



World Vision

Crisis Averted

Preventing the conflicts that drive humanitarian needs



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For more information, please contact Caelin Briggs, Senior Policy Advisor on Conflict and Displacement: caelin.briggs@worldvision.com.au

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Front cover: Destruction in Gori, Georgia.

Above: Jamira and her child in Kutupalong refugee camp. Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh.

Introduction

Conflict and violence are having a devastating impact on children and families around the world.

In 2018, forced displacement reached the highest levels in recorded history, with over 70.8 million people driven from their homes. Half of all refugees were children.ⁱ

This displacement, combined with the loss of livelihoods, destruction of infrastructure, and disruption of education and medical services, has led to soaring levels of humanitarian need. In 2019, an estimated 131.7 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance,ⁱⁱ at a cost of US\$26.59 billion (A\$39.53 billion).ⁱⁱⁱ

Unfortunately, despite the generosity of donors, funding has failed to keep up with these growing requirements. Last year there was a 40 percent shortfall in humanitarian funding,^{iv} which meant millions of families going without food, millions of elderly and people with disabilities losing access to medical care, and millions of children missing out on quality education critical to their futures.

This is, without question, a global humanitarian crisis.

While more humanitarian assistance is desperately needed, we must also do more to address the factors that drive and exacerbate crises. One of those factors is conflict: over a 10-year period from 2002-2013, the UN found that 86 percent of humanitarian needs occurred in situations of conflict and violence.^v With the escalation of the Syria conflict, the figure climbed as high as 97 percent in some subsequent years.^{vi} The impact of violence on coping capacities and support systems, and in some cases the deliberate denial of access to resources and services, has forced millions of families into a state of involuntary dependency.

The failure to effectively prevent and resolve the conflicts that drive needs has also led to a worrying new trend: not only do more people require humanitarian assistance than before, but they remain in need for longer. A recent

UN report notes that the average length of humanitarian responses has increased from 5.2 years in 2014 to 9.3 years in 2018.^{vii} Children and grandchildren are being born into displacement camps without ever knowing the places their families call home (see Box 1).

Likewise, as the effects of climate change are felt ever more strongly, humanitarian need will undoubtedly continue to grow. This may come in the form of disasters that arise with increasing frequency and intensity, but also from conflict, violence and displacement linked to failures to prevent and mitigate the impacts of climate change.

Although this is a bleak picture, it is not one without hope.

There are concrete steps governments like Australia's can take to break this cycle and move towards greater stability, peace and prosperity around the world. This report focuses on one such step: reinforcing efforts to prevent the conflicts and violence that drive humanitarian needs. Donors are increasingly recognising prevention as a priority, as has been demonstrated by the surge of interest in the so-called humanitarian-development-peace nexus, and by initiatives like the bipartisan Global Fragility Act passed by the United States House of Representatives earlier this year. With renewed efforts, Australia would be well positioned to take on a global leadership role in the prevention space.

This report makes the case for scaling up Australia's investment in conflict prevention and violence risk reduction, with the goal of establishing Australia as one of the top 10 global leaders in conflict prevention. Part I of the report explains what we mean by conflict prevention and violence risk reduction, and Part II outlines the imperative for scaling up this work. Part III will provide an overview of Australia's existing policy commitments and investments, and Part IV will then look at the steps Australia could take to become a global leader in this space.

Box 1 – A camp within a camp

In late 2017, over half a million Rohingya refugees fled Myanmar to seek refuge in the steep hills of Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. A city emerged overnight, with makeshift shelters struggling to withstand the monsoon rains and muddy slopes.

What many people may not have realised, however, was that nestled amid this rapidly expanding settlement stood another refugee camp – one that has hosted thousands of refugees for nearly three decades. Kutupalong's "registered camp" is home to 16,250 refugees who fled Myanmar prior to 1992 and still cannot go home for fear of violence and persecution. Within this camp, children have been born, gone to school, and grown up into adulthood. Many will now be starting families of their own, raising a second generation of children who have never known their family's homeland.

Today, over 78 percent of the world's refugees have been displaced for five years or longer. With the prospects of safety still distant in Myanmar, it seems likely the new Rohingya refugees will face similarly protracted displacement.



Refugee shelters in Kutupalong refugee camp struggle against monsoon rains in June 2018. Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh.

Box 2 – The impacts of conflict on children

As a child-focused organisation, World Vision is particularly concerned with the rights and wellbeing of children. Below are a few statistics that illustrate the scale of the impact of conflict and violence on children.

- More than half the world's children live in countries experiencing conflict, and nearly one in five children live within 50km of active fighting^{viii}
- More than 10,000 children were maimed or killed by conflict in 2017^{ix}
- Half of the world's 25.9 million refugees are children^x
- In 2017, the education of 75 million children was disrupted due to crises^{xi}



A Syrian refugee girl peeks out of her family's tent. Bekaa Valley, Lebanon.

Part I: What do we mean by conflict prevention and violence risk reduction?

Before going into why and how Australia could scale up its support to conflict and violence prevention, it is useful to first understand what is meant by these terms. For the purposes of this paper, conflict prevention and violence risk reduction refer to programs and interventions whose primary purpose is reducing the risk of conflict, or the risk of violence in conflict-affected settings.

This report looks specifically at conflict-prevention and violence risk reduction within the Australian aid program, and focuses on interventions whose primary intent is to support the rights and wellbeing of the affected population. While recognising that these interventions often have valuable secondary benefits for Australia's interests at home and overseas, there are sensitivities

involved with merging political, developmental and humanitarian objectives (see Box 3 for more details). In this context, the report focuses on protection activities aligned with the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality, and independence.

The exact form prevention programs take will differ depending on the identified risk – in some cases, they may be social cohesion or peacebuilding programs, while in other cases, the intervention may more closely resemble other types of general humanitarian or development interventions. What is crucial is that they all begin with a strong context analysis that informs the program approach, and that the approach is designed to respond to a specific risk to the affected population. See Box 4 for an overview of some of World Vision's context analysis tools.

Box 3 – Countering violent extremism

In light of growing international concern about violent extremism, many donors (including Australia) have made funding available for programs aimed at countering violent extremism (CVE) and preventing radicalisation. World Vision believes that these initiatives require caution. While in practice CVE interventions may be identical to other general humanitarian or development programs, the difference in intent is critical: whereas humanitarian and development programs aim to alleviate human suffering and support the rights and wellbeing of communities, CVE is driven by objectives that, at the very least, will be perceived as political.

In conflict settings, any association with political or defence agendas can compromise the ability of humanitarian organisations to deliver lifesaving assistance across frontlines. The safety of humanitarian personnel likewise relies on the trust of the communities and recognition that we work neutrally to alleviate human suffering, wherever it is found.

In this context, World Vision believes strongly that decisions about Australia's humanitarian and development assistance should be based on a neutral, impartial and independent assessment of global needs, and should not be influenced by Australia's political or defence objectives. Communications about Australia's



A soldier in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo.

investments should likewise be careful to avoid suggesting that recipients of Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) grants are intentionally supporting political or defence efforts, even if the program outcomes happen to align with Australia's interests.

Box 4 – World Vision’s context analysis tools

World Vision believes that strong context analysis is key to effective programming and conflict sensitivity. This is as relevant in fragile contexts as it is in active crisis settings. It is for this reason that World Vision has developed a series of analysis tools to help development and humanitarian practitioners to better analyse the context, including conflict dynamics that may impact program approaches and inform steps that may need to be taken to avoid causing harm and maximise the conflict prevention or resolution gains. These include the

Good Enough Context Analysis for Rapid Response (GECARR) tool, the **Integrating Peacebuilding and Conflict-Sensitivity** (I-PACS) tool, and the **Making Sense of Turbulent Contexts** (MSTC) tool. These resources are publicly available and often used jointly with other organisations and members of the affected community. In emergency contexts, World Vision also uses protection risk analyses (mapping threats, vulnerabilities and coping capacities), to identify and prioritise risks different vulnerable individuals face.

World Vision implements programs that work to prevent conflict and mitigate risks of violence across a range of contexts: in areas that are fragile but not yet experiencing outright violence, in situations of active conflict and crisis, and in post-conflict settings. The following section draws on our operational experience to outline a few of the program models that are relevant for preventing conflict (including its recurrence) and reducing risks of violence in active conflict settings.

Conflict prevention

World Vision believes that conflict prevention is most effective when it begins early. Too often, prevention efforts are only initiated when a community or country is already on the brink of violence, by which time key opportunities to avoid escalation may have been lost. It is for this reason that thorough and timely context analysis is crucial: understanding underlying tensions and their root causes can enable us to support early, targeted interventions that mitigate future risks. Programs might seek to:

- Facilitate dialogue, promote healthy dispute resolution practices, and provide a safe and structured forum where community tensions can be addressed
- Engage faith leaders and community members as positive agents for change, particularly in addressing harmful social norms and issues of equity and inclusion that can lead to grievances
- Support livelihood, education or skills-training opportunities that present a viable alternative to joining (or re-joining) armed groups
- Address resource-related tensions by improving communal management and restoring local ecosystems
- Build awareness and respect for the rights and humanity of all people, including the right for all people to benefit equally from opportunities, services and safety
- Demobilise and reintegrate former soldiers, including children
- Strengthen justice and rule of law mechanisms at both formal and customary levels

Box 5 – Preventing farmer-herdsmen conflict in Ghana

In 2015, tensions were simmering between farmers and herdsmen in Garu District, Ghana. Due to the lack of fodder for their animals, herdsmen were having to travel long distances to reach grazing areas, at times destroying farmers' crops in the process. As a result, relations were strained between the two communities, and at times teetered on the brink of violence. In the words of herdsman Abu Ananga, "Humiliation was like our daily food as insults kept on pouring on us, which sometimes led to a fight with the farmers."

World Vision's Ecological Restoration Project helped avert an outright conflict. The team worked with communities to regenerate trees on pastoral land using Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration, which allowed

grass to regrow and provided a more accessible grazing area. In the words of Abu, "Now, we are glad to have abundance of fodder at Akarateshie Natinga, where we can easily move our cattle to graze without destroying crops from people's farms and picking up quarrels with them."

World Vision also trained community leaders, farmers and herdsmen on peaceful conflict resolution so that if disputes should ever arise in the future, the communities would have a safer way of working through their grievances. Although the Ecological Restoration Project was originally established as a livelihoods program, it had clear peace dividends and provided a valuable model for how similar conflicts could be avoided in the future.¹

Once a country experiences violent conflict, it becomes far more likely to experience renewed outbreaks of violence in the future. This is sometimes referred to as the "conflict trap."^{xii} Preventing conflict (or the recurrence of conflict) thus also relies on helping communities recover where active violence has taken place in the past. This is particularly important in locations that experience cyclical or recurrent

low-intensity conflict. Many of the activities described above are as relevant following violence as they are before it begins in the first place. In addition, though, new efforts may be required to support truth, reconciliation and justice processes, and to support the recovery of individuals directly impacted by violence.

Box 6 – Trees and reconciliation in Rwanda

One of the cruellest aspects of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda was that its perpetrators were, in large part, people who were known to the victims. They were neighbours, friends and colleagues who were incited to commit horrendous violence against Tutsis and moderate Hutus. This dynamic of the violence has lasting implications for recovery, as survivors have had to find ways to live alongside their attackers.

Rwanda made commendable efforts to support community reconciliation, but healing is a long journey. When World Vision initiated an agriculture program that brought together 150 survivors and perpetrators of the genocide, it was clear that relations were still strained between the two groups – even many years after the violence had ended. In discussing how this could be addressed, the participants decided that perpetrators who were ready to share what they had done would be invited to do so, and that they would then have the opportunity to plant or nurture a tree in the compound

of their victim. The aim was to promote truth, reconciliation, and most importantly, recovery.

One participant, Alice, described her experience going through this process: "Emmanuel was known to me. However on that day, I did not even realise he was the one that attacked me. So when he told me that it was him that killed my child and cut off my hand, I couldn't believe it. It was too painful, but I knew forgiveness was the only way. When he requested to plant a peace tree in my compound, I knew he truly had repented and wanted reconciliation. I also decided to nurture one in his compound as a sign that I had forgiven him. Each day I look at the tree, and whenever I go to his home to also water and weed his tree, it shows me that we have truly put the past behind us."

Reconciliation and healing are an important part of long-term conflict prevention. Programs like the one above can serve as a crucial tool to this end.²

1 For more information see [Conflict resolution through sustainable management of trees in Ghana](#) on World Vision Australia's FMNR Hub.

2 For more information see [FMNR reconciliation trees in Rwanda](#) on World Vision Australia's FMNR Hub.



Students attending primary school in Maslakh IDP Camp, Afghanistan.

Violence risk reduction

In situations of active conflict or crisis, mitigating the immediate risk of violence is a top priority and goes hand in hand with interventions aimed at addressing underlying drivers of violence. Within humanitarian responses, this forms a core part of what is termed “humanitarian protection”. This is reflected in Australia’s Protection in Humanitarian Action Framework, which states its primary aim as “to improve the safety of people affected by natural and man-made crises”.

Protection actors seek to reduce risks to the safety, rights and dignity of individuals through three key channels:

- Mitigating the threat or source of the violence, for example through direct engagement with perpetrators or authorities
- Reducing the vulnerability of individuals to a threat, for example by reducing the frequency or duration of exposure to known perpetrators
- Increasing the coping capacity of individuals and communities, for example by supporting communities to develop self-protection strategies

The aim of these types of humanitarian protection interventions is not necessarily to address the underlying conflict itself, but rather to keep people safer from violence while the conflict persists. This could include “quick win” interventions like providing fuel-efficient stoves to reduce women’s exposure to sexual violence while collecting firewood.

There is, however, growing recognition that many of the longer-term conflict and violence prevention interventions described above can also be successfully implemented in active crisis settings. The potential for these interventions to co-exist and be mutually reinforcing forms a key part of the humanitarian-development-peace nexus, which has steadily gained traction in recent years. Examples of these blended approaches could include initiatives aimed at addressing harmful social norms, for example through engaging men and boys in changing views of women and preventing domestic violence.

Many of the program models described above can be relevant across all stages of the conflict continuum – when done with an intentional prevention lens, social cohesion or livelihood programs, for example, can have critical benefits before, during and after conflicts. Although the exact approach will need to be tailored to the context, prevention (whether of conflict or violence) can continue to occur throughout the lifecycle of a crisis.

Another key element that spans the crisis cycle is the importance of conflict sensitivity as a lens through which programming interventions are designed and implemented. Even in cases where prevention is not the primary focus of an intervention, World Vision believes strongly that all programs have a responsibility to avoid exacerbating conflict risks. Context analysis tools, like those described in Box 4, are critical to this end and can help to inform responders about dynamics and considerations that need to be factored into engagement strategies.

Part II: Why invest in conflict prevention and violence risk reduction?

Becoming a global leader in conflict and violence prevention would require a shift in some of Australia’s current investment approaches. Why make this leap? The following section outlines the importance and benefits of scaling up Australia’s prevention investments.

“The Australian thing to do”

The world’s current approach to managing conflict-related crises isn’t working. Despite growing donor contributions, funding has not kept up with the increase in humanitarian needs (see Graph 1). As a result, children and families who are trapped in situations of violence are missing out on critical life-saving assistance.

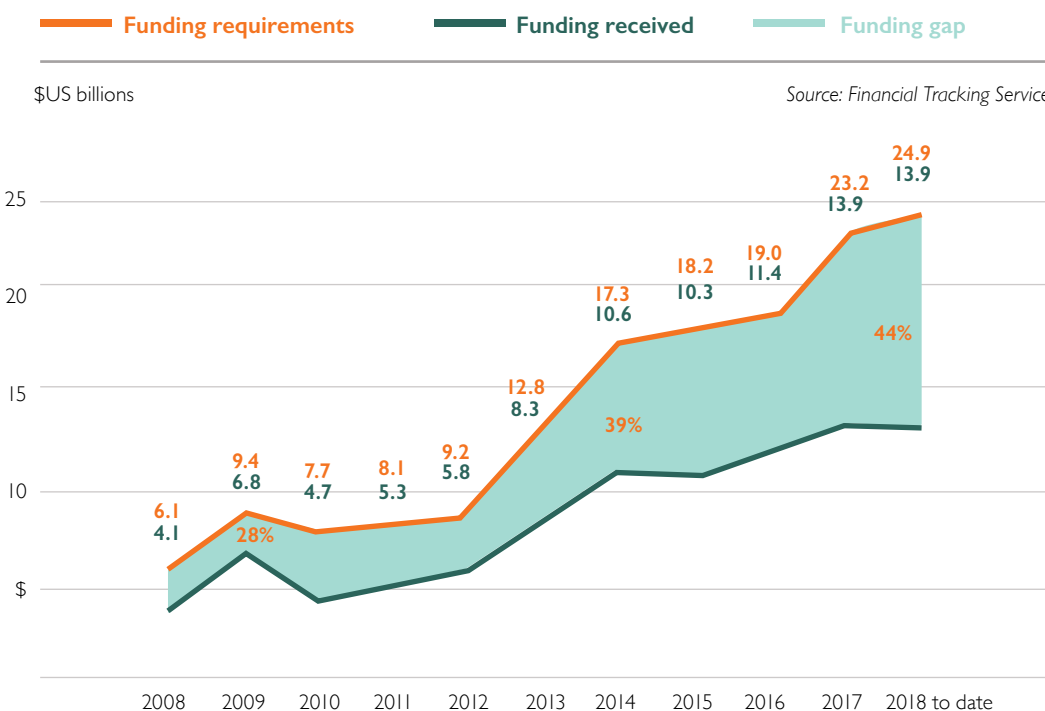
As a wealthy nation, Australia has a moral responsibility to support families and communities affected by crises. Prime Minister Scott Morrison shared this sentiment in his maiden speech to Parliament, saying “Let us note that in 2007 the total world budget for global aid accounted for only one-third of basic global needs in areas such as education, general health, HIV-AIDS, water treatment and sanitation. This leaves a sizeable gap.

The need is not diminishing, nor can our support. It is the Australian thing to do.”^{xiii}

Australia must stand in solidarity with the developing countries who are hosting the vast majority (86 percent) of the world’s refugees and do our fair share. Australia has a proud history of delivering life-saving assistance to people facing crises and has provided refuge to thousands of refugees fleeing persecution. This must continue and grow. But Australia also has a responsibility, both to people affected by crises, and to its taxpayers, to explore new, innovative ways of managing this global challenge. This includes looking at how to break the cycle of violence that is driving the needs in the first place.

Australia’s humanitarian assistance is saving lives, but as the chart below shows, it is not enough. The funding gap is staggering. Australia’s assistance must be coupled with efforts to meaningfully address the root causes of this crisis. Children deserve a better future and addressing the problem at its source is our best chance.

Graph 1: Global Humanitarian Appeal Funding Gap (2008-2018)



Source: Financial Tracking Service

Graph adapted from OCHA Global Humanitarian Overview 2019. Figures for funding received include HRPs and the Syria 3RP and exclude Flash Appeals and Other Appeals.

Economic benefits

Investing in prevention also makes sense economically. Two separate studies, one from the Institute of Economics and Peace^{xiv} and one from Hannes Muller for the World Bank,^{xv} both independently concluded that for every dollar invested in prevention, the global economy could save \$16 in loss linked to conflict and displacement. Based on Mueller's model, even if peacebuilding programs were only effective 50 percent of the time, an annual investment of US\$2.1 billion could see net returns of up to US\$33 billion per year.^{xvi}

Linked to this, Mueller estimates that the collective savings in humanitarian assistance and peacekeeping could reach US\$1.2 billion per year in the first 15 years.^{xvii} After that time, savings could grow to US\$2.5 billion, or roughly eight percent of total humanitarian assistance and peacekeeping spend.³ If this rate were crudely applied to Australia's humanitarian assistance and peacekeeping budgets, it would represent a saving of A\$54 million per year.⁴

The figures above do not even take into account potential savings in defence spending. Australia's current annual defence budget is A\$38.7 billion – a substantial amount. If a safer world requires less military investment, Australia could see further savings in its defence budget lines.

With these types of potential benefits, it is hard to imagine why Australia *wouldn't* invest in conflict prevention. Not only is it the right thing to do, but it can save Australia money.

Addressing the drivers of forced migration

Preventing conflict would also have important benefits for addressing forced migration challenges. With crises becoming more protracted, millions of refugees have found themselves trapped in situations of long-term displacement, often in under-resourced settlements and cities where they have limited opportunities for self-sufficiency. While the vast majority of the world's refugees continue to reside in countries neighbouring conflict zones, the number of asylum applications globally has doubled since 2013, from one million in 2013 to 2.1 million in 2018.^{xviii}

Many governments, including Australia,^{xix} have expressed a desire to find a more sustainable solution to the global displacement crisis. Conflict prevention provides a key opportunity in this regard: eliminating the violence that drives people from their homes means fewer people forced to seek refuge and asylum elsewhere. Addressing the key drivers of migration from conflict settings likewise presents an opportunity for Australia to further champion solutions grounded in a rules-based international order, an objective that was highlighted as a priority in Australia's Foreign Policy White Paper.



Refugee families walk along the train tracks between Serbia and Hungary.

3 Based on Mueller's estimated global annual spend of US\$30 billion on humanitarian assistance and peacekeeping.

4 Based on Australia's 2019-2020 humanitarian budget of A\$450 million and 2019 assessed contribution to UN peacekeeping of \$231 million.

Box 7 – Conflict and the Sustainable Development Goals

Preventing conflict is important not just for avoiding crises, but also for enabling sustainable development. The World Bank's Pathways for Peace publication outlines the many ways in which conflict and violence pose a threat to development, noting in summary that "violent conflict reverses hard-won development gains, stunts the opportunities of children and young people, and robs economies of opportunities for growth".^{xx} The threat to development is one we need to take seriously: by 2030, 80 percent of the world's

extreme poor will live in countries affected by fragility and violence. Australia invests billions of dollars in international development each year, and the success of these investments, and of progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals more broadly, will hinge on our collective ability to mitigate conflict, violence and their impacts. It is for this reason, among others, that an entire SDG goal has been dedicated to "Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions" (SDG 16).



A World Vision team member facilitates a group activity at a peace club in the Central African Republic.

Part III: Australia's current commitments and investment

With such strong benefits to conflict prevention, why hasn't Australia committed to doing it already? The good news is: it has. Over the past 10 years, the Australian Government has repeatedly acknowledged the importance of conflict prevention and violence risk reduction and has committed to strengthening its engagement in the prevention space. It has even provided funding to support prevention-focused interventions. The following section outlines these existing commitments and analyses how Australia's current prevention investment stacks up to those of other donors.

Policy commitments to conflict and violence prevention

In 2011, the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) published a Framework for Working in Fragile and Conflict-affected States. In recognition of the detrimental impacts of conflict and violence on development and humanitarian needs, the framework notes that Australian aid must take a different approach when working in fragile and conflict-affected settings. In particular, the framework highlights the need to support "three mutually reinforcing aims: building more responsive states, preventing violent conflict, and building resilient communities".^{xxi} Preventing violent conflict, and reducing violence in places where conflict is already occurring, is rightfully a central focus of the framework.

In more recent years, DFAT has reinforced the points set out in the 2011 framework. At the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016, Australia committed to "improve prevention and peaceful resolution capacities at the national, regional and international level", and "address root causes of conflict and work to reduce fragility by investing in the development of inclusive, peaceful societies".^{xxii} DFAT's 2016 Humanitarian Strategy further committed to "prioritise humanitarian action that protects civilians from serious harm, including violence, exploitation, coercion and deliberate deprivation".^{xxiii}

Earlier this year, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC), of which Australia is a member,

released a Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus. The statement committed to an approach of "prevention always, development wherever possible, humanitarian action when necessary", and noted that its members should seek to achieve this through, inter alia, "Increasing support for prevention, mediation and peacebuilding and early recovery, with a view to decreasing the risk of violent conflict, disasters and crises that generate humanitarian needs and undermine development".^{xxiv}

DFAT has also committed to supporting conflict prevention and violence risk reduction in its foreign policy and diplomatic statements. The 2017 Foreign Policy White Paper, for example, said that Australia will "particularly encourage a more coordinated focus on conflict prevention, rather than waiting for crises to develop".^{xxv} Australia was also instrumental in the UN's 2015 efforts to strengthen UN peacebuilding, and has been a global leader in the Responsibility to Protect Agenda, which includes prevention as a central pillar.

These various statements provide a valuable foundation for further strengthening Australia's role in conflict prevention. Australia has already committed to this work on the global stage and scaling up Australia's investment would help translate Australia's words into action.

Investments in conflict and violence prevention

It is difficult to assess the full scope of Australia's investment in conflict prevention and violence risk reduction because spending towards these objectives comes from a range of different departments' budgets.⁵ In looking at the Australian aid program specifically, one of the few proxy indicators for assessing Australia's investments is DFAT's self-reported funding for "Conflict Prevention and Resolution" in the annual Official Development Assistance (ODA) Statistical Summary. DFAT has identified five sub-categories under this heading, which are aligned with codes used by DAC – a grouping of 30 of the world's largest providers of aid, all of whom report against the same code system. The five DAC codes DFAT includes under "Conflict Prevention and Resolution" are:

⁵ World Vision understands that an evaluation is forthcoming that will work to identify Australia's total contribution to conflict prevention and violence risk reduction across portfolios, which will be welcome and will help to provide a fuller picture of Australia's total contribution to conflict prevention efforts.

- Civilian peacebuilding, conflict prevention and resolution (DAC 15220)
- Participation in international peacekeeping operations (DAC 15230)⁶
- Reintegration and small arms/light weapons control (DAC 15240)
- Removal of land mines and explosive remnants of war (DAC 15250)
- Child soldiers (prevention and demobilisation) (DAC 15261)

It is worth noting that there are other types of interventions that can contribute to conflict prevention – for example, programs that support effective justice and rule of law, or programs that are not focused exclusively on prevention but which nevertheless yield valuable peace dividends. Since these are the five areas that DFAT currently uses when reporting on Conflict Prevention and Resolution, however, we will restrict our analysis to this scope. Other forms of violence risk reduction activities undertaken as part of humanitarian responses may likewise not be captured within this heading.⁷

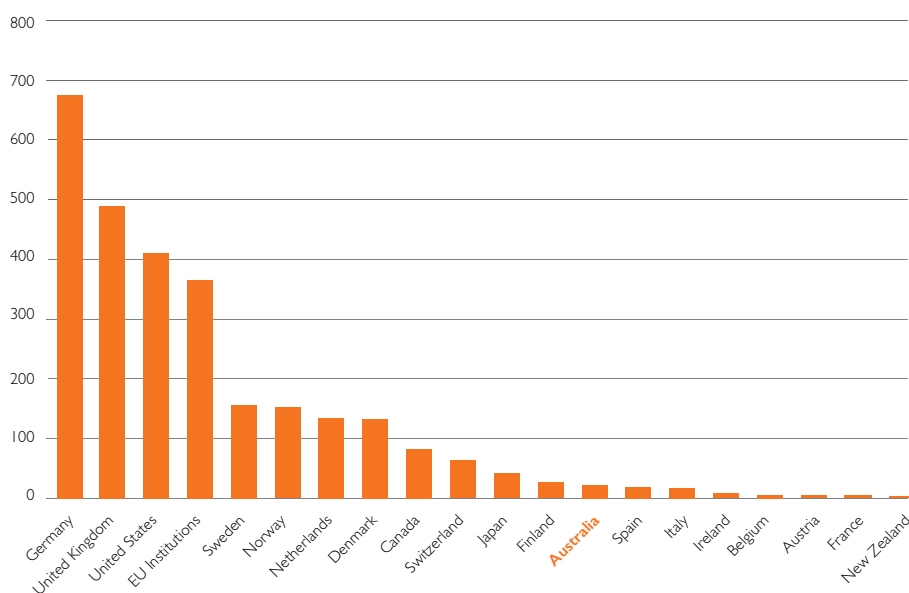
According to the 2017-2018 ODA Statistical Summary, DFAT spent A\$83 million on Conflict Prevention and Resolution. This includes both funding specifically earmarked to prevention programs (which is also recorded in the DAC database), as well as unearmarked funding provided to international organisations who subsequently allocate the funds to prevention-focused interventions (which is not captured in the DAC database).⁸

While A\$83 million may sound like a lot, Australia is falling well behind its peers. Graph 2 shows Australia's reported earmarked spending on Conflict Prevention and Resolution alongside the other top 20 DAC member states. Australia currently ranks 13 of the 30 DAC countries, and has invested 30 times less than the leading contributor (Germany). **Sweden has spent seven times more on conflict prevention than Australia, despite having a gross domestic product (GDP) of less than half the size.** The United Kingdom is 11 places ahead of Australia, with a GDP per capita that is A\$22,000 lower. Chart 1 shows funding levels alongside GDP and GDP per capita.

The figures included in these charts do not include donors' unearmarked contributions to international organisations, which constitutes the majority of Australia's self-reported A\$83 million investment in conflict prevention. However, given the size of the gap between Australia's contribution and those of its peers, even if we were to include all of Australia's unearmarked prevention funding, *and* assume that none of the 12 countries ahead of Australia gave any unearmarked funding at all, Australia would still not make it into the top 10 donor list.

Australia can and should do better than this. As a G20 country with a strong GDP per capita, Australia has the means to step up its contribution to conflict prevention. Doing so benefits not only those directly impacted by conflict, but also Australians who will benefit in the long-term from a more stable, peaceful and prosperous world.

Graph 2: Contributions to Conflict Prevention and Resolution (US\$ millions)⁹



⁶ While the inclusion of peacekeeping may appear to be outside the scope of conflict prevention outlined in Part I of this paper, the aspects funded through the aid program do not include military spending and are focused instead on initiatives such as supporting human rights, rehabilitating demobilised soldiers, and other civilian activities. World Vision recognises the importance of supporting the continuation of effective peacekeeping efforts, many of which have a mandated prevention function.

⁷ Other forms of violence risk reduction interventions in humanitarian responses may be recorded under general humanitarian or emergency response lines in the DAC database and ODA Statistical Summary. While specialised humanitarian funding trackers like the OCHA Financial Tracking Service do disaggregate protection from donors' overall earmarked humanitarian funding, they do not disaggregate prevention spending from within the general protection budget. As a result, and because humanitarian protection programs often include both a prevention and a response component, there is no reliable or comparable data available on the levels of funding invested in violence risk reduction as part of humanitarian operations.

⁸ Australia's contribution to these five DAC codes is recorded at US\$22.3 million (A\$33 million) in the DAC database. The difference between this and the A\$83 million reported in the ODA Statistical Summary is in large part due to the fact that DAC does not record unearmarked contributions that are subsequently allocated by recipients to prevention-focused interventions, such as those administered by multilateral organisations.

⁹ Data reflects contributions to "Conflict Prevention and Resolution", as defined by DFAT in the ODA Statistical Summary and as recorded in the DAC database. This includes contributions to the following DAC codes: 15220, 15230, 15240, 15250 and 15261. The DAC database, and therefore this data, does not capture unearmarked funding flows to multilateral organisations.

Chart 1: Funding levels alongside GDP and GDP per capita

	Country	GDP (US\$ millions)	GDP per capita (US\$)	Contribution to Conflict Prevention (US\$ millions) ¹⁰
1	Germany	3,996,759	48,195	675.7
2	United Kingdom	2,825,207	42,491	489.1
3	United States	20,494,099	62,641	410.8
4	EU Institutions	-	-	365.7
5	Sweden	551,031	54,112	155.9
6	Norway	434,750	81,807	152.3
7	Netherlands	912,872	52,978	134.3
8	Denmark	351,299	60,595	132.8
9	Canada	1,709,327	46,124	82.9
10	Switzerland	705,501	82,838	63.6
11	Japan	4,970,915	39,286	41.3
12	Finland	275,683	49,960	26.2
13	Australia	1,432,195	57,305	22.3
14	Spain	1,426,189	30,523	18.6
15	Italy	2,073,901	34,318	17.4
16	Ireland	375,902	77,449	8.2
17	Belgium	531,766	46,556	5.6
18	Austria	455,736	51,512	4.8
19	France	2,777,535	41,463	4.5
20	New Zealand	205,024	41,966	3.2
21	Korea	1,619,423	31,362	2.4
22	Slovak Republic	106,472	19,546	1.6
23	Portugal	237,978	23,145	1.3
24	Luxembourg	69,487	114,340	1.3
25	Slovenia	54,235	26,234	1.3
26	Czech Republic	244,105	22,973	1.3
27	Poland	585,782	15,424	1.0
28	Iceland	25,878	73,191	0.2
29	Hungary	155,703	15,938	0.2
30	Greece	218,031	20,324	-

¹⁰ Data reflects contributions to "Conflict Prevention and Resolution", as defined by DFAT in the ODA Statistical Summary and as recorded in the DAC database. This includes contributions to the following DAC codes: 15220, 15230, 15240, 15250 and 15261. The DAC database, and therefore this data, does not capture unearmarked funding flows to multilateral organisations.

Box 8 – Investment in preventing and demobilising child soldiers

Each year, hundreds of children are recruited into armed forces and armed groups. They are torn from their families, homes and schools, and are often subjected to (and forced to commit) horrific violence.

Preventing the recruitment of children and demobilising those already associated with armed groups is crucial to building safe and prosperous communities. Despite this, **Australia's reported ODA investment in "Child soldier prevention and demobilisation" is negligible – only A\$57,000.**^{xxvi} While this low figure is likely due in part to challenges in how child protection funding is recorded, even if the number were tripled or quadrupled, it would still represent an incredibly small contribution.

World Vision works to support former child soldiers in conflict zones all over the world. Last year, we provided over 750 former child soldiers in South Sudan with comprehensive case management and reintegration assistance – children who are now on the road to recovery thanks to the support of generous donors. These programs are not cheap: reintegrating former child soldiers takes time, money and commitment. But they are crucial interventions in conflict zones, and Australia's funding is far from enough. Using World Vision's South Sudan program as a benchmark, DFAT's total reported funding for this work wouldn't be able to fund a similarly sized program for even one month.

As Australia looks at how to strengthen its prevention engagement, World Vision encourages the

Government to make children a priority. Child soldiers are among the most vulnerable children in the world, and Australia could be doing much more to support them.¹⁰



A former child soldier participating in World Vision's reintegration program in South Sudan.

¹⁰ For more information on the drivers of child recruitment and what can be done to address it, see World Vision's recent report [No Choice](#), It takes a world to end the use of child soldiers.

Part IV: A way forward: Australia as a global leader for conflict prevention and violence risk reduction

The last section of this paper outlines five steps Australia could take to become a global leader in conflict prevention and violence risk reduction. Investment in prevention is smart spending in its truest form: it reduces the drivers of humanitarian need and protects the development gains achieved through Australia's broader aid investments. Through these five steps, Australia has the ability to demonstrate its leadership and contribute towards lasting change.

1. Scale up funding to become a top 10 donor in conflict prevention

As noted in Part III, Australia currently ranks 13 of 30 DAC donors in earmarked funding for conflict prevention and resolution.¹¹ To establish itself as a global leader in this space, we encourage Australia to commit to becoming a top 10 donor for conflict prevention. Based on current DAC data, this would require increasing Australia's current earmarked funding from US\$22 million to US\$64 million (A\$32 million to A\$93 million), while maintaining existing levels of unearmarked contributions.

While this may seem like a significant increase, we believe it is both necessary and achievable. Placed in the context of Australia's A\$38.7 billion defence budget, an increase of A\$60 million in conflict prevention should be manageable. And indeed, we believe that to avoid cutting funds from life-saving humanitarian or development programs, a portion of the new conflict prevention ODA should be reallocated from the defence budget. Given that Australia's defence interests would undoubtedly benefit (and save) from a more conflict-free world, it is reasonable that defence should contribute to scaling up Australia's civilian conflict prevention efforts.

This increase could be staggered over the three coming budget years rather than taking place all at once. World Vision does, however, encourage new conflict prevention funding from defence to be reallocated to DFAT (rather than being managed directly by defence) to ensure that investment decisions are made by technical specialists and remain independent of political or military interests. As noted in Part I, this independence and neutrality is critical in being able to work on all sides of a frontline and in protecting humanitarian staff working in areas of active hostilities.

For the sake of consistency in reporting, programs funded under this budget line should be those whose primary objective is conflict prevention (or using the markers described in Recommendation 4 below, programs that identify as Level 1 for conflict prevention).

2. Prioritise peacebuilding funding for models we know work

There is no one-size-fits-all approach to conflict prevention. As case studies highlighted in this report have shown, there are many types of interventions that can support prevention outcomes and yield peace dividends – including livelihoods, natural resource regeneration, and education-focused interventions that may not traditionally be considered conflict prevention but that respond to specific risks. These innovative approaches should be further explored and supported – see Recommendation 5 on Integrated Prevention.

Nevertheless, given that a substantial portion of DFAT's current Conflict Prevention and Resolution funding is allocated to "civilian peacebuilding", we believe it is also important to ensure that peacebuilding funds are directed to program models with a demonstrated record of success. In World Vision's experience, two such models are: programs that meaningfully involve children and young people, and programs that work with faith leaders.

Programs that meaningfully involve children and young people

Conflict prevention initiatives that engage children and youth present an opportunity to break cycles of conflict and violence. In the 2016 Sustaining Peace Resolution (2282), the UN Security Council recognised "the important role youth can play in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and as a key aspect of the sustainability, inclusiveness and success of peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts".^{xxvii} We encourage Australia to take this into consideration when making decisions about how to allocate peacebuilding funding.

Box 9 provides an example of one World Vision program that worked with children to build peace and repair broken bonds between communities.

¹¹ "Conflict prevention and resolution" again borrows DFAT's existing definition and DAC coding.

Box 9 – Peace clubs for South Sudanese refugees

When violence erupted in South Sudan in December 2013, tens of thousands of people fled across the border into Uganda. The refugees came from varying ethnic groups, and many had lost relatives, property and livelihoods during the conflict. Tensions within the displaced community were high, and early exposure to violence, combined with lack of effective dispute resolution skills, meant that refugee children would often fight with one another. One primary school head teacher estimated that teachers would sometimes spend more than half a class session breaking up fights between students.

With the support of UNICEF, in 2014 World Vision launched a program to empower children as peacebuilders. World Vision established 34 “peace clubs”, trained children on peacebuilding and conflict resolution,

and supported the adolescent clubs to develop and implement peacebuilding action plans – often including activities like community outreach through debates, peace-oriented creative and recreation activities, and adolescent-led dialogues on key community issues. In total, over 13,500 adolescents were involved.

The change was dramatic. Fighting was reduced among children who participated in the clubs, and adolescents developed a system to resolve disputes peacefully when disagreements did occur. In noting the transformation, one refugee leader remarked, “I realise the need to engage children in resolving these issues. Two terms now without a fight among children is amazing! Children now dance the cultural dance of other tribes they considered enemies.”¹²



Young South Sudanese refugees participating in a World Vision peace club in Uganda.

¹² For more information on World Vision's child protection and youth peacebuilding work with refugees in Uganda, please see World Vision's [Case Study for the Child Protection in Emergencies \(CPIE\) Integrated Programme for Refugees in Uganda 2016](#).

Programs that work with faith leaders

The majority of the world's population holds some form of religious belief. Faith leaders play a central and trusted role in the lives of many families and communities and can be instrumental in promoting peace and lasting change. World Vision believes strongly in working with leaders across faiths, including, if necessary, to influence the attitudes and behaviours of those leaders themselves.

Given the central role of these individuals in most communities, World Vision believes it is important to proactively engage them as part of conflict prevention and violence risk reduction efforts.

Box 10 provides one example of World Vision's engagement with faith leaders in the Central African Republic.

Box 10 – Engaging faith leaders in the Central African Republic

When violence erupted in the Central African Republic in late 2013, Christian and Muslim communities who had previously lived peacefully side by side found themselves pitted against one another. Armed actors manipulated religion to divide communities and advance their political aims, and within a few short months, there was almost complete segregation between the two groups.

In designing our emergency response to the crisis, World Vision worked closely with Muslim and Christian leaders. In one displacement camp in Yaloke, World Vision and the faith leaders facilitated a dialogue between the Christian host community and Muslim displaced persons to help repair broken ties. This dialogue, together with the continued support of the faith leaders, led to significant changes: within one month, Muslim displaced persons who had been confined to the camp were able to move outside. For the first time in months, many were able to access local markets and public service centres.

Having trusted leaders promoting peace, tolerance and shared humanity was crucial to breaking down barriers between these two communities. Without the engagement and support of the faith leaders, these important gains would not have been possible.¹³



An Imam leads prayers in Yaloke, Central African Republic.

¹³ For more information, please see World Vision's Learning Report [Adaptation and innovation: meeting humanitarian needs in fragile and conflict contexts](#).

3. Increase funding for violence risk reduction in humanitarian responses

Australia's 2013 Protection in Humanitarian Action Framework reiterated Australia's desire to "prevent and reduce the violence, exploitation, and deprivation" that people in crises face. With tens of millions of people today affected by conflict and displacement, World Vision believes that now is the time to redouble our efforts to keep people safe – even when they are living in the most unsafe places in the world.

DFAT's commitment^{xxviii} to increase the humanitarian budget to A\$500 million provides a valuable opportunity to strengthen violence risk reduction investments as part of humanitarian responses. Humanitarian actors have had

demonstrated success in preventing known risks in conflict and displacement settings. For one example, see Box II on World Vision's gender-based violence prevention programs in South Sudan.

Given the difficulties in tracking how much DFAT is currently investing in violence risk reduction as part of its humanitarian spending, we encourage DFAT, as a starting point, to earmark an initial A\$10 million in the humanitarian budget for programming whose specific aim is violence risk reduction. This A\$10 million should be additional to the core contributions provided to international organisations that may also allocate portions of their unearmarked funds to prevention-focused interventions.

Box II – Preventing gender-based violence in South Sudan

Women and girls suffer heavily in today's conflicts. Sexual violence is used as a deliberate tactic of war, domestic violence increases with family strain and displacement, and early marriage is used to alleviate perceived economic strain caused by girls. These are just a few of the many forms of gender-based violence that are commonly exacerbated in conflict settings.

In South Sudan, World Vision has taken a multi-pronged approach to addressing gender-based violence. Recognising the immediate risk of sexual violence faced by women and girls in some areas, World Vision has implemented interventions aimed at reducing their vulnerability to the imminent threat. In Warrap, for example, World Vision trained women to make charcoal briquettes from cow manure so that they didn't have to collect firewood as frequently in areas where armed actors were present and known to commit attacks. This cost-effective intervention has helped keep women safer even while threats persist.

Given that all forms of gender-based violence can ultimately be linked back to power dynamics and social norms, World Vision is also working to sustainably prevent gender-based violence in the future. Using the SASA! and Engaging Men and Boys in Accountable

Practices (EMAP) models, World Vision works to change attitudes, social norms and behaviours that permit gender-based violence to continue. EMAP supports women to share their views with men and boys to help them understand, embrace and champion female-led perspectives. SASA! Raising Voices is a community-based advocacy model that brings women and men together to explore healthy, safe relationships at home and in the community that promote non-violence and respect for the rights of women and girls.



Four survivors of sexual violence who participate in World Vision's gender-based violence program in South Sudan.

4. Establish a prevention and conflict sensitivity marker

To help provide a clearer picture of the extent to which programs prevent conflict and violence, World Vision recommends that DFAT establish a simple prevention “marker”. When submitting new proposals for programs in fragile or conflict-affected areas, organisations would be asked to select a rating for the level of attention given to conflict sensitivity and violence risk reduction, and then include a few sentences justifying their rating choice. Ratings could include:

1. Conflict prevention or violence risk reduction is the primary objective of this program
2. Conflict prevention or violence risk reduction is a partial aim of this program, but is not the primary objective
3. This program aims to avoid contributing to conflict or risks of violence, but has no specific focus on conflict prevention or violence risk reduction
4. This program does not address conflict or violence

For organisations that receive core contributions from DFAT, these same ratings could likewise be used when reporting back on how DFAT’s funding has been allocated. This would allow both DFAT’s earmarked and unearmarked contributions to be measured against the same prevention and conflict sensitivity scale.

While there is always a risk that these types of measures could become a box-ticking exercise, they can also be a useful starting point for placing emphasis on an issue DFAT believes requires greater attention. In initial stages while partners are still growing accustomed to DFAT’s expectations in this area, DFAT could make reporting against the marker optional. This would allow partners time to build their internal capacity. After one to two years in this transition phase, we would then encourage DFAT to make use of the marker mandatory.

Not only would such a marker give DFAT a better understanding of conflict sensitivity mainstreaming in programming (a critical part of Do No Harm), but it would also allow DFAT to better track its investment in conflict prevention and violence risk reduction. This would be particularly valuable for prevention investments in humanitarian operations, given the challenge of disaggregating prevention spending from general protection funding.

Based on the information received through the marker, we would then encourage DFAT (in partnership with implementing organisations) to produce a concise annual report that outlines the investments it has made in conflict prevention and violence risk reduction, and the impacts that have been achieved through these efforts. This type of reporting could help communicate DFAT’s achievements to the broader Australian public and demonstrate the sustainable change DFAT is achieving through its prevention efforts.¹⁴

5. Prioritise conflict sensitivity and integrated prevention in broader investments

Preventing conflict and reducing risks of violence is not only achieved through stand-alone prevention programs. All humanitarian and development programs have the potential to positively or negatively impact conflicts, power dynamics, and underlying tensions and grievances in a community. In looking at how to achieve greater peace and stability, it is important that Australia give renewed attention to conflict sensitivity in its broader investments, as well as to how integrated prevention programs can be further supported in fragile contexts.

World Vision encourages DFAT to make demonstrated context analysis and conflict sensitivity a prerequisite for funding in fragile and conflict-affected areas. In the DAC Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus, member states (including Australia) agreed to work towards “Ensuring that all interventions are, at a minimum, conflict sensitive in that they draw on a suitable analysis of the conflict context, understand the interaction between the intervention and the context, and act upon this understanding to minimise negative impacts and, where possible and appropriate, maximise positive impacts.”^{xxix}

The prevention marker suggested above would help DFAT make this determination when assessing proposals. Partner organisations should be able to demonstrate that they have conducted a thorough context analysis and have adapted their program design accordingly to avoid exacerbating tensions or risks. World Vision has seen the benefits of these processes repeatedly in our responses around the world – see Box 12 for one example. If organisations struggle to adopt conflict-sensitive approaches, DFAT could support capacity building through the dissemination of publicly available context analysis and conflict sensitivity resources, or by providing funding for workshops and trainings for their partners. As with the marker, the initiation of this as a requirement could likewise be phased in its implementation to give partners time to build their capacity in this space.

Finally, when considering development funding in fragile contexts, we believe preference should be given to programs that proactively integrate a conflict prevention focus. World Vision has seen strong peace dividends come from integrated prevention programs, for example, livelihoods programs that include a focus on reducing opportunity-related tensions or risks, or natural resource regeneration programs that help mitigate disputes associated with resource strain. Given the dual benefits of such interventions, World Vision believes this type of integrated approach should be used more intentionally in fragile contexts, and that doing so would help Australia to achieve greater prevention impact even within the existing budget.

¹⁴ DFAT could also consider broadening the marker to include other forms of risk reduction and risk mitigation - for example, to capture the extent to which a program aims to reduce risks associated with climate-induced shocks. While this could complicate efforts to use the marker’s data to track conflict prevention investments, it would allow for a more holistic picture of DFAT’s contributions to crisis prevention broadly.

Box 12 – Context analysis and conflict sensitivity in Kasai, Democratic Republic of Congo

When conflict broke out in the Kasai region of DRC, many humanitarian organisations were unfamiliar with the local context and dynamics. The humanitarian response in DRC had historically been concentrated in the east of the country, where violence had simmered since the early 1990s.

In this new environment, World Vision decided to undertake an analysis using its Good Enough Context Analysis for Rapid Response (GECARR) tool. Over a period of two weeks, World Vision worked with CARITAS, Catholic Relief Services and the UN to carry out 14 focus group discussions and 15 key informant interviews, reaching over 133 community members, displaced persons, faith leaders and staff of local and international organisations. The analysis team worked to synthesise the information and then hosted a joint scenario planning workshop.

The results of this analysis and scenario planning were critical. Several of the key trigger events identified as part of the scenario planning eventually unfolded, and World Vision and other participating organisations were better equipped to respond as a result of having already discussed these scenarios at an interagency level. Community participants had identified, for example, that the combination of high need and limited food rations had the potential to cause tensions. As warning signs of conflict started to materialise in certain areas, World Vision worked with the World Food Programme to reassess needs and ultimately decided to move from targeted food rations to blanket coverage.

In another case, participants noted that as displaced people began to return home, tensions could emerge if only the displaced people were targeted with assistance. To mitigate this risk, World Vision was

careful to closely assess host community needs when designing its intervention, and ultimately served both the displaced community as well as those who had remained in their homes.

The GECARR analysis was a crucial tool in supporting Do No Harm within World Vision's response, as well as the responses of other organisations involved in the process. By actively consulting communities, local leaders and a broad spectrum of response organisations, World Vision gained a deeper understanding of contextual dynamics that helped to avoid exacerbating or perpetuating the conflict.



Children in Kananga, Kasai Central Province, Democratic Republic of Congo.

Conclusion

Australia has the ability to make a meaningful contribution to preventing conflict and violence around the world. Over time, these interventions can break cycles of need and dependency and create lasting change. World Vision

urges Australia to take this important step and commit to becoming a global leader in conflict and violence prevention. Doing so would help to achieve the stability, peace and prosperity that the world so urgently needs.



Children from different faiths in Bosnia and Herzegovina come together to promote peace.

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