

The “P” in Practice

Field evidence on operationalising
conflict sensitivity, WPS and YPS
across the HDP Nexus



SHORT VERSION

Peace in a fragile world

Peace is a central principle in humanitarian, development, and social cohesion programming, especially in fragile, conflict-affected, or displaced populations. Women, youth, and children—often the most vulnerable—face multiple, overlapping risks including exclusion from decision-making, entrenched gender inequalities, weak governance, and competition over limited resources. These vulnerabilities shape how interventions are designed, implemented, and evaluated.

Even in stable, high-income contexts, social cohesion is threatened by rising political polarisation, misinformation, and socioeconomic inequality (European Sociological Review, 2025). These dynamics erode trust in institutions and weaken democratic legitimacy. Globally, fragility is increasing: in 2024, 61 active state-based armed conflicts were recorded—the highest since systematic tracking began—with nearly 160,000 people killed and civilian attacks rising sharply (Uppsala Conflict Data Program, 2025). Fragility spans economic, political, societal, and security dimensions, interacting with climate shocks, displacement, and governance challenges, undermining resilience and sustaining long-term instability (OECD, 2025; World Bank, 2025).

Integrated approaches are critical. The European Union’s policies demonstrate how linking humanitarian, development, and peace (HDP) actions strengthens resilience, addresses root causes of conflict, and reduces vulnerability. Where these links are systematic, programs can support transitions out of conflict even before peace agreements. In less systematic contexts, gaps remain, highlighting the importance of coordinated strategies that embed peace as a guiding principle.

STUDY OBJECTIVES

This publication seeks to advance understanding of peace and operationalise the HDP Nexus. Its objectives are:

- 1. Advance understanding of peace within WPS and YPS agendas** – demonstrating how inclusive, community-based, and context-sensitive interventions strengthen social cohesion and resilience.
- 2. Illustrate operational approaches to the HDP Nexus** – highlighting gender-transformative and intergenerational strategies fostering coexistence, equity, and durable peace.
- 3. Strengthen evidence and analytical knowledge** – capturing how peacebuilding principles are embedded across programmes and interventions.
- 4. Recognise women, youth, and children as agents of change** – showing their role in reshaping social relations and rebuilding trust.
- 5. Promote evidence-based understanding of conflict sensitivity and social cohesion** – highlighting risks and power dynamics in context-insensitive interventions.



REPORT STRUCTURE

INTRODUCTION: This section outlines the report’s theme, key concepts, and the methodology employed. We adopted a deductive approach, combining field implementation analysis through comparative grids with interviews of project participants, WeWorld staff, and external partners. The chapter concludes with practical guidance derived from operational insights and these external perspectives.

CHAPTER 1: Examines WeWorld’s organisational approach to the HDP Nexus, with a focus on the “P” dimension and how we understand it and operationalise it in practice. The chapter provides a detailed overview of our Conflict Sensitivity Toolkit and explores our approach to implementing the WPS (Women, Peace and Security) and YPS (Youth, Peace and Security) agendas.

CHAPTER 2: Organised into country and programme fact-sheets. Using the outlined methodology, this chapter presents lessons learned in operationalising the “P” dimension of the Nexus, with a specific focus on WPS and YPS agendas. Concrete examples are drawn from Lebanon, Ukraine, the Swahili Coast, Mozambique, Benin, and Italy.

CHAPTER 3: Synthesises lessons learned from field experience, highlighting opportunities for scalability and offering recommendations tailored to different stakeholders. This chapter also incorporates reflections from external stakeholders, including EPLO and Search for Common Ground, situating our findings within broader international debates on operationalising the HDP Nexus, WPS, and YPS agendas.

METHODOLOGY OVERVIEW

ELEMENT	DESCRIPTION
Research Question	How is the “P” of the HDP Nexus operationalised, with attention to Conflict Sensitivity, Governance, WPS, and YPS?
Approach	Qualitative, comparative analysis; triangulated data from field experience, project factsheets, and internal/external interviews
Contexts	Benin, Lebanon, Swahili Coast (Kenya/Tanzania/Mozambique), Mozambique, Ukraine, Italy
Tools	Project factsheet grids, internal/external interview guides, MEAL materials
Analysis	Multi-phase: structuring → data collection → thematic coding → triangulation → feedback/learning
Mitigations	Addressed self-analysis bias, generalisability limits, and political sensitivity through triangulation and ethical safeguards



CHAPTER 1.

WeWorld's Understanding and Operationalisation of Peace



Short Version

WeWorld is a multi-sectoral international organisation operating in over 20 countries across humanitarian response, development cooperation, and social cohesion and peacebuilding. Its core constituencies—women, children, and young people—face overlapping vulnerabilities such as unequal access to services, harmful gender norms, exclusion from decision-making, weak governance, and competition over limited resources.

Peace is not a standalone sector for WeWorld but a strategic orientation that informs all programming. Conflict drivers shape both humanitarian needs and development barriers, making peace-responsive approaches essential to reducing harm, building trust, and enabling non-violent management of tensions. This includes embedding Women, Peace and Security (WPS) and Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) principles to shift power toward those most affected by inequality.

Communities across WeWorld's operational contexts face pressures from protracted crises, fragile institutions, social fragmentation, and entrenched inequalities. These dynamics manifest differently in low- and middle-income countries, emergency settings, and marginalised communities in high-income countries, including Italy and the EU. When addressed inclusively, these challenges reveal opportunities for cooperation, agency, and social cohesion.

HOW WE UNDERSTAND PEACE

WeWorld defines peace as more than the absence of conflict—it enables communities to live with dignity, access rights, and navigate tensions non-violently. Peace is socially grounded, relying on positive relationships, accountable institutions, and inclusive participation.

DIMENSION	KEY FOCUS
Peace in Daily Life	Fair, safe, accessible interactions with services and institutions; equitable participation.
Peace as the Quality of Relationships	Trust, dialogue, and cooperation between communities, authorities, and service providers.
Peace as Governance and Institutional Responsiveness	Transparent, accountable, and inclusive institutions that deliver services equitably.
Peace as Structural Transformation	Shifts in social norms, power relations, and institutions to address root causes of inequality.
Peace as a Foundation for Resilience and Sustainability	Ensures humanitarian and development work reinforce rather than destabilise communities.

HOW WE OPERATIONALISE PEACE

WeWorld operationalises peace through five interlocking approaches aligned with the dimensions above:

- **Peace in Daily Life:** Needs-based, inclusive service delivery; community feedback channels; equitable participation.
- **Peace as the Quality of Relationships:** Continuous conflict analysis, do-no-harm approaches, and adaptive learning.
- **Peace as Governance and Institutional Responsiveness:** Co-analysis and co-design with local actors, capacity strengthening, and sub-grants to women- and youth-led initiatives.
- **Peace as Structural Transformation:** Convening dialogues, intergroup platforms, joint analysis, and coordination mechanisms to build trust.
- **Peace as a Foundation for Resilience and Sustainability:** Aligning humanitarian and development interventions to reduce grievances, strengthen accountability, and support constructive engagement.

CONFLICT SENSITIVITY OPERATIONAL TOOLKIT

Developed in 2022 with the Peaceful Change Initiative (PCI) and funded by AICS, the toolkit provides practical guidance to integrate conflict sensitivity across the project cycle. It consists of five modules: strategy design, programme design, support functions, implementation, and monitoring & evaluation. Initially piloted in Libya, it is now being rolled out globally, promoting constructive conflict resolution and safeguarding dignity.



HOW WE INTEGRATE THE WPS AND YPS AGENDAS INTO PROGRAMMES

Peace depends on inclusive relationships, governance, and social systems. Women and young people are active contributors in analysis, programme design, monitoring, and decision-making.

1. Gender-Transformative Approaches as a Foundation for Peace and the HDP Nexus

Gender equality is treated as a peacebuilding strategy and societal transformation pathway. Approaches:

- Expand inclusive participation and leadership
- Promote equitable access to services and livelihoods
- Support non-violent masculinities and positive social norms
- Strengthen accountable governance
- Foster relationships based on respect and shared responsibility

Operationalised across the HDP Nexus:

- Humanitarian: Safe access, risk reduction, leadership, inclusive communication
- Development: Economic empowerment, shared decision-making, inclusive governance
- Peacebuilding: Mediation, social norm change, structural transformation

2. Child and Youth Participation as a Core Driver of Peace, Resilience, and Intergenerational Justice

Through the CARES Framework, children and youth actively contribute to conflict analysis, programme adaptation, community mediation, decision-making, monitoring, and capacity development.

Benefits:

- Strengthens social cohesion and intergenerational justice
- Transforms youth from potential sources of tension into peace agents
- Embeds inclusive norms in governance and community structures

WPS AND YPS AS STRATEGIC LEVERS FOR PEACE

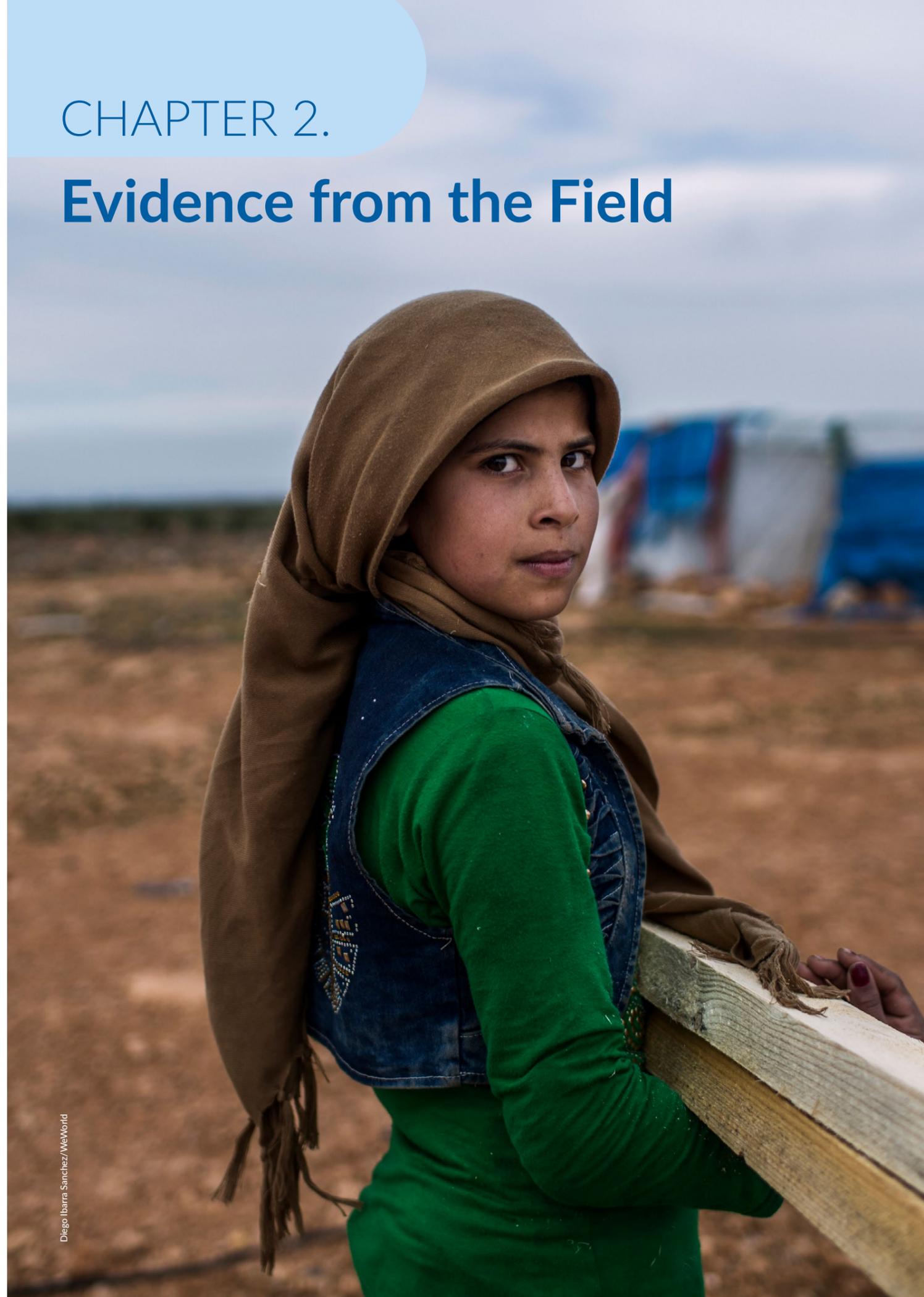
Integrating WPS and YPS strengthens peace outcomes across four areas:

IMPACT AREA	ROLE OF WOMEN & YOUTH
Operational Effectiveness	Programmes respond to drivers of tension and exclusion.
Social Cohesion	Participation strengthens relationships and bridges divides.
Institutional Accountability	Engagement encourages transparent and responsive governance.
Structural Transformation	Participation reshapes norms, power relations, and governance practices.

Embedding these agendas ensures interventions foster trust, inclusion, and constructive management of tensions, creating durable peace and resilience across humanitarian, development, and protection efforts.

CHAPTER 2.

Evidence from the Field



Diego Ibarra Sanchez/WeWorld

WeWorld in

BENIN - Media-B Project



Benin faces growing risks linked to hate speech, disinformation, inter-religious tensions, land disputes, and weak media governance, all of which can exacerbate social divisions or trigger violence. The MEDIA-B project, co-funded by the European Union and led by WeWorld in partnership with a broad consortium of local actors, was designed to strengthen capacities for conflict-sensitive journalism, youth and women's engagement, and community dialogue. The initiative intentionally bridged short-term risk reduction with long-term capacity building, operationalising the Humanitarian–Development–Peace (HDP) nexus, and aligning with the European Union's Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference (FIMI) objectives to reinforce information integrity, accountability, and community resilience.

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

MEDIA-B focused on creating ethical and inclusive media ecosystems that directly contribute to social cohesion. Its interventions included training journalists in gender- and conflict-sensitive reporting, updating the national Media Code of Ethics, engaging youth as media ambassadors, and supporting women-led CSOs. Community dialogue was enhanced through communal consultation frameworks, moderated debates, and structured forums bringing together religious leaders, authorities, farmers, herders, and civil society.

The project reached multiple levels of society, combining knowledge transfer, media production, and inclusive dialogue to prevent conflict escalation. MEDIA-B also strengthened early-warning mechanisms and increased the visibility and influence of women and youth in civic participation.

KEY INTERVENTIONS & APPROACHES

APPROACH	ACTIVITIES & FOCUS	REACH & IMPACT
Media Capacity	Training journalists on ethical, gender- and conflict-sensitive reporting; updating Media Code of Ethics; multimedia production	31 journalists trained; updated 33-article Code of Ethics; press releases, radio spots, videos, posters disseminated
Community Dialogue	Communal Consultation Frameworks (CCCs), documentary screenings, moderated debates	12 inter-religious forums; structured early-warning mechanisms; improved trust between authorities, religious leaders, farmers, herders
Youth & Child Participation (YPS)	Youth associations trained in media literacy, conflict resolution, and inter-religious dialogue; school press clubs engaged	~200 youth engaged; youth ambassadors producing inclusive media; strengthened media literacy among students
Women, Peace, and Security (WPS)	Inclusion in dialogue forums, media trainings, awareness campaigns; support for women-led CSOs	22% women participation; increased leadership visibility; gender-sensitive communication integrated
Conflict Sensitivity & FIMI Alignment	Continuous context analysis using WeWorld Conflict Sensitivity Toolkit, do-no-harm integration, monitoring emerging tensions	Reduced misinformation, hate speech, and gender bias; promoted responsible media ecosystems and democratic resilience

METHODOLOGY / TOOLS / INNOVATION

- **Conflict-Sensitive Programming:** The WeWorld Conflict Sensitivity Toolkit guided monitoring, risk assessment, and adaptation to prevent harm or exacerbate tensions.
- **Arts, Media, and Dialogue:** Multimedia outputs, documentary screenings, and youth-led media projects promoted ethical journalism while engaging communities in constructive reflection.
- **HDP Nexus Operationalisation:** Humanitarian action addressed urgent misinformation risks; development built capacity for sustainable media and civil society engagement; peacebuilding reinforced dialogue, early warning, and social cohesion.
- **Inclusive Participation:** Women and youth were deliberately empowered as facilitators, content creators, and mediators, ensuring locally grounded and representative interventions.

STRATEGIC HIGHLIGHTS

- MEDIA-B integrated media literacy, youth participation, and gender-sensitive approaches to strengthen social cohesion.
- Local ownership was enhanced through community dialogue mechanisms and participatory media production.

- Aligning with EU FIMI objectives, the project addressed misinformation risks while fostering inclusive governance and democratic resilience.
- Youth and women were empowered as visible leaders, mediators, and content creators, demonstrating tangible behavioural change in their communities.



Lessons Learned / Key Insights

- Inclusive participation strengthens dialogue and conflict prevention.
- Media literacy and ethical journalism serve as practical tools for peacebuilding.
- Continuous conflict sensitivity ensures adaptive and context-aware intervention.
- Sustainability relies on embedding local capacities, governance mechanisms, and organisational structures to maintain progress independently.



WeWorld in

ITALY - Youth Participation Programme



Italy's young people face multiple barriers to meaningful participation. Formal engagement mechanisms often replace genuine influence, structural inequalities persist, and young women confront additional obstacles from stereotypes and unsafe environments. Digital spaces, while valuable, can create isolated "bubbles," and offline opportunities for civic engagement remain uneven. Disillusionment—fuelled by slow institutional responses to climate change, inequality, and rights issues—further discourages youth participation. The Youth Participation Programme, implemented by WeWorld, aims to rebuild trust, open pathways into decision-making, and empower youth—especially girls and under-represented groups—through creative expression, structured dialogue, and participatory governance. The programme links local action to EU-level advocacy, providing a continuum from community engagement to global policy influence.

PROGRAMME HIGHLIGHTS

The programme engages youth through arts, dialogue, education, and digital platforms to foster social cohesion, civic skills, and advocacy capacity. Safe spaces, participatory pathways, and mentorship opportunities support first-time participants, while transnational exchanges connect young people across

Europe. Gender-sensitive approaches and youth leadership integration ensure that under-represented groups can actively influence decisions, challenge stereotypes, and gain visibility in local and EU-level governance processes.

KEY INTERVENTIONS & APPROACHES

APPROACH	ACTIVITIES & FOCUS	REACH & IMPACT
Creative & Arts-Based Participation	Theatre, storytelling, podcasts, workshops; safe spaces for first-time engagement	111,890+ youth engaged; 30,000+ girls and young women; increased confidence and civic skills
Structured Democratic Pathways	Local-to-EU dialogue (roundtables, consultations, manifestos), advocacy training	Youth presented recommendations to municipal, national, and EU bodies; 100,000+ signatures for climate action
Education & Global Citizenship	Formal, non-formal, and informal learning; teacher and CSO capacity building	830+ educators trained; 15,000 learners; improved civic competences and climate awareness
Digital & Transnational Exchange	Virtual dialogue, online toolkits, transnational youth networks	1,300+ youth facilitators trained; 20+ countries; increased intercultural solidarity and EU engagement
Social Cohesion & Participatory Governance	Multi-stakeholder initiatives (BRIDGE, HYPE); community-led action	89.5 million citizens reached; stronger local solidarity and institutional trust
Gender Equality & WPS Integration	Gender-responsive curricula, campaigns, workshops; safe spaces	Girls and young women's leadership enhanced; stereotypes challenged; gender-sensitive civic participation strengthened
Conflict Sensitivity & YPS Integration	Inclusive, safe participation; advocacy skills; peaceful civic action	Youth influence public decisions constructively; communities more cohesive; intergenerational dialogue reinforced

METHODOLOGY / TOOLS / INNOVATION

- **Arts-based & Creative Practice:** Theatre, storytelling, podcasts, and collective performance make complex themes accessible, foster trust, and support first-time engagement.
- **Dialogic Formats:** Activist conversations and participatory circles create safe spaces where youth voice is central; moderated discussions enable inclusive debate.
- **Structured Participation Pathways:** Youth progress from local workshops to national and EU-level consultations, providing clear routes from learning to advocacy.
- **Digital Tools & Virtual Exchange:** Online toolkits, moderated exchanges, and transnational networks ensure accessibility, continuity, and cross-border collaboration.
- **Micro-funding & Public Restitution:** Small grants and community showcases allow youth and local organisations to implement ideas and build shared ownership.
- **Evidence-informed Adaptation:** Continuous monitoring of participation quality, inclusivity, and behavioural change guides iterative programme improvements.

STRATEGIC HIGHLIGHTS

- **Linking creativity, dialogue, and advocacy:** Artistic and participatory approaches make complex social issues accessible and actionable.

- **Local-to-global pathways:** Youth gain confidence locally before contributing to national and EU decision-making.
- **Diversity and inclusion:** Under-represented youth and girls meaningfully engaged, enhancing legitimacy and outcomes.
- **Partnerships for scale:** Schools, CSOs, municipalities, universities, and cultural actors enable sustained impact.
- **Operationalising WPS/YPS:** Gender equality and youth leadership embedded across all interventions, fostering safe, inclusive, and participatory spaces.



Lessons Learned / Key Insights

- Early, local engagement builds trust and prepares youth for broader influence.
- Participation must be meaningful and visible—showing how contributions affect decisions.
- Creative methods and blended learning sustain attention and support diverse learning styles.
- Partnerships and ecosystem-building amplify reach, credibility, and impact.
- Continuous monitoring of participation quality ensures accountability and adaptive improvements.



Arianna Arcara/WeWorld



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WeWorld in

LEBANON - Power of Youth Project



Lebanon faces profound political, economic, and social fragility. Poverty, service collapse, and sectarian tensions exacerbate urban pressures, particularly in Greater Beirut and Tripoli. Young people—including Lebanese, Palestinian, Syrian, and migrant youth—are disproportionately affected, facing exclusion, discrimination, and exploitation. The Power of Youth project, co-led by WeWorld, Mada, and the Jafra Foundation, addresses these challenges by creating inclusive spaces, dialogue platforms, and cultural initiatives. The programme strengthens social cohesion and empowers youth to act as agents of peace, fostering resilience, inclusion, and constructive civic engagement.

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

The project engages youth through leadership development, arts and cultural initiatives, structured dialogue, and conflict-sensitive programming. By integrating humanitarian support, development activities, and peacebuilding approaches,

the project provides safe spaces for participation and promotes intergenerational and inter-community collaboration. Special attention is given to gender inclusion, refugee and migrant youth, and under-represented groups.

KEY INTERVENTIONS & APPROACHES

APPROACH	ACTIVITIES & FOCUS	REACH & IMPACT
Youth-Led Capacity Building	Organisational strengthening of CSOs, governance, safeguarding, MEAL, conflict-sensitive programming	Youth CSOs better equipped to lead, monitor, and implement community initiatives
Creative & Cultural Engagement	Graphic novels, youth media storytelling, cultural events	Youth co-create media to counter harmful narratives; early outputs gaining visibility
Youth-Institution Dialogue	Structured interaction with municipalities and local authorities	Increased responsiveness and accountability from institutions; channels for youth voices opened
Conflict-Sensitive Programming	Context mapping, continuous risk assessment, adaptive management	Early warning mechanisms guide activities; safe participation for vulnerable youth, including women
Inclusion & Gender	Mixed and women-only formats, gender-sensitive facilitation	Young women's participation strengthened; deliberate outreach to refugees and migrants

METHODOLOGY / TOOLS / INNOVATION

- **Conflict-Sensitive & Inclusive Programming:** Partners mapped local realities, identified risks, and designed engagement tools; the WeWorld Conflict Sensitivity Toolkit guides adaptive management.
- **Artistic, Cultural, & Media Approaches:** Safe, creative entry points—graphic novels, media platforms, exhibitions—foster dialogue, highlight positive stories, and counter disinformation.
- **Youth-Institution & Intergenerational Dialogue:** Structured spaces connect youth with authorities and elders to enhance understanding, accountability, and equitable decision-making.
- **Operationalising HDP Nexus:** Humanitarian grants address urgent needs; development support strengthens CSO capacities; peace initiatives foster dialogue, coexistence, and inclusive narratives.
- **Monitoring & Adaptive Management:** Conflict analysis, early-warning systems, and FCRM tools ensure responsive, safe, and inclusive participation.

STRATEGIC HIGHLIGHTS

- **Youth leadership at the centre:** CSOs and informal groups lead initiatives, monitor progress, and shape activities.
- **Gender and inclusion:** Young women, refugees, and migrant youth actively influence community decision-making.

- **Bridging communities:** Dialogue fosters understanding across Lebanese, Palestinian, Syrian, and migrant youth.
- **Creative & digital engagement:** Cultural events and media outputs amplify positive narratives and counter misinformation.
- **Conflict-sensitive, locally grounded approach:** Continuous assessment ensures programmes remain responsive to volatile socio-political dynamics.



Lessons Learned / Key Insights

- Early conflict analysis strengthens programme design and risk mitigation.
- Tailored strategies are needed to support youth with irregular employment or from marginalised backgrounds.
- Participatory co-design and safe spaces are key to sustained engagement.
- Linking humanitarian, development, and peace approaches maximises both short- and long-term impact.
- Continuous monitoring and adaptive management ensure relevance and trust in volatile contexts.



WeWorld in

MOZAMBIQUE - Peacebuilding and Social Cohesion in Cabo Delgado



Since 2017, Cabo Delgado province has faced violent conflict, displacement, and deep social and economic marginalisation. Extremist attacks, combined with exclusion from natural resource benefits, have heightened tensions and weakened community resilience. The Northern Crisis Recovery Project (NCRP), implemented by WeWorld, addresses these challenges by strengthening local peace structures, fostering social cohesion, and promoting community-led resilience. The programme focuses on youth and women’s empowerment, creative engagement, and conflict-sensitive approaches to build trust and reduce tensions across communities, including internally displaced persons (IDPs) and host populations.

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

The project strengthens Peacebuilding Committees (PBCs) and volunteer networks, develops creative and cultural initiatives, and integrates gender and youth leadership. Through conflict-sensitive planning, intergenerational collaboration, and

community-led dialogue, NCRP fosters safe spaces for participation, strengthens local governance, and reduces risks of harm in a volatile context.

KEY INTERVENTIONS & APPROACHES

APPROACH	ACTIVITIES & FOCUS	REACH & IMPACT
Community-Led Peacebuilding	Revitalised PBCs, volunteer networks, inclusive dialogues	6 PBCs trained and fully operational; 120 volunteers equipped with peacebuilding and GBV knowledge
Creative & Cultural Engagement	Theatre, music, murals, sports, participatory photography	300+ activities delivered; 25 youth groups leading initiatives; community exhibitions and festivals held
Gender & Youth Empowerment	Leadership training, women-led PBCs, safe spaces, participatory workshops	Women take visible leadership roles; youth actively facilitate dialogue and creative events
Conflict-Sensitive Planning	Stakeholder mapping, context monitoring, early warning, adaptive management	Tensions monitored continuously; activities adapted to reduce harm and ensure inclusion
Intergenerational Collaboration	Mixed-age dialogues and joint cultural events	Strengthened trust between youth, elders, IDPs, host communities, and authorities

METHODOLOGY / TOOLS / INNOVATION

- **Conflict-Sensitive & Participatory Design:** PCI conflict-sensitivity toolkit guides mapping, planning, and monitoring. Activities are co-designed with communities to ensure inclusivity and relevance.
- **Artistic, Cultural, and Media Approaches:** Creative media, theatre, music, sports, and local-language arts provide safe, relatable channels for peace messaging.
- **Youth & Women Leadership:** Structured workshops, mentorship, and safe spaces empower youth and women as agents of change. Women-led PBCs enhance local governance and visibility.
- **Operationalising HDP Nexus:** Humanitarian support provides safe spaces; development strengthens local associations and PBCs; peacebuilding initiatives foster dialogue, mediation, and social cohesion.
- **Monitoring & Adaptive Management:** Continuous context analysis, early-warning systems, and participatory MEAL tools ensure responsive, safe, and locally relevant implementation.

STRATEGIC HIGHLIGHTS

- **Community ownership:** Local actors lead initiatives, ensuring sustainability and resilience.
- **Inclusive participation:** Targeted engagement of youth, women, IDPs, and marginalised groups strengthens equity and reduces tensions.

- **Cultural and creative tools:** Arts, theatre, music, and photography enable constructive dialogue and counter harmful narratives.
- **Intergenerational dialogue:** Mixed-age activities bridge generational divides and enhance mutual understanding.
- **Conflict-sensitive & adaptive implementation:** Continuous monitoring and flexible planning mitigate risks in volatile contexts.



Lessons Learned / Key Insights

- Participatory cultural and sports activities are highly effective in building social cohesion.
- Addressing inequalities and empowering marginalised groups fosters trust and inclusive decision-making.
- Strong MEAL systems with conflict-sensitive indicators improve responsiveness and reduce harm.
- Safe spaces for women and structured youth engagement enhance leadership and agency.
- Scaling community-led structures and creative initiatives ensures sustainability and wider impact.





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WeWorld in

SWAHILI COAST - Kujenga Amani Pamoja (KAP)



Along the Swahili Coast of Kenya, Tanzania, and Mozambique, youth face limited civic participation, economic marginalisation, and exposure to conflicts over land, water, and marine resources. Displacement in northern Mozambique has added further strain to local communities. The Kujenga Amani Pamoja (Building Peace Together) initiative (2023–2026), co-funded by the European Union, empowers young women and men as peacebuilders, strengthens local structures for dialogue and mediation, and fosters inclusive, resilient communities. The project adopts a youth-centred, conflict-sensitive approach, integrating arts, media, and participatory methodologies to promote sustainable peace and social cohesion.

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

The programme engages youth in conflict analysis, civic participation, and community dialogue. Youth-led initiatives, creative projects, and capacity-building for teachers, journalists, CSOs, and local authorities are central to the intervention.

Integration of Women, Peace and Security (WPS) and Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) frameworks ensures inclusive and equitable participation.

KEY INTERVENTIONS & APPROACHES

OBJECTIVE / APPROACH	ACTIVITIES & FOCUS	KEY RESULTS / OUTCOMES
Understand local conflict dynamics & youth roles	40 community workshops with 556 youth; baseline surveys; research; youth consultations; Open Mic Forums	127 youth consultations & 8 Open Mic Forums reached 1,645 youth; enhanced understanding of local conflict drivers and youth perspectives
Build youth capacities for peace	Training 130 Community Peace Activists (CPAs) in mediation & conflict resolution; 99 journalists in conflict-sensitive reporting; 108 teachers in arts-based peace education; 80 CSO members trained	Youth and CSOs equipped to lead, monitor, and implement peace initiatives; arts-based methods embed peace skills in educational and media settings
Expand access to safe spaces & civic participation	37 youth-led initiatives funded; 66 community dialogues and intergenerational forums; school arts projects reaching 14,732 students; Photovoice exhibitions; 5 media campaigns on peace & GBV; engagement with local authorities & security actors	Improved youth–authority relations; strengthened trust across generations; increased civic participation and visibility of youth-led peace initiatives

METHODOLOGY / TOOLS / INNOVATION

- **Multi-layered Conflict Analysis:** Participatory workshops, community assessments, conflict-sensitivity matrices, incident trackers, observation checklists.
- **Youth-Centred Engagement:** Safe spaces, transparent selection processes, gender-sensitive facilitation, intergenerational dialogue.
- **Arts & Media Strategies:** Theatre, poetry, dance, school arts projects, and Photovoice “Women See Many Things” amplify women’s perspectives and non-confrontational dialogue.
- **Inclusive Community Dialogue:** Structured forums with elders, authorities, and local stakeholders; resource and environmental conflict mediation.
- **HDP Nexus Operationalisation:** Humanitarian support addresses urgent needs; development activities strengthen local capacities; peacebuilding initiatives foster dialogue, coexistence, and inclusive narratives.

STRATEGIC HIGHLIGHTS

- **Youth leadership:** Community Peace Activists and youth groups drive initiatives, monitoring, and programming.
- **Creative and inclusive engagement:** Arts and media provide accessible, non-confrontational avenues for dialogue and reflection.

- **Intergenerational collaboration:** Youth, authorities, and elders engage in structured forums, fostering trust and mutual understanding.
- **Integration of WPS and YPS:** Gender equality and youth leadership embedded in all interventions.
- **Community ownership & resilience:** Local structures, CSOs, and schools are strengthened to sustain peace initiatives.



Lessons Learned / Key Insights

- Power imbalances must be addressed to ensure meaningful youth participation.
- Arts, culture, and media provide safe and effective spaces for dialogue and reflection.
- Conflict sensitivity requires systemic integration, mentoring, and ongoing monitoring.
- Linking peacebuilding with livelihoods and social support strengthens youth resilience.
- Transparency, inclusion, and multi-stakeholder engagement enhance trust, ownership, and sustainability.





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WeWorld in

UKRAINE - Protect Kharkiv Project



In Ukraine, millions of people face trauma, displacement, and exposure to mines and unexploded ordnance. The ongoing conflict has disrupted daily life, education, and community cohesion, particularly affecting women, children, and other vulnerable groups.

The Protect Kharkiv project (July 2025 – January 2026), funded by the Emilia-Romagna Region and implemented with Peaceful Heaven of Kharkiv, combines humanitarian assistance, development support, and peacebuilding. The initiative aims to reduce immediate stressors, strengthen community capacities, and create safe, inclusive spaces to rebuild trust and social cohesion in conflict-affected areas.

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

The project focuses on community-led initiatives, psychosocial support, gender-responsive WASH interventions, and conflict-sensitive programming. Local partners, schools, and volunteers are trained to sustain inclusive engagement and resilience.

KEY INTERVENTIONS & APPROACHES

OBJECTIVE / APPROACH	ACTIVITIES & FOCUS	KEY RESULTS / OUTCOMES
Assist conflict-affected communities	Sub-grants for community spaces (Berezivka House of Culture; Berestyn Centre)	Locally owned hubs revitalised; safe, multifunctional spaces established for arts, education, and psychosocial recovery
Integrate conflict sensitivity & community-driven approaches	Risk-informed, participatory programming; toolkit-guided monitoring; continuous feedback loops	Inclusive targeting ensured; trust maintained despite volatile context; adaptive risk mitigation strengthened
Provide MHPSS for children and adults	Mobile teams delivering play-based and adolescent-tailored psychosocial support; referral pathways for GBV cases	Safer, inclusive spaces created; improved emotional resilience and psychosocial well-being among children, adolescents, and caregivers
Provide essential WASH services with gender focus	Hygiene kits including menstrual health supplies; community awareness and dignity-focused outreach	Improved hygiene and menstrual health outcomes; dignity and safety promoted for women and girls

METHODOLOGIES & INNOVATION

- **Conflict-Sensitive, Community-Led Programming:** Systematic integration of a conflict sensitivity toolkit, participatory stakeholder mapping, and routine risk mitigation.
- **Creative Approaches:** Artistic methods embedded in psychosocial support; media visibility through local partner-produced content.
- **HDP Nexus Operationalisation:**
 - **Humanitarian:** Immediate WASH and protection support.
 - **Development:** Training, mobile support, and referral pathways.
 - **Peacebuilding:** Sub-grants and inclusive, locally rooted initiatives.
- **Youth & WPS Integration:** Adolescents engaged as “young leaders of change”; gender-responsive hygiene interventions support dignity, safety, and agency.

STRATEGIC HIGHLIGHTS

- Strengthened social cohesion through locally led initiatives and inclusive community spaces.
- Improved psychosocial well-being, particularly for children and caregivers.
- Gender-transformative WASH promotes Women, Peace, and Security outcomes.

- Community trust and participation increased, empowering local actors to sustain recovery.
- Conflict-sensitive, adaptive management mitigates unintended harm and ensures relevance in a volatile context.

Lessons Learned / Key Insights

- **Strategic:** “Peace” and “conflict” framing must be sensitive in active war zones; multi-phase interventions are more effective than short-term humanitarian cycles.
- **Operational:** Sub-granting works best when paired with coaching, clear criteria, and ongoing monitoring; local partners are essential for trusted, adaptive, culturally sensitive delivery.
- **Programmatic:** Conflict sensitivity is most effective when built in from the start; integrating psychosocial support with social cohesion initiatives requires longer-term engagement.
- **Key Takeaways:** Trust underpins coordination, adaptation, and community engagement; gender-transformative interventions advance WPS and HDP nexus objectives.



CHAPTER 3.

Conclusions & Recommendations



Max Cavallari/WeWorld

Short Version

PEACE AS A FOUNDATION

Peace is not a programmatic theme but the condition for safe, effective, and lasting humanitarian and development outcomes. Success relies on strong relationships among communities, institutions, and services, and on fairness, voice, and accountability.

Key Drivers of Fragility & Responses:

- **Youth Exclusion:** Limited decision-making and unemployment → engage youth in dialogue, arts, and co-design; fund youth-led initiatives and livelihood/MHPSS linkages.
- **Gender Inequality & GBV:** Restricted mobility and high GBV → support women-led analysis, safe spaces, mediators, norm-change programs; fund women’s organisations.
- **Institutional Mistrust:** Perceived corruption and uneven services → embed transparency, feedback mechanisms, and community–institution forums.
- **Economic Marginalisation & Intercommunal Tensions:** Resource competition, unemployment → combine social cohesion with livelihood support; ensure equitable aid and host community inclusion.
- **Polarisation & Disinformation:** Fake news and divisive narratives → media literacy, ethical journalism, arts-based engagement; fund local media partnerships.

Operational Realities: Challenges include political sensitivity, facilitator retention, structural gaps (livelihoods, mental health), disability inclusion, and volatile platforms. Solutions involve conflict-sensitive framing, retention support, service linkages, budgeted accommodations, and adaptive management.

Governance & Peace: Fair, accountable institutions and inclusive decision-making—especially for youth and women—are crucial. WeWorld strengthens:

- **Institutional capacity & accountability** → fairer services, reduced tension
- **Community–institution interfaces** → faster de-escalation, shared responsibility
- **Civil society leadership** → local legitimacy, continuity
- **Transparency & information** → fewer rumours, better do-no-harm outcomes

RECOMMENDATIONS

Drawing on the lessons from the field, the following practical adjustments highlight how donors and implementing partners can work together to strengthen peace-responsive programming, ensuring both investments and operational approaches are effective, inclusive, and sustainable.

RECOMMENDATION	LEAD ACTOR	KEY OPERATIONAL LEVERS
Multi-year, flexible funding	Donors	24–36 month envelopes; pre-cleared pivots; no-cost extensions; budget realignments for context shifts
Conflict sensitivity as programme infrastructure	Donors & Implementing Partners	Ongoing analysis; partner workshops; adaptation logs; community feedback loops; recognise learning as outputs
Invest in local CSOs (women & youth)	Donors & Implementing Partners	Sub-grants + mentoring; budget lines for organisational strengthening; multi-year partnerships
Link peace, livelihoods, MHPSS	Partners	Purposeful allocations; cross-sector referrals; integrate cohesion work with livelihoods and psychosocial support
Fund multi-actor platform stewardship	Donors & Implementing Partners	Facilitation, accessibility, documentation, follow-up; anchor platforms in civic/service structures
Support shared learning & scaling	Donors & Implementing Partners	Joint analyses; youth- and women-led studies; playbooks/tool-kits; replicate tested approaches with contextual adaptation



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