WATER & CONFLICT

A TOOLKIT FOR PROGRAMMING

Key Issues

Lessons Learned

Program Options

Rapid Appraisal Guide

Water, Conflict and Peacebuilding in Development: Lessons for Practitioners

Toolkit Launch Event

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INTRODUCTION

Water is an essential ingredient for human security[1] and sustainable development. From growing food and supporting economic growth to ensuring disease is kept at bay, water is a fundamental and irreplaceable resource in all societies. Given its centrality to human life, it is not surprising that water management is complex and that water-related interests are frequently contested. Access to water in sufficient quantity and quality can drive competition where interests are perceived as incompatible. It can also foment cooperation where mutual interest can be found.

There is a pressing need to better understand water as it relates to all levels of conflict. From the arid pastoralist areas in the Horn of Africa to communities affected by melting glaciers in Andean South America to the burgeoning potential for hydropower fueled economies in South Asia, the banner of "water and conflict" is very broad. It includes scenarios as diverse as the peaceful resolution of an inter-communal dispute over access to a particular water source to mitigating the effects of armed conflict on water quality, infrastructure, and institutions in urban environments. Even when water is not directly connected to the proximate causes of conflict, it is essential to consider the many ways that water insecurity, which is most often derived from water resource management configurations, could be interacting with the social and institutional dynamics in fragile [...] With that complexity in mind, this toolkit is [...] the linkages between water resource manag[...] peacebuilding. It also explicitly supports the [...] tive into development programming.

This toolkit is part of a series that explores h[...] address key risk factors associated with confl[...] related issues in depth, this toolkit and others [...] pieces to conflict assessments. Conflict assess[...] of destabilizing patterns and trends in a societ[...] dations about how to make development and [...] responsive to conflict dynamics, they do not [...] to design specific activities. The toolkits in this [...] a diagnosis of the problem to a detailed discu[...] Together, the USAID Conflict Assessment Fra[...] are designed to help USAID officers and oth[...] deeper understanding of the forces driving vi[...] developing more strategic and focused devel[...] have attempted to inspire creative thinking ar[...] prevent water-related conflicts as well as capt[...] resilience-strengthening opportunities.

1. The notion of human security emphasises security for th[...]
2. *Fragility refers to the relationship between the state and [...] engagement between the state and society fails to produ[...] legitimate. Fragility exists when the relationship between [...] producing results that members of society deem to be l[...] fragility is meant to convey more than the set of charact[...]*

This toolkit is divided into the following four parts:

• **PART 1: KEY ISSUES** — explores the relationship between water, conflict, and cooperation;

• **PART 2: LESSONS LEARNED** — highlights lessons learned from water-related development and peacebuilding programs;

• **PART 3: PROGRAM OPTIONS** — discusses potential program options, real-world examples of relevant development interventions, and monitoring and evaluation; and

• **PART 4: RAPID APPRAISAL GUIDE** — provides guidance to help identify and evaluate the conflict risk and peacebuilding potential of water programs.

The Water and Conflict Toolkit emerged from collaboration with the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars (WWICS). It was authored by Sandra Ruckstuhl (Group W Inc), Emily Gallagher (Group W Inc), Geoff Dabelko (Ohio University), Russell Sticklor (WWICS), Lauren Herzer Risi (WWICS), Cynthia Brady (USAID/CMM), Kirby Reiling (USAID/CMM), and Mary Ackley (USAID/CMM). Substantial input was provided by USAID officers, other U.S. Government agencies, donor agencies, academia, and the NGO community. This toolkit builds on earlier drafts prepared by a team of experts, in addition to those named above, including Alexander Carius (adelphi), Annika Kramer (adelphi), Doris Capistrano (CIFOR), and Jay Singh (USAID). Comments, questions, and requests for additional information should be directed to USAID's Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation.

A young girl sits beside a polluted canal that flows through her village in Cambodia. (Photo by AECOM International Development)

DEVELOPMENT GOALS

• Manage and prevent water-related conflicts

• Capture long-term peace and resilience-building opportunities

PURPOSE OF TOOLKIT

• Raise awareness about linkages between water resource management, conflict and fragility and peacebuilding

• Review a broad range of development issues associated with water management – considering different sectors and scales

• Act as a companion piece to conflict assessments, helping to bridge analysis and practical interventions

• Inspire creative thinking among development professionals from a variety of disciplines and sectors

CMM Conflict Toolkits

PART 1: KEY ISSUES

A South Sudanese boy carries a box of water bottles at the Tongping United Nations Mission (UNMISS) base in Juba on January 17, 2014. (Photo by Phil Moore, AFP ImageForum)

Water management is a complex issue with far-reaching and often contentious effects. Water-related tensions emerge on different geographic scales but it is the interplay of these tensions with a number of political, socioeconomic, environmental, and cultural factors that determine whether violent conflict will result. The next section will elaborate on the complex links among water resources, their management, the risk of conflict, and opportunities for peacebuilding.

UNDERSTANDING CONFLICT

As a starting point, it is helpful to have a common understanding of conflict.

"Conflict" simply refers to a real or perceived set of incompatible interests and goals among two or more parties. It is not necessarily violent. Conflict is a natural part of public life and the process of

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Socio-economic and Demographic Issues

- Population Growth
- Population Movement
- Agriculture and Food Security
- Infrastructure Development and Modernization

Institutional Issues

- Data and Information Management
- Weak, Non-Inclusive or Corrupt Governance
- Institutional Inefficacy
- Tradition and Customary Practices

External Influences

- Hydropolitics
- International demand for economic products

Physical and Geographic Issues

- Upstream/Downstream Flows
- Groundwater
- Pollution
- Climate Change
- Natural Disasters

BOX 1: Women, Water, and Conflict

Men and women use water differently according to their gender-specific roles. Women tend to have greater water needs due to their domestic responsibilities like washing family clothes, bathing children, and preparing meals. Even basic hygiene, like hand washing to reduce the transmission of disease, increases water needs at the household level. Menstruating women have additional demands such as washing clothing and bathing when men are not present. If the only water source is in a public or highly frequented location, they may wait until dark or travel to remote areas for privacy.

Women produce half of the world's food supply. They are often responsible for feeding their families. As small farmers who are dependent on sources beyond rainfall, women and their dependents are at risk of food insecurity when alternative water sources are not available.

Yet, water is hard to access in many parts of the world. When water is far from home, women and girls generally shoulder the burden of transporting it. They may be at risk of harm during travel to obtain it.

These patterns make females highly vulnerable to violence in conflict environments. Water access becomes more difficult as previously safe routes become dangerous territory. Household responsibilities may increase such as caring for the sick and wounded or meeting family members' nutritional needs. Taking care of personal hygiene by dark or in isolated places increases the risk of direct or indirect violence.

A young woman collects water in Sri Lanka. (Photo by USAID/Sri Lanka)

The humanitarian discussion of water access and violence generally focuses on women as victims. However, water resources are part of a system that affects and is affected by its entire population. In some contexts, men and boys access water for their households and face the same risks as females. Women and men may travel far for water in rural areas, or walk long distances from refugee settlements or slums, and thus be more vulnerable to attack. For example, there is anecdotal evidence of Somali men killed over water access and the "water widows" who have survived them. Both women and men are affected by poor water access and the complications of a fragile or conflict-affected context.

The experiences of men and women are also not consistent across time and culture. There is variation across gender experience based on social and community tradition, class structure, ethnic relations, urban vs. rural environments, livelihoods practices, and more. Due to their different roles in the community, women and men may have different information and perspectives about the causes and consequences of water-related problems. In addition, gender roles themselves often change as a consequence of conflict and fragility. Water practitioners will therefore find it constructive to move their analysis beyond the limited focus on female vulnerabilities and to consider gender dynamics within the system as a whole.

How can field staff better understand gender and water access issues? Seeking gender- and age-specific data, these questions serve as a starting point to examine how water access connects to wider conflict dynamics:

• Who is at risk of harm when accessing water?

• Who perpetrates the harm? What means do they use, and what are their objectives?

• Does the conflict involve water supply and resources? Directly or indirectly? Are there opportunities to mitigate the conflict by addressing water access?

• How do gender roles associated with water access change over time?

Adapted from S. Ruckstuhl 2011.

PART 2: LESSONS LEARNED

Refugees from South Sudan fetch water at the Dzaipi Refugee Transit Centre in Adjumani, Uganda, on January 24, 2014. (Photo by Isaac Kasamani, AFP ImageForum)

A review of water-related development programming throughout the developing world and across multiple agencies and organizations reveals a range of success stories as well as cautionary examples. When these lessons are aggregated, they can be conceived of as principles of good practice and applied to improve the conflict sensitivity of water-related development interventions.

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1. **Consider all water issue as part of complex, dynamic cross-boundary systems**

2. **Enhance information management and public awareness**

3. **Build formal and informal institutional capacity for collaborative governance**

4. **Strengthen equitable and affordable water access**

5. **Coordinate water-related aid and investment**

6. **Ensure conflict-sensitive design and capitalize on peacebuilding opportunities**

BOX 2: Conflict Sensitivity and "Do No Harm"

Together, "conflict sensitivity" and the "Do No Harm" approach require a practitioner to:

a. Understand the context in which s/he is operating. In particular, to understand intergroup tensions and the "divisive" issues with a potential for conflict, as well as the "connecting" issues with the potential to mitigate conflict and strengthen social cohesion;

b. Understand the interaction between the intervention and the context; and

c. Act upon that understanding, in order to avoid unintentionally feeding into further division and to maximize the potential contribution to strengthen social cohesion and peace.

Why is conflict sensitivity important?

Conflict sensitivity is fundamentally about making foreign assistance more sustainable, effective, and ethical. Organizations operating in a country context become part of that context. They interact with the conflict dynamics whether they intend to or not, creating new risks and opportunities for USAID, its partners, and the communities where they work. The idea behind conflict sensitive practice is to make practitioners more aware of the context, more self-aware and deliberate in their actions, and more strategic and responsible in the risks taken.

A boy in the Democratic Republic of Congo carries a bucket of water in the early morning. (Photo by Ken Wiegand, USAID/DRC)

STEP 1: Understand the conflict context.

A systematic conflict assessment and rolling conflict analysis should help donors, implementers, and stakeholders understand the conflict dynamics: patterns of grievance and resilience, how key actors mobilize groups for peace or conflict, and which likely events could trigger violence or create openings to build peace. At a minimum, conflict analysis for conflict sensitivity requires basic knowledge about the dividing and connecting issues in a society as well as important actors pursuing conflict or peace. Where possible, analysis should be done in conjunction with local partners and updated during project implementation.

STEP 2: Understand interactions between the project and the conflict context.

What is the interaction between the identified key elements of conflict and fragility and key elements of the intervention itself? The three fields of observation include: (1) the project, (2) the partners and stakeholders, and (3) the organizational setup. Identify relevant factors in each of these categories which are either creating tensions or positively affecting the conflict context. This should include consideration of sequencing and how the intervention fits with other assistance activities (e.g., connecting humanitarian assistance and development interventions thoughtfully).

### STEP 3: Adapt and make strategic choices.

There are always options and opportunities to be more conflict sensitive. Project, program, and management decisions should be taken on the basis of conflict analysis. Be prepared to admit mistakes and make changes — donors and beneficiaries will be appreciative. Remember that conflict sensitivity is as much about HOW you work as WHAT you do; it is possible to modify a project while keeping the goals the same. Making reflective, strategic adaptations in operations and implementation should become part of the program management cycle.

Adapted from Swiss Peace: KOFF conflict sensitivity factsheet and CDA Collaborative "Do No Harm" Program Resources and Fact Sheet

PART 3: PROGRAM OPTIONS

WATER IS LIFE

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JULY 01:2003
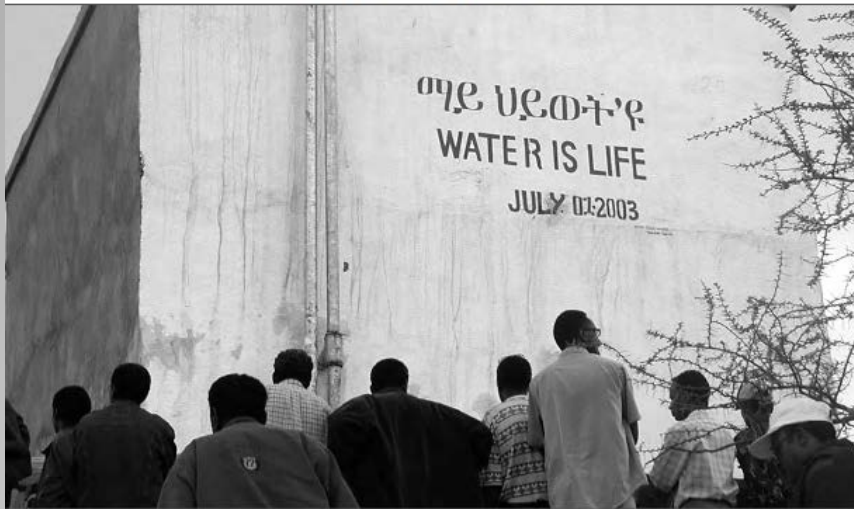
A new water plant opens in Eritrea in 2003. (Photo by USAID)

Water-related development activities can most effectively contribute to conflict management and prevention as well as foster cooperation through three primary categories of intervention: (1) strengthened planning and governance, (2) enhanced citizen knowledge and user behavior, and (3) water as a tool for peacebuilding. Section (4) addresses monitoring and evaluation approaches in conflict-affected and fragile contexts. As a reminder, it is essential that all water programs designed and implemented in conflict-affected or fragile situations heed the principles of conflict-sensitivity even when the program's goals remain sectoral.

Illustrative Examples

- Strengthen Planning and Governance
- Enhance Knowledge and User Behavior
- Water as a Tool for Peacebuilding
- Monitoring and Evaluation in Conflict-Affected Environments

Emphasis on Key Dimensions

- Roles
- Relationships
- Capacity
- Dialogue

BOX 3: Want to know more?

The following print publications and websites provide additional practical recommendations and ideas from real-world cases.

Gehrig, Jason, and Mark M. Rogers 2009: *Water and Conflict: Incorporating Peacebuilding into Water Development.* **Catholic Relief Services.** Available online at: http://www.crsprogramquality.org/storage/pubs/peacebuilding/waterconflict.pdf
Provides conceptual information and practical guidance on the integration of water and peacebuilding in project programming.

Ruckstuhl, Sandra 2012: *Conflict Sensitive Water Supply: Lessons from Operations.* **The World Bank: Social Development Working Papers No. 127.** Available online at: http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2012/05/04/000386194_20120504022133/Rendered/PDF/685090NWP00PUB0I0development0papers.pdf
Explores the lessons learned from World Bank-led water projects in conflict-affected, fragile, and violent areas.

Roberts, Ellie and Lynn Finnegan 2013: *Building Peace Around Water, Land and Food: Policy and Practice for Preventing Conflict.* **Quaker United Nations Office.** Available online at: http://www.quno.org/geneva/pdf/economic/QUNO%20peace%20water%20land%20and%20food%202013-1.pdf
Reviews policy and legal mechanisms, including five case studies, for preventing and resolving conflict related to natural resource governance.

Weinthal, Erika, Jessica J. Troell and Mikiyasu Nakama (eds.) 2014: *Water and Post-Conflict Peacebuilding.* **Routledge.**
Contains nineteen case studies exemplifying the role water can play in a post-conflict situation to facilitate or undermine peacebuilding.

USAID Global Water for Sustainability Program. Information available online at: http://www.globalwaters.net/
Summarizes information on a consortium of water supply, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) services, water management, and building local capacity projects financed by USAID.

UNESCO International Hydrological Programme "From Potential Conflict to Cooperation Potential." Information available online at: http://www.unesco.org/new/en/natural-sciences/environment/water/ihp/ihp-programmes/pccp/
Presents examples of projects focused in multi-level and interdisciplinary dialogues that promote cooperation rather than conflict over the management of shared water sources.

United Nations Development Programme—United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office. "Peace Dividends and Beyond: Contributions of Administrative and Social Services to Peacebuilding." Information available online at: http://www.un.org/en/peacebuilding/pbso/pdf/peace_dividends.pdf
Presents evidence in support of including administrative and social services amongst the menu of choices available to directly support peacebuilding in any given context.

United Nations Environment Programme—Disasters and Conflict Sub-Programme. Information available online at: http://www.unep.org/disastersandconflicts/
Demonstrates methods to alleviate potential environmental harm in disaster and conflict situations with research publications, general information, and program options.

Natural Resource Management and Development Portal. Information available online at: http://rmportal.net/
Collection of resources to be distributed among natural resource networks to foster open communication on available information, projects, media, etc.

PART 4:
RAPID APPRAISAL GUIDE

Residents in Rajasthan, India, fill up at a harvesting structure, which has made water readily available for drinking, agriculture, and sanitation during the dry season. (Photo by Jal Bhagirathi Foundation)

This Rapid Appraisal Guide has been designed to assist development practitioners as they seek to identify factors that could trigger or escalate conflict and to determine peacebuilding and resilience-strengthening opportunities associated with water programs. To help inform all phases of the program cycle, the guide is divided into two sections: a list of general considerations and a set of more specific lines of inquiry.

1. CHECKLIST OF GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS
This section outlines a series of basic factors to frame a conflict-sensitive approach to water programming. These considerations may help practitioners identify specific areas that require further in-depth inquiry or analysis and to organize information collected through interviews, assessments, or literature reviews.

2. GUIDING QUESTIONS
This section lists key questions that

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Checklist of General Considerations

- Context-specific Interventions
- Politically Strategic Interventions
- Timing and Sequencing
- Indicators of Conflict or Collaboration
- Level of Intervention
- Government Buy-in
- Key Actors and Stakeholders
- Local Capacities
- Donor Coordination

Guiding Questions

- Identifying Social and Institutional Patterns of Grievance
- Accounting for Emerging Issues and Trends
- Understanding Key Actors

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http://www.usaid.gov/what-we-do/working-crises-and-conflict/technical-publications

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