



2.2. Adapting in response to conflict risks and interactions

The purpose of conflict-sensitive monitoring is to generate timely information to **adapt and respond to the issues identified**. Such data are essential for a conflict-sensitive approach, but can be very sensitive. WASH teams/partners may decide to use such information internally to guide programme adaptation rather than for external reports, to enable greater openness and better-quality responses to monitoring questions. The whole point of collecting monitoring data is that such data should be used as evidence for action or decision-taking – **reflective practice and adaptive programming** are central to conflict sensitivity. Data can be used to:

- **Consider changes to what we are doing and how we are doing it** – through considering data and feedback on grievances, and opinions on the ground about WASH-relevant conflict and interactions identified in the CP Scan and CS/Risk matrix
- **Build capacity** – Monitoring data may be used to justify additional human resources or better-skilled human resources, getting more funding, building better systems or improving the governance and management of a programme
- **Re-prioritize** – Certain aspects of the programme may need to change, based on monitoring data. It may be necessary to change implementing partners, change strategies, and/or make other adjustments⁶).

6 UNICEF, 'Results-Based Management Handbook: Working together for children', 2017, <https://www.unicef.org/rosa/media/10356/file>, pp. 124–125.

7 Conflict Sensitivity Community Hub, "'How To' Guide to Conflict Sensitivity', 2012, <https://www.international-alert.org/app/uploads/2021/09/Conflict-Sensitivity-How-To-Guide-EN-2012.pdf> p. 15

8 Saferworld, 'Conflict-sensitive approaches to development, humanitarian assistance and peacebuilding - A resource pack', 2004, <https://www.saferworld.org.uk/resources/publications/148-conflict-Chapter 3 / Module 3>, pp. 6-7.

Projects can be re-designed or adapted in response to monitoring findings for several reasons, for example if:

- activities are unintentionally triggering tensions or reinforcing divisions in the community and there is a need to revise the implementation strategy to minimize those adverse effects
- underlying tensions in the target groups are hindering people's participation in activities and holding back implementation and there is a need to better understand and address those tensions to achieve progress
- opportunities exist for reinforcing community cohesion or dialogue between divided groups through project activities, and these activities could be capitalized on for the broader success of the intervention.⁷

For a conflict sensitivity strategy to be effective the M&E plan must be designed with, and endorsed by, key stakeholders including donor, management, government counterparts, implementing partners and participating communities. This will increase the chance of project adaptations being implemented effectively and smoothly.

A conflict-sensitive WASH intervention will place a high value on its projects' interactions with the context and on effective adaptation. For example, a project that underperforms on the anticipated number of boreholes drilled may, from a conflict-sensitive perspective, still be considered a success if it contributed positively to conflict dynamics. Given that the definition of a successful project can be controversial, organizations may have difficulty in valuing an under-performing conflict-sensitive project over a well-performing project that unintentionally exacerbates conflict. For an organization to enhance the way it understands success, there must be an institutional willingness and ability to think differently about how it measures impact and to respond to conflict risks with adaptive strategies.⁸