

How WASH can contribute to peace- and state-building

Background to this paper

Recent policy discourse often assumes that the relationship between service delivery and peace- and state-building is reciprocal: conflict and fragility disrupt services, therefore reinstating services can improve the prospects for building peaceful, stable societies and states.ⁱ Yet, the small number of reviews carried out so far means that there is limited evidence regarding the extent to which services can yield peace- or state-building dividends.ⁱⁱ Moreover, the imperatives to build peace remain fundamentally different from those concerned with strengthening state institutions and state-society relations. So the need to distinguish between peace-building and state-building is critical.

This research looked at how (and how far) the delivery of Tearfund's water, sanitation and hygiene services (WASH) can contribute to peace-building and/or state-building in fragile and conflict-affected states (FCAS). It assessed Tearfund programmes in South Sudan and eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).ⁱⁱⁱ

Summary of key findings from the research

- The evidence challenged assumptions that the delivery of WASH services *per se* contributes to peace- and state-building.
- However, WASH programmes can be designed to take better account of – and sometimes make a contribution to – peace- and state-building goals at the local level.
- This requires existing policy commitments to be fulfilled, for instance the commitment to conflict-sensitive analysis and programming. In some cases, it means going further, identifying specific 'entry points' (see below) for engaging with wider processes of peace- or state-building.

There is evidence that the greatest transformative possibilities for peace- and state-building come from investment in, for example, security, justice and education.^{iv} However, this research identified **opportunities for Tearfund WASH programmes, particularly in terms of how they are implemented, to make an important contribution to local-level state-building** and, to a lesser extent, peace-building. Given the prominence of WASH needs in FCAS, such programmes will remain vital in their own right. However, they should be designed so that, in addition to delivering basic services, they *also* contribute towards building peaceful and stable societies, taking advantages of opportunities where they exist.

There are a number of **intermediate entry points where programming decisions can impact on (and be impacted by) the wider processes of peace- and state-building**. In this regard, what seemed most pertinent in Tearfund programmes were key decisions on *how* WASH programmes were implemented (e.g. the siting of infrastructure, beneficiary selection, community participation) and *who* was seen to deliver the service. For example, it is important that, when donors choose to fund service delivery through non-state providers (due to low capacity of the state), this does not embed parallel systems of governance and accountability that threaten to undermine longer-term institution- and state-building.^v This is not necessarily specific to WASH but rather a matter of 'good programming' generally.

NGOs need to implement fully their own procedures for taking a conflict-sensitive approach in all programmes within FCAS – **undertaking thorough and ongoing conflict analysis for all programmes, monitoring their impact on the conflict dynamics and adjusting programmes accordingly**. All responsible humanitarian and development NGOs will have already made this commitment, yet this study suggests that this commitment did not always translate into action for the projects analysed. All too often, conflict and context analyses are either not done at all or are left to 'sit on the shelf', instead of being an ongoing process that is reviewed, with any risks monitored and any positive or negative impacts checked. In some cases, however, analysis was conducted in a participatory way and yielded significant benefits, garnering greater buy-in from stakeholders and providing a forum for them to begin examining their own conflict issues critically. This experience is shared by other organisations working on peace-building, such as Saferworld.^{vi}

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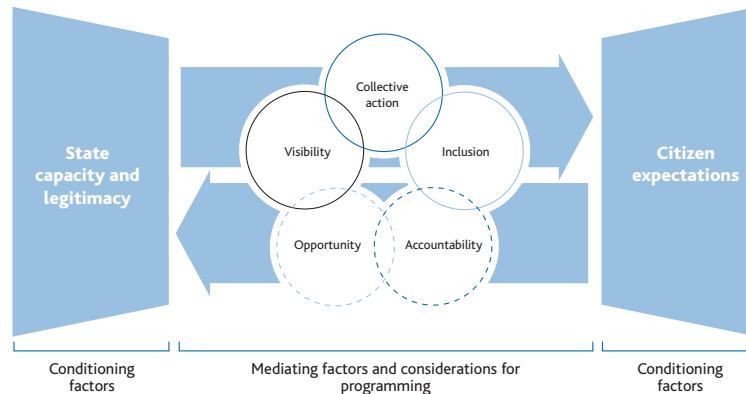
Women, who have returned to South Sudan, collecting water in their host community (2011). Layton Thompson/Tearfund.



In South Sudan, many citizens had high expectations of government to provide services such as water and sanitation (2011). Layton Thompson/Tearfund.

Five entry points for WASH programmes to contribute to peace- or state-building

Based on a literature review, five potential intermediate entry points between WASH programmes and peace- and state-building at a local level were identified (see diagram below). These take place within the broader 'conditioning factors' of citizen expectations and state capacity and legitimacy, which frame the context for WASH programming.



Potential tensions and trade-offs can arise when NGOs and donors are seen as most visible in delivering services. Aweil town, South Sudan (2011). Layton Thompson/Tearfund.

Identifying the five entry points in DRC and South Sudan

WASH programmes in DRC and South Sudan were measured against the five entry points to identify which entry points existed in practice and could therefore be best exploited in future programming. It is important to note that more evidence was found for 'visibility' and 'collective action', and more rigorous research is required to test further all five of these entry points and to consider their applicability to other sectors. The next section outlines some practical examples of these interactions between WASH programmes and peace- and state-building at a local level. The highly contextualised nature of FCAS means that it is impossible to create a peace- and state-building 'blueprint', but the final section of this paper draws on these findings to make some recommendations.

Visibility – *Examining the relative visibility of different stakeholders delivering services, assessing the risks of high visibility of non-state actors compared with that of the state.*

Potential tensions and trade-offs can arise when NGOs are seen as most visible in delivering services; these need to be considered and – where they undermine institution- and state-building – mitigated. With an estimated 95 per cent of services provided by NGOs in DRC and 75 per cent in South Sudan, the high visibility of NGOs is unsurprising. Yet, their visibility has wider implications for state-building and therefore presents a challenge for NGOs.

In South Sudan, communities had higher expectations of government than in DRC, which perhaps reflects the fact that the South Sudanese government is still relatively new and enjoying a period of 'grace', buoyed by independence. Yet, all those interviewed in both countries identified NGOs as responsible for the majority of service delivery. Participants acknowledged that NGOs need to be visible, partly to be accountable for their work. But it was also clear that NGOs are not always perceived to be responsive, fully consultative or accountable to local communities. This was a common complaint, although not one levelled directly at Tearfund's work. There were, for example, instances of boreholes being poorly sited, without consultation with local stakeholders.

Collective action and collaboration – *Identifying capacities for collective action and collaboration between and within different groups for the delivery of services.*

In Goja village, Central Equatoria state, South Sudan, relative improved stability has made possible some longer-term developmental approaches. Tearfund's partner, Across, for example, has adopted Tearfund's Church and Community Mobilisation (CCM) approach. This involves local community members and church leaders acting as facilitators to empower the local population to consider how they can meet

their own needs, and not just those related to WASH. Key strengths of the CCM approach include its potential to strengthen societal structures, to build the resilience of communities to meet their own immediate needs and to establish links with a range of local actors including church leaders, chiefs and local government officials. In this approach, there is potential to support local processes of state- and society-building, by bringing together different groups (inside and outside the state) around shared service-delivery problems. This seems to be a valuable approach in contexts where there are significant constraints regarding capacity and resources.

Inclusion – *Mapping groups who are marginalised from accessing or using services and identifying conflict risks arising from their marginalisation.*

In some border areas of South Sudan, there are high levels of insecurity and tension between returnee and host communities and a lack of interaction between them; there is also little interaction between such communities and the government. Expectations of what government should do were found to be higher in returnee communities than in host ones. Returnees also expressed feelings of marginalisation. One resident of the Apada returnee camp, Northern Bahr el Ghazal, said: 'The government has forgotten the returnee communities.' Similarly, host communities expressed resentment and there were examples of competition such as clashes in the host village in queues for water. The local *payam** office was accused of favouring certain communities and tensions flared up into disputes over usage and payments for maintenance. This highlights the importance of understanding different groups' perceptions in terms of who 'receives services', as well as the need to map underlying tensions and conflict risks, for instance in choosing the siting of provision or selecting beneficiaries.

Accountability – *Identifying the nature of accountability relationships between different groups (including local chiefs and faith leaders) for service delivery.*

Few examples of this entry point were found in the two case studies, although accountability is closely linked to 'collective action'. Building on collective action made possible through strengthened societal relations, communities can find that they feel more confident about engaging with local leaders and government officials and, potentially, about holding them to account.

Respondents in DRC said they did not necessarily expect the government to be accountable to them. One said: 'We do not depend on the government. The government does nothing. We prefer the NGOs. You see the state of the roads... the government sees this and does nothing.' The accountability that did exist was between Tearfund and the communities it was working with. While not a negative thing in itself, this relationship did not help state-building; rather, it reinforced communities' distrust of the state. Importantly, in both countries, some Tearfund programmes worked through a range of groups who did have some roles linked to accountability (whether formally or informally), including working with local chiefs and faith leaders. Mapping the realities of accountability relationships in a particular context, and identifying entry points to work with or build on these relationships, may be a useful approach to support longer-term institution- and state-building.

Opportunity – *Identifying any entry points where broader links can be made to create economic opportunities or other such openings for citizens.*

No concrete examples of this were observed during the field research. In economic terms, the time-saving and health benefits of water supply and sanitation services outweigh the costs, according to WHO research. These same benefits may increase citizens' ability to participate in the economic and social opportunities of 'normal life'.^{vii} However, the way services are delivered may also open up opportunities, potentially breaking persistent poverty cycles that have been linked to fragility. Where a sanitation marketing approach is adopted, for example, there may be economic opportunities around the provision of supplies, such as latrine slabs – although this was not observed during the field research and remains a hypothetical entry point in need of further testing.



Maper, on the outskirts of Aweil town, is a host community in South Sudan that has been under stress from returnees from Sudan (2011). Layton Thompson/Tearfund.

*South Sudan consists of ten states which are sub-divided into first counties, then *payams*.



A water supply provided by a Tearfund partner in an IDP camp in Minova, eastern DRC. An estimated 95 per cent of services are provided by NGOs in DRC (2009). Richard Hanson/Tearfund.

Policy implications for donors and NGOs

- 1. The default position for donors and NGOs should be one where peace- and state-building are explored. However, there must be realistic expectations of what is achievable and when such an approach is appropriate.**

Drawing from Tearfund's experience, there may be greater opportunities to work 'on', rather than just 'in', situations of conflict and fragility. This means taking into account peace- and/or state-building dynamics as a default position, rather than such an approach being an 'optional extra', and one that is largely ignored.

- 2. There is a need for a shift in culture and routine working practices so that NGOs operationalise fully conflict-sensitive approaches for all service delivery.**

Tearfund's experience was that its staff could do more to recognise peace- and state-building dynamics as 'part of their job' when working in FCAS, alongside service delivery. As a minimum requirement, this requires fully implementing procedures for taking a conflict-sensitive approach in all programmes within FCAS – undertaking thorough and ongoing conflict analysis for all programmes, monitoring their impact on the conflict dynamics and adjusting programmes accordingly. It may also require strengthening a range of skills, from technical WASH expertise to forms of conflict sensitivity, political economy and governance skills.

- 3. To help bring about this cultural shift, there is a need for funding mechanisms to build in greater emphasis on conflict analysis, taking account of peace- and state-building and identifying 'hybrid models'.**

This could include, for example, adopting longer-term and more adaptable funding mechanisms which support approaches blending humanitarian and development work and even a 'hybrid' of the two (i.e. infrastructure investment, alongside forms of community engagement). This allows for flexibility to respond to changing conflict dynamics and adopt longer-term approaches that lend themselves more readily to incorporating peace- and state-building goals. It makes particular sense in the context of protracted fragility and violence such as in South Sudan and DRC, which may move back and forth along the humanitarian-development continuum. To achieve the changes in culture and working practices mentioned, funding stipulations could include consideration of whether peace- or state-building aims could be included in WASH programmes in FCAS and, if not, why not.

- 4. Consideration of how services are delivered is crucial**

How a WASH programme is delivered is fundamental to whether it can contribute to peace- or state-building. Therefore, there is a need to identify which processes, or methods, for WASH service delivery best lend themselves to supporting some of the intermediate entry points for peace- and state-building described.

- 5. Addressing visibility questions**

Although 'visibility' can be linked narrowly to the use of logos and branding (for both donors and NGOs), it is also about communities' perceptions. More attention should be paid to the question of how different levels of a FCAS government could be made more visible. The appropriateness of supporting governments that may be predatory towards their own citizens also needs to be assessed. Nevertheless, NGOs and donors do need to consider how to foster ownership both by communities and by the state, and how programmes can support improved state-society relationships.

ⁱ Mason, N (2012) *Relationships between water supply, sanitation and hygiene service delivery and peace-building and state-building. A preliminary review of the literature*, ODI, page iii

ⁱⁱ Ndaruhutse, S et al (2012) *Synthesis research report. State-building, peace-building and service delivery in fragile and conflict-affected states*. CfBT, Save the Children & Practical Action Consulting. Also, Carpenter, S, Slater, R and Mallett, R (2012) *Social protection and basic services in fragile and conflict-affected situations*. Working Paper 8 of Secure Livelihoods Research Consortium

ⁱⁱⁱ See: Wild, L and Mason, N (2012) *Examining the role of WASH services within peace- and state-building processes. Findings from Tearfund programmes in the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Republic of South Sudan*. ODI. Also, Kooy, M and Wild, L (2012) *Tearfund WASH service delivery in South Sudan: contributions to peace-building and state-building*. ODI. Also, Kooy, M and Bailey, S (2012) *Tearfund WASH service delivery in the Democratic Republic of Congo: contributions to peace-building and state-building*. ODI

^{iv} World Bank (2011) *World development report 2011: conflict, security and development*. Also, World Bank and OECD (2008) *Service delivery in fragile situations: key concepts, findings and lessons*

^v The World Bank's Water and Sanitation Programme calls this a 'capacity conundrum': Water and Sanitation Programme (2011) *Delivering water supply and sanitation in fragile states: the transition from emergency to development*. Conference report, page 2

^{vi} Saferworld and Conciliation Resources (2012) *From conflict analysis to peacebuilding impact. Lessons from the People's Peacemaking Perspectives project*

^{vii} Hutton, G (2012) *Global costs and benefits of drinking-water supply and sanitation interventions to reach the MDG target and universal coverage*. Geneva: World Health Organisation