



NAVIGATING THE NEXUS:

A Brighter Future for Children in
Urban Contexts in Lebanon

World Vision

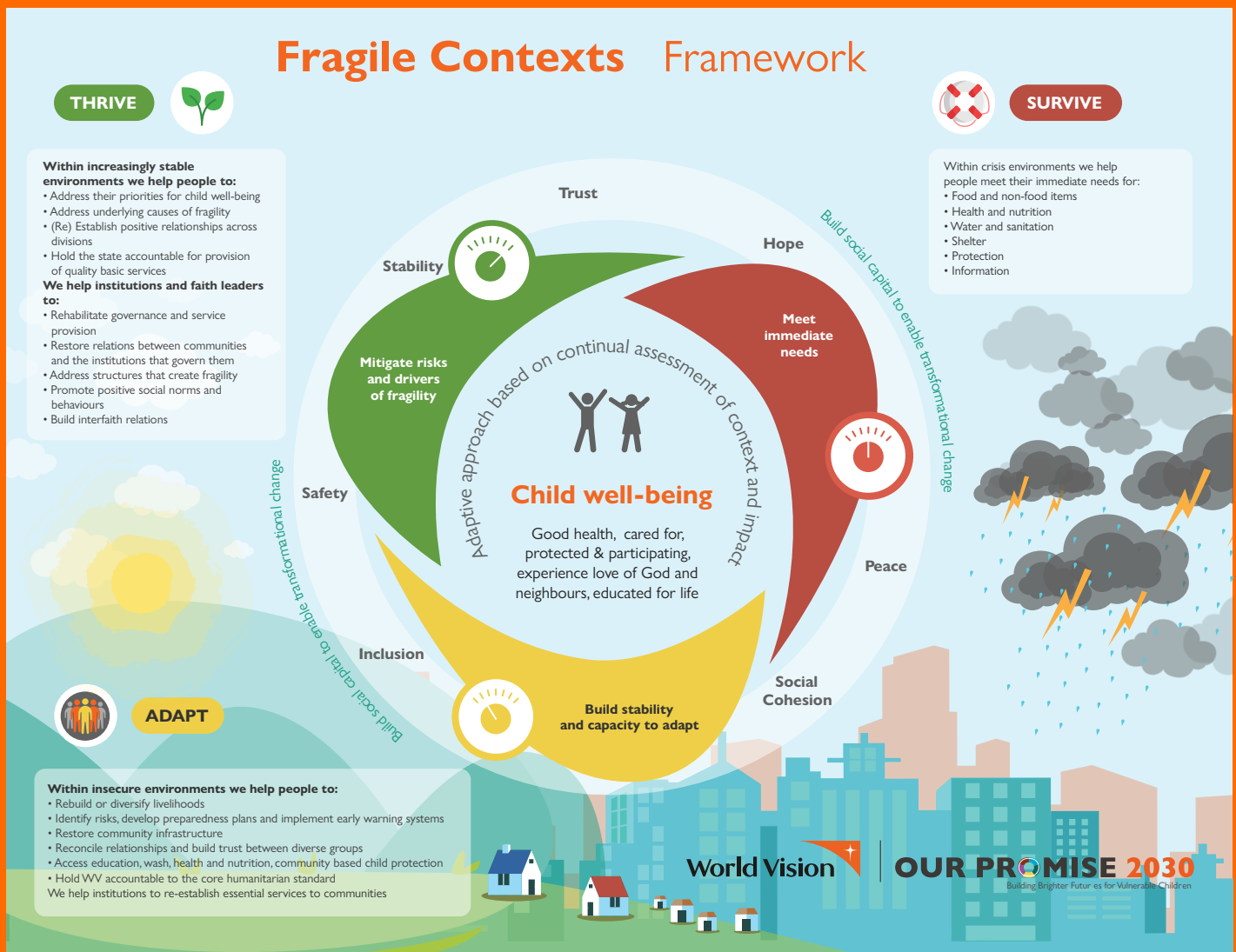


Our approach
to fragile contexts

A brighter future for children: World Vision's Fragile Contexts Approach

Two billion people live in countries where development outcomes are deeply affected by fragility, conflict and violence and which are some of the most dangerous places in the world to be a child. In these fragile contexts children face extreme levels of abuse, exploitation, deprivation and violence, often for generations.

Through its global strategy, Our Promise, World Vision is aligning its humanitarian, development, peacebuilding and advocacy efforts to address fragility. Based on more than 70 years of experience working in fragile contexts, World Vision has developed a Fragile Contexts Programme Approach (see diagram below) to support its efforts to expand and deepen its impact. Its approach has informed global frameworks, such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus¹, and, in turn, is informed by them. World Vision's Fragile Contexts Programme Approach (FCPA) has been piloted in multiple countries, with more planned in the future.² World Vision's goal is to make a sustainable difference in the lives of the most vulnerable girls and boys so they can survive, adapt and thrive now and in the future despite fragility. At the heart of the FCPA is the agility to shift from meeting immediate humanitarian needs to addressing root causes even in the context of continued fragility, in order to support transformative change whenever possible, so that communities can build resilience to shocks over the long term.



1.

Introduction

Two billion people live in countries where development outcomes are deeply affected by fragility, conflict and violence, and which are some of the most dangerous places in the world to be a child. Additionally, the causes of multidimensional fragility are often more intensive in cities, and urban environments contribute to unique manifestations of fragility.

After decades of civil war, Lebanon was already one of the most fragile countries in the world. Although Lebanon is an upper-middle income country where over 88 per cent of the population live in urban areas,¹ Lebanon is ranked as the 34th most fragile state in the world,² and its position is expected to deteriorate with the recent emergence of concurrent crises.³ The Syrian war, economic and financial crises, political instability, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the explosion at the Port of Beirut have only further exacerbated the fragility of the country.

Given the rising need for humanitarian support and the government's inability to meet this demand for assistance, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) including World Vision have been challenged to fill the gap. Emerging from the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit's discussion around improving connectivity between humanitarian and development efforts, the international community calls for a more comprehensive approach that effectively tackles factors of heightening fragility by linking the nexus of humanitarian, development and peacebuilding efforts on a programmatic level. This triple nexus is an operational framework that aims to overcome siloed, output-oriented aid operations through a coordinated effort between the relevant actors implementing these types of programming.⁴ By approaching humanitarian, development and peacebuilding efforts as interconnected, it not only addresses immediate needs but also builds resilience to future shocks.⁵

In line with the nexus framework, World Vision is breaking internal siloes and strategically developing new, agile ways of working that span the humanitarian, development and peacebuilding nexus in these unique and unpredictable settings. This has led to

the development of World Vision's Fragile Contexts Programme Approach (FCPA), which began in 2017. Evidence shows that the FCPA allows frontline teams to work effectively in places that were previously judged to be too risky for a long-term programming presence. The new approach also enables World Vision to work with partners to address immediate survival needs without neglecting longer-term investments that address the systemic causes of conflict and vulnerability and that build peace. These interventions reduce the impact of recurrent shocks and stresses, which is essential for development and child well-being gains to be sustainable.

Rising fragility under concurrent crises and a high urbanisation rate make Lebanon a uniquely challenging context that has an urgent need to realise a better nexus approach to address urban fragility. While World Vision Lebanon (WVL) has not yet implemented World Vision's FCPA, WVL has adopted principles of the FCPA in their programming related to the humanitarian-development-peacebuilding nexus. This case study examines WVL's current urban programming to understand how World Vision is operationalising the nexus in fragile urban contexts. The study identifies enabling factors for success as well as several barriers that constrain the realisation of a nexus approach. To overcome these barriers, the paper also provides recommendations for the Government of Lebanon, donor agencies and international organisations on how to fill the gaps that currently exist and strengthen nexus programming.

It is predicted that by 2030, 80 per cent of people experiencing extreme poverty will be living in fragile contexts,⁶ and a staggering 96 per cent of urban growth is expected to take place in developing countries in cities that already face fragility.⁷ There is tremendous need to address both the immediate humanitarian needs and the root causes through effective collaboration across the triple nexus, and World Vision is well-positioned to enact this approach for the well-being of children and communities in Lebanon's unique urban context.

2.

Fragility and urban contexts in Lebanon

The origin of fragility in Lebanon dates back to the Lebanese Civil War (1975–1990), which resulted in massive physical destruction, an anaemic economy and fiscal challenges, as well as a disruptive governance structure.⁸ Despite economic development during the post-war period, instability increased as political tensions rose and the country suffered from spill over effects of the Syrian civil war, ultimately shifting aid organisations' focus back to humanitarian assistance.⁹

More than 10 years into the Syrian conflict, Lebanon's fragility has been further exacerbated by a series of crises including political turmoil, economic and financial crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the explosion at the Port of Beirut.¹⁰ The compounded impact of these events has placed a significant strain on both vulnerable Lebanese and displaced populations including Syrian and Palestinian refugees, many of whom live in densely-packed housing in low-income urban neighbourhoods or refugee camps and also experience virtually no government protection.^{11,12}

As the Syrian conflict continues and refugees remain displaced in Lebanon, the country has faced high unemployment rates, a rise in security threats, increased pressure on infrastructure and basic services, and densification of low-income urban areas.¹³ As a result, low-income vulnerable Lebanese communities are exposed to shrinking livelihoods opportunities and a deterioration in the standard of living.¹⁴

Additionally, Lebanon's vulnerabilities exist against the backdrop of political fragility, with a government divided

across sectarian lines that reflect the country's major religious groups.¹⁵ Without effective macroeconomic policies to address Lebanon's long-standing fiscal and economic challenges, coupled with economic pressure caused by the influx of Syrian refugees, the Lebanese economy collapsed in 2019.¹⁶ As a result, Lebanon is currently grappling with significant challenges such as socioeconomic disparities, informal and exploitative labour conditions (especially prevalent for high-risk youth), and a declining educational system.¹⁷

The COVID-19 pandemic and the 2020 explosion at the Port of Beirut have added additional strain to the ongoing crises. World Vision's COVID-19 assessments estimate that 65 per cent of households in Lebanon have struggled to meet basic household needs since the outbreak of the pandemic.¹⁸ The pandemic overstretched national healthcare and social support systems, exacerbated the economic crisis, and impeded the provision of adequate assistance to vulnerable populations living in cities.^{19,20} There were also harsher restrictions imposed on refugees, increasing their vulnerability.²¹ In 2019, the economy collapsed, precipitating widespread banking failure, sovereign debt default, currency collapse, and soaring inflation.²² The economic downturn has led to higher levels of unemployment, a deterioration of government revenues, and additional pressure on public services.²³ The Beirut explosion in 2020 devastated the capital and created additional humanitarian need in an already fragile urban context, requiring some form of assistance for an estimated 500,000 individuals.²⁴



3.

World Vision’s work in Lebanon

World Vision has been active in Lebanon since 1975, first responding to the rising demand for emergency relief after the outbreak of the Lebanese Civil War.²⁵ Through its 45-year community presence, World Vision Lebanon (WVL) has developed a community-based approach that leverages its connection with a range of stakeholders including local governments, faith leaders, schools, youth groups and local NGOs.²⁶

WVL’s first urban programme was implemented in 2001, focusing on education, health and peacebuilding. In 2009, WVL was selected as a pilot country for new global research on urban poverty initiated by World Vision Australia.²⁷ After five years of project implementation and research – including peacebuilding and youth engagement projects in Greater Beirut – WVL became one of the first countries in World Vision to start a citywide urban approach.²⁸ Today, WVL’s citywide operations in Greater Beirut focus on a variety of programmatic interventions across multiple sectors to meet immediate needs while also building resilience and sustainable futures for vulnerable children and communities. The challenge currently facing WVL is to assist vulnerable individuals suffering from urban fragility (such as refugees and low-income Lebanese), in tandem with operationalising the nexus, given the organisational effort to strengthen linkages between humanitarian, development and peacebuilding efforts.

World Vision’s current operations in Lebanon are structured around providing emergency relief to vulnerable Lebanese households and refugee communities, as well as implementing development-oriented and social cohesion interventions in both urban and rural areas.²⁹ In 2021, WVL implemented a range of development, humanitarian and disaster relief projects, with the number of beneficiaries WVL provided assistance to totalling 1,023,710. The organisation particularly identifies the following areas as their priority sectors:³⁰



Child Protection: WVL is committed to creating a protective environment that supports the well-being of children by focusing on ending violence against children (specifically violent child discipline at home and in schools), child labour, mental health psychosocial support to children and caregivers, and working with faith leaders and key community stakeholders to promote child protection.³¹ In 2021, WVL’s child protection programmes reached 461 individuals, including 296 children.



Education: Regarding education, WVL aims to improve access to and quality of education so that children have the skills and knowledge to succeed. Through its education programmes, WVL provided community-based early childhood education to 3,864 beneficiaries in 2021, including 2,017 children.



WASH: WASH is another priority sector for WVL as they seek to address gaps in water infrastructure, basic sanitation facilities and hygiene so children and communities can enjoy good health and be better protected from disease and infection. WASH programming focuses on humanitarian WASH (water distribution, construction of latrines, etc.), hygiene promotion and community mobilisation (including on COVID-19) and supporting institutions to strengthen infrastructure.³² In 2021, WVL provided 47,582 beneficiaries with WASH programming, including 28,644 children.



Basic Assistance: Basic assistance is the priority sector where WVL spares most resources and supports most individuals to help improve livelihoods and resilience. WVL aims to improve economic opportunities for host and refugee communities by focusing on food and multipurpose cash assistance, cash-for-work assistance as temporary income generation, improved access to labour markets, and helping improve production and access to markets and finance.³³ Total livelihoods beneficiaries in 2021 was 7,887, with 3,829 of those being children, and cash assistance beneficiaries totalled 592,773, with 312,612 child beneficiaries.



Recent Crises: WVL has also responded to the COVID-19 pandemic and reached out to 247,000 individuals to alleviate its impact on the most vulnerable population.³⁴ This included preventive measures to limit the spread of the virus and strengthening health systems and workers.³⁵ In response to the August 2020 Beirut explosion, WVL has provided emergency relief to 154,000 individuals to meet basic needs including food, shelters and hygiene supplies.³⁶ Psychological first aid projects were also implemented to mitigate the impact of the explosion.³⁷



Operationalising the triple nexus through WVL's programming

Keeping children safe now and protecting future generations

WVL's child protection work aims to protect children from violence at the community level and to advocate for stronger protection measures at the national level.³⁸ At the local level, the WVL's child protection programming aims to build capacity by providing various life skills and positive parenting sessions for caregivers.³⁹ Additionally, children and youth committees facilitated by WVL advocate with their local government to influence budget decisions and to co-design interventions based on research to strengthen the protective environment for children and enhance the built environment. At the national level, WVL facilitates a collaborative platform for partner organisations to oversee and inspire ongoing child protection efforts and advocacy strategies to further strengthen child protection.⁴⁰ In this way, the child protection programme seeks to both address immediate needs through interventions as well as build capacity for future protection through advocacy.⁴¹ WVL continues to build on the Beirut Port explosion response to strengthen child protection programming across the nexus, by

ensuring immediate humanitarian needs are fulfilled while focusing on addressing the root causes of child abuse, exploitation, neglect and violence. During the response, immediate psychosocial support and psychological first aid was provided to children and caregivers at the same time national protection curricula were amended, local partnerships and networks were activated, and their capacities were strengthened to cover the immediate protection needs but also contribute to enhance the protective environment for children. WVL will continue to expand the scope of its child protection programming, emphasising opportunities to reorient existing child protection programming toward nexus linkages, including economic and livelihood programmes targeted toward parents.

Meeting basic needs and supporting the local economy through cash assistance

In response to the Beirut explosion, WVL implemented a multi-purpose cash assistance programme for those affected, transitioning away from initial emergency responses like the provision of food. Through cash assistance, WVL targeted vulnerable households across all populations, regardless of nationality, and partnered with the local government to help them meet basic needs. This cash assistance also simultaneously

supported livelihoods through the circulation of money in the local community (shops, services, etc.) which strengthened the local economy, and, in turn, benefitted the entire community. Additionally, cash for businesses approach was used to support micro and small business owners to recover post the Beirut Port explosion to reactivate their businesses in order to sustain their own livelihoods on the long term. This intervention, situated in a high-diversity area, also served to alleviate social tensions between refugee and host communities, was implemented in tandem with other partner organisations, and helped increase trust in the local government through their involvement. WVL's cash assistance programme demonstrated the ability of emergency aid to function cross-dimensionally across the nexus, by serving both short-term humanitarian aid objectives post crisis and longer-term development goals in supporting the local economy and the livelihoods of families, as well as social cohesion objectives in already fragmented urban communities.

Building back better after the Beirut explosion

WVL's depth of experience with urban contexts enabled them to respond to the immediate humanitarian crisis as well as focus on long-term interventions for resiliency following the Beirut explosion. WVL provided shelter rehabilitation and necessary household items to those affected but also focused on development interventions by including the most vulnerable houses within the same neighbourhoods that were structurally inadequate due to unplanned urbanisation and densification due to the refugee influx. This approach included partnering with other NGOs, the municipality and the landowners to ensure that the most marginalised were not evicted and did not experience increased rent prices post-renovation. WVL's shelter rehabilitation also focused on child protection measures to ensure the safety of children in their homes and the WASH aspect to ensure water and energy conservation measures were applied not only for environmental purposes but also for the basic provision of water in these vulnerable communities.

Peacebuilding while empowering youth and improving communities

WVL's Youth RESOLVE is a peacebuilding-oriented project targeting youth that began in 2017 with the objective of strengthening social stability among youth by empowering them to become leading actors in their communities. The project has proven successful at improving social cohesion amidst tension in Lebanon, as it involves both host communities and refugee youth. In addition to contributing to peacebuilding directly, this intervention operates across the nexus



by addressing short-term humanitarian needs for disadvantaged host communities and refugee youth that were affected by the crises in Lebanon as well as contributing to longer-term development objectives. This was done through building youth capacities on a range of professional and soft skills, engaging them in networking opportunities and meaningful youth participation focused interventions such as involving them in decisions affecting their lives by participating in local budgeting processes, organising local advocacy campaigns, utilising technology to generate data on the youth needs – which is followed by co-designing and implementing quick impact projects to enhance their local communities. The success of Youth RESOLVE stems from its ability to partner with the local government and the youth to establish youth municipal committees that work collaboratively to influence decision-making at the municipal level, positively impacting social stability as a result.

4.

Enabling factors for successful work to strengthen the nexus

1. Long-term investment in understanding urban contexts generates ability to adjust programming to emerging fragility

As one of the first offices in World Vision to focus on urban programming, WV Lebanon has a long and deep history of operating in urban contexts for humanitarian and development programmes. The organisation invests intentional efforts to better understand urban contexts, urbanisation trends and fragility in this setting, enabling them to make necessary adjustments to programming. These efforts include continuous research, community engagement, and strengthening partner and governmental relationships to better address child well-being issues that are the result of unplanned urbanisation, fragility, climate change and poverty. WV Lebanon also built on organisational experience to better integrate development, humanitarian and peacebuilding interventions as a result of practical engagement in the protracted Syrian crisis, the COVID-19 response, the Beirut explosion and the recent economic and political crisis. This rich history of investment in understanding and working in urban contexts allows WV Lebanon to operate with a breadth of knowledge, resulting in nexus programming that is able to adjust to emerging fragility.

2. Localising responses ensures sustainable, conflict-sensitive programming

WV Lebanon pursues sustainable and conflict-sensitive responses by leveraging connections to a range of local stakeholders, including municipalities, local NGOs and faith-based organisations. The close relationships maintained by WV Lebanon staff establish the necessary foundation for implementing interventions across development and peacebuilding dimensions. WV Lebanon also assists local actors by providing capacity-building for staff for specific interventions and sharing efficient programme development and evaluation methods. Coupled with the sustainable nature of interventions, WV Lebanon also implements conflict-sensitive

approaches that create a foundation on which long-term programming across the nexus is grounded.⁴² To better operationalise the nexus, WV Lebanon is building on the existing partnerships in development programmes to scale them up for humanitarian responses. This approach also helps partners realise how resources and efforts can be combined to maximise impact with the least possible resources through joining humanitarian and development objectives.

3. Engaging youth as an approach to mitigating social tension and driving linkages across the nexus

Youth engagement is essential to the success of forward-looking development and peacebuilding interventions as it mitigates social tension and contributes to long-term societal changes. WV Lebanon's work reflects the importance of engaging youth, as WV Lebanon programmes explicitly assist young people in reaching their full potential which, in turn, benefits the entire community.

Youth engagement in peacebuilding initiatives is critical to successful programming across nexus dimensions, as they are among the most likely to exacerbate tension and initiate conflict among communities. By empowering youth through formal social cohesion initiatives, WV Lebanon and other organisations are able to directly stem the tensions stoked by youth populations. Because young people play an important role in influencing household decision-making, peacebuilding efforts targeted at youth also have positive indirect effects on a broader range of populations.⁴³ Similarly, youth have the potential to push established political and social systems of urban communities to evolve, as young people often introduce new perspectives and drive innovation.⁴⁴ Perhaps most importantly, youth populations represent the cohort of future power, so their empowerment through constructive peacebuilding programming allows organisations like WV Lebanon to directly engage communities and facilitate societal change.^{45 46}

5.

Barriers to successful work to strengthen the nexus

1. Severity of concurrent crises pushes humanitarian need to the forefront, limiting forward-looking planning

The ongoing economic crisis, recurrent political turmoil, and the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic have precipitated a significant deterioration of living standards in Lebanon. Coupled with the impact of the Beirut explosion, it is estimated that more than a half of the Lebanese population now lives below the poverty line.⁴⁷ In response to the crises, WWL and other NGOs have played a key role in providing emergency relief due to the government's inability to take on this role.⁴⁸

The re-emergence of acute emergency needs in the country has challenged WWL's ability to immediately find the balance between direct aid provision and sustaining the long-term development focus. WWL staff highlighted that with the emergence of any crisis, immediate human-

itarian needs must be prioritised and fulfilled in order for the organisation to keep engaging in conversations regarding development programming. This is where the nexus operationalisation comes into play. It enables the organisation to leverage its long term presence, existing partnerships and relationships of trust with the communities to strategically utilise resources and design nexus interventions which cover urgent needs while also adopting a forward-looking development and peacebuilding focus. An example of this approach is the way in which WWL's Beirut Port explosion response cash assistance operations were designed to meet immediate needs while maintaining long-term perspectives.

2. Sectarianism and clientelism⁴⁹ undermine the linkage of nexus objectives

Public services in Lebanon are divided by sect and, as power structures among sects change, initiatives that



involve public institutions are consistently forced to restart after considering new power balances, fundamentally impeding the stability of interventions. Sectarianism presents additional challenges in urban environments, as more groups are simultaneously impacted by the changing power structure of the government.

Peacebuilding efforts are also affected by sectarianism as sect leaders are often reluctant to establish peacebuilding agendas because of concerns that improved social cohesion comes at the expense of their power and influence. This reluctance limits how significantly WWL's interventions are able to affect community change.

The clientelism of excluding unaffiliated groups from access to basic public services and activities has also impacted WWL's ability to reach the most vulnerable, exemplified by municipalities refusal to allow WWL or other organisations to develop water networks using existing public infrastructure for Syrians living in informal tented settlements. This decision left WWL with no choice but to continue unsustainable and high-cost water trucking to meet humanitarian needs, exemplifying the limitations that exist due to the country's sectarian divisions. Other examples include restrictions from local government on specific groups (e.g., refugees) in terms of movement as well as access to public spaces in an informal manner, like public gardens and playgrounds, with restrictions based on verbal rules as opposed to formal written policy. Such instances of clientelism have limited WWL and other organisations in how they can implement nexus programming in these contexts.

3. Tensions between and among host and refugee communities limit peacebuilding objectives

Social tensions in Lebanon are currently rising, especially in urban areas that host a large number of refugees among host communities.⁵⁰ Amidst a growing refugee population and the resulting shift in balance of religious and political affiliations in cities, host communities have also expressed fear about dilution of their culture and values, as well as an increase in violence.⁵¹ The international community's obligation to assist refugees further fuels frustration among the Lebanese people when domestic socioeconomic conditions deteriorate. Additionally, as a result of the economic crisis, the level of poverty and lack of basic needs is increasing for host communities, causing tensions among the Lebanese themselves and also exacerbating the perception that refugees deprive local populations of employment opportunities and raise the cost of living.⁵² During the Beirut Explosion response, there were many instances where host community members who were excluded from aid – as they didn't meet the criteria – contributed to heightened tensions in distribution sites. In spite of WWL's ongoing peacebuilding

efforts, the deeply fragmented relationship between and among the communities impedes the progress made by social cohesion programming in urban areas.

4. Funding gap manifests across nexus dimensions

Efforts to adopt flexible and long-term triple nexus funding have been limited. Current funding mechanisms fail to align with the multi-year flexible approach emphasised by the nexus framework⁵³ because many humanitarian funding streams are allotted for a short-term period and are only to be used for humanitarian purposes.⁵⁴ However, because on-the-ground contexts in Lebanon are not neatly differentiated along humanitarian, development and peacebuilding dimensions (especially in urban contexts),⁵⁵ the nexus approach challenges this type of traditional funding.

Additionally, development and peacebuilding funding have been lower priorities for donors because international funders continue to view Lebanon through the lens of the Syrian crisis response. Therefore, most funding remains earmarked for refugee assistance, although host populations have increasingly been included among beneficiary populations since the outbreak of COVID-19 and the Port of Beirut explosion. Development and peacebuilding interventions are deprioritised with donors due to the diminished clarity of needs and reduced visibility of programme outcomes, as results often only appear after years of consistent intervention.

The significant delay in generating donor interest across humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding dimensions at the outset of interventions thus presents a substantial challenge for programming effectively across the nexus.

5. Partnering structure lacks official mechanisms for efficiency

A lack of mutually beneficial data sharing, joint analysis and assessment structures, and established mechanisms for cooperation with local partners impedes programming across nexus dimensions. Coordination typically takes place in an unofficial capacity and in response to specific needs due to its significant resource requirements and because of the lengthy administrative processes required to reach agreements. For local NGO partners with limited resources, the addition of time-consuming administrative work presents a particular burden. Despite the convenience of flexible ad hoc cooperation, the absence of official mechanisms for cooperation between WWL and local partners could produce programmatic redundancy and impede future collaboration, resulting in lost opportunities for mutually beneficial partnership.

6.

Conclusion and recommendations

Facing a number of unprecedented challenges, Lebanon today is in need of working at the nexus between humanitarian emergency response and longer-perspective development and peacebuilding activities in order to sustainably support vulnerable families and communities. WVL is committed to serving the most vulnerable populations through agile, responsive and integrated nexus programming in the short and long term. This case study identified WVL's advantage of having a long presence operating in urban contexts, strong and diverse partnerships, and the ability to leverage youth involvement, providing opportunities for the nexus to be operationalised in urban fragile contexts. However, the nexus could be further realised and strengthened to improve the well-being of children and families. Recommendations that address the challenges WVL face are as follows:

1. Partnerships and planning

The Government of Lebanon should

- Actively coordinate with more key players in civil society that provide a range of support in order to (1) facilitate unconstrained access to vulnerable populations and ongoing humanitarian, development and peacebuilding solutions; (2) avoid duplication of services; (3) and ensure strategic targeting and plans are put in place jointly with the key actors.
- Encourage round tables and discussions among sect leaders to consider their engagement with communities and NGOs to facilitate smooth and efficient transitions of power as well as participation in peacebuilding projects to strengthen social cohesion.

Donor agencies, multilateral organisations and international financial institutions should

- Provide opportunities for actors operating across the nexus to coordinate interventions through a variety of partnering approaches – from formal consortia to informal information-sharing meetings focused on ensuring a holistic approach and working towards collective outcomes.

- Partner with the government representatives when relevant to ensure messages are in full alignment with government messages to avoid confusion among humanitarian actors.

International organisations should

- Intentionally engage with organisations that have experience with the triple nexus and pursue formal opportunities for knowledge sharing and collaboration. Building such partnerships will lead to significant improvement in operationalising the triple nexus. It will also help ensure effective integration of interventions to meet the immediate humanitarian needs of the affected communities while strategically tackling the causes of fragility through designing and implementing long-term development interventions.
- Share insights into and experience with the triple nexus with local stakeholders and enable cross-nexus operations at the broader community level beyond just those involved in interventions. Building capacity of local stakeholders facilitates the establishment of city-level nexus operations for long-term operations and enables international organisations to effectively operationalise the nexus through productive partnerships in the short-term as well.

2. Programming approaches

The Government of Lebanon should

- Reverse any restrictions that prevent NGOs from reaching out to the most vulnerable people – including refugees – and allow organisations to help every individual meet minimum basic needs under any circumstances.

Donor agencies and international financial institutions should

- Actively engage in policy dialogue at national, subnational and city levels where possible to emphasise the need for long-term development funding and peacebuilding programming to be connected with short-term humanitarian interventions, including conflict resolution and social cohesion interventions.

International organisations should

- Take the triple nexus approach into consideration when initiating any kind of projects. Even under acute crises, it is ideal that a longer-term perspective would be maintained to avoid reversals of development and peacebuilding progresses. The nexus-oriented culture could be attained, for example, by training staff in development and peacebuilding aspects, as many organisations already have humanitarian expertise given the long history of responding to emergencies in Lebanon.
- Prioritise peacebuilding efforts. Social tensions between refugee and host communities are one of the biggest obstacles hindering the linkages of the triple nexus. Although peacebuilding is less 'visible' compared to humanitarian and development programmes, peacebuilding is a necessary element for successful triple nexus operation in the long run.

3. Funding and financing***The Government of Lebanon should***

- Regain donor community's trust in the government in order to create an environment where donor agencies would be able to confidently invest long-term and commit to multi-year nexus funding.

Donor agencies and international financial institutions should

- Develop sustainable, flexible, multi-year, and multi-sectoral programme funding streams that are context-oriented in line with the OECD-DAC Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus.
- Extend the timeframe of humanitarian assistance to ensure that the immediate needs of vulnerable communities continue to be met as interventions reorient toward sustainable, development-focused programming.
- Establish a structure that appropriately measures not only humanitarian need but also development and peacebuilding need in a timely manner and that increases visibility of programme outcomes for all nexus initiatives in order to increase donor interests in development and peacebuilding efforts.
- Investigate sustainable ways for donor agencies to have enough flexibility to ensure that humanitarian actors can amend project designs, outcomes and targets to address the rapid changes in urban fragile contexts and the emerging needs of the people.

Annex

Methodology and limitations

This case study took place in 2020 and 2021 and relied on a mixed-method research methodology which included a desk review of internal and external literature, an analysis of project documentation, and interviews with key stakeholders such as with World Vision in-country staff, peer NGOs, and local partners. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all interviews were conducted remotely at a time in which in-country staff have been under significant added strain, and external partners were less able to dedicate time and resources to this project.

Projects analysed:

- COVID-19 national response
- Beirut Explosion response
- Beirut & Mount Lebanon Development programme
- Youth Resolve EU funded grant
- Syria response WASH and Food assistance projects in Bekaa and Akkar

Interviews conducted:

- Rami Zoueini, Beirut & Mount Lebanon Area Manager at that time
- Joelle Semaan, WWL Programme Quality Director
- Georges Abi Rizk, WWL Livelihood Technical Specialist
- Charbel Khoury, Bekaa Area Manager
- Tabitha NGO – partner for WWL

Endnotes

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