

# A PEACEBUILDING ROADMAP

World Vision  
Iraq's strategy  
for violence  
prevention and  
social cohesion





# CONTENTS

<b>Acronyms .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>5</b>
Positioning peacebuilding in Iraq's nexus strategy .....	5
<b>Historical context .....</b>	<b>6</b>
From cycles of fragmentation to systemic resilience .....	6
<b>Peacebuilding matters now: A critical turning point for Iraq.....</b>	<b>7</b>
The overlooked stressors: Climate hazards and environmental insecurity .....	8
<b>WV Iraq's strategic approach.....</b>	<b>9</b>
Reframing peacebuilding as a development enabler .....	9
Conflict analysis and participatory context monitoring.....	9
Operationalisation of peacebuilding strategy.....	9
Establishment of a peacebuilding community of practice: Local leadership, shared learning, and systems change .....	11
Strategic intervention areas .....	12
Localisation and capacity strengthening for peace infrastructure .....	12
Integration of peacebuilding across programming .....	13
Faith leadership for social cohesion and reconciliation.....	15
Children and young people as peacebuilders .....	16
Inclusion and social equity.....	17
Advocacy for inclusive and sustainable peacebuilding system.....	18
Advocacy platforms, tools, and outcome monitoring .....	19
Monitoring, evaluation, and learning for peacebuilding .....	20
Digitally-aware and conflict-sensitive engagement .....	21
Theory of change alignment.....	21
Stakeholders for peace: Platforms, engagement, and collaboration .....	23
Women peacebuilders and networks.....	23
Working with the Iraqi government and line ministries.....	23
Peacebuilding flagship project: Nexus Accelerator Fund Iraq .....	25
Measuring what matters: Impact and accountability .....	25
Principles for ethical and inclusive data use .....	25
Alignment with sector roadmaps and peacebuilding pathways of change .....	26
Disaster risk reduction as a resilience enabler.....	28
<b>Conclusion: Peacebuilding as the path to sustainable development in Iraq .....</b>	<b>29</b>
Operationalisation: Turning the roadmap into action .....	29

# ACRONYMS

CBDRM	community-based risk and disaster management
CBO	community-based organisation
CoP	community of practice
CSO	civil society organisation
CVA	Citizen Voice and Action [approach]
CWBO	child well-being objective
DRR	disaster risk reduction
EBA	ecosystem-based adaptation
ECaP	Empowering Children as Peacebuilders [model]
GECARR	Good Enough Context Analysis for Rapid Response [tool]
HDP	humanitarian-development-peace [nexus]
IDP	internally displaced person
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IPACS	Integrating Peacebuilding and Conflict Sensitivity [tool]
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
KAICIID	The International Dialogue Centre
MEL	monitoring, evaluation, and learning
MHPSS	mental health and psychosocial support
MSTC	Making Sense of Turbulent Contexts [tool]
NAF	Nexus Accelerator Fund
NGO	non-governmental organisation
OIOS	Our Impact, Our Story
PwD	person with disabilities
RRPI	Resilience and Recovery Pathways for Iraq [framework]
US	United States
WASH	water, sanitation, and hygiene
WV Iraq	World Vision Iraq



# INTRODUCTION

## Positioning peacebuilding in Iraq's nexus strategy

This document presents World Vision (WV) Iraq's *Peacebuilding and Social Cohesion Roadmap* – a forward-looking framework that operationalises World Vision's commitment to advancing inclusive, community-driven peacebuilding in fragile and conflict-affected areas. Anchored within the broader humanitarian-development-peace (HDP) nexus, the roadmap serves both

as a strategic vision and an actionable tool for integrating peacebuilding into programming, policy influence, and partnerships.

The roadmap aims to complement WV Iraq's national office strategy by addressing systemic drivers of fragility, such as intercommunal mistrust, weak governance structures that limit service delivery and accountability, political exclusion, and environmental degradation, through an adaptive, multisectoral approach.



# HISTORICAL CONTEXT

## From cycles of fragmentation to systemic resilience

Iraq's recent history is marked by recurrent cycles of state collapse, social fragmentation, and violent conflict that have severely undermined trust in public institutions. The 2003 United States (US)-led invasion dismantled the state apparatus, creating a power vacuum that enabled sectarianism, militia dominance, and insurgency. The emergence of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) in 2014 further destabilised the country, resulting in mass atrocities, widespread displacement, and deepening mistrust between communities, particularly in minority and disputed areas.<sup>1</sup> Even in the post-ISIS era, unresolved grievances, weak governance, and fractured social fabrics continue to fuel local tensions and impede reconciliation.<sup>2</sup>

Today, Iraq faces a convergence of new and old threats – rising inequality, climate change, protracted displacement, and economic exclusion – that risk reinforcing cycles of fragility. Environmental degradation, particularly in southern governorates, such as Thi Qar, is now a leading driver of displacement and resource-based conflicts.<sup>3</sup> Meanwhile, social exclusion of women, children, youth, and persons with disabilities (PWDs) continues to marginalise key groups from peace processes and public life. These challenges are reflected in Iraq's classification as a "high risk" country in the 2025 INFORM Risk Index, where it ranks 27<sup>th</sup> out of 191 countries globally.<sup>4</sup> This ranking highlights Iraq's high levels of hazard exposure, vulnerability, and limited coping capacity, especially in conflict-affected and climate-fragile areas. And yet, Iraq is not without hope. Communities are demonstrating resilience

through grassroots reconciliation efforts, youth-led advocacy, and interfaith engagement. A locally-led, inclusive, and system-wide approach to peacebuilding is not only possible but also essential.



<sup>1</sup> IOM Iraq. (2022). *Return Index Report – Round 15*. Retrieved from: <https://iraq.iom.int/publications/return-index-round-15-march-2022>

<sup>2</sup> UNDP. (2023). *Towards Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons in Iraq*. Retrieved from: <https://www.undp.org/iraq/publications/towards-durable-solutions-internally-displaced-persons-iraq>

<sup>3</sup> UNESCWA. (2022). *Arab Climate Change Assessment Report – Phase II*. Retrieved from: <https://www.unescwa.org/publications/arab-climate-change-assessment-report-phase-ii>

<sup>4</sup> DRMKC. (2025). *INFORM Risk Index – 2025 2nd edition* [Global ranking data]. Retrieved from <https://drmkc.jrc.ec.europa.eu/inform-index/INFORM-Risk/Results-and-data>

# PEACEBUILDING MATTERS NOW: A CRITICAL TURNING POINT FOR IRAQ

Iraq sits at a pivotal crossroads. Years of violent conflict forced displacement, governance breakdown, and, more recently, climate shocks have left many communities in a state of fragility. Beneath the surface of ongoing humanitarian and development programming lies an uncomfortable truth: without social cohesion, inclusive governance, and conflict transformation, Iraq's recovery will remain fragile and vulnerable to the next shock.

To secure all other development gains, peacebuilding must be reframed as a cross-cutting and foundational strategy. In a context where children, women, youth, persons with disabilities, and returnees remain marginalised, and where intercommunal distrust, exclusion, and economic inequality are daily realities, peacebuilding is the path to durable recovery. WV Iraq's peacebuilding roadmap is therefore not about conventional and isolated peace dialogues. Instead, it offers a systems-based, participatory, and locally-owned approach to transforming the root causes of fragility and vulnerability, intentionally focusing on peacebuilding as part of the HDP nexus. Our role is not just to respond to conflict but to address the root causes and reshape how resilience and recovery are achieved in fragile settings.

The challenges for peace in World Vision programme areas are social division,

displacement, and disconnection. These findings draw on World Vision Iraq's Making Sense of Turbulent Contexts (MSTC) and Integrating Peacebuilding and Conflict Sensitivity (IPACS) analyses conducted in Ninewa and Thiqr in 2023, as outlined in the World Vision Iraq 2024–2026 Nexus Strategy (internal document, January 2024). reveal a pattern of fragile social contracts, weak connectors, and rising dividers, especially in the areas of resource competition, exclusion, and identity-based tension. The IPACS analysis further identified underdeveloped Positive Peace Pillars,<sup>5</sup> specifically equitable access to services, local leadership legitimacy, and intergroup dialogue — as key deficits weakening community resilience. Positive Peace Pillars, as defined by the Institute for Economics and Peace, refer to the attitudes, institutions, and structures that foster peaceful and resilient societies. They are essential because strengthening these pillars addresses the root causes of fragility, enabling communities to better manage conflict and sustain long-term stability. For instance, in Ninewa, local councils were perceived as disconnected from youth priorities, while in Thiqr, access to water emerged as both a critical stressor and a potential connector through shared resource governance. These findings reinforce why peacebuilding efforts in Iraq often fall short: they address symptoms but rarely tackle the systems that produce fragility.

<sup>5</sup> The positive peace pillar is an evidence-based conceptual framework developed by the Institute for Economics & Peace (IEP). They identify the eight key drivers encompassing attitudes, institutions, and structures that support and sustain peaceful societies. These pillars were derived through rigorous statistical analysis of thousands of datasets and are strongly associated with low levels of conflict and high resilience

## The overlooked stressors: Climate hazards and environmental insecurity

In 2024, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) reported that over 140,000 Iraqis were displaced due to climate-related causes, mostly in the southern governorates of Thi Qar, Missan, and Muthanna.<sup>6</sup> Droughts, water scarcity, and soil salinisation are not just environmental issues, they are also conflict triggers. WV Iraq's MSTC analysis in Thi Qar

confirms that disputes over water access, land degradation, and failed harvests are driving competition between groups, adding a new layer of fragility to already divided communities. Climate insecurity now intersects with identity-based grievances, weak governance, and exclusion – amplifying the risk of localised violence and displacement.

Key systemic challenges identified include:



**Fragmented interventions:** Peace initiatives are often ad hoc, short-term, or donor-driven, focusing on isolated events rather than building structures that communities can sustain. Our IPACS analysis shows that without embedded peace infrastructures, trust and cooperation remain fragile.



**Exclusion of key actors:** Women, youth, refugees, faith leaders, PwDs, and civil society actors are consistently underrepresented in peacebuilding efforts. MSTC findings from Ninewa and Thi Qar highlighted how exclusive decision-making structures, and a constrained civic space serve as persistent dividers, limiting the participation of marginalised groups in reconciliation and recovery processes.



**Economic marginalisation:** The IPACS field data confirms that a lack of livelihood opportunities, especially amongst internally displaced persons (IDPs), returnees, and refugees, fuels localised tensions. Reintegration or local integration without access to economic opportunity generates frustration and disillusionment rather than social healing.



**Climate stressors:** Water scarcity and environmental degradation in Thiqar emerged as critical conflict accelerators in MSTC. Disputes over water access, land degradation, and agricultural collapse are not just environmental; they are social flashpoints.



**Disability and child exclusion:** Peacebuilding mechanisms frequently overlook children and PwDs, despite MSTC data showing that both groups are amongst the most affected by violence and displacement and often experience secondary exclusion in recovery efforts.

WV Iraq's strategy applies an intersectional lens to conflict sensitivity, recognising how overlapping identities (e.g. age, disability, displacement status, and social background) shape access to peace processes, services, and protection.

These challenges are not just operational gaps; they are structural and strategic blind spots. A WV Iraq-specific approach must respond to these insights by treating peacebuilding not as a standalone sector, but as a method of rebalancing power, fostering inclusion, and transforming systems of care.

<sup>6</sup> International Organization for Migration (IOM). (2024). *Climate-Induced Displacement in Iraq – March 2024*. Retrieved from: [https://iraqdtm.iom.int/files/Climate/20245212158666\\_2024-05-08%20-%20Climate%20Induced%20Displacement%20-%20March%202024.pdf](https://iraqdtm.iom.int/files/Climate/20245212158666_2024-05-08%20-%20Climate%20Induced%20Displacement%20-%20March%202024.pdf)



# WV IRAQ'S STRATEGIC APPROACH

## Reframing peacebuilding as a development enabler

Building on the evidence and contextual analysis outlined above, WV Iraq's peacebuilding strategy is strongly aligned with the *WV Iraq HDP Nexus Strategy (2024–2026)*<sup>7</sup> where WV Iraq adopted the positive peace framework<sup>8</sup> as a guiding principle to strengthen the underlying systems, norms, and relationships that sustain peace across our programmes. This enables WV Iraq to go beyond addressing surface-level conflict triggers and to invest in the institutional, social, and cultural foundations of resilience and cohesion. WV Iraq will revive national dialogue approaches and modules previously developed in collaboration with partners, such as KAICIID (The International Dialogue Centre),<sup>9</sup> aiming to scale structured, inclusive dialogues across conflict-affected areas. It positions peace not as an isolated outcome but as a foundational driver of resilience, inclusion, and sustainable development across all sectors and geographies.

## Conflict analysis and participatory context monitoring

WV Iraq retains MSTC, IPACS, Good Enough Context Analysis for Rapid Response (GECARR),<sup>10</sup> and spiritual landscape analysis<sup>11</sup> as tools within its conflict-analysis toolkit, applying each according to their strengths and the requirements of a given context. We

begin by defining clear selection criteria, such as depth of analysis, community familiarity, speed of deployment, cost and the relevance of spiritual or faith-based dynamics, and then choose MSTC when rapid sense-making is needed in highly fluid environments, IPACS when systematic capture of diverse stakeholder perspectives is paramount, GECARR when a more detailed gender and age-sensitive risk assessment is required, and spiritual landscape analysis when understanding faith-based influences, religious leadership structures, and local healing practices is essential. Once a tool is selected for a specific setting, we invest in building local capacity around its use and embed conflict sensitivity as a continuous practice within programme design, adaptation, early-warning systems and area-based strategies. This approach ensures that peacebuilding remains a responsive, community-owned, long-term process of conflict transformation rather than a one-off exercise.

## Operationalisation of peacebuilding strategy

WV Iraq views peacebuilding as a transformative approach that aims at shaping how all programming is designed, implemented, and sustained. This approach enables us to focus on addressing root causes of fragility and enabling local systems to resolve tensions, absorb shocks, and restore trust.

<sup>7</sup> World Vision Iraq. (2024). *World Vision Iraq Humanitarian–Development–Peace Nexus Strategy 2024–2026*. (Unpublished internal document, January 2024).

<sup>8</sup> The Positive Peace framework by IEP identifies eight societal pillars that statistically underpin peaceful and resilient societies.

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.kaiciid.org/>

<sup>10</sup> GECARR is a World Vision context analysis tool that provides a macro-level analysis of a country or a specific region during or in anticipation of a crisis. GECARR is designed to be an inter-agency tool and flexible, so that can be used in unpredictable and conflict-prone contexts. Additional information is available at: <https://www.wvi.org/peacebuilding-and-conflict-sensitivity/publication/good-enough-context-analysis-rapid-response>

<sup>11</sup> Spiritual landscape analysis is a World Vision tool used to uncover the underlying spiritual and cultural dynamics influencing child well-being in each context. It maps the roles of faith actors, social norms, and spiritual practices to inform programming, strengthen engagement with faith leaders, and integrate faith-sensitive approaches into humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding interventions. World Vision. (2023). *Syria Response: Spiritual Landscape Analysis Report*. (Internal document).

WV Iraq's peacebuilding strategy utilises the following interconnected pillars:



**Locally-led:** WV Iraq's peacebuilding efforts are anchored in the legitimacy and capacities of Iraqi civil society, community-based organisations (CBOs), youth networks, faith leaders, and traditional structures. Sustainable peace cannot be externally imposed; it must be led and owned by communities themselves. WV Iraq will prioritise community-led initiatives that foster trust, collaboration, and shared problem-solving between divided groups, ensuring that peacebuilding efforts are grounded in local ownership and mutual accountability.



**Integrated and area-based:** Peacebuilding is no longer treated as a cross-cutting theme or standalone sector. Instead, it is positioned as a core pillar and operational bridge in WV Iraq's nexus programming strategy, integrating humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding objectives across sectors and geographies.



**Cross-sectoral:** WV Iraq embeds peacebuilding across education, water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH), livelihoods, protection, and climate resilience activities using a context-sensitive, area-based model. This ensures that sectoral interventions contribute not only to service delivery but to social cohesion, violence prevention, and systemic resilience.



**Inclusive:** Children, women, PwDs, and other marginalised groups are not beneficiaries; they are central actors in peacebuilding. WV Iraq intentionally designs programmes to elevate their voice, agency, and access to decision-making spaces, recognising that inclusion is not only a rights-based imperative but a precondition for durable peace.



**Faith-anchored:** In fragile and rural contexts, faith actors often carry unmatched moral authority and reach. WV Iraq engages them not only as influencers

but as architects of reconciliation. Interfaith collaboration is leveraged as a pillar of social cohesion, healing, and restorative justice.



**Evidence-based and adaptive:** WV Iraq utilises context analysis tools to identify dividers, connectors, and conflict dynamics, taking a critical yet constructive approach to "evidence-based peacebuilding", recognising that different forms of data (narrative, qualitative, quantitative, and experiential) offer distinct insights. The strategy prioritises a balance between scientific data and community-based knowledge, using participatory methods to inform, rather than override, local priorities.



**Collaborative and nexus-aligned:** WV Iraq's peacebuilding strategy is operationalised through multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral platforms, such as the Resilience and Recovery Pathways for Iraq (RRPI),<sup>12</sup> under which the Nexus Accelerator Fund (NAF)<sup>13</sup> is a flagship initiative. Together, these platforms demonstrate how WV Iraq's nexus strategy is implemented in practice, linking climate adaptation, peacebuilding, and economic inclusion across shared geographies.



**Digitally aware and conflict-sensitive:** Digital technologies, particularly social media, are increasingly shaping community dynamics, public trust, and intergroup relations. While offering new opportunities for civic engagement, these platforms also accelerate misinformation and hate speech, which we acknowledge is a strategic gap. WV Iraq will use digital platforms to explore partnerships and scalable models that promote ethical tech use, media literacy, and youth-led digital engagement, especially in peacebuilding and climate education, while also ensuring safeguarding protocols are in place and followed to combat any potential protection issues.

<sup>12</sup> The RRPI programme, founded in 2024, is a collaborative initiative led by eight international and national non-governmental organisations (NGOs), including World Vision Iraq, Save the Children, Catholic Relief Services, Tearfund, Islamic Relief, Al Masalla, Aid Gate Organization (AGO), and Public Aid Organization (PAO), aimed at addressing Iraq's vulnerability and fragility by bridging the gap between humanitarian aid and long-term recovery by adopting a nexus approach, ensuring flexible and context-specific interventions. Additional information is available at: <https://www.wvi.org/stories/iraq/resilience-and-recovery-pathways-iraq-rrpi>

<sup>13</sup> Iraq's NAF project aims to enhance the well-being of vulnerable children and communities by delivering sustainable, integrated programmes in areas like protection, education, peacebuilding, WASH, and livelihoods. It also focuses on empowering youth as advocates for change and fostering partnerships for long-term impact.



© World Vision/Shayan Nuradeen

WV Iraq's peacebuilding strategy ultimately serves as a core enabler of our nexus strategy by transforming fragility into resilience, marginalisation into participation, and conflict into social renewal. As climate and environmental shocks increasingly intersect with fragility dynamics, the strategy will also elevate disaster risk reduction (DRR) and anticipatory action as critical enablers of peace. This includes efforts to minimise the impact of hazards on vulnerable communities, promote environmentally responsible practices, and reduce competition over scarce resources, particularly in high-risk areas such as Thi Qar and Ninewa. By proactively addressing risk and promoting ecological stewardship, WV Iraq contributes to both climate adaptation and violence prevention, reinforcing community cohesion and long-term resilience.

### **Establishment of a peacebuilding community of practice: Local leadership, shared learning, and systems change**

WV Iraq will establish and facilitate a national peacebuilding community of practice (CoP) as a flagship mechanism to promote shared learning, inclusive analysis, and collaborative problem-solving. The CoP will bring together

peace practitioners, youth networks, women-led organisations, teachers, traditional and faith leaders, academic institutions, and local authorities from Ninewa, Thi Qar, and other areas where WV Iraq operates. This initiative will be led by WV Iraq's Peacebuilding and Inclusion Technical Advisor, with support from World Vision's global peacebuilding technical team and WV Iraq's Programme Director. Over time, WV Iraq will seek to embed the CoP within national or governorate-level coordination platforms, such as the NGO forum or relevant government structures, to promote institutional ownership, sustainability, and policy influence.

The CoP will serve not only as a space for learning and peer exchange, but as a strategic mechanism to link grassroots practice with national-level policy dialogue. It will begin with a visioning workshop with stakeholders to define a shared, cross-sectoral vision for peacebuilding in Iraq and co-develop a CoP charter outlining roles, commitments, and learning modalities.

The CoP will use IPACS as its primary conflict-analysis method, driving programme adaptation, informing advocacy, and catalysing community-led innovations, thereby ensuring peacebuilding remains locally owned, evidence informed, and advanced by those closest to the challenges.



The CoP will also conduct joint conflict context analyses and positive peace workshops<sup>14</sup> to evaluate and reinforce all eight pillars of peace across our programmes. Where religious or spiritual dynamics emerge as a critical fault line or opportunity, we will layer in spiritual landscape analysis on a case-by-case basis.

The CoP will also serve as a platform for advancing joint advocacy and learning on protection of civilians, with particular attention to returnees, IDPs, children, and other high-risk groups. Through shared conflict analyses and policy dialogues, members will explore how to strengthen early warning systems, legal protections, and referral pathways, while ensuring that community actors play a central role in civilian protection strategies.

It will also reinforce outcome #3 (social cohesion and reintegration) of the RRPI framework<sup>15</sup> by creating a sustained, multi-stakeholder structure for inclusive systems thinking, inter-area dialogue, and accountability to affected communities.

In addition to technical learning, the CoP will provide safe and inclusive spaces for interfaith, intergenerational, and cross-sectoral exchange, leveraging arts, sports, storytelling, and creative methods to promote trust-building and healing. Faith leaders and youth peacebuilders will be engaged as core facilitators and connectors.

The CoP will also serve as a learning hub to document best practices, case studies, and innovations from Iraq and similar contexts, thereby contributing to the regional and global discourse on peacebuilding.

Participants will include academia, school teachers/staff, faith leaders, tribal leaders, government stakeholders, international NGOs and CBOs, civil society organisations (CSOs), youth groups, private sector, and minority representatives (e.g., Yazidi, Christian, Kakai, Shabak, and other ethnoreligious minority groups). Partners may also include CSOs, youth networks, schools and universities, the national

department of education, faith actors, tribal leaders, international NGOs, and the private sector.

While establishing a national peacebuilding CoP is a priority strategic goal, WV Iraq will also explore thematic or issue-based CoPs, such as a conflict sensitivity and social cohesion CoP, in alignment with regional platforms supported by the global World Vision Partnership.

## Strategic intervention areas

### *Localisation and capacity strengthening for peace infrastructure*

WV Iraq prioritises decentralising peacebuilding by strengthening the skills, legitimacy, and leadership of local actors, particularly CSOs, women-led groups, minorities, youth groups, and faith-based organisations, as the primary agents of change in their communities. These actors are not passive beneficiaries but architects of durable peace.

#### Key actions will include:



Training and mentoring community peace committees, youth networks, school-based clubs, and traditional leaders in core peacebuilding competencies, including mediation, early warning, participatory conflict analysis, and anticipatory action. Capacity strengthening will also include entry points for community-based DRR, particularly in climate-fragile areas—linking preparedness with peace outcomes.



Building inclusive and accessible peace infrastructures that ensure the meaningful participation of children, PwDs, IDPs, returnees, and refugees. These infrastructures will reflect the intersectional needs of diverse community groups often excluded from formal peace processes.

<sup>14</sup> Positive peace workshops are participatory sessions based on the Institute for Economics and Peace's Positive Peace framework. These workshops help stakeholders identify and strengthen the eight interrelated pillars, such as good governance, equitable resource distribution, and strong social cohesion that create the attitudes, institutions, and structures necessary for sustainable peace ([Institute for Economics & Peace](#))

<sup>15</sup> RRPI framework (internal WV Iraq, RRPI outcomes document, 2024).



Strengthening the institutional capacity of civil society to lead trauma-informed social cohesion initiatives, engage in policy dialogue, and advocate for peacebuilding priorities.



Integrating conflict analysis tools to map dividers, connectors, and systemic dynamics in fragile settings. WV Iraq will also apply the positive peace framework as a cross-cutting diagnostic tool to assess and reinforce the eight pillars of peace across sectoral interventions. Positive peace reviews will be promoted across all programmes operating in fragile or socially divided areas, ensuring that even non-peacebuilding projects contribute to inclusive, resilient systems through adaptive learning.



Establishing and institutionalising a peacebuilding CoP as a neutral, cross-sectoral platform for participatory learning, conflict analysis, and systems thinking. The CoP will lead joint positive peace and conflict analyses, integrating approaches, such as “do no harm”<sup>16</sup> and conflict sensitivity training, to build trust and local capacity. Drawing on successful models from West Africa and the Philippines,<sup>17</sup> WV Iraq will also leverage creative methods – including art, storytelling, and interfaith dialogue as entry points. Over time, the CoP will be embedded in national or sub-national coordination mechanisms to ensure institutional sustainability and influence. Inspired by WV Mali’s experience with anticipatory action protocols and community-based disaster risk management,<sup>18</sup> WV Iraq will explore how its CoP can support early warning, conflict risk monitoring, and inclusive contingency planning as part of a broader prevention and resilience strategy.



Leveraging World Vision’s internal digital platforms for staff and partner training on IPACS, positive peace, conflict sensitivity, and “do no harm”, while developing a tailored national capacity-building plan. Opportunities to scale through partner access to online learning tools will also be explored.



### Integration of peacebuilding across programming

WV Iraq embeds peacebuilding across all sectors, including education, WASH, livelihoods, protection, and climate resilience, through a conflict-sensitive and area-based approach. Sectoral programming is positioned as a transformative tool to rebuild fractured social relationships and address structural drivers of conflict. To further support this integration, WV Iraq will promote the use of the positive peace workshop analysis to assess both context and project design. This will enable teams to identify entry points for reinforcing the eight pillars of peace within ongoing sectoral interventions, even when the primary objective is not peacebuilding.

<sup>16</sup> “Do no harm” is an evidence-based approach widely used in the sector, specifically to provide a tool to equip faith leaders with conflict sensitivity principles and skills while enhancing cooperation within and across religious communities in contexts of both violent and latent conflict. Additional information is available at: <https://www.wvi.org/faith-and-development/do-no-harm-faith-leaders>

<sup>17</sup> Localized CoPs using Peace Clubs and Do No Harm/LCP tools, empowering children and youth as peacebuilders and embedding participatory learning and conflict sensitivity in regional programming. Available at: [https://www.wvi.org/sites/default/files/ECaP%20Guidelines%202011%20Final.pdf?utm\\_source](https://www.wvi.org/sites/default/files/ECaP%20Guidelines%202011%20Final.pdf?utm_source)

<sup>18</sup> Anticipation Hub (2023). *Saving lives and reducing damage through anticipatory action in Mali*. Available at: <https://www.anticipation-hub.org/news/saving-lives-and-reducing-damage-through-anticipatory-action-in-mali>

## Key actions will include:



Applying the “do no harm” and conflict sensitivity principles throughout project design, implementation, and monitoring to ensure interventions reduce tensions and promote inclusion. In addition, WV Iraq will equip local actors, such as CSOs, community leaders, and service providers, with practical peacebuilding tools and conflict sensitivity training to strengthen local ownership, promote inclusion, and enhance community acceptance.



Positioning schools, WASH facilities, and Child-Friendly Spaces as platforms for dialogue, belonging, and peaceful interaction, especially in communities marked by historical division or displacement.



Aligning livelihoods and cash programming with reintegration efforts for returnees, IDPs, and unemployed young people to mitigate economic drivers of conflict and exclusion. Where feasible, WV Iraq will integrate mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) into livelihoods programming to address emotional healing, strengthen psychosocial well-being, and foster the trust-building necessary for successful reintegration and social cohesion.



Promoting climate peacebuilding through community-led water governance, land-use agreements, and shared adaptation planning to address competition over natural resources. Given the increasing role of climate stressors, especially in Thiqar, as root causes of conflict and displacement, WV Iraq will further prioritise climate adaptation as a core track within its peacebuilding programming. This includes integrating ecosystem-based adaptation (EBA), anticipatory action,



and natural resource conflict resolution into community resilience efforts.

Utilising appropriate tools for context analysis and adaptive management, including:

- MSTC for in-depth participatory conflict analysis in fragile settings
- IPACS for real-time community perception monitoring
- GECARR for rapid conflict scans during humanitarian or transitional response
- positive peace analysis to identify how programming can strengthen the eight pillars of peace across sector interventions
- establishing continual feedback loops with communities and partners to adapt interventions based on emerging risks and opportunities
- ensuring robust context monitoring mechanisms are in place to track evolving conflict dynamics
- integrating contingency funds or flexible response windows into programme design to respond rapidly to shifts in context
- applying the Empowering Children as Peacebuilders (ECaP) model<sup>19</sup> across child protection, education, and MHPSS programming to equip children (aged 6–18) with age-appropriate peacebuilding skills, foster positive identity formation, and support inclusive, creative, and safe participation in community life.



Supporting peace clubs to use storytelling, skits, sports, and creative arts to empower youth, particularly adolescents aged 12–18, to lead change in their communities. Where possible, connect youth leaders to Track 2 (civil

<sup>19</sup> The ECaP model is a World Vision approach that builds children’s capacities as active agents of peace, enabling them to engage in conflict transformation within their families, schools, and communities <https://www.wvi.org/publications/report/peacebuilding/empowering-children-peacebuilders-ecap-framework>





© World Vision

society-level peacebuilding)<sup>20</sup> and Track 3 (grassroots, community-driven efforts),<sup>21</sup> promoting intergenerational collaboration and long-term transformation.

### Faith leadership for social cohesion and reconciliation

Faith leaders are central to WV Iraq's strategy for peace. They are not only moral influencers but also trusted community actors in building intergroup trust, resolving disputes, and fostering restorative justice in areas affected by violence, displacement, and sectarian tension. Faith can act as either a connector or divider in fragile contexts, and WV Iraq intentionally works to strengthen its role as a force for inclusion, protection, and resilience.

#### Key actions will include:



Expanding interfaith dialogue platforms and collaborative service delivery, such as community awareness campaigns, school-based peace education, and climate adaptation messaging, to ensure religious actors are actively engaged in promoting inclusion and resilience, especially in conflict-affected areas like Ninewa and Thiqr.



Equipping faith leaders through World Vision project models, like Celebrating Families,<sup>22</sup> Spiritual Nurture of Children,<sup>23</sup> and Channels of Hope,<sup>24</sup> to address social exclusion, challenge harmful practices, and foster positive parenting and promote social inclusion through faith-based care and influence. This

<sup>20</sup> Track 2 within this strategy refers to *civil-society-led, unofficial peacebuilding efforts conducted by non-state actors (e.g. NGOs, academics, community leaders), focused on dialogue, problem-solving workshops, and relationship-building to support or influence official tracks.* <https://www.research-collection.ethz.ch/bitstream/handle/20.500.11850/389119/1/Mediation-Multi-Track-01-block.pdf>

<sup>21</sup> Track 3 within this strategy refers to grassroots, community-driven peacebuilding led by local actors (e.g., community leaders, youth, and faith groups), focusing on reconciliation, social cohesion, and addressing local grievances. <https://www.research-collection.ethz.ch/bitstream/handle/20.500.11850/389119/1/Mediation-Multi-Track-01-block.pdf>

<sup>22</sup> Celebrating Families seeks to ensure that families, especially the most vulnerable ones, enjoy positive and loving relationships and are able to have hope and vision for the future. Additional information is available at: <https://www.wvi.org/faith-and-development/celebrating-families>

<sup>23</sup> Spiritual Nurture of Children is one way that World Vision works directly with children and adolescents, by ensuring spiritual nurture through an integrated approach in kids' clubs, nurturing care groups and youth engagement, ensuring spiritual care is offered in culturally and faith-appropriate ways. Additional information is available at: <https://www.wvi.org/faith-and-development/spiritual-nurture-children>

<sup>24</sup> Channels of Hope is an interactive process to create a safe space for faith leaders, their spouses and faith communities to become active participants in the well-being of children through science-based information and insight from religious texts. Additional information is available at: <https://www.wvi.org/faith-and-development/channels-hope>

also includes adapting complementary approaches such as World Vision's MenCare,<sup>25</sup> which seeks to redefine masculinity and reduce toxic, risk-taking, or violent behaviours amongst boys and men, contributing to more peaceful and gender-equitable communities.



Introducing the *Do No Harm for Faith Groups: Christian-Muslim Edition Manual*<sup>26</sup> to guide faith leaders through facilitated workshops on local capacities for peace,<sup>27</sup> exploring how their faith teachings can be harnessed as a unifying force to reduce religious division, prevent faith-based violence, and increase social cohesion. This participatory tool supports joint reflection and collective action across denominational and sectarian lines.



Promoting faith-based advocacy on inclusion, reconciliation, and social healing at both community and national levels, with an emphasis on engaging faith networks in messaging around coexistence, trauma recovery, and peacebuilding.



Leveraging child protection advocacy and MHPSS tools to support trauma-sensitive religious engagement, particularly in communities undergoing reintegration, return, or long-term recovery from conflict.

## Children and young people as peacebuilders

WV Iraq believes that children and adolescents are not passive recipients of peace; they are agents of transformation. Programming empowers them to lead through civic engagement, creative expression, intergenerational dialogue, and community-rooted advocacy. Across age groups, World

Vision invests in children's peace capacities by recognising their creativity, resilience, and preference for peaceful solutions.

Given Iraq's demographic profile and increasing donor prioritisation of youth-focused peacebuilding in fragile contexts, WV Iraq recognises children and adolescents as strategic actors in sustaining peace. It will amplify this emphasis across proposal design and programme delivery.

### Key actions will include:



Scaling up the ECaP model across schools and adolescent protection programmes to equip children aged 6–18 with age-appropriate skills in peacebuilding and conflict transformation. Tailored approaches, such as play-based learning, storytelling, creative arts, and leadership mentoring, will be applied for different age groups. Where needed, ECaP will be complemented by MHPSS support to ensure children affected by trauma can meaningfully engage and build resilience through peacebuilding activities.



Establishing and strengthen peer-led peace clubs within schools and informal education settings, such as Child-Friendly Spaces, where children can learn about inclusion, conflict resolution, identity, and peaceful coexistence. Children will co-design activities, lead peer awareness campaigns, and engage in collective reflection on local challenges and opportunities for peace.



Engaging children and adolescents in school-based and community-level advocacy on issues affecting their well-being and inclusion, such as

<sup>25</sup> The MenCare Approach is designed to challenge harmful gender norms, reduce domestic violence, and encourage men to take an active role in family. Additional information is available at: <https://www.wvi.org/stories/silent-revolution-how-engaging-men-transforming-families-and-communities>

<sup>26</sup> Do No Harm for Faith Groups: Christian-Muslim Edition Manual is a practical guide that equips faith leaders to use their teachings as a tool for reducing division, preventing faith-based violence, and fostering social cohesion. Additional information is available at: <https://www.wvi.org/publications/report/peacebuilding/do-no-harm-faith-groups-christian-muslim-edition>

<sup>27</sup> Local Capacities for Peace (LCP) refers to a participatory approach that identifies and strengthens existing community connectors to prevent violence and promote social cohesion. Additional information is available at: <https://www.wvi.org/publications/report/peacebuilding/do-no-harm-faith-groups-christian-muslim-edition>

discrimination, bullying, environmental degradation, and child protection. WV Iraq will facilitate child-led dialogues with teachers, faith leaders, and local authorities, integrating the Citizen Voice and Action (CVA) approach<sup>28</sup> where feasible.



Integrating MHPSS and spiritual nurture of children as cross-cutting elements to ensure children – particularly those affected by displacement or trauma – can participate meaningfully and safely in peacebuilding activities.



Utilising IPACS and selected participatory learning and action tools to assess how children's participation in peace clubs and advocacy activities influences social cohesion, safety, and peer relationships in schools and communities. Where appropriate, positive peace workshops will be introduced to spark reflection on the eight peace pillars and to co-develop context-specific indicators with children, educators, and community members. These insights will help measure the broader impact of ECaP and ensure that inclusion, relevance, and child agency remain central.



Promoting digital storytelling, youth-led theatre, and arts-based dialogue as vehicles to challenge harmful narratives, foster empathy, and amplify peaceful alternatives, particularly in areas where youth are vulnerable to radicalisation, marginalisation, or online hate speech.



Introducing media and digital literacy components into youth engagement programmes to foster critical thinking, protect against misinformation, and enhance digital resilience in a rapidly evolving information environment.

As WV Iraq increasingly engages with digital platforms in its youth and peacebuilding work, it recognises that digital engagement must go beyond access and content creation. Misinformation, online polarisation, and digital exclusion can reinforce existing inequalities and deepen social divides, especially amongst children and young people. WV Iraq is therefore committed to exploring context-appropriate, ethical, and inclusive digital engagement strategies. This may include integrating basic media literacy into youth-focused initiatives, promoting responsible digital storytelling, and supporting community-led awareness efforts that foster online dialogue and trust-building. While advanced digital peacebuilding models may lie outside the current scope, WV Iraq will continue to identify opportunities within its mandate and partnerships to ensure that technology is used to connect rather than divide.

### *Inclusion and social equity*

Peace cannot be sustained without justice and equity. WV Iraq's inclusive peacebuilding approach dismantles structural exclusion and advances the agency of historically marginalised groups.

#### **Key actions will include:**



Applying the women's equality and wider social inclusion framework<sup>29</sup> to ensure equitable access to services, resources, and decision-making.



Promoting participatory dialogue with communities on power dynamics, resource sharing, and social accountability.



Addressing barriers faced by PwD and other underserved groups in accessing reconciliation and development processes.



Scaling up the MenCare model to address harmful gender norms and reduce violent behaviours amongst boys and men.

<sup>28</sup> CVA is World Vision's social accountability approach to equip communities to hold their own governments accountable for the promises they make. CVA works by educating citizens about their rights and equipping them to advocate for improvements to basic services. Additional information is available at: <https://www.wvi.org/social-accountability/our-approach>

<sup>29</sup> This framework refers to a participatory approach that integrates principles of equity into programs—ensuring marginalized groups (by gender, disability, ethnicity, age, etc.) have fair access to services, resources, and decision-making processes. [https://www.fhi360.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/resource-gesi-cs-implementation.pdf?utm\\_source](https://www.fhi360.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/resource-gesi-cs-implementation.pdf?utm_source)



## Advocacy for inclusive and sustainable peacebuilding system

WV Iraq sees advocacy as a critical enabler to influence policies, shift public narratives, and amplify the voices of children, youth, women, and marginalised groups in peacebuilding processes.

Iraq's fragile communities continue to grapple with unresolved ethnic, religious, and social tensions. Returnees and host communities face deep mistrust and limited access to integrated reintegration support. Widespread trauma and protection risks, including for children, youth, and minorities, continue to undermine recovery. Faith and community leaders often lack the tools to mediate or prevent violence, while young people remain underutilised as peace actors. Which is why strengthening inclusive, community-driven peacebuilding and reintegration mechanisms is critical to fostering social cohesion and durable recovery. WV Iraq will invest in building the advocacy capacity of children, youth networks, CSOs, and faith actors. Through tailored training, mentoring, and joint planning, these actors will be supported to develop effective advocacy

messages, influence policy processes, and safely mobilise for inclusive peace.

WV Iraq will pursue a two-track advocacy approach utilising:

- 1.** community-led advocacy that empowers local actors, including youth groups, peace committees, and faith leaders, to influence decisions on service delivery, social cohesion, and protection through evidence-based dialogue with authorities
- 2.** policy and systems-level advocacy to engage with national and sub-national decision makers, leveraging evidence from World Vision's programmes to shape inclusive policies on peacebuilding, reconciliation, climate fragility, child protection, and conflict-sensitive education and livelihoods – these efforts will be anchored in structured policy dialogue platforms, such as multi-stakeholder roundtables, district-level forums, and community hearings, with ministries, local councils, and other powerholders.



© World Vision/Shayan Nuradeen

WV Iraq will advocate for:



national frameworks that integrate peacebuilding, mental health, and reintegration services with funding lines and implementation mechanisms



scaling of peace clubs in all schools across target governorates to foster civic engagement and trauma resilience



delivery of integrated livelihoods and psychosocial support (e.g. vocational training, MHPSS) for returnees and host communities



training and equipping community and faith leaders with conflict prevention and dialogue tools



establishment of youth-led interfaith platforms to counter hate speech and promote inclusive narratives at the local and national levels.

Advocacy efforts will also integrate:



the strategic use of digital media and storytelling to challenge harmful narratives and elevate the lived experiences of affected groups



partnerships with faith networks, local CSOs, and media actors to increase the reach and legitimacy of peace-related messaging



collaboration with international platforms and donors to position Iraq's lessons, such as youth-led civic engagement and climate-conflict prevention, as global public goods.

WV Iraq will coordinate advocacy efforts with sectoral coalitions, inter-agency working groups, and relevant donor consortia to ensure unified messaging, collaborative learning, and the elevation of local peacebuilding innovations to regional and global platforms. Where feasible, WV Iraq will also support joint advocacy agendas emerging from the peacebuilding CoP, enabling shared influence on cross-cutting priorities such as inclusion, protection of civilians, and the prevention of violent extremism.

All advocacy initiatives will be implemented through a conflict-sensitive and "do no harm" lens, ensuring that communities, particularly children and marginalised groups, are not

exposed to political backlash or protection risks. WV Iraq will establish safeguards and mitigation protocols for all public-facing and policy engagement activities to uphold community safety and programme integrity.

Protection of civilians, especially children, women, PwDs, and minority groups, will be a key advocacy priority. WV Iraq will work with humanitarian and peacebuilding actors to strengthen national commitments to civilian protection, including safe return, freedom of movement, access to services, and safeguards against retaliation or targeting. Where possible, WV Iraq will support evidence-based advocacy for protective legal frameworks and improved accountability mechanisms.

### **Advocacy platforms, tools, and outcome monitoring**

WV Iraq's advocacy will be supported through practical tools such as CVA, inclusive scorecards, participatory planning, and community audits to foster accountability and social contract renewal. Peace clubs, youth networks, and interfaith groups will serve as platforms for locally driven advocacy. WV Iraq will also engage in media advocacy around international peace days, support youth storytelling initiatives, and lead community dialogue events that foster reconciliation and understanding. These actions will be complemented by monthly coordination meetings through the peacebuilding CoP, ensuring sustained collaboration and evidence uptake.

Where feasible, advocacy efforts will also target specific national and local policy frameworks and service delivery mechanisms, such as:



reintegration frameworks for returnees and displaced persons (e.g. influencing durable solutions policy at the Iraqi Ministry of Migration and Displacement (MoMD) and governorate levels)








education sector policies to integrate peace education, anti-violence modules, and peace clubs in schools (aligned with Ministry of Education priorities)



community policing and local governance procedures to institutionalise inclusive conflict mediation, early warning, and social cohesion mechanisms.

Advocacy outcomes will be monitored alongside peacebuilding results, including indicators such as:

-  policy or procedural shifts influenced by evidence (e.g. around reintegration, education, DRR, or peacebuilding integration into local development plans)
-  adoption of inclusive DRR or anticipatory action protocols that incorporate peacebuilding and community resilience priorities
-  local action plans or sectoral programs (e.g. education, protection, climate resilience) adapted as a result of community-led advocacy
-  number of citizen-generated recommendations that influence decision-making or budget allocations (tracked through CVA, inclusive scorecards, or community audits)
-  civic engagement metrics (e.g. frequency and quality of participation by marginalised groups in advocacy platforms, such as peace clubs, interfaith networks, and youth groups).

**Figure 1. WV Iraq's advocacy channels and timeline**

Channel	Purpose	Timeline
Peace clubs and youth platforms	Promote civic advocacy, trauma resilience, and anti-violence education	Ongoing 2025–2026
Community & faith leader dialogues	Strengthen local capacity for reconciliation and cohesion	Monthly
Media engagement & digital campaigns	Shift narratives and raise awareness nationally	September 2025–June 2026
Policy briefs & roundtables	Influence government and donor commitments	September 2025–onward

## Monitoring, evaluation, and learning for peacebuilding

WV Iraq will adopt a mixed-methods monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) framework to track progress towards transformative peace outcomes, including shifts in social cohesion, intergroup trust, inclusive participation, and community resilience. The approach integrates real-time conflict perception data from IPACS, longitudinal insights from positive peace reviews, participatory feedback mechanisms, and programme-specific indicators aligned with donor requirements and World Vision's global results frameworks.

A Peacebuilding MEL Indicator Framework, aligned with the Theory of Change and OIOS Level 1 and Level 2 indicators, will be developed to track progress across all strategic areas. These indicators will be mapped to each strategic priority in the Peacebuilding Roadmap to ensure relevance, measurability, and alignment with both internal and donor frameworks. Measurement approaches will distinguish between WV Iraq's direct attribution and its contribution to broader contextual change, triangulated with partner and sector data.

Community feedback will be gathered through mechanisms such as hotlines, digital surveys, and in-person forums, with findings shared back to communities in accessible formats.

Learning products will include quarterly leadership dashboards, donor policy briefs, and community infographics to ensure that evidence is tailored to decision-making audiences.

Peacebuilding MEL will leverage existing digital platforms (LMMS, KoBo, Power BI) for real-time context monitoring, trend analysis, and reporting.

Where relevant, MEL processes will actively involve children, youth, faith leaders, and civil society actors to ensure participatory validation, contextual relevance, and accountability to affected populations.



## Digitally-aware and conflict-sensitive engagement

As WV Iraq increasingly engages with digital platforms in its peacebuilding and youth programming, it recognises that digital engagement must go beyond access and content creation. In fragile and conflict-affected areas, misinformation, online hate speech, and digital exclusion can reinforce existing inequalities, deepen intergroup divides, and increase the vulnerability of children and youth to manipulation, bullying, or radicalisation.

WV Iraq is committed to developing ethical, inclusive, and context-appropriate digital engagement strategies that uphold the “do no harm” principle and promote social cohesion. These efforts will:



integrate basic media and digital literacy components into youth-focused programming, helping children and adolescents build critical thinking skills and recognise harmful content



promote responsible digital storytelling to uplift narratives of inclusion, coexistence, and local resilience



support community-led awareness campaigns, particularly those led by peace clubs or youth, to foster online trust-building, counteract harmful stereotypes, and enhance intergenerational dialogue



ensure digital initiatives are inclusive of girls, children with disabilities, and marginalised groups, and sensitive to the trauma experiences of children in post-conflict and displacement contexts



explore partnerships and innovation opportunities to expand WV Iraq's digital peacebuilding capabilities, while remaining grounded in its core protection, MHPSS, and child well-being mandates.

WV Iraq will also pursue collaboration opportunities to strengthen digital peacebuilding, enhance children and young people's engagement, and counter harmful narratives in online spaces.

While advanced digital peacebuilding models may lie beyond the current scope, WV Iraq will continue to learn from global practice, strengthen staff capacity, and integrate digital conflict sensitivity wherever feasible across its programmes.

## Theory of change alignment

The following table summarises how each strategic intervention area contributes to WV Iraq's overarching peacebuilding theory of change. It clarifies the expected intermediate outcomes and how each pillar supports transformative, inclusive, and sustainable peace.



© World Vision/Shayan Nuradeen

**Figure 2. WV Iraq's peacebuilding theory of change**

Strategy area	Intermediate outcome	Pathway contribution
Localisation and capacity strengthening for peace infrastructure	Strengthened local peace infrastructure and shared conflict analysis capabilities	Builds localised systems for resilience and participatory peace architecture
Integration of peacebuilding across programming	Sector programmes foster social cohesion, reduce dividers, and promote local ownership	Mainstreams peacebuilding into essential services and area-based development
Faith leadership for social cohesion and reconciliation	Faith actors support healing, intergroup trust, and positive norms through inclusive religious engagement	Reduces sectarian and identity-based tensions through interfaith collaboration and social healing
Children and young people as peacebuilders	Children and young people lead peer-led initiatives, challenge harmful narratives, and shape inclusive futures	Strengthens agency, leadership, and nonviolent action amongst children and adolescents
Inclusion and social equity	Systemic barriers to participation are reduced, and historically marginalised groups are empowered	Addresses root causes of exclusion; fosters equitable access to peace processes and governance
Advocacy for inclusive and sustainable peacebuilding systems	Community evidence informs national policy; grassroots voices influence structural reforms	Connects community priorities with policy change; advances protective legal frameworks, accountability for protection of civilians, and inclusive peacebuilding environments
MEL for peacebuilding	Outcome measurement is inclusive, phased, and grounded in community feedback and positive peace diagnostics	Ensures strategic learning, adaptive management, and evidence-based decision-making
Digitally-aware and conflict-sensitive engagement	Digital spaces are used for positive engagement, resilience building, and reducing polarisation	Mitigates online conflict drivers and supports ethical, inclusive digital engagement practices

## Stakeholders for peace: Platforms, engagement, and collaboration

In Iraq's post-conflict and fragmented context, sustainable peace cannot be achieved by a single actor alone. Years of authoritarianism, conflict, and fragility have eroded institutional trust and dispersed authority across a wide range of formal and informal actors, including tribal and religious leaders, youth groups, civil society, local councils, and informal networks. Critically, minorities and historically marginalised groups, including women, youth, PwDs, and ethno-religious minorities, must be at the centre of peacebuilding efforts, given their historic exclusion from decision-making spaces and disproportionate exposure to violence, displacement, and marginalisation.

WV Iraq recognises that durable peace must be co-owned by those who govern, those who influence, and those who are most directly affected. To support this, WV Iraq engages stakeholders across four levels – grassroots, community, institutional, and strategic, ensuring strengthened social cohesion and sustained legitimacy across WV Iraq's peacebuilding efforts.

To operationalise this approach, figure 3 translates WV Iraq's approach into an actionable framework, outlining priority stakeholders, their contributions to the peacebuilding process, the rationale behind their engagement, as well as the potential platforms on which WV Iraq can engage them to ensure our efforts are inclusive, coordinated, and grounded in local realities.

WV Iraq will review stakeholder engagement effectiveness biannually through participatory reflection and adaptive planning, ensuring peacebuilding practices remain responsive, inclusive, and contextually grounded. To support this, WV Iraq will use a range of partnering tools, including memoranda of understanding, sub-agreements, and the partner capacity assessment tool,<sup>30</sup> to formalise collaboration, clarify roles, and strengthen institutional readiness. These tools help ensure that our engagement with CSOs, local authorities, and

other peace actors is not only relational but also structured, equitable, and aligned with World Vision's conflict-sensitive and inclusive standards.

### *Women peacebuilders and networks*

WV Iraq recognises the critical role of women peacebuilders in shaping inclusive, durable peace. Existing networks, such as the Iraqi Women Network, the National Coalition for UNSCR 1325, and the Women, Peace, and Security Working Group, provide platforms for collective advocacy, policy influence, and community-based mediation. WV Iraq will actively explore formal partnerships and co-designed interventions with these actors, including joint capacity-building initiatives, shared conflict analysis, and integrated community dialogue forums. This approach draws on evidence such as the UN Women 2022 study on Women Mediators in Iraq, which demonstrates that women's participation not only increases the legitimacy of peace processes but also leads to more durable agreements.<sup>31</sup>

### *Working with the Iraqi government and line ministries*

While WV Iraq adopts a broad multi-stakeholder approach to peacebuilding, the role of government actors, particularly national line ministries and local authorities, remains foundational. These institutions are not only service providers but also custodians of long-term policy frameworks that shape civic trust, social protection, and conflict resolution and management. Partnering with government actors ensures that peacebuilding efforts are institutionalised within public systems, aligned with national strategy, and capable of being scaled or sustained beyond the project lifecycle. WV Iraq, therefore, will prioritise strategic collaboration with the government's ministries of education, youth and sports, labour and social affairs, and environment, recognising their critical influence in addressing root drivers of fragility and promoting inclusive governance.

<sup>30</sup> Partner Capacity Assessment Tool is a structured framework used by World Vision to assess partner organizations' capacities across governance, technical, and operational areas to inform tailored capacity-strengthening plans. <https://www.wvi.org/publications/toolkit/partnering/partnering-practice>

<sup>31</sup> [https://iraq.un.org/en/188075-womens-participation-local-mediation-lessons-iraq-libya-syria-and-yemen?utm\\_source](https://iraq.un.org/en/188075-womens-participation-local-mediation-lessons-iraq-libya-syria-and-yemen?utm_source)



Figure 3. Stakeholder roles and strategic engagement for peacebuilding

Stakeholder	Actors	Role	Goal	Platform / intervention	Frequency	Current level of influence	Targeted level of influence
Government (national and local)	Ministry of Education, Ministry of Youth and Sports, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Ministry of Environment and Water Resources, governorates, local councils	Policy leadership, civic education, youth/livelihood integration, and climate-responsive governance	To ensure alignment with national frameworks and sustain peacebuilding impact beyond project cycles	Formal memoranda of understanding, joint technical working groups, co-designed school peace clubs, livelihood linkages, local climate adaptation planning	Quarterly coordination; ad hoc taskforce meetings	High	Medium
Tribal and religious leaders	Tribal sheikhs, imams, priests, and religious councils	Mediation, social legitimacy, moral influence, healing	To command trust and shape community attitudes, vital for reconciliation and behaviour change	Interfaith dialogue platforms, Channels of Hope, traditional dispute resolution spaces, and inclusive sermons	Monthly engagement or tied to specific community dialogue events	High	High
CSOs and CBOs	Women's groups, youth-led orgs, local NGOs, peace committees	Local mobilisation, accountability, and bridging between communities and institutions	To be trusted by local communities and act as first responders or conveners	Capacity building workshops, participatory planning, joint peace campaigns, sub-grants for local initiatives	Built into programme design cycles, ongoing engagement	Low	Medium to high
Minority and marginalised groups	Returnees, IDPs, ethnic/religious minorities, PwDs	Bring firsthand experiences of conflict and marginalisation; vital to designing inclusive interventions	To guarantee their participation to ensure peacebuilding is legitimate, representative, and context-sensitive	Inclusion audits, stakeholder consultations, community advisory roles, safe spaces for engagement	Ongoing throughout project life; embedded in MEL and design	Low	Medium to High
Security actors	Community police, local peacekeepers, security forces, counter terrorism forces	Early warning, community safety, conflict mitigation, coordination for reintegration of former combatants	To enable their involvement to ensure conflict-sensitive reintegration, prevents escalation, and strengthens referral and protection pathways, especially in areas where returnees or individuals formerly associated with armed groups are being reintegrated	Joint early warning systems, conflict mapping, "do no harm" training, coordination with counter-terrorism units to vet and support project participants in reintegration efforts	Ad hoc, as risks arise; biannual coordination and ongoing case-based engagement in reintegration zones	High	High
Private sector	Local businesses, entrepreneurs, chambers of commerce	Employment generation, local investment, economic peace dividends	To reduce root drivers of fragility (e.g. young people's unemployment, exclusion)	Public-private roundtables, employment hubs for young people, business for peace initiatives	Semi-annual forums during project design and job-matching phases	Low	Medium to high
Academia and media	Universities, think-tanks, journalists, community radio	Evidence generation, public awareness, narrative shaping	To help combat misinformation and inform data-driven, ethical programming	Co-designed research, storytelling for cohesion, media capacity training	Project-based and aligned with communication cycles	Low	Medium to high
International actors	United Nations (UN) agencies, donors	Technical expertise, funding, global advocacy, policy dialogue	To scale impact, align with global frameworks, and sustain long-term programming	Donor roundtables, joint assessments, knowledge exchange networks, peer learning	Donor-driven frequency; typically, quarterly to semi-annually	High	High
Peacebuilding CoP	Youth leaders, CSOs, faith leaders, academia, local government, private sectors	Participatory learning, workshops, shared conflict analysis, and systems thinking	To strengthen trust, legitimacy, and adaptive coordination across sectors	Collaborative workshops, positive peace reviews, quarterly learning forums	Quarterly	Low	High

## Peacebuilding flagship project: Nexus Accelerator Fund Iraq

The RRPI initiative was jointly designed by World Vision and seven other NGOs in Iraq to implement area-based nexus programming in Thiqr and Ninewa governorates. NAF is the first project designed and implemented under RRPI. This programme directly aligns with WV Iraq's peacebuilding strategy, transforming the HDP nexus into locally owned, inclusive systems of resilience. It prioritises peacebuilding and climate adaptation and will run from 2025 through 2027. WV Iraq leads on local capacity development and youth inclusion activities within the project. WV Iraq will also explore testing and refining models of environmental governance that simultaneously strengthen social cohesion, to inform future scale-up and policy engagement.

NAF key objectives:

- 1 build anticipatory action and climate resilience systems
- 2 train CSOs and women/youth leaders in peacebuilding and environmental governance
- 3 implement school and community-level EBA for peace
- 4 use participatory context assessment and analysis approaches (e.g. IPACS, MSTC, GECARR, COSMAT) to track conflict and inclusion outcomes.

## Measuring what matters: Impact and accountability

WV Iraq is committed to measuring peacebuilding success in ways that go beyond activity counts, focusing instead on tangible shifts in community dynamics, trust, inclusion, and resilience. To achieve this, the strategy prioritises outcome-level measurement, utilising both quantitative indicators and qualitative insights, such as community feedback, perception data, and contextual analysis. Where appropriate, this will be aligned with Our Impact,

Our Story (OIOS)<sup>32</sup> Level 1 indicators under child well-being objectives (CWBOs) to ensure consistency and comparability across World Vision programming.

WV Iraq also recognises the evolving global conversation around how data is used in fragile settings. While rigorous data collection is essential for accountability and adaptive learning, WV Iraq emphasises the importance of balance, ensuring that evidence-gathering supports inclusive programming and community ownership, rather than overwhelming project goals with burdensome reporting requirements. In doing so, WV Iraq takes a values-driven approach to data, one that prioritises transparency, relevance, and respect for context. This means treating participatory methods, perception studies, and qualitative feedback not as supplementary, but as essential to understanding impact, especially in peacebuilding, where changes in relationships, trust, and inclusion are difficult to quantify. By embedding ethical, inclusive, and conflict-sensitive practices in data use, WV Iraq aims to make measurement meaningful for both communities and partners.

### *Principles for ethical and inclusive data use*

WV Iraq recognises that data is not inherently neutral and that its value depends on how it is interpreted, shared, and acted upon. To ensure data contributes to inclusive peacebuilding rather than reinforcing existing inequalities, WV Iraq follows principles grounded in ethical and conflict-sensitive practice. These include:



collecting data only when it serves a defined purpose



sharing insights with communities to strengthen their agency



reflecting on how power and identity shape evidence



maximising the use of data across programming in accessible and safe ways.

<sup>32</sup> OIOS is a World Vision initiative that will allow us to tell a Partnership-wide story of impact across all funding streams and programme contexts, enhancing effective impact reporting at all levels to increase our influence and grow our funding.



© World Vision/Shayan Nuradeen

WV Iraq aims to democratise data use by sharing findings with communities in accessible ways through visual storytelling, civic platforms, and participatory planning tools – so data becomes a tool for voice, not just measurement. WV Iraq also promotes community participation not only in interpreting data, but in shaping what data is collected, how, and for what purpose – ensuring communities are not passive sources but co-owners of knowledge.

### *Alignment with sector roadmaps and peacebuilding pathways of change*

WV Iraq's peacebuilding MEL strategy is intentionally aligned with World Vision's sector roadmaps, particularly in education, child protection, livelihoods, and climate resilience,

as well as the global peacebuilding and conflict sensitivity roadmaps. It directly contributes to the CWBOs. Peacebuilding outcomes such as increased trust, inclusion, resilience, and participation feed into broader development goals, including safe learning environments, equitable livelihoods, and responsive protection systems.

WV Iraq's peacebuilding pathway of change is guided by our theory of change and grounded in measurable outcome indicators. These pathways are structured to ensure programmatic coherence across sectors and reflect key themes identified through community feedback. Each is tracked using both quantitative and qualitative tools, including perception surveys, IPACS, MSTC, stakeholder mapping, inclusive audits, and participatory planning mechanisms.



### ***Pathway 1: Rebuilding trust and intergroup relationships***

Builds social cohesion across religious, ethnic, and identity lines

- Key indicators:
  - Improved trust and cooperation (IPACS, MSTC, community surveys)
  - Faith leader contributions to reconciliation (Channels of Hope records)
  - Youth-led civic engagement and advocacy initiatives (digital storytelling, programme documentation)
- Aligned CWBOs:
  - Reduced violence and strengthened social cohesion
  - Youth demonstrate agency and resilience

### ***Pathway 2: Inclusive peace infrastructure and local systems***

Strengthens the use and legitimacy of local mechanisms for preventing and resolving conflict

- Key indicators:
  - Functionality of peace infrastructures (e.g. peace committees, school peace clubs)
  - Inclusive mechanisms resolving disputes involving IDPs, returnees, or youth
  - Established early warning and response systems
- Aligned CWBOs:
  - Children and families access trusted structures
  - Communities are protected from harm

WV Iraq will explore the use of World Vision's community-based risk and disaster management (CBDRM) module<sup>33</sup> to expand local preparedness beyond environmental hazards to include conflict-related risks. Drawing on global adaptations such as those piloted in West Africa,<sup>34</sup> WV Iraq will support communities in anticipating, mitigating, and adapting to both natural and conflict-induced hazards. This integrated risk approach will strengthen local peace infrastructures and reinforce community-led early warning and response mechanisms.

### ***Pathway 3: Transforming exclusion and empowering participation***

Ensures meaningful engagement of children, PwDs, and marginalised groups

- Key indicators:
  - Increased participation of children and PwDs in peacebuilding
  - Youth-led platforms that elevate diverse perspectives in civic processes
- Aligned CWBOs:
  - Children meaningfully participate in decisions
  - Marginalised voices are represented

### ***Pathway 4: Building resilience to conflict and climate shocks***

Promotes adaptive capacity, environmental cooperation, and institutional learning

- Key indicators:
  - Greater integration of conflict sensitivity in sector programming (IPACS reviews)
  - Improved community resilience to conflict and climate-related shocks
- Aligned CWBOs:
  - Children and communities are resilient to adversity
  - Systems enable responsive adaptation

<sup>33</sup> CBDRM is a process where communities actively participate in identifying, analysing, planning, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating DRR efforts. Additional information is available at: [https://www.wvi.org/sites/default/files/2024-05/HEA%20DRR\\_160524\\_0.pdf](https://www.wvi.org/sites/default/files/2024-05/HEA%20DRR_160524_0.pdf)

<sup>34</sup> In West Africa, World Vision adapted its Community-Based Disaster Risk Reduction/Management (CBDRDM) module to include conflict-sensitive elements—such as mapping social tensions, establishing early-warning mechanisms for conflict triggers, and integrating social cohesion activities into preparedness planning—alongside traditional disaster risk reduction practices. [https://www.preventionweb.net/files/66637\\_proceedingsen.pdf](https://www.preventionweb.net/files/66637_proceedingsen.pdf)

## Disaster risk reduction as a resilience enabler

While WV Iraq's peacebuilding strategy primarily focuses on conflict transformation, it recognises that DRR is a critical component of systemic resilience. Where feasible, WV Iraq will integrate core DRR measures into peacebuilding interventions, including community-based early warning systems, inclusive contingency planning, and localised risk mapping. Drawing on World Vision's CBDRM module and lessons from anticipatory action pilots, WV Iraq will strengthen the capacity of local peace infrastructures to anticipate, absorb, and adapt to both conflict- and climate-induced shocks.

Together, these pathways ensure that peacebuilding is not an isolated effort but a system-wide, cross-sectoral driver of transformation. WV Iraq uses this framework to prioritise what matters most: changes in relationships, behaviours, systems, and community agency – the actual outcomes of sustainable peace.

To ensure these pathways remain dynamic and responsive, WV Iraq will adopt an adaptive learning approach that integrates quarterly reflection and adaptation cycles across its peacebuilding and nexus programming. These cycles will review progress in areas, such as CoP development, conflict sensitivity integration, and the application of positive peace tools. Learning loops will inform both programme refinement and strategy updates.

WV Iraq also aims to document and share learning more systematically, including co-producing peacebuilding case studies with communities. Potential focus areas include water governance in Thiqar and youth civic engagement in Ninewa, contributing to global knowledge platforms, donor learning agendas, and regional forums. Where feasible, WV Iraq will pursue operational research partnerships to showcase how locally-led, nexus-aligned peacebuilding contributes to sustainable development outcomes.



# CONCLUSION: PEACEBUILDING AS THE PATH TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN IRAQ

Peace in Iraq cannot be outsourced. It must be built through the hands, stories, and structures of local actors, many of whom have long been excluded from formal processes. WV Iraq's roadmap is not a call for more workshops; it is a call to reimagine what peacebuilding looks like in fragile and fractured contexts.

By centring inclusion, integration, and institutionalisation, and by amplifying the voices of faith leaders, children, civil society, women, and PWDs – WV Iraq is laying the foundation for sustainable transformation, not surface-level calm. Peace is not the absence of conflict. It is the presence of dignity, justice, and shared ownership. WV Iraq is committed to making this strategy a reality.

This strategy reflects a deliberate shift from fragmented peacebuilding interventions towards a systems-level, cross-sectoral approach to conflict transformation. By embedding positive peace principles, inclusive governance, and faith-sensitive tools into sector programmes, WV Iraq positions peace as a continuous process of structural change – not a siloed objective. The integration of SLA, IPACS, MSTC, and participatory audits reinforces a data-informed yet community-driven model that prioritises relevance, legitimacy, and resilience.

WV Iraq also challenges technocratic tendencies that dominate global development practice. Centring local knowledge, dismantling data hierarchies, and interrogating who defines “evidence” are not optional – they are essential to achieving inclusive, accountable, and sustainable peace.

## Operationalisation: Turning the roadmap into action

To ensure this roadmap translates into real-world impact, WV Iraq will prioritise the following deliverables over the next 12 to 18 months:



Establishment of the peacebuilding CoP



Roll out of positive peace reviews across all fragile operational areas, embedding conflict transformation into sectoral planning and implementation



Piloting of integrated peacebuilding initiatives in Ninewa and Thi Qar, linking peace, livelihoods, protection, education, and climate resilience



Institutionalisation of participatory conflict analysis by scaling tools, such as IPACS and MSTC, through internal capacity building and local partnerships



Launch of joint evidence-generation efforts with local CSOs and communities, producing learning briefs, case studies, and policy guidance to inform national dialogue and donor engagement



The embedding of peacebuilding key performance indicators and reflection loops within sectoral MEL systems to ensure accountability and adaptive learning.

Through these milestones, WV Iraq will operationalise its strategy not as a static plan, but as a dynamic and evolving framework for systems transformation.



