ways:
>
> - **Enhancing status within a community.** Vocational training has the potential to improve social standing and status, as enhanced skills and knowledge contribute to enhanced community recognition. Status can be particularly important in societies where strong hierarchies exist. Through the Gastromotiva project, WFP sensitized at-risk youth and returnees to the importance of overcoming stigma and provided them with vocational training. WFP sensitised private sector partners, created a private sector network and a bridge between employers and trainees, resulting in reintegration of the most marginalized sectors of society into the wider social and economic sphere.
>
> - **Empowerment.** Enhanced opportunities and livelihood options can lead to strengthened self-confidence and autonomy, providing hope for the future. The youth engaged in the project shared their renewed sense of hope for alternatives to violence, thereby becoming agents of change to help build a culture of peace.
>
> - **Preventing recruitment.** Livelihoods programming may have some potential to help stem the recruitment of individuals into militia or other armed groups, or into gangs. The employment opportunities provided through the Gastromotiva project may have a stronger influence on forced returnees from the United States and Mexico who are at high risk of joining gangs if they do not find livelihoods alternatives.

with data, analysis and evidence; providing technical assistance to enhance the quality of specific government-led social safety net programmes; and offering technical advice to strengthen legislation related to social safety nets. WFP's portfolio of capacity strengthening initiatives typically provides support across the breadth of government, covering ministries such as agriculture, education, environment, health and social protection; provincial authorities; and the national food security and statistical institutes.

Where exclusion from services provided by the government coincides with a sense of injustice and divisions within the community, such as ethnic or tribal divisions, even the perception of being excluded can feed grievances against the state. In most of the country case studies, WFP advocates and provides technical assistance to enhance the inclusivity of social safety nets.

In Kyrgyzstan, by working with the government in a government-led social safety net initiative, WFP has the potential to help strengthen the government's performance legitimacy on education (see box 2.3). The high level of interest in providing and willingness at all levels of government to provide school meals and active community participation means that WFP's Optimising School Meals Programme can help improve the quality of school meals and build more grassroots trust in the local and central government. WFP is also piloting methods to include schools that do not reach the minimum criteria for inclusion in this free school meals programme. However, its contribution to improving the prospects for peace is as yet constrained by limited state visibility and the lack of feedback mechanisms and relevant data.

Enhancing access to and supply of contested natural resources

***If** the supply of natural resources is enhanced and/or the equitable use of natural resources is guaranteed, **then** this will create resilience to shocks that, without resilience, might leave communities vulnerable to violence.*

Box 2.3. The Optimising School Meals Programme and government capacity building in Kyrgyzstan

*Theory of change: **If** the Government develops responsive, inclusive and accountable institutions at the national and subnational levels and enhances service delivery, **then** citizens will increasingly trust the state.*

In 2013, the World Food Programme (WFP) launched the Optimising School Meals Programme (OSMP) to improve the national school meals programme (SMP) for children aged 6–9 years old. The programme upgraded the standard daily 'tea and bun' provision for school children to a nutritious hot meal, through technical support to the schools, policy support to the government, and strengthening the capacity of the involved staff. To date, WFP has introduced improved school meals in approximately 500 primary schools and 500 additional schools will receive financial and technical support from WFP to improve their meals. The government aims to cover all of the 2200 schools across the country with improved meals in the next five years.

WFP works with the Government of Kyrgyzstan, which provides part of the financing; local authorities, which pays for the relevant infrastructure and renovations required for schools to shift to hot meals; and communities, including village committees as well as parent and teacher associations (PTAs). PTAs, in particular, function as project management committees through daily monitoring and follow-up, involvement in the management of the meals (such as collection of funds and purchase of additional products), daily oversight of the quality of the food, and support to the day-to-day running of the SMP.

WFP provides technical assistance with the reconstruction and re-equipment of school kitchens and canteens and water/sanitation infrastructure; the introduction of new nutritious menus; training managers and cooks; and promoting and supporting school farms and gardens. At the policy level, WFP provides assistance to the Government to revise and develop national policy and legislation related to school nutrition for the sustainability and effective management of the school meals programme.

The national and safety regulations prescribe strict standards and requirements for school canteen infrastructure and basic facilities related to the preparation of fresh food at school. This means that those schools which do not meet the standards, mostly located in rural areas or impoverished communities, might not be eligible for the programme. It is estimated that 25 per cent of schools do not meet the standards. To address this challenge, WFP is currently engaging with new partners and raising complementary funds for infrastructure rehabilitation. At the time being, 190 schools which do not meet the minimum criteria have been receiving assistance to enable these institutions to join fully the programme. This effort to ensure a more inclusive approach is resource-intensive and requires involvement of both local and national government stakeholders. The process is still at the onset and the result not fully documented yet. It is expected that the programme, as a longer-term impact, will improve the prospects for sustaining peace, building inclusiveness and stronger trust within communities.

Currently, corporately WFP has limited indicator set to collect data that could document enhanced performance, legitimacy or accountability in the communities. Although some external data sets contain indicators for measuring perceptions of public service delivery and trust in government. Corporate and targeted WFP toolsets are instrumental to document results and trigger effective and informed actions within peace building and community trust.

Control over and access to natural resources, in particular land and water, are common drivers of conflict in resource-dependent communities. Demographic change, environmental degradation, market pressure and climate change are all pressures on scarce and diminishing natural resources. These pressures can push people to exceed the sustainable limits of natural resources, which become subject to intense competition. Resilience programming that directly addresses natural resource constraints has the potential to diminish the conflict and tensions induced by resource scarcity. To achieve this, WFP typically utilizes Food Assistance for Assets (FFA) programmes. These are one of WFP's key tools for providing food assistance to the most vulnerable and for strengthening their food security, livelihoods and resilience to shocks and stresses.[25]

FFA programming is implemented in all four case study countries to reduce natural resource stresses. It has, for example, contributed to the rehabilitation of irrigation canals which cross back and forth between disputed territories that are claimed by both Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. The programme has reduced water loss and contributed to increased agricultural productivity with the result that inter-community conflict over water has been prevented (see box 2.4).

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[25] WFP, 'Food Assistance for Assets: Regional overviews', Rome, 2018.

Box 2.4. Reducing water loss in disputed territories between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan

Theory of change: If natural resource infrastructure is improved to enhance efficiency and allow separate access by different ethnic groups, then there will be a reduction in tensions over natural resource management.

Water stress is widely regarded as a major driver of conflict in Batken province, Kyrgyzstan, and among the communities in the disputed territories between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. A lack of border demarcation means that there are no functioning governance structures to deal with natural resource management. The water infrastructure has deteriorated, resulting in significant water losses, which means that in drier periods there is not enough water for all water users. This contributes to tensions both between communities on either side of the border, and among communities on the same side of the border, which sometimes erupt into acts of violence.

Working in conjunction with other agencies through a Peacebuilding Fund project, the World Food Programme (WFP) implemented Food Assistance for Assets programming to rehabilitate irrigation canals and water pipelines in cross-border villages in the region, with priorities identified and agreed by communities on both sides of the disputed border. For example, in Karabak Ayil Okmoto, Tajik and Kyrgyz communities live in immediate proximity, and the existing irrigation canal is implicitly understood by local communities as the de facto border. The canal itself is seen by both communities as belonging to the Kyrgyz side but with no alternative sources of water, Tajik farmers had illegally drilled holes into the canal to draw water, reducing the overall water flow by approximately 50 per cent.

Through the programme, a new irrigation canal was built to serve the Kyrgyz side, and wells were constructed to serve the Tajik side. The programme has documented evidence of enhanced access to irrigation water, reduced tensions between communities over water access and enhanced relations between communities.

Given the tacit understandings on ownership of the canals, the programme is carefully navigating choices over which pieces of infrastructure to rehabilitate and who can work on them. Since control over water is such a contentious issue, the project needs to continually assess whether rehabilitation efforts might enhance actual control of water by one community, or whether it might give an implicit message of increasing assertion of control over water.

However, WFP's approach is often limited to enhancing access to, or the supply of, natural resources. Other elements of natural resource management are not normally the focus of WFP interventions, including in the four case studies. To maximize contributions to improving the prospects for peace, such programmes should create a clear system of ownership of the natural resources in question, as well as mechanisms for resolving disputes over resource use and promoting equity in benefits.[26] WFP's performance is uneven in this regard.

The most promising practice was found in El Salvador, where WFP is brokering agreements between communities or groups of beneficiaries that do not have access to productive land, and landowners. In order to support this intervention, WFP is also bringing in legal support. The contracts agreed allow communities to use the improved land and assets even after project completion (see box 2.5).

In Mali, WFP's cooperation partners brokered agreements within communities to determine land use rights in an effort to prevent conflict over improved land, but these did not address critical underlying structural inequalities regarding land ownership and use.

In the cases we observed, WFP support following the completion of newly con-structed or rehabilitated infrastructure typically drops off so there is no onward support to help communities take advantage of the enhanced assets. The question of the sustainability of enhanced assets, and whether this has any bearing on the pros-pects for peace, requires further examination.

Community-based participatory approach

If *all sections of the community participate in the planning, implementation and monitoring processes of community programming,* **then** *this will help to (re)build trust and social capital among communities.*

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[26] USAID, *Water and Conflict: A Toolkit for Programming* (USAID: Washington, DC, 2014).

> **Box 2.5.** Brokering agreements for land usage rights in El Salvador
>
> *Theory of change: **If** rural communities vulnerable to climate change and violence have access to: (a) community participation avenues; (b) diversified income sources; (c) increased knowledge; and (d) improved management of natural resources, **then** there will be increased social cohesion and greater resilience to contextual conflict dynamics.*
>
> The resilience programme targets rural smallholders who identify and build key assets to diversify and improve their livelihoods and build resilience to shocks.
>
> The study looked at three specific interventions: the building of macro-tunnels, greenhouses and forestry projects. For households to be able to participate in these two projects, they must have access to land and water. A major challenge, however, is the limited access to land, as only 20 per cent of participating households owned land. As a way of overcoming this limitation, local landholders have lent land for free to beneficiaries. Although participants benefit from improved and diversified livelihoods for the duration of the project, such arrangements increase the risk of elite capture of assets. The landowner also benefits from the improved soil and water management resulting from participants' work on the land. Where rent is paid, participants are also vulnerable throughout the project to rent increases or even the landowner terminating the agreement.
>
> To reduce these risks, the World Food Programme contracts lawyers to legally formalize rental agreements. A Shared Benefit Compromise Letter is signed by the landowners and landless participants to ensure that the benefits of asset creation activities are shared for at least 3–5 years beyond programme closure.

WFP has used community-based participatory processes extensively to inform the planning and implementation of food assistance programmes. This approach engages a representative group drawn from all sections of communities in all aspects of programming. It works on the assumption that communities are better placed than anybody else to identify their needs and the actions required to meet them. This way of working has been widely used by international development agencies as a principal component of community-driven development (CDD) or reconstruction (CDR) in conflict-affected contexts. Over the past three decades, CDD programmes have gained profile as a vehicle for strengthening governance at the grassroots level. There is no clear difference between the strategies or methodologies devised in conflict-affected or non-conflict settings. In conflict-affected contexts, however, countries face an even stronger imperative to rebuild socio-economic infrastructure and social capital torn apart by violent conflict. Thus, the rapid transfer of resources in the form of a peace dividend can help fill service gaps and mitigate the risk of conflict, especially if the focus is on opportunities for collective benefit from collaborative action.[27] Even more importantly, participatory processes of product delivery with strengthened mechanisms for redressing grievances can influence attitudes, behaviours and norms in a way that rebuilds social accountability.[28]

Community-based participatory planning (CBPP) is widely used by WFP to inform resilience programming.[29] WFP evaluation results suggest that CBPP has contributed to building trust and social cohesion in communities by involving different actors in programming processes.[30] Broader impacts on gender dynamics have also been observed, such as improvements in the position of women in the community and households, and increased social connectivity.[31]

A number of evaluations of community-driven development highlight that some targeted local institutions were discriminatory, exclusionary and unrepresentative of

[27] Cliffe, S. et al., *Community-driven Reconstruction as an Instrument in War-to-Peace Transitions*, CPR Working Paper no. 7 (World Bank: Washington, DC, 2013).

[28] Bennett, S. and D'Onofrio, A., 'Community driven development in conflict affected contexts: revisiting concepts, functions and fundamentals', *Stability: International Journal of Security and Development*, vol. 4, no. 1 (2015), pp. 1–18; and de Regt, J., et al. 2013. *Designing Community-driven Development Operations in Fragile and Conflict-affected Situations: Lessons from a Stocktaking* (World Bank: Washington, DC, 2013).

[29] For further information on WFP's 3PA, see WFP, 'The Three-pronged approach (3PA) Factsheet', 2 May 2017.

[30] WFP, *Synthesis Report of the Evaluation Series on the Impact of Food for Assets (2002–2011) and Lessons for Building Livelihoods Resilience: Impact Evaluation Synthesis* (WFP: Rome, 2014).

[31] WFP, *The Potential of Food Assistance for Assets (FFA) to Empower Women and Improve Women's Nutrition: A Five Country Study* (WFP: Rome, 2017).

Box 2.6. Peers for peace: Building social cohesion in the Mopti and Ségou regions of Mali

Theory of change: **If** *communities strengthen livelihoods through an inclusive participatory process,* **then** *the community will work together which will signal a positive change in circumstances, reduce the sense of marginalization and provide purpose and meaningful employment for youth.*

This pilot Peacebuilding Fund project is jointly implemented by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the World Food Programme (WFP) and the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR), with WFP as the lead agency. The project targets 500 households ('peers for peace') and involves strengthening community-based conflict mediation mechanisms and enhancing livelihoods and community infrastructures.

All the activities are based on Participatory Community Planning Processes. To enhance livelihoods, a communal vegetable garden was created. The land used for the garden was chosen by the entire community and an agreement was signed where the land initially belonged to an individual or family. In order to have a fully functional water management system, a rotating management committee was formed (in some communities, expensive solar materials can expose the population to theft). A community youth group was trained in equipment maintenance and repair, and the community was encouraged to create a management fund to pay for a night watchman and mechanics.

Significant changes in the commune of Diankabou, in the Mopti region covered by the project, have been observed by cooperation partners. In particular, there has been a decrease in the severity and extent of inter-community violence. It is difficult to ascertain the exact reasons for the reduction in violence; the installation of army bases in the intervention areas could have played an important part. Nevertheless, prior to the intervention, there had been numerous cases of inter-communal violence between Fulani pastoralists and Dogon farmers, involving mutual killings and the burning of villages. Subsequently, Dogon community members could not access fields near the Fulani village. In the initial planning phase, the community members were too afraid to enter each other's village. However, tensions have significantly reduced since the beginning of the project. Furthermore, there has been an increase in economic interdependence between villages—Fulani allow Dogon to bring their animals to the Fulani village to drink from the pastoral well that was built through the project, while the Dogon now sell vegetables, which were grown in the market gardens supported by the project, to the Fulani. In addition, village credit and savings groups provide a sense of empowerment through access to small credits while allowing members to build chains of solidarity and dialogue. Finally, there has been an overall increase in the movement of people across villages.

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communities.[32] These were examples of how efforts to promote inclusive participation can unintentionally lead to exclusion. WFP's CBPP seeks full representation but to achieve this, an understanding of local power dynamics is required to avoid the exclusion of marginal groups. Here, the research team identified cases (discussed further in section 3.2) where particular groups were not adequately included due to the local power structures, cultural norms or displacement.

In all four case study countries, there was anecdotal evidence of CBPP contributing to enhanced trust and stronger social capital. In the Kyrgyzstan school meals programme, for example, parental support was found to have a positive impact on relationships between parents, and between parents and the school (see box 2.3).[33] However, without any mapping of ethnicity or details on whether schools serve divided communities, it is impossible to discern whether participation in a school committee has any bearing on relationships across divides or in areas where social capital is weak. In a social cohesion project in Mali, by contrast, observable changes in the conflict context are clear, such as decreased violence and increased interactions among divided communities (see box 2.6). WFP collects data to determine whether the management committee of a specific asset exists, how it is composed and its functionality. However, it does not consider such questions as the quality of the process or who

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[32] See e.g. Strand, A. et al., 'Community Driven Development in Contexts of Conflict', *Concept Paper Commissioned by ESSD, World Bank* (Chr. Michelsen Institute: Bergen, 2003); World Bank, *The Effectiveness of World Bank Support for Community Based and Driven Development: An OED Evaluation* (World Bank: Washington, DC, 2005); Haider, H., *Community-based Approaches to Peacebuilding in Conflict-affected and Fragile Contexts*, GSDRC Issues Paper (University of Birmingham: Birmingham, 2009); and Wong, S., *What have been the Impacts of World Bank Community-Driven Development Programs?* CDD impact evaluation review and operational and research implications (World Bank: Washington, DC, 2012).

[33] WFP, 'Report on the results of the overview assessment for the project "Optimization of the National School Meals Program"', *Kyrgyz Republic: A Component for the Development of Complementary School Facilities*, DEV Project 200176 (WFP in the Kyrgyz Republic: Bishkek, 2017).

is included in decision making. This does not provide full insight on possible peace effects or possible conflict sensitivity concerns.

General food assistance and stabilization

If *general food assistance is provided to people affected by crises to respond quickly to their urgent food needs,* **then** *this will contribute to restoring stability and re-establishing a sense of normalcy among affected populations.*

General food assistance is the largest component of the WFP portfolio and is particularly vital to individuals displaced by violence. A number of TOCs about the contribution of general food assistance to improving the prospects for peace were identified in Mali and Iraq. However, the evidence base for these remains unformed. A number of cooperating partners that have been delivering WFP's general food assistance in northern Mali reported that general food and cash transfers have a stabilizing effect, but there were no metrics of stabilization.

A potential sub-category of this TOC is that providing food assistance at times of severe food insecurity could encourage people to remain in their place of origin. This would avoid them becoming internally displaced persons (IDPs) and moving to an area where, as often happens, there are tensions with the host population. Where other survival strategies have been exhausted and there is a lack of access to food, it would seem logical that the availability of food assistance could be an inducement to people to remain in their home areas throughout a period of severe stress. Furthermore, although the initial driver of migration differs across contexts, onward movement is driven by a common desire for stability, and livelihoods and food security are key pull factors.[34] However, while the National Food and Nutritional Security Survey (ENSAN) collects data on the movement of people, including their reasons for moving, it does not offer evidence that food assistance contributes to preventing human mobility in Mali.

Nor was there evidence to support another potential sub-category of this TOC that addresses potential tensions between IDPs and host populations. These tensions are often caused by the perception among the host community that the IDPs are being better treated than they are. Food aid targeted to IDPs alone, like other forms of assistance, therefore gives rise to significant risks. In Mali, WFP provides emergency food assistance to both IDPs and host populations during the so-called lean season. The most vulnerable IDPs and host community households are eligible for continued assistance outside the lean season. Again, logic suggests that this could well be a conflict mitigation method, but there are no metrics for measuring the effects. WFP in Mali recently launched a mobile vulnerability analysis mapping (mVAM) survey to assess targeting among general food assistance beneficiaries—although not specifically IDPs—and this could be utilized as a tool to collect relevant data.

Nonetheless, a number of other studies have found evidence that the regular provision of food assistance could contribute to re-establishing a sense of normalcy among people affected by displacement and violence.[35] Since general food assistance is designed to be of short duration (even though it frequently continues for a decade or more), its impact is likely to be limited; accompanied by additional livelihoods investments, however, it could create a buffer through which people affected by conflict can begin to rebuild their lives and livelihoods. Although clear evidence is lacking, there is enough of a basis here to conclude that further exploration of the impact of general food assistance on the prospects for peace would be worthwhile.

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[34] WFP, *At the Root of Exodus: Food Security, Conflict and International Migration* (WFP: Rome, 2017).
[35] Frankenberger (note 9).

3. Cross-cutting findings

This chapter discusses issues that emerged from the four country case studies that have a wider relevance beyond these four countries, and sketches out the areas to be addressed in setting out to enhance WFP's overall contribution to improving the prospects for peace.

Conflict sensitivity

It is well known that the introduction of aid resources into conflict and peacebuilding environments can influence patterns of violence and expose intended recipients to new risks.[36] In effect, when international assistance is provided in conflict-affected states, it becomes part of the context and thus also of the conflict. It can at worst become part of the reason why violent conflict is prolonged or diffused. Although WFP as a humanitarian actor seeks to be neutral and nonpartisan, the impact of its interventions may not be.

As a way to think about this, the principle of 'do no harm' has received wide acknowledgement and support among international humanitarian, development and peacebuilding actors over the past two decades.[37] To this end, to avoid exacerbating conflict, the concept of conflict sensitivity encourages organizations to understand both the context in which they work and how their activities interact with it.[38] Beyond doing no harm, organizations aspire, of course, to do some good and may have high ambitions, but the minimum acceptable standard is the avoidance of harm. In complex and often fast-moving conflict contexts, this may be the minimum but that does not make it simple. Given the highly complex and contextual nature of armed conflict and peacebuilding environments, conflict sensitivity concerns are different among the countries where WFP operates and, to add further complexities, even within them; different areas of the same countries can present quite different operational environments.

Eight broad conflict sensitivity concerns were identified across the four country case studies. These relate to conflict dynamics and the operational environment, on the one hand, and WFP's processes and activities, on the other. The research team found that WFP has a number of mitigation measures in place to meet these concerns but they were not comprehensively applied. The most important conflict sensitivity concern is targeting, which is discussed separately below.

The response to all of the concerns raised below is to increase conflict sensitivity in programming, which means putting increased emphasis on analysis in the planning stages and throughout the life of a programme. Too often, international actors are not fully informed about what is happening in the areas where they operate and it is often an extremely demanding task to develop an adequately broad, deep and sensitive analysis and keep it up to date. This is one of the key challenges for humanitarianism, development assistance and peacebuilding alike.

Violent extremism

WFP operates in numerous settings where violent extremism is commonplace. There is mixed evidence around the connection between food insecurity and violent

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[36] Wood, R. M. and Sullivan, C., 'Doing harm by doing good? The negative externalities of humanitarian aid provision during civil conflict', *Journal of Politics,* vol. 77, no. 3 (2015), pp. 736–48.

[37] Anderson, M. B., *Do No Harm: How Aid Can Support Peace—or War* (Lynne Rienner Publishers: Boulder, CO, 1999).

[38] See the definition provided by the Conflict Sensitivity Community Hub, <http://conflictsensitivity.org/conflict-sensitivity/what-is-conflict-sensitivity/>.

extremism.[39] However, it is clear that WFP's interventions could have an impact on some of the drivers of recruitment into extremist groups. In particular, WFP's work on social safety nets, community cohesion and resilience interacts with important social factors that drive recruitment, such as social exclusion, marginalization and discrimination (real or perceived), limited social mobility, limited education or employment opportunities, displacement and criminality.

Operating with a dual humanitarian and development mandate

WFP's dual humanitarian and development mandate poses dilemmas in certain conflict-affected or fragile contexts. Wherever possible, WFP engages in development programming in support of host governments to sustainably reach zero hunger. In conflict-affected environments, the humanitarian principle of neutrality plays a significant role in ensuring that armed actors and affected populations accept WFP's presence and programming. This requires neutrality and operational independence from the host government. The distinction is more complicated in practice. In some conflict-affected countries, WFP continues to work with the host government, including on development projects, while in conflict-affected areas WFP operates under humanitarian principles. This duality means that gaining acceptance for safe and effective programming is a particular challenge.

Corruption

Corruption is a pervasive problem that occurs at both the central and the provincial levels of government and is often a driver of conflict. In two country case studies, important concerns arose around the intention of government to provide and/or improve services to sections of the population, as well as concerns over corruption and state budgets.

Diversion

Theft of aid resources by a warring party is similarly a major challenge that faces all development and humanitarian actors in a wide range of conflict contexts. In one country case study there had been incidents of food being looted by armed groups, but this was not widespread.

Resource capture

Through programmes such as FFA and Food Assistance for Training (FFT), WFP provides resources in the form of cash, vouchers and food transfers, as well as investments in infrastructure to build social and human capital. These resources are at times captured by local elites or other non-intended beneficiaries, which can reinforce societal inequalities. Resource capture is tied to local power dynamics and traditional practices, and is different from the issue of diversion. Contesting the traditional practices that underpin resource capture, however, raises new risks around challenging social stability. In a wider conflict context, such interventions could significantly destabilize communities

Participatory planning

CBPP seeks to involve representatives of all the different stakeholders in communities and local governance in identifying issues and solutions. Participatory planning is a good principle, but conflict sensitivity concerns arose in some case study countries around incomplete representation. Defining who is 'the community' can exclude

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[39] See e.g. Hendrix and Brinkman (note 10); and Raleigh, C., Choi, H. J. and Kniveton, D., 'The devil is in the details: An investigation of the relationships between conflict, food price and climate across Africa', *Global Environmental Change* , vol. 32 (Apr. 2015), pp. 187–99.

certain members—such as IDPs or nomadic groups—or those in nearby communities who may be affected by an intervention.

Onward linkages

WFP provides training to food insecure beneficiaries in combination with food or cash transfers to build knowledge or skills that can generate income. However, if onward linkages to employment opportunities are weak, interventions run the risk of creating frustration among trainees.

Targeting

The targeting process, which determines who does and does not receive resources, is the most common conflict sensitivity flashpoint across all international aid. Even when aid is targeted to the most vulnerable, this can be perceived as bias. Vulnerability often coincides with lines of division among and between communities. The case studies highlighted a number of concerns.

Inclusion/exclusion errors in targeting

Where lists of beneficiaries are generated through government lists, such as working through government social safety net programmes, or where government has a strong role in determining the location of interventions, such as schools to be supported or irrigation canals to be improved, there is a risk that programming can reinforce any existing bias in these lists. In some situations, particularly where WFP cannot access communities due to security concerns, targeting can become caught up in wider conflicts, where certain groups or powerful individuals in the community seek to influence or even control beneficiary lists. This is a potential mechanism for reinforcing their power over a community and gaining legitimacy in the eyes of the government and international organizations.

Visibility of beneficiaries

Where WFP systems support victims of violence and require the provision of personal data, this can result in individuals who wish to remain hidden becoming identifiable. Even when personal data is anonymized, information about the location of beneficiaries could fall into the wrong hands. This raises a protection risk. The right to privacy is not only an important right in itself, but also a key element of individual autonomy and dignity. Beneficiaries may want to remain hidden for various reasons, including fear of persecution, marginalization or stigmatization, or as a matter of principle.

In other cases, when WFP is co-controller of personal data together with the government or has data-sharing agreements with other agencies or governments (normally to improve programme integration or support social registries and social protection systems), there is a risk that data might be used for unintended purposes. Data stored in social registries can easily be linked to other systems, including those unrelated to social protection (e.g. law enforcement, commercial marketing, counterterrorism, migration) and can therefore be used for non-humanitarian or non-development purposes. While this specific risk was not observed or relevant in any of the four country case studies, it has been highlighted in the overall discussions regarding conflict-sensitivity and data protection, and it is an emerging area of concern as WFP's work to support government systems expands.

Finally, being a recipient of aid can expose beneficiaries to threats and extortion, particularly in a context of gangs.

Challenge to social norms

In some contexts, there are difficulties with the concept of targeting, as community leaders collect distributed inputs (food or cash) from the targeted beneficiaries and redistribute them across the entire community. While encountered in one country case study, it is not clear how widespread this phenomenon is. Nonetheless, it affects all aid providers, not just WFP, and appears to be largely accepted by local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) on the basis that all community members consider themselves vulnerable. There are conflict sensitivity risks that efforts to reach the most marginalized could inadvertently result in reinforcing their marginalized status within the community, with no power to control the assets targeted to them, and the potential to increase grievances if a leader were to favour certain groups/individuals.

Holistic approach

The conflict sensitivity issues discussed above highlight some of the challenges faced by organizations operating in armed conflict and peacebuilding environments. Building a sustainable peace is a complex undertaking that entails influencing the behaviour of social systems that have been affected by armed conflict. Chapter 1 contained reflections on the complexities of conflict, peace and the process of building peace. These imply that work aimed at improving the prospects for peace must be based on a nuanced understanding of the task in hand. All social systems are complex, highly dynamic, non-linear and emergent—meaning that they have the ability to adapt and self-organize.[40] Peacebuilding must seek to stimulate processes in a society that enable self-organization and that will lead to strengthened resilience among the social institutions that manage internal and external stressors and shocks. Engaging with such complex challenges requires organizations to think and act in integrative ways that cut across traditional boundaries and to see peacebuilding not just through the lens of their own core competencies, but in a holistic way that considers the peacebuilding needs of a situation at the systemic level.[41] It requires thinking about interconnectedness as events and social phenomena do not exist in a vacuum but are connected to other events and social phenomena. Causality does not flow only in one direction, but any causal event touches off a chain reaction that will eventually have an impact on the initial causal event itself (feedback).

A holistic approach thus requires recognition of the many different types of actors, their networks and relationships, operating in different sectors of society and in different parts of the country, exercising their agency for peace or against it.[42] These interactions often transcend the traditional political and thematic boundaries that peacebuilding efforts tend to organize around. Examples of the complex challenges that WFP encounters include the return of refugees and IDPs to communities that may not want them back, negotiating with local governments on sustainable resource or infrastructure management, or resolving larger systemic issues such as targeting in the presence of ministries and donors that earmark and have their own political objectives. Engaging with complex challenges like these brings to the forefront the importance of partnerships.

[40] De Coning, C., 'Adaptive peacebuilding', *International Affairs*, vol. 94, no. 2 (2018), pp. 301–17.

[41] Ricigliano, R., 'Networks of effective action: Implementing an integrated approach to peacebuilding', *Security Dialogue*, vol. 34, no. 4 (2003), pp. 445–62.

[42] MacGinty, R. and Richmond, O. P., 'The local turn in peace building: A critical agenda for peace', *Third World Quarterly*, vol. 34, no. 5 (2013), pp. 763–83.

Partnerships

The many complex challenges in conflict and peacebuilding environments call for an increased role for partners and partnerships. We identified a tendency in WFP, familiar in other international organizations, to think of partners purely in contractual terms as participants in implementation. Partnerships with organizations in the countries where WFP works could extend beyond this and some WFP teams are already entering into more expansive forms of partnership. This can be important in at least four ways: knowledge, wisdom, credibility and critical distance.

First, partners, by virtue of their diverse mandates and experience, have additional technical knowledge that can be informative. Conflict-affected environments such as those of the four countries visited are often characterized by incomplete information systems. Partners may, for example, have contacts in the government that can help navigate the bureaucracy so as to move a project forward. They may be able to identify technical resources that might serve as the foundation for programme design and planning.

Partners may also bring additional perspective to and understanding of the operating environment. This can enhance understanding of the challenges and help to identify workable solutions. Examples include the ability to convene multiple stakeholders to broker agreements, an understanding of deeply rooted grievances that may affect perceptions of targeting, and knowledge of which stakeholders in a complex environment will be allies or obstacles to reform and progress.

The WFP acts in line with the principles of neutrality and independence but it is hard to be completely objective in a complex political environment. Problems of analytical bias may arise not because WFP or its staff take sides, but because of their sense of mission, or because of assumptions about the conflict situation, especially where information is incomplete. In these circumstances, triangulation through consultation with partners can provide critical perspectives and help understand the complex political context. Partners can thus serve as a sounding board to provide feedback on analysis and programme design, and advise WFP when it may be lacking conflict sensitivity or be blind to other stakeholders' objectives.

All of this is predicated on partnerships being developed steadily and sustainably, and on close relationships developing with a degree of strategic alignment and a great deal of mutual trust. The aim should be to include local partners not only in implementation, but also in analysis, planning and assessment. At the same time, when partnerships involve contractual relationships, it is important that the same demands for conflict sensitivity are made of partners as of WFP. Attachment to common standards is one condition for a successful partnership.

Climate change

The issue of climate change impacts arises in each of the four case study countries and will arise with increasing intensity throughout WFP's work in the years ahead. Climate change has been a significant cause of the increase in world hunger in the past half-decade.[43] This impact can be expected to increase as the world moves towards 1.5°C of warming, which on current trends according to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change will be reached some time between 2030 and 2050.[44] There is

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[43] FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO (note 1).

[44] Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), *Global Warming of 1.5°C: Special Report* (IPCC: Geneva, 2018).

considerable evidence available of the security-related risks of climate change, among which are some that hinge on issues of food security such as price volatility.[45]

Most of El Salvador is part of the Dry Corridor that also stretches through Guatemala and Honduras. The region is experiencing one of the worst droughts of the past ten years. This has had disastrous consequences for grain production, particularly affecting small-scale farmers who have lost much of their maize harvest. The lack of water was a recurrent topic in the interviews with communities. The drought is a main driver of migration and perhaps also of the increased levels of violence. In Mali, climate change, land degradation and demographic challenges have led to increased competition for land and water. This contributes to increased levels of intercommunal conflict between farmers and pastoralists, as it does elsewhere across the Sahel. In central Mali, competition for land is central among the long-term causes of conflict, in which the emergence of jihadi groups is a recent evolution.

In Iraq and Kyrgyzstan, WFP has begun to address climate change issues. In Kyrgyzstan, where climate change has negatively affected the livelihoods and food security of vulnerable people as well as water availability, the country office has received funds to work with the Green Climate Fund (GCF). There are plans to analyse cause-effect relations of climate change and food security. In Iraq, WFP is working with the government on a GCF proposal. Climate change exacerbates the all too evident existing risks to human security and has the potential to undermine peacebuilding efforts.[46] In the southern provinces, climate change is producing prolonged heatwaves and decreased rainfall. This puts pressure on basic resources and undermines livelihood security for the local population, resulting in angry protest movements. Climate change in Iraq is expected to put further strain on water resources, agriculture and living conditions: 92 per cent of the total area of the country is at risk of desertification.[47] In contrast to the technologically advanced dam projects upstream in Turkey and Iran, Iraq's water infrastructure is heavily damaged and outdated.[48]

In a climate-changing world, WFP, like the rest of the international system, will have to adjust its programming. It will need to be climate sensitive in all of its work. It will also need to include the impact of climate change in its conflict analyses, and to contribute in the food sector to climate adaptation. By helping to build resilience, it will be contributing across all the fields of humanitarian, development, peace and climate action.

Measuring peace

To repeat, peace is complex and improving the prospects for it is too. Peace is multi-faceted, culturally shaped and contested. It includes elements such as feelings and relationships that are not easily quantifiable. Measuring contributions to the improved prospects for peace, therefore, is challenging. Among the main challenges are:

- **Challenges of attribution.** In a fast-changing conflict, in which there are multiple interventions from a range of agencies, it is difficult to claim that a particular change was due to a specific intervention.

[45] See e.g. Rüttinger, L. et al., *A New Climate for Peace: Taking Action on Climate and Fragility Risks* (Adelphi, International Alert, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars and European Union Institute for Security Studies, 2015); see also Krampe, F. and Smith, D., 'Climate-related security risks in the Middle East', eds A. Jägerskog, M. Schulz and A. Swain, *Routledge Handbook on Middle East Security* (Routledge: London, 2019).

[46] Expert Working Group on Climate-related Security Risks, 'Iraq: Climate-related security risk assessment', Aug. 2018.

[47] Expert Working Group on Climate-related Security Risks (note 46).

[48] Luchtenberg, K., 'Iraq's watershed moment: Hydropolitics and peacebuilding', LSE Middle East Centre Blog, 19 July 2018.

- **Intangibility of results.** Among the changes necessary to build peace are intangible ones such as greater trust and tolerance.
- **Fragility of results.** The progress of a peace process is rarely smooth. Reverses and hiatuses are common. Especially in impoverished countries, it may not take more than a few hundred disgruntled people with access to weapons to reverse the gains of several years of building peace. Claims of success and registering achievements are often rather tenuous.
- **Complexity of causality.** Addressing conflict is often complex because the causal pathway is unclear and changeable. Many social, economic, political and security factors come together to generate violence or create a sustainable peace. The large number of intervening variables makes it difficult to identify the relative importance of different issues.
- **Constraints on data collection.** Not only can it be difficult to access the relevant people due to conflict, but people may be traumatized, it may be difficult to ask questions about conflict or the conflict might be hidden.

For these reasons, monitoring, evaluation and impact assessment are challenging tasks. They are made more difficult when activities aimed at improving the prospects for peace have an unclear purpose, when TOCs are implicit or weak, or when conflict analysis is inadequate. They are also difficult when, as is often necessary, interventions are deliberately experimental because unfamiliar problems are to be addressed.

As WFP establishes itself as a humanitarian and development agency with the aim of helping to improve the prospects for peace wherever possible, it will need to identify ways to manage and minimize these challenges. In so doing, because of its scale, it is capable of making a major, if indirect, contribution to improving monitoring, evaluation and assessment throughout the fields of humanitarian action, development assistance and peacebuilding.

4. Enhancing WFP's contributions to improving the prospects for peace

In chapter 2, we identified WFP's contribution to improving the prospects for peace, based on the four case studies from which five meta theories of change were derived. In this chapter, we set out how WFP can enhance its contribution to improving the prospects for peace. These are our preliminary conclusions and recommendations on how WFP can fulfil its stated ambitions on contributing to improving the prospects for peace. They do not entail WFP diverging from its mandate and the core nature of its work. Rather, our findings are about the need to go about programming and activities differently. To this end, we have identified five main areas of change for WFP and 11 action points.

Conflict analysis to ensure conflict sensitivity

Chapter 3 outlined the importance of conflict-sensitive programming. While many country offices are taking steps to apply conflict-sensitive approaches, a key finding of this research is that conflict sensitivity in programming is not sufficiently institutionalized. Working in this way, without clear corporate processes or accountability, can result in conflict-sensitivity risks, as emerged in the country case studies.

Conflict analysis is the basis of conflict-sensitive programming. Without a strong analysis, it is impossible to assess a programme's potential interaction with conflict. The analysis must strike a balance between capturing the complexities of armed conflict and being programme relevant. There needs to be a recognition of the limitations of conflict analysis in providing a complete account. While it is necessary, it cannot generate a fully accurate understanding of a conflict-affected social system. Even the best conflict analysis will be provisional.[49] It is therefore important not to regard it as a one-off activity. The best conflict analysis is actually one that is continuously refreshed with new facts as they emerge, new insights and new perspectives. With this in mind, in order to usefully inform programme design and implementation, conflict analysis should be:

- **Documented.** Capturing the analysis is valuable for incoming staff, and for revisiting programme design decisions when the context shifts.

- **Process-oriented.** The need to produce a document can result in conflict analysis being contracted out and then left on a shelf. That will not inform programming. The process of the conflict analysis should engage staff and partners in discussions.

- **A live document.** The conflict analysis should be a rolling document, updated in the light of significant changes in the context or at least every year prior to new resource allocations.

- **Robust.** The conflict analysis should include analysis of:
  - drivers of conflict, including underlying and structural causes of conflict, triggers of conflict and other drivers such as the availability of weapons;
  - actors, such as the people and groups involved in the conflict, their aims and means;
  - power dynamics and relations; and
  - broader social trends, including plausible scenarios and windows of opportunity for peace.

[49] De Coning, C. (note 40).

Box 4.1. A conflict sensitivity, gender and environmental risk screening checklist in Kyrgyzstan

The Kyrgyzstan country office has developed an integrated risk screening for all community projects when they are in the preparation stage. The checklist was designed to implement the World Food Programme's peacebuilding principles and policies in the programme activities with the purpose to enhance positive peacebuilding, gender and environmental opportunities as well as to ensure that adverse risks and impacts are avoided, minimised and mitigated. The checklist requires field monitors to confirm that they have:

- Analysed the local conflict context;
- Considered possible conflict risks;
- Considered specific risks relating to water, pasture, arable land and services; and
- Assessed whether the project might exacerbate conflict.

The checklist is then submitted to the project review committee which in case of potential negative impacts conducts additional proposal review and carefully considers it for thorough risk assessments and decision.

- **Programme-relevant and at an appropriate level of granularity.** While acknowledging wider conflict dynamics, the analysis should focus on the geographic area in which the programme will be implemented, should consider issues relevant to the programme and should understand the regional nuances.

Compared to some other organizations, staff capacity for conflict sensitivity is low in WFP. In both Mali and Kyrgyzstan, the country offices benefit from a specialist peace and conflict position (see box 4.1); in Kyrgyzstan, the country office has integrated the process of screening projects for their conflict, gender and environmental impact. Beyond these two roles, staff conceptualization of conflict sensitivity was very mixed, and understandings of WFP's possible contribution to peace varied from deep and nuanced to simplistic. Building staff competence in conflict sensitivity is crucial. This is particularly true for an organization such as WFP, which relies heavily on decentralized decision making. There is a demand from country teams for this training and it was noted that corporate support for building competencies in this area would be welcome. Along with this, of course, staff responsibility for operationalizing conflict sensitivity and accountability for its part of satisfactory performance must be included in the job descriptions for all relevant staff positions.

Recommendation 1.
Incorporate conflict analysis throughout WFP's programme planning and implementation cycle.

Recommendation 2.
Build staff competence in conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding by systematically providing training in these areas.

Recommendation 3.
Include responsibility and accountability for conflict sensitivity in job descriptions.

Targeting

A systematic commitment to conflict analysis along the lines indicated above would significantly help WFP to navigate concerns around targeting. Conflict analysis, if done correctly, will interrogate community dynamics and power relations, which in turn can mitigate any inclusion/exclusion errors. In situations where WFP seeks to access hidden populations, the conflict analysis process must not only interrogate local dynamics and relations, but also capture how these connect to wider regional and national conflict dynamics. This need was clearly illustrated in El Salvador, where IDP populations wished to remain hidden given the ability of perpetrators to

locate displaced persons because a wide network of gangs reaches into most parts of the country. The location of beneficiaries is not requested by WFP. Nor is such information revealed in those cases where beneficiary location does become part of the data obtained by WFP. Nonetheless, the fear that such information might leak can result in intended beneficiaries from hidden or other vulnerable populations not providing data required by WFP and thus risking exclusion from the intervention.

Recommendation 4.
Focus conflict analysis on ensuring that targeting assistance does not run the risk of increasing exclusion.

Holistic approach

The most promising areas for WFP's contribution to improving the prospects for peace demonstrate the need to look beyond individual projects and individual actors. An individual activity may successfully achieve its short-term outcomes but such successes do not necessarily add up to real progress towards peace. One reason for this is that both conflict sensitivity and contributing to improving the prospects for peace present a series of 'wicked problems'.[50] Wicked problems are frustrating because they have no single correct solution and the problems themselves refuse to stand still; they alter across time, often in response to the efforts made to resolve them. Faced by such problems, the most appropriate and efficient course of action is not to look for the first-best solution, but rather to go for best-fit solutions, unique to their different contexts.

Thinking holistically means, among other things, a recognition that no single actor can resolve the wicked problem of peace in a given country or in part of it. An agency's contribution may be important—but may be of genuine impact only if it is dovetailed with another intervention from a different source. Overall, programming should be a set of mutually reinforcing efforts that include enhancing social cohesion and trust, improving livelihoods, strengthening resilience and reducing the risk of violence.

Drawing on successful experiences found in the four country case studies, working in this way could look something like the following:

- **Facilitated needs assessment with communities.** An exploratory process to understand a community's needs, including but not limited to food security; this would be led by communities rather than being based on a survey.

- **Partnership with a range of actors.** The needs assessment would be likely to identify needs beyond the mandate of WFP; other agencies should be involved in responding to them.

- **Long-term, continuous support.** If the intended impact will only be felt in the long term or is hard to sustain without assistance, WFP and its donors should commit to supporting and accompanying the community over several years.

- **Multiple rounds of transfers.** This allows for continuous improvements in targeting to reduce inclusion/exclusion errors. It also provides learning opportunities to demonstrate accountability and responsiveness.

- **Integrated approach.** As an integrated programme, it would draw on the full range of WFP's possible programming, beyond general food assistance,

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[50] Wicked problems have six main features: (*a*) the problem is not understood or defined until the solution is formed; (*b*) there is no stopping rule for formulating a solution; (*c*) there is no right or wrong solution (often because different solutions may be preferred on different dimensions); (*d*) every wicked problem is, by definition, unique and novel; (*e*) every solution is unique (one shot); and (*f*) there are no given alternative solutions. See Conklin, J., *Dialogue Mapping: Building Shared Understanding of Wicked Problems* (Wiley: West Sussex, 2006).

Box 4.2. Supporting return and reconciliation

The case of Iraq shows that resilience/rehabilitation programming can be a vehicle for building relationships across divided groups, as cooperation partners brokered deals between divided tribes to enable canal rehabilitation projects to proceed. In the Iraqi context, there are not only tribal divides, but also sectarian and ethnic divisions, as well as pervasive anger towards perceived Islamic State-affiliated families in which a relative, sometimes quite distant, is accused of having been supportive of the Islamic State. These perceived Islamic State-affiliated families have largely not been able to return to their homes and remain in internally displaced person (IDP) camps due to rejection by their communities. There are no obvious durable solutions for this section of society.

However, some local peacebuilding actors, such as the Iraqi Facilitators Network (IFN, hosted by Sanad), have succeeded in negotiating significant returns. In Yathrib in Saladin Governorate, IFN negotiated the return of approximately 40 000 Sunni IDPs who were previously rejected by the remaining Shia community as perceived IS-affiliated families. This was a long-term negotiation process, but IFN's support dropped off at the point of return even though the need for reconciliation was clear. This represents a potential entry point for the World Food Programme—where resilience and rehabilitation can take on a specific aim of supporting reconciliation and reintegration. This would need to be part of a more holistic approach, working with others to provide a wider package of support.

To achieve this level of ambition would require knowing when these nascent 'windows of opportunity' are open and which processes should be supported. Partnerships with other groups, such as Sanad and IFN, could help to identify these opportunities. The design of such interventions could also be linked to the nature of the return pact, ensuring that only voluntary and dignified returns are supported.

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beyond FFA and FFT, beyond livelihoods and into broader social skills, as required.

- **Careful targeting.** If the intention is to reach a specific group—for example, young people at risk of recruitment into armed groups or gangs—the best possible efforts must be made to understand the pool of potential recruits and their social dynamics.

Building knowledge about the effectiveness of working in this way within WFP is an important part of the organizational development now required.

Recommendation 5.
Ensure a holistic programming approach by adopting a design process that brings together different types of intervention.

Recommendation 6.
Strengthen programming capacities by ensuring programme staff are familiar with evidence of what has worked and what has not in previous interventions.

Partnerships

Emphasising the holistic approach indicates the necessity for partnerships with different actors in various sectors. In particular, in conflict or complex settings, cooperation partners such as local NGOs can enable access not only for needs assessments, but also for delivery as well as monitoring and reporting.[51] While such partnerships help to push the boundaries of humanitarian assistance to meet the needs of those who would otherwise be inaccessible, WFP's approach has generally taken a contractual cooperation partner format and worked in silos. Working to improve the prospects for peace requires a different approach to partnerships. Critical friends and partners in reflection, planning and evaluation are required to act as sounding boards and sources of knowledge and wisdom; they can help not only with deeper contextual knowledge, but also with networks. The evidence from one case in Iraq shows how such partnership might look (see box 4.2).

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[51] WFP, *Policy Evaluation: WFP Corporate Partnership Strategy, 2014–2017,* Evaluation Report OEV/2016/010 (WFP: Rome, 2017).

Recommendation 7.
Develop multi-sector, multi-stakeholder partnerships to meet the different needs and priorities of vulnerable populations and to ensure greater synergies among WFP-supported interventions.

Measurement of contributions to improving the prospects for peace

Evidence compiled through this research suggests that WFP is able to make important contributions to improving the prospects for peace. However, its monitoring and evaluation systems are not designed to capture and measure many of these contributions. The metrics WFP uses to assess performance in delivering to the most vulnerable in the most difficult and complex places, often acting as service provider of last resort, say little about the prospects for peace. Developing, testing and getting familiar with a new approach to measurement is a major task for WFP.

Current measurements and data inadequate for measuring contribution to peace

Further compounding the challenge, WFP utilizes a Corporate Results Framework (CRF), which provides a menu of corporate indicators from which country offices must select the most suitable to their context and country portfolio. While this approach allows for systematic comparisons between different countries and contexts, it is ill-suited to measurement of peacebuilding interventions which should be context-driven.

In El Salvador, for example, the WFP country team expressed concern over the inability of the CRF to capture important contributions to peace. FFA initiatives build community cohesion through generating spaces where community members gather and discuss problems of common interest, beyond the specific issues related to the WFP intervention. In some cases, mutual support groups and rotating savings schemes were established by the communities within these spaces. The extended and sustained functioning of such local community networks is an indicator of improved community cohesion in a context where protracted violence has fomented a culture of mistrust. However, these unexpected benefits were not part of the monitoring framework and are not systematically documented or monitored. Similarly, in Mali's Peers for Peace programme (see box 2.6), the observations of cooperation partners were not an element of the monitoring plan, even though they could be captured through other techniques such as community journals or movement maps.

Recommendation 8.
Develop the capacity to generate contextually calibrated indicators of progress on contributing to improving the prospects for peace.

Using existing data and measurements differently

Assessing WFP's contribution to improving the prospects for peace cannot be done simply by modifying WFP's current data and evaluation systems. These are impressive, should be maintained and can be called on to meet some of the needs for assessing the contributions to improving the prospects for peace. However, there is no avoiding a change in what WFP measures and how. To assess and report on WFP's contribution to peace, work must begin on conflict analyses and use a combination of qualitative, quantitative and visual measures. Indicators that aim to capture local and subjective dimensions of peace should be developed in conjunction with the community affected by the interventions. Since an important aspect of peacebuilding is to foster changes in individuals and relationships between people, the development of indicators should include not only project beneficiaries, but the wider community. Because of the wicked

nature of the problem (see above), assessment must be carried out in real time so that the necessary adjustments to programme activities can be quickly made.

Both qualitative and quantitative indicators are important. Qualitative indicators are well-suited to capturing subjective understandings of peace, including what peace means for the communities served by WFP and how it is experienced in their everyday lives. They reflect the various dimensions of peace and resist oversimplification. Quantitative indicators can aggregate complex findings and effectively demonstrate what happened and how much, while qualitative indicators can reveal how something is working and why this happens.

Since peacebuilding fundamentally seeks to achieve change in divided societies (see 'WFP programming and the prospects for peace' in chapter 1), longitudinal studies are particularly useful for assessing the impact of WFP's interventions on the prospect for peace. They gauge change over time in a defined population through repeated measurements which are analysed against baseline data. While it can be complicated and costly to carry out longitudinal surveys in conflict and peacebuilding environments, WFP's well-established presence in many such areas should make it possible. Findings from longitudinal studies on what changes occur can be unpacked through qualitative research on how and why these changes occurred, using methods such as focus group discussions, key informant interviews, Go-Along interviews or Most Significant Change techniques.

Existing WFP survey tools reviewed in the case study countries already collect data that has some utility for understanding WFP's interactions with conflict and peacebuilding environments. The PBF project in Kyrgyzstan has collected a range of relevant data, using surveys to collect perception-based data to demonstrate reductions in violence and tensions. Outside of PBF programming, in Iraq, FSOM collects data on safety issues. In all four case study countries, WFP had begun to work on a complaints and feedback mechanism (CFM). If well understood and utilized for this purpose by communities, a CFM can help capture conflict sensitivity concerns.

WFP Regional Bureaux and country offices that were not among our four case studies also have useful measurement and monitoring tools. The Regional Bureau in Cairo developed a social cohesion score indicator and piloted it in Egypt and Lebanon, to assess the degree of acceptance of Syrian nationals by host communities. The indicator measures positive attitudes and acceptance by host nationals by assessing the agreement of the respondent to several statements. It can be used in activities that involve both Syrian refugees and host communities, such as FFA and FFT.

Finally, measurement through visual methods can aid the representation of data, help reveal patterns and facilitate the interpretation of underlying processes. As this report has repeatedly stated, peace is complex and measuring contributions to the improved prospects for peace is challenging. Cutting edge data visualization techniques offer new ways to understand big and abstract data on complex processes. Layering data on to dynamic geographical maps visualizes transformation over time and space. Data visualization in this way allows the communication of thousands of data points in a few single images. Compared to tables, text, graphs and charts, the new data visualization techniques often make new analytical insights possible and make the data accessible to a wider range of users.

WFP already visualizes part of its data through its vulnerability analysis and mapping (VAM) approach. Adding layers relevant for understanding conflict and peacebuilding can help understand how drivers of conflict change over time and space, which in turn allows for a better calibrated response. Layers relevant for understanding conflict and peacebuilding could include lethal and non-lethal conflict-related violent events, and the spread of organized violence, acts of terrorism, arms transfers and refugee

movements.[52] Further layers could be added related to climate change, for example, featuring temperatures, water volumes and flows in lakes and river basins, dry zones and the changing extent of grazing land.

Recommendation 9.
Expand WFP's toolkit for monitoring, evaluation and assessment to include more qualitative methods and a systematic approach to data visualization.

Recommendation 10.
Combine standard survey methods with techniques such as interviews and focus groups to improve measurement.

External data

Data on conflict and violence is collected by a number of local, national and international actors. Some are primary sources (entities directly involved in the collection or recording of events) and some are secondary sources (those that compile data from a range of different sources). Primary sources include surveys and studies of public perceptions on issues such as social cohesion, the prospects for the future and/or trust in government.[53]

Where WFP staff do not have the skills or access to conduct in-depth community consultations, other specialist agencies can help. There is a large body of external data that WFP can draw on both to understand changes in a macro conflict context and to help understand the organization's contribution to improving the prospects for peace. Existing conflict data gathered from other sources can be a useful measure of the degree to which an area is affected by conflict and an indication of the complex conditions in which WFP works. Using external data alongside WFP's own data can help inform strategic planning to support implementation in conflict and peacebuilding environments.

Finally, the trends identified in these statistics, and how they change over time, can tell a story about trends in peace. This could be linked to shifts in portfolio, from emergency assistance and general food distribution (GFD) to livelihoods and resilience. It will not be possible to attribute a perceived decline in violence to the work of WFP, but that should not preclude WFP from noting where positive trends in peace are correlated with positive trends in sustainable food security outcomes.

Recommendation 11.
Familiarize WFP with external data sources.

Recommendation 12.
Supplement WFP skill sets and knowledge by working with partner organizations.

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[52] Data is available from conflict databases such as the Uppsala Conflict Data Project; and the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data project. Terrorism data is available from the Global Terrorism Database; and arms transfers data is available from the SIPRI Arms Transfers Database. Data on refugees is available from UNHCR.

[53] See the World Bank conflict survey module and Afrobarometer as well as the Gallup World Values Survey polling questions.

5. Summary of recommendations

WFP has the dual mandate of meeting humanitarian need and supporting social and economic development by building long-term food security. Because an estimated 80 per cent of humanitarian needs are driven by violent conflict, the question arises: what is the impact of WFP's operations in conflict-affected contexts and what could it be beyond the humanitarian and development space? The UN Secretary-General's leadership has provided an invigorated imperative not only to meet urgent humanitarian need, but also to address the long-term causes of violent conflict; and WFP signed up to the Peace Promise in 2016. For WFP, this means both striving to do no harm and examining its potential contribution to improving the prospects for peace. The threefold task of working across the triple humanitarian, development and peace nexus is consistent with WFP's mandate because conflict generates need. The WFP is not the only actor called on to carry out this work; nor does it have a monopoly on knowledge. It does, however, gain access to locations where vulnerability is extreme and insecurity is rife, and where there is often no other international actor engaged. It does have useful knowledge and experience. It has a part to play along with others.

The evidence compiled for this report indicates that some WFP programmes do contribute to improving the prospects for peace. There are, however, problems, deficiencies and missed opportunities that need to be addressed. It is for this reason that the knowledge partnership with SIPRI was initiated. This preliminary report is based on studies of WFP programming in only four countries. Further work is required to test the robustness and general applicability of the findings and recommendations. That said, while the recommendations below may in time be expanded, deepened or fine-tuned, we are confident that, whatever else WFP does, it needs to make at least these changes in order to fulfil its ambitions.

Based on the analysis in chapter 4 above, these recommendations are necessary action points for changing how WFP goes about its programming:

1. Incorporate conflict analysis throughout WFP's programme planning and implementation cycle.
2. Build staff competence in conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding by systematically providing training in these areas.
3. Include responsibility and accountability for conflict sensitivity in job descriptions.
4. Focus conflict analysis on ensuring that targeting assistance does not run the risk of increasing exclusion.
5. Ensure a holistic programming approach by adopting a design process that brings together different types of intervention.
6. Strengthen programming capacities by ensuring programme staff are familiar with evidence of what has worked and what has not in previous interventions.
7. Develop multi-sector, multi-stakeholder partnerships to meet the different needs and priorities of vulnerable populations and to ensure greater synergies among WFP-supported interventions.
8. Develop the capacity to generate contextually calibrated indicators of progress on contributing to improving the prospects for peace.
9. Expand WFP's toolkit for monitoring, evaluation and assessment to include more qualitative methods and a systematic approach to data visualization.

10. Combine standard survey methods with techniques such as interviews and focus groups to improve measurement.

11. Familiarize WFP with external data sources.

12. Supplement WFP skill sets and knowledge by working with partner organizations.

Each of these recommendations is a modest and rather easily digestible technical adjustment in how WFP works, rather than a major change of direction. Taken together, however, they will effect a significant enhancement of WFP's contribution to improving the prospects for peace. Beyond these, it is more than certain that further inquiry into other countries where WFP works and into specific sectors of work such as general food assistance, cash transfers and others will identify further challenges.

In a climate-changing world of deepening political instability and growing human insecurity, the need for WFP to work across the three pillars of humanitarian action, peace and development will not recede. In a changing world, the way to alleviate need changes too. Here are set out some initial steps to start down that road.

Annex A. Imputed theories of change from the four case study countries

Country	Theories of change
	Livelihoods investments
Kyrgyzstan	*If* poor and vulnerable people acquire new skills, diversify their livelihoods and increase income, *then* they can meet essential household needs remaining in their location, reducing frustration and grievance towards the state.
Mali	*If* natural resources are enhanced and equitable agreements are reached on their use, *then* conflict / tensions over natural resource access between competing user groups will reduce.
	If livelihoods are strengthened through an inclusive participatory process, *then* the community will work together, which signals a positive change in circumstances, reducing a sense of marginalization and strengthening resilience, and will provide purpose and meaningful employment to youth at risk of recruitment into armed groups.
Iraq	*If* livelihood options are increased in areas of return and communities thrive, *then* rural communities will not present an enabling environment for radical groups.
El Salvador	*If* urban youth at risk of stigma, violence and displacement have opportunities for socio-economic inclusion and access to safe spaces, *then* they connect and develop, become agents of change in their communities and support themselves and their families without becoming caught up in conflict dynamics.
	If returnees and internally displaced persons have access to transitional humanitarian assistance linked to a comprehensive package of support, *then* they have improved opportunities for sustainable economic, socio- and psychosocial reintegration.
	State–citizen links
Kyrgyzstan	*If* the government develops responsive, inclusive and accountable institutions at the national and subnational levels, and enhances service delivery, *then* citizens will increasingly trust the state.
Mali	*If* the school meals programme is delivered efficiently and is recognized as a public service, *then* this reduces the sense of neglect and marginalization, and may contribute to restoring state legitimacy, strengthening citizen-state relationships
	If government enhances and maintains its performance in the provision of basic social services, including education and nutrition, *then* this signals the state's willingness and ability to respond to its population's needs and citizens will trust the state.
	If the school meals programme contributes to keeping schools open, *then* they can help strengthen the stabilizing role of education among communities affected by crisis
Iraq	*If* the government is seen to reduce corruption and increase the effectiveness of the public distribution system (PDS), *then* this will improve performance legitimacy, fostering citizen trust towards the state.
	If technical solutions are provided for the government to more efficiently manage the PDS, *then* the government will be receptive to shifting from a blanket provision of PDS to a targeted PDS.
El Salvador	*If* mechanisms to connect citizens to local authorities are strengthened and referrals are made to enhance access and the quality of service delivery, *then* this contributes to fostering state–citizen trust.
	Enhancing access to and the supply of contested natural resources
Kyrgyzstan	*If* natural resource infrastructure is improved to enhance efficiency and allow separate access by different ethnic groups, *then* there will be a reduction in tensions over natural resource management.
	If risks associated with climate change are mitigated and livelihoods are more adaptive, diversified and resilient, *then* stress over natural resource access will be reduced, and future conflict over natural resource management will be prevented.
El Salvador	*If* rural communities vulnerable to climate change and violence have access to: (*a*) avenues for community participation; (*b*) diversified income sources; (*c*) increased knowledge; and (*d*) improved management of natural resources, *then* there will be increased social cohesion and greater resilience to contextual conflict dynamics.
	Community-based participatory approach
Kyrgyzstan	*If* parents actively engage in school committees to oversee the free school meals programme, *then* they will build relationships among one another.

Country	Theories of change
Mali	*If* local communities mobilize themselves to manage the school meals programme through, for example, school management committees, *then* they will demonstrate good governance at the grassroots level and strengthen shared values, cooperation and trust among community members.
	If communities strengthen conflict mediation mechanisms, and local livelihoods are improved through income generation strategies, *then* communities will be more resilient to violent conflict related to natural resource management, and intra- and inter-community trust will be strengthened.
Iraq	*If* communities work together to identify common needs, and collectively respond to these needs, *then* relationships will be fostered across ethnic/sectarian/tribal/other divides
	General food assistance and stabilization
Mali	*If* distributions reach communities at times of extreme food insecurity, *then* these can help communities to better respond to crises and enable communities to remain in their place of origin, thereby avoiding tensions between host and IDP (Internally displaced person) communities.
	If distributions are provided to both host and IDP communities, *then* this can prevent tensions over access to resources.
Iraq	*If* support is provided to the most impoverished and marginalized IDPs (including those accused of association with the Islamic State), *then* this will reassert their humanity and help prevent radicalization among such individuals.
	If the government provides support (PDS and from the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs) to the most impoverished and marginalized IDPs (including those accused of association with the Islamic State), *then* these IDPs will increase their trust in the state and this will prevent radicalization among these individuals.

About the authors

Caroline Delgado (Sweden) is a Researcher at SIPRI with the Peace and Development Programme. Her current research is on sustainable peace, including making use of geographic information systems (GIS) technologies as a way of inquiring into complex conflict dynamics. Caroline has a background in both academic and policy-oriented research, specializing in how security is understood, practised and produced in conflict and post-conflict transition contexts. She received her PhD in Humanitarian and Conflict Response from the University of Manchester.

Suyoun Jang (South Korea) is a Researcher at SIPRI with the Peace and Development Programme. Her current research is on state fragility, human fragility, food security and peace, triple nexus, and Korean and Swedish ODA in conflict-affected fragile states. Suyoun was seconded to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) as Technical Adviser to support the PRAIA Group on Governance Statistics in Praia, Cape Verde from 1 November 2016 to 31 March 2017. Suyoun received her PhD in International Studies (Development Cooperation) from the Ewha Womans University.

Gary Milante (United States) is the Director of Studies for Peace and Development at SIPRI. His research focuses on the intersection of security and socio-economic development throughout his career as a researcher and policy advisor. Before joining SIPRI, he was a Senior Economist for the World Bank working on fragility, conflict and violence and was the lead economist for the *World Development Report 2011: Conflict Security and Development*. Gary received his PhD in Economics from the University of California at Irvine.

Dan Smith (United Kingdom) is the Director of SIPRI. He has a long record of research and publication on a wide range of conflict and peace issues, including the relationship between climate change and insecurity, peace and security issues in the Middle East, peacebuilding, the ethics of forcible intervention in conflicts, gender aspects of conflict and peacebuilding, and global conflict trends. Dan served four years in the UN Peacebuilding Fund Advisory group, two of which (2010–11) were as Chair.