

IRAQ CASE STUDY: MAKING PEACEBUILDING & CONFLICT SENSITIVITY FOUNDATIONAL



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Context and Rationale

Iraq's recent history of violent conflict, displacement, governance breakdown, and climate shocks has left many communities in a state of fragility. A series of analyses conducted by World Vision Iraq, including MSTC workshops, IPACS, Do No Harm reviews, conflict mapping, GECARR risk scans, and Positive Peace diagnostics, highlighted systemic challenges: weak governance legitimacy, inequitable services, fractured social fabrics, and intergroup mistrust.

These findings underscored that recovery and resilience would remain fragile unless programming addressed conflict drivers and strengthened the foundations of peaceful societies. In response, WV Iraq made a strategic decision to position peacebuilding and conflict sensitivity (PB/CS) as core to its 2025–2027 Peacebuilding Roadmap.

Strategic Shift

The roadmap reframes peacebuilding as a development enabler and positions it as a cross-cutting driver of WV Iraq’s Humanitarian–Development–Peace (HDP) Nexus Strategy. Instead of limiting peacebuilding to standalone dialogue initiatives, it embeds PB across education, livelihoods, protection, climate resilience, and disaster risk reduction (DRR).

Tools such as MSTC, IPACS, Do No Harm, GECARR, and Positive Peace reviews moved from diagnostic instruments to operational enablers—guiding adaptive programming, informing evidence-based decision-making, and ensuring that conflict sensitivity was systematically applied in real time.

Leadership reinforced this shift by mandating PB/CS integration across all programmes, mobilising sector teams to apply CS tools, and resourcing evidence generation as a core programmatic function. The Roadmap also establishes a national Peacebuilding Community of Practice (CoP) to connect grassroots practice with national-level policy dialogue, ensuring shared ownership with civil society, youth, women, faith leaders, and government actors.

Results and Evidence

Evidence from the CRRISA Post-Assessment¹ demonstrated the effectiveness of embedding peacebuilding into broader programming and provided lessons that directly informed the 2025–2027 Peacebuilding Roadmap.

Area	Indicator	Results	Gender Insights
Social Cohesion	% of community members reporting improved acceptance of returnees and reintegration	94% overall (Returnees: 98%, Host: 90%)	78% of males and 68% of females reported welcoming attitudes. Women, particularly in Kirkuk and Salah Al-Din, expressed slightly lower perceptions of acceptance.
Economic Stability	% of households reporting improved household income or stability	98% overall	Female-headed households: 99% vs. male-headed: 96%. Female returnees had greater success in business start-ups (95% in Hawija vs. 72% for host-community women)
MHPSS	% of individuals reporting improved psychosocial well-being	87% overall	Women: 92% vs. Men: 82%. Women showed greater improvements across most locations.

Source: WVI – CRRISA Post-Assessment Report (2024), Final Draft, March 2024.

“For the first time, we feel included in decisions about our future and our community.” – Community Participant.

These results illustrate that embedding peacebuilding approaches generates measurable improvements in reintegration, livelihoods, and psychosocial well-being while highlighting gender-specific patterns that inform future programming.

¹ WVI - CRRISA - Post Assessment Report - Final Draft. March - Clean (1) 1



Key Enablers in Developing the Roadmap

WV Iraq's experience highlights several enablers that made PB/CS foundational:



Leadership Commitment – Senior leaders championed PB/CS as a strategic priority and allocated time and resources to operationalise it.



Evidence-Driven Advocacy – Findings from MSTC, IPACS, and Positive Peace analyses provided the evidence base to shift from fragmented interventions to a system-wide approach.



Institutionalised CS practice – Tools like IPACS and Do No Harm became mandatory across all projects. Inclusive, Locally-Led Action– Civil society organisations (CSOs), women-led groups, youth, and faith actors were recognised as architects of peace, not beneficiaries, grounding PB/CS in community ownership.



Climate and Fragility Lens – In Thi Qar and Ninewa, peacebuilding was directly linked to climate adaptation, water governance, and anticipatory action, reducing resource-based tensions.



Systems Thinking – PB/CS was positioned as a cross-sectoral driver, connecting peace with livelihoods, education, WASH, and protection to build systemic resilience.



Global and Regional Support – WV's regional and global PB/CS teams provided technical coherence and secured buy-in across the Partnership.



Dedicated Peacebuilding Staff – Having a technical advisor embedded in the national office was crucial for coordination, learning, and strategy implementation.



Faith & Development Integration – Building on WV Iraq's Resilience Through Faith approach, faith leaders were systematically engaged as connectors, co-designers, and advocates. Models such as Channels of Hope, Celebrating Families, and Spiritual Nurture of Children were scaled to address trauma, strengthen interfaith collaboration, and embed inclusion and protection in community systems.



Peacebuilding MEL framework – A tailored Framework measured outcomes such as trust, resilience, and participation, embedding community feedback loops and perception monitoring.

Lessons Learned:

1. Peacebuilding succeeds when it's positioned as a core systems driver, not an add-on.
2. Embedding conflict sensitivity requires leadership accountability and cross-sector buy-in.
3. Evidence-based advocacy is the bridge between analysis and institutional change.
4. Locally-led engagement sustains ownership beyond project cycles.
5. Linking peacebuilding with climate resilience, governance, and service delivery ensures systemic impact beyond community-level interventions.

Conclusion

This experience contributes to WV's global learning on operationalising the HDP Nexus and advancing SDG 16 through integrated peacebuilding approaches. WV Iraq has redefined its operating model by embedding peacebuilding, conflict sensitivity, and faith engagement across all programmes. Driven by leadership and anchored in evidence, this shift has made PB/CS a strategic foundation—resourced, accountable, and inclusive. Grounded in continuous conflict analysis, WV Iraq has moved from fragmented interventions to a system-wide, participatory model that strengthens social fabrics and builds resilience. By making peacebuilding and conflict sensitivity core to its work, WV Iraq is not only fostering resilience and inclusion but also securing the conditions for children to grow, thrive, and envision a future free from violence.

