# ALNAP

# WORKING ACROSS THE HUMANITARIAN-DEVELOPMENT-PEACE NEXUS: WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM EVALUATIONS?

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UN agencies, members of the Red Cross/
Crescent Movement, donors, academics
and consultants dedicated to learning how
to improve response to humanitarian crises.

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# Acronyms

| | |
|---|---|
| ADB | Asian Development Bank |
| AfDB | African Development Bank |
| ALNAP | Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action |
| CDA | CDA/Collaborative Learning Projects |
| CIC | Center on International Cooperation |
| CO | collective outcome |
| CRRF | Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework |
| CSO | civil society organisation |
| DAC | Development Assistance Committee |
| DEval | German Institute for Development Evaluation |
| DEVCO | Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development (EU) |
| DFAT | Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Australia) |
| DG ECHO | Directorate-General European Commission for Humanitarian Aid Operations (EU) |
| DG INTPA | Directorate-General for International Partnerships (EU) |
| DI | Development Initiatives |
| DRC | The Democratic Republic of the Congo |
| DRR | disaster risk reduction |
| EEAS | European External Action Service (EU) |
| EU | European Union |
| FAO | Food and Agriculture Organization |
| FCDO | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (UK) |
| GAC | Global Affairs Canada |
| GEEWG | gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls |
| GEF | Global Environment Facility |
| GCR | Global Compact for Refugees |
| HDP/HDPN | Humanitarian, development and peace/nexus (three domains, in any combination) |
| IAHE | Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation |

| | |
|---|---|
| IASC | Inter-Agency Standing Committee |
| IDP | internally displaced person/people |
| IGAD | Intergovernmental Authority on Development (Horn of Africa) |
| ILO | International Labour Organization |
| IOM | International Organization for Migration |
| LRRD | linking relief, rehabilitation and development |
| MFA | Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Finland, Norway, Denmark, Sweden…) |
| NGO | non-governmental organisation |
| NORAD | Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation |
| NRC | Norwegian Refugee Council |
| NWOW | New Way of Working |
| ODA | official development assistance |
| OECD | Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development |
| PRF | peace responsive facility |
| PRA | International Assistance Evaluation Division (Global Affairs Canada/ GAC) |
| SCG/SFCG | Search for Common Ground |
| SDC | Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation |
| SIDA | Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency |
| TOC | theory of change |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Group |
| UNDRR | United Nations Disaster Risk Reduction |
| UNEG | United Nations Evaluation Group |
| UNFPA | United Nations Population Fund |
| UNHCR | United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees |
| UNICEF | United Nations Children's Fund |
| UNOCHA | United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs |
| UNPBF | United Nations Peacebuilding Fund |
| UNRWA | United Nations Relief and Work Agency (for Palestine Refugees in the Near East) |
| USAID | United States Agency for International Development |
| WBG | World Bank Group |
| WFP | World Food Programme |

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## Glossary and list of key terms

The following terms are used in this paper (*official definitions are adapted*):

- **Collective outcomes**: 'A jointly envisioned result with the aim of addressing and reducing needs, risks and vulnerabilities, requiring the combined effort of humanitarian, development and peace communities and other actors as appropriate' (IASC, 2020a).

- **Conflict-sensitive programming**: The practice of understanding how aid interacts with conflict in a particular context, to mitigate unintended negative effects, and to influence conflict positively wherever possible, through humanitarian, development and/or peace-building interventions (CDA, n.d.).

- **Connectedness**: The extent to which activities of a short-term emergency nature are carried out in a context that takes longer-term and interconnected problems into account (ALNAP, 2006; 2016).[1]

- **Coordination**: Systematic delivery of assistance 'in a cohesive and effective manner, focusing on the practical effects of actions of governments and agencies — e.g., whether they join cluster groups, whether they discuss geographical targeting, and the extent to which information is shared' (ALNAP, 2006: 54).

- **Do no harm**: 'Avoiding or minimising any adverse effects of an intervention on the affected population' (ALNAP, 2016: 57).

- **Donor**: OECD DAC or other governments that provide bilateral funds for humanitarian, development and peace nexus approaches in countries receiving ODA.

- **Domain or pillar**: One of three elements in the triple nexus: humanitarian, development and peace.

- **Durable solutions**: For communities that are at risk or in need, such solutions are results that should withstand the test of time. A durable solution for displaced persons who no longer have any specific assistance and protection needs linked to their displacement is achieved when 'they can enjoy their human rights without discrimination on account of their displacement'.[2]

- **Fragile contexts**: Settings that display 'the combination of exposure to risk and insufficient coping capacity of the state, systems and/or communities to manage, absorb or mitigate those risks' (OECD, 2020).

- **Government**: National or local authorities in ODA-recipient countries supported by HDP practitioners.

- **Localisation**: A process of recognising, respecting and strengthening the leadership by local and national authorities and the capacity of local civil society in (humanitarian) action, in order to better address the needs of affected populations and to prepare national actors for future (humanitarian responses) (IASC, 2021b).[3]

- **Policy coherence**: Achieved when mechanisms and tools are streamlined and integrate the economic, social, environmental and governance dimensions of sustainable development at all stages of domestic and international policy-making (OECD, 2021).

- **Protracted crises/contexts**: Countries 'with at least five consecutive years of UN-coordinated humanitarian or refugee response plans… Protracted crises often involve more than one crisis happening at once (such as conflict, displacement and natural hazards)' (Development Initiatives, 2020: 95); or where a significant proportion of the population is acutely vulnerable to hunger, disease and disruptions to livelihoods over prolonged periods (Macrae and Harmer, 2004).

# Executive summary: 12 key messages from nexus evaluations

## Why an evaluation mapping and synthesis on the humanitarian-development-peace nexus?

The humanitarian-development-peace nexus is an evolving and complex concept that has increasingly gained high-level policy commitment. In 2019 the OECD DAC Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) nexus outlined the key concept and rationale, and was adhered to by 31 OECD DAC members and seven UN agencies.[4] It solidified existing thinking on how to improve outcomes for affected populations through better cross- and intra-organisational coordination. This was embodied in the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit's call for 'a greater diversity of partners toward collective outcomes over multiple years' (UNGA, 2015: 9); and in the United Nations 2017 New Way of Working (UN, 2017) which called on humanitarian and development actors to work collaboratively based on their comparative advantages towards 'collective outcomes' – a concept often linked to the HDP nexus. The OECD DAC Recommendation also incorporated views from a joint study published by the United Nations and the World Bank in 2018, 'Pathways for Peace', which underscored the importance of investing in conflict prevention and the need to ensure that humanitarian and development work are conflict-sensitive (United Nations and World Bank, 2018). The OECD DAC Recommendation also reflects the shift of bilateral donors towards increasingly viewing development cooperation as a foreign policy instrument, with development actors putting greater focus on conflict prevention and peace objectives.[5] (See Introduction and Chapter 2 for more on definition and policy commitments related to the HDP nexus.)

Since 2018, a growing number of evaluations have looked at ways in which organisations have adopted HDP or double nexus approaches (those which embrace two of the three pillars) through explicit or implicit policies or programming. Evaluations reflect shifts in language and practice over time and explore key barriers to implementing more effective nexus programming and ways of working. They often outline various obstacles to improving the connectedness and complementarity of humanitarian and development aid. Evaluations also document the progress of organisations and the wider sector, and may provide lessons relevant for other actors.

This HDP nexus evaluation mapping and synthesis paper aims to share key findings from evaluations on how organisations have advanced their version of a nexus approach. The paper offers insights on how the policy concept of the triple nexus has been operationalised and implemented in practice, and it looks at what can be learned from recent efforts.[6] The paper presents a mapping of evidence and analysis from 90 evaluations, syntheses and lessons learned papers that were undertaken between 2018 and April 2022, and it reflects on key findings and trends in those publications.

## Summary of key findings

This synthesis of evidence suggests that the policy concept of the HDP or triple nexus has yet to be sufficiently translated into practice. It is not yet possible to assess, from these evaluations, if taking an HDP nexus approach has led to improved outcomes in specific country contexts for affected populations. It may be too early for evaluations to fully capture change, particularly given that many of the evaluations look at previous periods. Yet going forward it is important that organisations focus their efforts on areas highlighted by evaluations as needing more work. Positively, there is evidence of progress being made in some of the key areas where evaluations have highlighted shortcomings. Particularly notable signs of progress are: 1) recent efforts to clarify peace linkages; 2) the establishment of the HDP Nexus academy to address staff understandings on the nexus; and 3) the work by the IASC Nexus Task Force to develop guidance on collective outcomes and to review recent good practices, including country-level nexus coordination.

While there are important areas of progress, more work is needed as evaluations point to barriers that appear to be doggedly persistent. These key areas are presented below in the format of 12 key findings.

## 12 key findings from nexus evaluations:

**01**

**Evaluations reveal substantial differences in how different actors view and conceptualise the nexus, including how it relates to other pre-existing frameworks such as resilience.**

Hence, despite resilience being seen as integral to the nexus, the exact relationship between resilience and the HDP nexus varies across the evaluations and documents reviewed. There were at least four different ways to describe this relationship in the evaluation literature, with evaluators often also suggesting that greater conceptual clarity would be appreciated and may be a prerequisite for further progress.

**02**

**Despite policy commitments, the HDP nexus has yet to be fully translated into concrete, operational guidance.**

Evaluations suggest the need for more organisations to be clear on how their overall programming approach and unique mandate relate to the HDP nexus. They suggest a need for organisations to provide clear guidance to their staff on: how to build HDP partnerships, how to mainstream gender and inclusion across HDP nexus planning and approach, how to better integrate climate and environmental concerns, and how to define contributions to peace for development and humanitarian actors. A clear need exists for guidance on sectoral and thematic issues such as protection, health, social cohesion, and the HDP nexus. Such thematic or sectoral guidance could also aid the development of clear theories of change. Evaluations say these are widely lacking (the exception being in the area of forced displacement where policy, operational guidance and models, and HDP nexus theories of change are relatively well-developed and practices more advanced).

**03**

**Peace is not fully integrated into the HDP nexus concept for many actors, according to evaluations.**

Specifically, evaluation evidence suggests that peace (big P and little p)[7] has largely not yet been integrated into humanitarian and development organisations' strategies, tools, assessments, partnership guidelines and existing theories of change. While organisations' roles and contributions to peace objectives vary widely, additional guidance and tools on how to integrate peace (and/or conflict sensitivity) may be needed that still respect humanitarian and development organisations' specific mandates and areas of focus. Despite recent efforts to make progress in this area, much remains to be done. Evaluations rarely focus on how humanitarian action can or does support peace or related objectives. Humanitarian actors have instead tended to highlight how uncomfortable they are in this area, although with an apparent desire to unpack the conceptual linkages between humanitarian action and peace objectives. Many actors are seemingly more comfortable focusing on how humanitarian action can indirectly affect or have intended or unintended outcomes on social cohesion, intercommunal tensions, and potential conflict drivers.

**04**

**All too often 'conflict analysis', 'context analysis', attention to 'do no harm' and 'gender analysis' do not take place in programmes that strive to adapt HDP nexus ways of working.**

These types of analyses are not systematically integrated into planning, collective outcomes, and programming, nor are they widely used in evaluations. This is surprising given the focus on applying HDP nexus approaches in protracted crisis settings and the explicit attention to gender that was included in the OECD DAC Recommendation.

**05**

**A clear need exists to build staff capacity further, to develop 'trilingual' practitioners and staff who have appropriate skill sets that are fit for working in fragility.**

Some evaluations suggest having nexus advisers at country level or at headquarters level. There is a long list of skills that evaluations suggest staff need to have in order to be able to ensure that HDP nexus approaches are successfully operationalised. Overall, evaluations highlight how staff in many organisations lack the appropriate skill sets and how many staff continue to report a lack of conceptual clarity related to the nexus.

**06**

**Several evaluations suggest the importance of focusing on a bottom-up inclusive approach to the nexus. There are clear opportunities to strengthen the voice and participation of local actors and affected populations in HDP nexus planning, including in the development and monitoring of collective outcomes.**

Evaluations highlight the need to adapt HDP nexus approaches and ways of working to diverse contexts and to develop appropriate models for working with governments, civil society and local actors. They highlight the need to focus greater attention on transitions and inclusive approaches

to foster broader and longer-term change. Some evaluations highlight localisation as a 'nexus glue' with opportunities for working with local actors, civil society and community leaders to transform relationships, build trust and influence individual and collective behaviour. This would better manage conflict, build social cohesion and reduce violence.

**07**

**Greater support and guidance are needed on how to promote private sector collaboration and partnerships across the HDP nexus and how to promote market-based approaches.**

Evaluations of HDP nexus approaches rarely discuss the role of the private sector. When they do, they highlight its relevance. Hence there is a suggestion that private sector and non-traditional actors should be considered as potential long-term partners with the need to explore and develop appropriate forms of partnerships and engagement. Functioning market systems are essential to ensure that populations can meet their own needs in the long term, thus promoting market-based approaches within HDP nexus approaches deserves further attention.

**08**

**Further investments are required in joint analysis, joint assessments and inter-organisational cooperation.**

Evaluations also reveal a need to ensure that country-level collective outcomes are integrated into sectoral activities and planning, including at the subnational and local levels. In contrast, some evaluations talk about how humanitarian, development and peace actors can work in a more complementary way, without integrating programming or doing joint analysis, and they offer alternatives.

**09**

**Despite long-standing concerns that taking an HDP nexus approach could undermine humanitarian principles, no evaluations highlighted any specific cases where this occurred.**

This may be attributed, in part, to the fact that many evaluations did not specifically look at humanitarian principles or the fact that humanitarian-peace linkages were rare in the evaluations reviewed. Future evaluative work should be used to examine further the potential risks in this area.

**10**

**Evaluations highlight how nexus approaches can be applied in response to disaster risk reduction, natural disasters and in addressing climate and environmental risks, but they suggest that these areas are still rarely explicitly included in many humanitarian and development approaches to the nexus.**

Unsurprisingly, nexus approaches are most often adopted in contexts of conflict and protracted crisis, despite the potential for taking similar approaches in other contexts.

**11** There is a striking need for multi-stakeholder guidance on how to monitor, measure and evaluate progress when working towards HDP nexus approaches, including practical advice on indicators, the collection of relevant data and good practice examples.

Moreover, evaluations to date do not show how taking an HDP nexus approach translates or may translate into better outcomes for affected populations. Despite the focus within HDP policy circles on collective outcomes, there appears to be no substantive, internationally agreed collective monitoring or accountability framework. There are few joint evaluations of collective progress on how the international community is living up to its HDP nexus commitments. The few joint evaluations that have been undertaken have led to substantial learning. That said, some evaluations caution that collective outcome processes are often too theoretical, and risk being set up in parallel to other planning processes.

**12** Finally, policy silos are deeply entrenched and embedded in the funding architecture of the international aid system. The inadequacy of funding overall and the imbalance of funding between actors can undermine HDP nexus approaches.

Too often funding is short-term, inflexible and insufficient to address holistic needs or to successfully finance key aspects of even flagship nexus approaches, with the result being that humanitarian or development interventions may receive quite different levels of funding, undermining the potential for complementarity. Peace actors tend to be even less likely to receive adequate funding or to be integrated into nexus planning processes and approaches.  Notwithstanding this, bilateral donors are experimenting with new funding models and encouraging their multilateral partners to commit to nexus approaches and new forms of partnerships. Collaborations with development banks, trust funds and pooled funding mechanisms are increasingly being used. They offer potential solutions for more holistic funding. Despite the growing use of new funding mechanisms, evaluations tend to highlight that the siloed funding architecture itself remains the main barrier to meaningful progress, as piecemeal and small-scale financing solutions are not addressing the roots of the problem.

Although beyond the scope of this synthesis paper to propose solutions or recommendations, we have offered further reflections and suggestions at the end of the paper (see Chapter 6: Conclusions).  These are meant to prompt further discussion, as fundamentally, we believe that more substantial progress will be driven by broader, collective commitments to address the more systematic barriers. While there are clear steps that individual organisations can make, collective effort is needed to ensure meaningful action to support the operationalisation of nexus principles to achieve better outcomes for affected communities.

## Endnotes

1 Connectedness was added by OECD DAC in 1999 as 'an alternative to sustainability' and was promoted in ALNAP, 2006 and 2016.

2 The IASC framework on durable solutions for internally displaced persons (quoted in FAO, DI and NRC (2021: 45)). For UNHCR, durable solutions for refugees include voluntary repatriation, local integration, and resettlement (UNHCR, 2003).

3 Without defining the term, the IASC guidance refers to 'efforts to strengthen the meaningful participation, representation, and leadership of local and national humanitarian actors' (IASC, 2021b).

4 Known hereafter as the OECD DAC Recommendation. Beyond the seven UN agencies that have officially adhered to the OECD DAC Recommendation, the UN Secretariat (DCO, OCH, DPPA) and the Global Fund have endorsed the principles of the recommendation, while not being able to adhere to it legally.

5 Based on comments received by the authors from the OECD DAC Secretariat.  The merger of development cooperation units into ministries of foreign affairs underscores this trend (as seen in Australia, Canada and the United Kingdom).

6 This synthesis adds nuance to the OECD's paper, 'The Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus Interim Progress Review',  which outlines advances that donors and UN agencies have made in using a nexus approach since 2018 (OECD, 2022a). This paper builds on previous work, such as the 2018 United Nations Evaluation Group's (UNEG) evaluation synthesis on the Humanitarian Development Nexus, which included 123 evaluations undertaken between 2010 and 2017 (Christoplos et al., 2018).

7 Two main types of approaches to peace in the nexus exist: 'big P', namely political solutions and securitised responses to violent conflict; and 'little p', which involves building the capacity for peace in societies.

# 1. Introduction

## What is the humanitarian-development-peace nexus?

The humanitarian-development-peace (HDP) nexus — or triple nexus — is an evolving and complex concept that has increasingly gained high-level policy commitments. For decades there have been calls to improve the coordination, connectedness and coherence of humanitarian and development actions. More recently, focus has turned to how to integrate 'peace' when providing humanitarian and development assistance in protracted crises and conflict settings. Indeed, conceptions of the linkages and connectedness between humanitarian and development assistance have shifted over time.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee (OECD DAC) 2019 Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus,[1] adhered to by 31 OECD members and seven UN agencies, is one of the main triple nexus policy documents. There are a variety of other related policy concepts that suggest how to advance this agenda and improve outcomes for affected populations, often with a focus on cross- and intra-organisational coordination. The World Humanitarian Summit in 2016, for instance, promoted 'Working differently to end need' and called for 'a greater diversity of partners toward collective outcomes over multiple years' (UNGA, 2015: 9). Since 2017, the UN's New Way of Working (UN, 2017) has called on humanitarian and development actors to work collaboratively, based on their comparative advantages, towards 'collective outcomes' – a concept that is often linked to the HDP nexus. A joint study published by the United Nations and the World Bank in 2018, 'Pathways for Peace', underscored the importance of conflict prevention and the need to ensure that humanitarian and development work are conflict-neutral (United Nations and World Bank, 2018). In 2020, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) developed 'light guidance' on collective outcomes (IASC, 2020a)[2] and in 2021 it produced a report on good nexus practice, which mapped tools and guidance on humanitarian-peace linkages (IASC, 2021a).

While new guidance and policy commitments specific to the triple nexus have emerged since 2018, there has been a long-standing recognition that humanitarian and development activities should be better connected. There is a long history of practitioners attempting to bridge the divides between humanitarian and development assistance, and has been referred to by many names. They range from the EU's 'Linking relief, rehabilitation and development' (LRRD) in the late 1990s (EU, 2001), to long-term work on disaster risk reduction (DRR) — the latter including the Hyogo Framework for Action in 2005, followed by the Sendai Framework for DRR (UNISDR, 2005; 2017), the increasing focus on the concept of 'resilience', and more recent efforts broadly to apply and use systems thinking and network analysis. Overall, a consensus has grown that protracted crises need to be addressed holistically and not only as a humanitarian endeavour. Promoting peace (including conflict sensitivity, conflict prevention and conflict resolution) has meanwhile been recognised as important for reducing humanitarian needs.[3]

## Purpose and aim of this paper

A growing number of evaluations look at ways in which organisations have adopted HDP nexus approaches through explicit or implicit policies or programming. Evaluations reflect shifts in language and practice over time and explore key barriers to implementing more effective nexus programming. Often they outline various obstacles to improving the connectedness and complementarity of humanitarian and development aid. Evaluations also document the progress of organisations and the wider sector, and may provide lessons relevant to other actors.

This paper maps and analyses evaluations, syntheses and lessons learned papers[4] that relate to the HDP nexus with the aim of sharing key findings on how organisations have advanced their version of a nexus approach. The paper offers insights on how the policy concept of the triple nexus has been operationalised and implemented in practice and looks at what can be learned from recent efforts.[5] It builds on analysis conducted by ALNAP in 2021—2022 on HDP nexus policy and practices for ALNAP's 2022 *State of the Humanitarian System (SOHS)* report. Given the high-level interest in this area among ALNAP Members, this paper explores in more depth lessons from evaluations undertaken between 2018 and 2022.

This paper seeks to answer the following research questions, each of which is examined in its own chapter:

- Defining the nexus: do organisations have a shared understanding of the nexus? (Chapter 2)

- Linking actors: how are organisations ensuring coherence internally and with other actors? (Chapter 3)

- Building practice: what are the common elements of effective nexus programmes? (Chapter 4)

- Adapting approaches: how are different context scenarios and cross-cutting issues addressed in nexus approaches? (Chapter 5)


## Scope of this paper

A key challenge faced during this research, which is captured in recent evaluations, is the lack of strong consensus on the definition of the 'nexus' or how the nexus as a policy concept can be applied in various programmatic areas and across different contexts. ALNAP's mapping of evaluations found relatively few evaluations that look at all three components or pillars of the triple nexus. Evaluations also address key 'nexus issues' in a wide variety of ways. Hence this evaluation synthesis includes evaluations and evaluative studies that contain or feature findings with

*an explicit and deliberate connection, overlap or link between at least two of the humanitarian, development and peace domains' objectives, activities or outcomes with the aim of improving the lives of those in need.*

This is broadly in line with the OECD DAC Recommendation that the nexus aims to strengthen 'collaboration, coherence and complementarity' between humanitarian, development and peace actors 'to reduce overall vulnerability and the number of unmet needs, strengthen risk management capacities and address root causes of conflict' (OECD, 2019b as cited in IASC, 2020b). The OECD DAC Recommendation also reinforces the importance of connectedness between actors and embraces the need for horizontal coherence. This paper therefore looks at evaluative evidence on how coherent, coordinated and complementary humanitarian, development and peace interventions are in any combination (denoted as HDP, HD, DP or HP).

Consequently, this paper has a broad scope and includes both evaluations that have a primary focus on the nexus and evaluations that deal with nexus linkages as a secondary focus or in relation to other programmatic, thematic or geographic areas of inquiry. The scope is therefore broader than a previous evaluation synthesis, published by the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) in 2018 on the humanitarian-development nexus which looked at humanitarian and development linkages, but not including peace. UNEG's 2018 paper included 123 evaluations undertaken between 2010 and 2017 (Christoplos et al., 2018). This paper looks at evaluations undertaken since 2018 including evaluations looking at peace. As this paper seeks to build on the 2018 UNEG paper, previous findings from the earlier UNEG synthesis are incorporated into this paper where appropriate. The intended audience of this synthesis is humanitarian, development and peace practitioners and policy experts at headquarters and country levels, both within and beyond the ALNAP Membership.

## Methodology

Relevant nexus evaluations for this paper were identified from the ALNAP online HELP Library supplemented by outreach to solicit additional evaluative literature. This included an effort to identify more evaluations that cover humanitarian-peace linkages.[6] Efforts were made to include evaluations and evidence syntheses from a wide range of actors, including: bilateral donors, UN agencies, civil society/NGOs, and the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and other key development and peace actors.[7] Selection was based on the manual screening of titles and evaluation questions for explicit or implicit reference to the nexus or to links between at least two of the three pillars. Approximately 600 evaluations contained in the HELP Library since 2018 were initially screened in the first mapping phase. Out of 230 reports initially identified as relevant, 90 evaluations or evaluation syntheses were retained from 27 organisations.[8] In addition to the 90 evaluations, this paper draws on 48 non-evaluative documents on the HDP nexus to help contextualise the main findings. Evaluations were coded in MaxQDA for qualitative analysis based on key themes framed around a set of initial research questions and areas of inquiry. (For more details on the methodology see Annex 2.)

This paper also includes short summaries of the most relevant recent 'nexus' evaluations in Chapter 7. These capture the key focus, areas of inquiry and findings from individual evaluations that look explicitly and primarily at implementation of nexus approaches. The summaries aim to add additional insights specific to a given organisation's individual evaluation, which may not be captured elsewhere in this paper.

There are a variety of limitations that result from the nature of this research. The main limitation is that the paper is based on evaluations that cover the period from 2018 to April 2022; hence it does not capture current practices. Given the broad definition of the HDP nexus (and the decision to include evaluations that look at linkages between any two of the three pillars), the evaluations included are extremely varied. It was challenging to establish trends when evaluations often cover quite different topics, themes, contexts and actors. (See Annex 2 on methodology for more limitations.)

## Mapping HDP nexus evaluations: what does the evidence base look like?

A large number of evaluations mapped for this paper refer to the nexus in passing, but few evaluations focus specifically on the nexus. The majority of the evaluations and evaluative literature mapped for this paper address nexus issues as a sub-component of another theme, programme or topic. There is a notable lack of consistency in how the 'nexus' is defined.

Moreover, organisations have incorporated questions related to the HDP nexus into their evaluations in a wide variety of ways. Primarily, these have taken the form of: (1) integrating questions on the HDP nexus into country or project-level evaluations; (2) including evaluation questions related to the nexus in various thematic evaluations; or (3) commissioning evaluations that focus specifically on how the organisation is adapting the triple or HD nexus approach in practice.

Of the 90 evaluations (or evaluation syntheses) retained from 27 organisations, 14 feature the nexus as the principal focus. (See the list of evaluations that focus primarily on the nexus in Annex 1 Table 1. One-page summaries of key nexus evaluations are included in Chapter 7.) Three of the subset of 14 are joint evaluations and two of the 14 do not refer to the HDP nexus by name. The majority (10 of the 14) were published since 2020. Twelve are global (multi-site) evaluations, while two focus on specific refugee contexts.

There are two main trends of note related to the evaluative evidence base:

**Although policy-level attention to the humanitarian, development and peace nexus is growing, evaluations rarely cover all three pillars**. Less than one-third of the 90 evaluations reviewed for this research explicitly mention the HDP nexus or the *triple* nexus (see Annex 1, Table 2). Moreover, the term 'triple' (or HDP) nexus is not used systematically or consistently in the evaluations reviewed. Many of those that refer to the 'triple nexus' in evaluations only describe two of the three pillars. Out of the 14 evaluations focused explicitly and specifically on the nexus, half do not mention the 'triple nexus' per se but rather centre their findings on a 'double' nexus; they examine the 'humanitarian-development' nexus or the 'development-peace' nexus. While humanitarian actors are largely seen as the earliest drivers of the nexus approach (given their presence, sometimes continued, in the case of protracted crises), humanitarian-peace combinations are rare in the evaluations studied.

**Most evaluations that look visibly and explicitly at nexus approaches have been commissioned by United Nations agencies and bilateral donors**. While recognising that NGO evaluations are often less likely to be published and widely shared,

including in ALNAP's database, it is notable that half of the 90 evaluations reviewed for this synthesis were commissioned by UN agencies and one-third by donors (Figure 1). This may reflect the fact that NGOs have not 'adhered' to the OECD DAC Recommendation and have hence faced less 'pressure' to evaluate their nexus ways of working, compared to UN agencies and bilateral donors.[9] The 10 joint evaluations identified featuring nexus approaches all include the UN as one of the entities. See Figure 1.

## Figure 1. Commissioners of 90 nexus evaluation
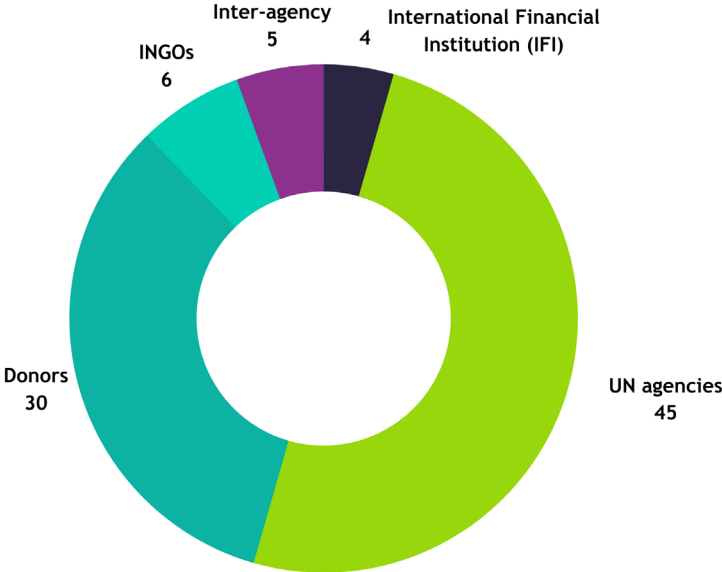
## Endnotes

1  Hereafter referred to as the OECD DAC Recommendation.

2  This guidance was developed by the World Health Organization (WHO) and UNHCR, on behalf of the IASC by the IASC Results Group 4 on Humanitarian-Development Collaboration in consultation with the UN Joint Steering Committee (JSC) to Advance Humanitarian and Development Collaboration.

3  Language used in the World Humanitarian Summit and the OECD DAC Recommendation refers to working to reduce humanitarian needs, including by efforts to address 'root causes'. As this paper shows, however, there is no evidence that the triple nexus is achieving this objective or is likely to, with efforts to address 'root causes' largely absent from the evaluative literature. There is also clear evidence that humanitarian needs and funding are increasing year on year.

4  Syntheses and lessons learned papers are referred to in the paper as 'evaluative literature'.

5  This synthesis adds nuance to the OECD paper, 'The Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus Interim Progress Review', which outlines advances that donors and UN agencies have made in using a nexus approach since 2018 (OECD, 2022a).

6  This effort led to the inclusion of evaluations from the UN Peacebuilding Fund (UNPBF), but aside from the UNPBF, the authors found very few evaluations looking explicitly at peace linkages. This is likely due to: 1) the lack of a central database of evaluations looking at peace (by comparison, databases of evaluations specific to development and humanitarian action are maintained by the OECD, UNEG, ALNAP and others); 2) the fact that ALNAP and its Members are largely humanitarian or dual mandate (HD) and hence ALNAP and the authors are less familiar with peace evaluation efforts; and 3) the fact that peace evaluations and various forms of reviews and assessments of foreign policy, diplomacy, and stabilisation are less likely to be published and shared publicly (that said, the authors focused on evaluations of peace actors, rather than foreign policy, diplomacy or stabilisation-focused evaluations.).

7  The dominance of humanitarian evaluations in the set is likely due to ALNAP conducting this synthesis. ALNAP chose not to conduct further searches of development evaluation databases, as HD linkages were well covered in the initial ALNAP mapping, which included evaluations from various dual mandate organisations. As noted above, peace and NGO evaluations are less likely to be published or publicly available. (There are requirements in key evaluation norms and standards for UN actors and bilateral donors to publish all of their ODA-focused evaluations, while similar norms are not in place for most NGO actors).

8  A total of 11 of the 90 evaluative reports are syntheses (hereby referred to also as evaluations); 10 of the 90 have joint authorship, including two IAHEs. The 90 retained all refer to at least two of the three domains in the evaluation objectives or questions (explicitly or implicitly, with some minor exceptions to ensure organisation coverage).

9  This is likely to be due to the fact that NGOs often do not share their evaluations and, in general, have no requirements to make their evaluations public, unlike UN agencies and OECD DAC donors. The result is that relatively few NGO evaluations are included in ALNAP's online database, the HELP Library. ALNAP wrote individual emails to each ALNAP Member, including all NGOs, asking them directly to share any HDP nexus evaluations with ALNAP, but these efforts yielded almost no additional NGO evaluations. Another possible explanation for the lack of NGO focus on the nexus in evaluations may be that some NGOs are dual mandate and therefore less likely to refer explicitly to their work using the nexus terminology, making these evaluations more challenging to identify.

# 2. Defining the nexus: do organisations have a shared understanding of the nexus?

Policy definitions of the HDP nexus are intentionally broad to allow a wide range of donors and implementing agencies to find approaches that suit their role, mandate and wider strategic outlook.  However, this breadth has led to many evaluations finding a lack of clarity in organisational approaches to the nexus and what it means in practice. This is particularly the case in relation to how the peace component is interpreted and how nexus work is related to existing work on resilience. These different conceptions of the HDP nexus are explored further below.

## 2A. The need for clear internal policy, strategy and guidance on the HDP nexus

**Many actors have only recently developed — or still do not have — a clearly articulated internal definition of the HDP nexus that outlines how it relates specifically to their organisation's mandate, according to evaluations**. For this reason, evaluations have sometimes been used to help advance internal reflections to clarify the concept. Evaluations often go on to highlight that organisations also lack an internal, organisation-wide HDP nexus policy or strategy that can be used to anchor their work across existing programmes and ways of working.[1] Evaluations repeatedly find that staff within the same organisation often have widely varying understandings of the HDP nexus.[2] (See Section 3A for findings on staff capacity and skills needed.)

> *There is currently little shared understanding amongst FAO personnel of what the broad-ranging HDP nexus means, nor of its implications for the Organization. The completion of this evaluation is an opportunity to clarify what the HDP nexus means to FAO, and to reiterate its relevance to FAO. There are many different dimensions to the HDP nexus as revealed in the burgeoning literature on the topic. What it means for an individual UN agency, like FAO, has to be unpacked, and to some extent customized.*
>
> (Buchanan-Smith et al., 2021: 77)

**Moreover, the HDP nexus appears to have advanced far more at the global policy level than at the operational level where more technical guidance is needed, the evaluations suggest**.[3] Currently communicated primarily as a high-level political and policy agenda, the nexus now needs to be translated into practical, technical guidance. Many evaluations specifically call for this guidance. For instance, a 2019 evaluation of Global Affairs Canada called for 'overall departmental guidance on the nexus' (PRA,

2019b: 3). A 2021 UNHCR evaluation 'found that guidance on important aspects of humanitarian-development cooperation is missing' with a particular need for guidance on choosing who to work with within a nexus approach (UNHCR, 2021: 41 & 33-34). At the same time, a 2021 UNICEF evaluation highlighted the need for guidance on indicators to monitor progress (Taylor et al., 2021: 6).

**Guidance is also missing on the use of theories of change (TOC) to guide the design of nexus approaches**. Although early evaluations and policy papers on the nexus stressed the importance of creating clear and appropriate TOCs for nexus work, an absence of clear thinking around TOCs and what nexus approaches are meant to be achieving was still being raised in later evaluations. Only a few TOCs were found in the evaluations reviewed (Murray et al., 2018; Roxin et al., 2021; Buchanan-Smith et al., 2021: 94; IEO, 2020b) and some of these were designed retrospectively by the evaluators. More often, evaluations recommended the need to develop TOCs or ways to strengthen them, with many suggesting that this would be a necessary step to improve the organisational approach to operationalising nexus principles. Similarly, a 2019 Synthesis Review of Peace Building Fund evaluations noted that if the fund 'continues to expand its funding across the development-humanitarian-peacebuilding nexus, it will be important to be clear about peacebuilding theories of change and expected peacebuilding impacts across the development and humanitarian spectrum' (Ernstorfer, 2020: 19). That review focused on the lack of clarity about peace-building, but it speaks to the broader point: that organisations have not sufficiently clarified internally and to their own staff, let alone in their programmatic and operational models, how working in a HDP nexus manner or taking an HDP nexus approach may relate to concrete changes in ways of working or expected outcomes.

In terms of what nexus theories of change should look like, in guidance on the nexus there is a strong emphasis on the need to avoid linearity and embrace complex causal relationships, 'including the interlinkages between systemic structural causes … visible conflict and peace drivers, dividers and connectors' (IASC, 2020b: 13). Some evaluations note the problems that arise when this is not done well, particularly failing to understand how root causes can be addressed (Zetter et al., 2019). Collaborative approaches are also considered key to navigating this complexity: the 2021 FAO evaluation stressed that design of interventions should be 'conducted in consultation with local actors and partners… underpinned by a collaboratively generated theory of change' (Buchanan-Smith et al., 2021: 83).

## 2B. The HDP nexus compared to resilience, recovery, preparedness and disaster risk reduction

In the OECD DAC Recommendation, **strengthening risk management capacities is an integral part of the definition of the triple nexus** (OECD, 2019b). The conventional risk management paradigm includes four main spheres: prevention, preparedness, response and recovery; to manage risk is to manage each of these spheres. Disaster risk reduction (DRR) and risk-proofing actions are activities included in risk management. DRR projects typically feature early warning, early action and anticipatory action (not discussed here).

The HDP nexus is seen in various ways to relate to the pre-existing concepts of resilience, recovery, preparedness, risk management and DRR in evaluations. Among the evaluations and reports reviewed:

- **Resilience is a common thread across most nexus approaches evaluated**. It is almost uniformly noted in nexus descriptions, across nearly all subsets of documents. There is no consensus, however, on the extent to which and precisely how resilience and nexus approaches overlap. Of the 90 evaluations, 30 featured the term 'resilience' when explaining the nexus. They do so in four different ways:

  1. where resilience objectives and activities are seen as critical to achieving nexus outcomes/objectives;

  2. where nexus objectives and activities are seen as critical for achieving resilience outcomes/objectives;

  3. where they are treated as interchangeable concepts;

  4. where nexus and resilience are seen as distinct concepts or areas of practice that are still poorly defined in relation to one another.

  Some evaluations, such as FAO's 2021 evaluation, explore the theme of resilience in greater depth and generally find that it is a useful framing. Nevertheless, there is strong evidence that the lack of clarity on the exact relationship between resilience and the HDP nexus has proven confusing for many actors. (See Annex 1, table 3 for examples of how evaluations describe nexus actors' ways of linking the nexus and resilience.)

- **Recovery, recognised as an opportunity to hand over from humanitarian to development actors, is frequently mentioned**. It is present in 60% of the evaluations, and is especially visible in nexus approaches described by donors and INGOs. It is most prevalent among the set of 14 evaluations that have a main or significant focus on the nexus.

- **Preparedness (or the set of actions that focus on the period preceding specific crisis events) is largely missing from the nexus approaches described in evaluations**. It is a visible feature of only one-third of the evaluations overall, rising to two-thirds for the nexus-centred evaluations. It is a feature of almost half of the UN nexus approaches, but much less so in evaluations of or by donors.[4]

- **Risk management is finding a renewed focus through several agencies' approaches to the nexus.**

  o In particular UN agencies are more often linking risk management to their nexus approaches,[5] with a 2021 UNICEF evaluation on the HD nexus emphasising that risk management should be an integral part of the way organisations do their work, rather than an add-on activity (Taylor et al., 2021).[6]

  o NGOs more readily relate their nexus approaches to DRR (versus risk management). For Oxfam, the nexus is a continuation of long-running efforts including DRR.[7] CARE International directly links the relevance of the nexus to their work on resilience and DRR.[8] Similarly, WFP's evaluations suggest that its staff recognise the relevance of the nexus to its DRR work.[9]

**Nevertheless, disaster risk reduction tends to receive little attention in evaluations of nexus approaches overall. Some more recent evaluations describe stronger linkages to DRR and its use by agencies to re-centre their nexus work around 'risk-informed' approaches to development and humanitarian response**. Only 14% of the evaluations overall and 36% of the evaluations with a main or significant focus on the nexus include DRR.[10] An early (2018) UNEG evaluation synthesis on the humanitarian-development nexus noted a lack of clarity in how DRR was being applied by nexus actors (Christoplos et al., 2018: 2). Later evaluations report more significant examples of mainstreaming DRR into humanitarian and development programmes — which potentially reflects a shift in practice in recent years.

**This greater focus on DRR is seen most strongly in development finance**. The World Bank, UN agencies and other partners have invested heavily in DRR and climate change adaptation funding mechanisms. Regional development banks (e.g., the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB)) increasingly operate in fragile settings and have scaled up their involvement in DRR to include 'developing contingent financing facilities … and further developing tailored approaches to fragility, such as the AfDB's Transition Support Facility' (FAO, DI and NRC, 2021: 23). At the same time, a distinct division of labour remains among the HDP domains, raising questions as to whether DRR is a focus for nexus-style integration or is merely a common theme adopted by humanitarian and development actors but still pursued in silos.

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### Text box 1.  UNICEF's use of multi-hazard DRR to progress a nexus approach

The most prominent contribution to the nexus over the evaluation period was reportedly the UNICEF work on **preparedness and risk-informed programming**, which has made a significant difference to internal and external 'preparedness to respond to crises, especially for recurring, cyclical natural' hazards (Visser et al, 2019: 85).

A 2019 UNICEF evaluation reports **nexus-centred progress using the lens of multi-hazard risk reduction**. An example in Nepal offers lessons with 'strong government engagement…effective coordination and a comprehensive focus on multi-hazard risk reduction and resilience within the education sector' (Ibid: x). Humanitarian and development coordination groups are aligned with government in working towards a collective outcome of comprehensive school safety and risk reduction.

 Since the 2010 UNICEF Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action, there has been corporate acknowledgement for the 'link between humanitarian action and development, providing an explicit focus on disaster risk reduction' (Ibid: 64).

UNICEF's Peacebuilding, Education and Advocacy Programme (PBEA), supported by funding from the Government of the Netherlands, has reportedly also contributed to 'risk-informed programming and made sustained impacts in research outside of UNICEF' (Ibid: 106).

## 2C. Understanding peace in the nexus: differentiated approaches?

**There is strong evidence that many humanitarian organisations have yet to clearly define their institution's approach or linkages between their core work and peace objectives or outcomes**. Evaluations tend to highlight the discomfort that many humanitarian actors have with more clearly articulating or focusing on HP linkages. A 2021 UNICEF evaluation highlights this clearly, finding: 'there has been a great deal of uncertainty and a lack of consensus in regard to UNICEF's role in peacebuilding' (Taylor et al., 2021: 59). Although the precise meaning of peace within the nexus remains unclear for many, there is greater recognition about this lack of clarity. The relevance of aligning to the peace agenda is also now largely recognised.

> *The peace component of the HDP nexus is the most contentious…This is also the component that generates the widest range of interpretations amongst interviewees, from those who stress the technical essence of FAO which they interpret as inherently neutral and are therefore uncomfortable with an explicit commitment to promoting and sustaining peace, to those who interpret it as FAO being conflict sensitive in all that it does, to those who see it as a critical opportunity to proactively address underlying conflict and power dynamics which may be present in apparently peaceful contexts as well as in acute emergencies.*
>
> (Buchanan-Smith et al., 2021: 18)

**Some humanitarian actors are increasingly distinguishing two main types of approaches to peace in the nexus: 'big P' (political solutions and securitised responses to violent conflict) versus 'little p' (building the capacity for peace in societies)**. This dichotomy is reflected in the IASC nexus mapping of good practices (2021a) and an earlier IASC issues paper that details the ways in which the H and P pillars of the nexus may interconnect (see Figure 2). This suggests that 'little p' approaches may create more opportunities for organisations to engage across the nexus (IASC, 2021a). Only three evaluations explicitly mention and use the big P/little p dichotomy: the FAO/DI/NRC learning synthesis calls it an 'emerging consensus at global level' (FAO, DI and NRC, 2021: 15). At the same time, a UNRWA evaluation suggests 'it is not within UNRWA's mandate to engage in any "Big P" activities, while there are some elements … that clearly are "little p"' (UNRWA, 2021: 22). This sentiment is echoed by FAO's 2021 nexus evaluation which highlights the relevance of 'little p' to FAO's work (Buchanan-Smith et al., 2021: 20).  Despite only three evaluations explicitly mentioning the 'big P' / 'little p' by name, examples of peace approaches in other evaluations tend to fall clearly into one of these two types.

## Figure 2. Linkages between humanitarian action and peace



Source: (IASC, 2021a; 2020b)

**'Big P' tends to be more common in the approaches of bilateral donors**. Given the growing amount of official development assistance (ODA) being provided to humanitarian contexts in conflict, post-conflict and protracted settings, for more than a decade, greater attention has been paid to linking aid to notions of peace, peace-building, stabilisation, security, disarmament and whole-of-government approaches (which often combine diplomacy and foreign policy objectives and may mix ODA with non-ODA funding).[11] This is only nominally reflected in the evaluations reviewed. For instance, a 2019 evaluation by the Government of Finland recommends the need to 'engage in international stabilisation/peace building advocacy and policy influence' to promote nexus approaches among all partners (Zetter et al., 2019: 90). Several donors have more wide-reaching peace components in their portfolios, however little attention has been paid to the alignment of peace with humanitarian action (see Text box 2) (Zetter et al., 2019; Betts et al., 2020; PRA, 2020). It is possible that other aspects related to diplomacy, peace and security are more visible in their foreign policy evaluations or other unpublished internal reviews.

**Operational humanitarian actors find 'little p' approaches offer more opportunities across the HDP nexus, but are largely wary of engaging in 'big P'**. A common example of engaging in 'little p' appears to be an increasing commitment to understand conflict dynamics and the potential impacts of humanitarian and development programmes on social cohesion and conflict. One of the key challenges of engaging in stronger programmatic links between humanitarian and peace domains are the different timeframes (i.e. standard lengths of projects) and vastly different 'cultures' and approaches.[12] The FAO evaluation highlights how FAO's small Conflict and Peace Unit in its headquarters developed a corporate framework; although the evaluation revealed that many FAO staff were unaware of it and/or had not made use of its resources and expertise (Buchanan-Smith et al., 2021: 25). The same evaluation

noted how the organisation can, at times, play a more active role in in 'big P' efforts in some specific countries and highlighted the 'important role' FAO played when 'the Government of Colombia and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia asked FAO to collaborate in the implementation of the first point of the peace agreement, which focuses on fighting hunger and promoting rural reforms and development' and also highlighted some examples where FAO has engaged with UN Peacekeeping missions (Buchanan-Smith et al., 2021: 26-33).

Further examples of how 'peace' in the nexus is being described are provided in Text box 2.

> ### Text box 2. Unpacking what peace entails in the HDP nexus for different organisations
>
> - A 2021 learning synthesis (by the FAO, Development Initiatives and the Norwegian Refugee Council) provided examples of what peace may entail in the nexus, spanning '**stabilization** (northern Cameroon and Somalia), **state-building (Somalia) and counter-terrorism/preventing violent extremism interventions** (Somalia and Bangladesh), and **security and justice sector reform**' (FAO, DI and NRC, 2021: 15). This has resulted in a growing interest in comprehensive and joint context, conflict and situation analyses as well as conflict-sensitive programming (see endnote for examples).[13]
>
> - The 2021 FAO evaluation describes the **relevance of peace to the organisation's work and portfolio** specifically because some drivers of conflict relate directly to FAO's mandate and areas of technical competence. Examples of these drivers include 'competition over natural resources ..., disputes over land rights ... and/or environmental mismanagement' (Buchanan-Smith et al., 2021: 20).
>
> - **The Peace Responsiveness Facility** (PRF) is another example of an initiative to support actors in unpacking how their work contributes to peace objectives. Funded by the Government of Canada (2021–2024), the PRF, piloted since 2017 through fieldwork conducted by Interpeace, aims to build capacities of the next generation of 'peace responsive' actors. Peace responsiveness 'seeks to enhance the ability of actors operating in conflict affected or fragile contexts to be conflict-sensitive and to deliberately contribute to peace through their technical programming' (PRF). The facility promotes peace responsiveness through research, online training and exchange. PRF partners include FAO, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and the World Health Organization (WHO).

Programming for social cohesion surfaces as the most frequent way of integrating a relevant 'peace perspective', particularly in terms of targeting refugees as well as host communities in protracted displacement. (See Section 4B for more information on social cohesion.)

**The relationship between food systems, conflict and peace is attracting more dedicated efforts and attention**. It is another emerging focus of peace considerations in nexus programming. Recent SIPRI research highlights how equitable, sustainable food systems can help create conditions that are conducive to peace. This includes breaking the links between conflict and food insecurity (the politicisation and weaponisation of food; the links between climate-induced food shortages, resource depletion and inter-group grievances; and the inequitable distribution of resources that fuel or prolong conflict) (Tschunkert and Delgado, 2022). This focus is increasingly reflected in evaluations commissioned by FAO and the World Food Programme (WFP 2021c).

Literature also supports the historic effectiveness of peace interventions that practitioners can draw on, such as the CDA Collaborative Learning Projects' Reflecting on Peace Practice Programme which built on 26 peace-building case studies to identify five elements that increase the impact of conflict prevention and peace-building interventions (see Text box 3). CDA's work also focuses on how to assess the effectiveness of peace practice, but its approach was largely absent from the evaluations reviewed.

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### Text box 3. CDA's Reflecting on Peace Practice (RPP) Programme's five key elements

**Five key elements to increase the impact of conflict prevention and peace-building interventions**

1. Target one or more **key conflict drivers** (as identified through a conflict analysis highlighting the conflict dynamics).

2. Ensure that the interventions contribute towards one or more of the five 'building blocks for peace' and that efforts towards the building blocks are **fast enough, big enough and sustained**, among other factors.

3. Aim for **change at the socio-political level** (in addition to changes at the individual/personal level).

4. **Involve both 'more people'** (the general population in its diversity) **and 'key people'** (opinion leaders).

5. **Formulate a theory of change** at both programme level (how do we think that activities will yield the expected results and why) and to explain the contribution of the project to 'peace writ large' to ensure that assumptions are expressed, and can be verified and adjusted.

Source: paraphrased from Peace in the Nexus in Cameroon (n.d.), p.4, which cites CDA Collaborative (2016b).

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Various efforts are under way to develop stronger guidance and tools to help humanitarian actors to integrate peace more effectively. In 2022, the IASC Nexus Result Group 4 with support from Interpeace, produced an inventory of guidance and tools on peace-building and conflict-sensitive approaches, as well as an analysis on the degree to which current tools meet the needs of practitioners in the field (IASC, 2022).

## Chapter 2 summary

Overall, the review of the evaluative evidence from 2018 to 2022 suggests that, despite the increasing level of policy commitment, many organisations have yet to articulate clearly for internal purposes how their organisation relates the HDP nexus concept to their own mandate. We also found that definitions of the nexus vary quite substantially. This includes the lack of a clear articulation of peace approaches both in evaluations and in many humanitarian organisations' overall nexus approaches. The next chapter explores in more depth organisations' internal and external coordination challenges related to the nexus.

## Endnotes

1   Buchanan-Smith et al. (2021), Barnes et al. (2018), King and Fransen (2018), Taylor et al. (2021), WFP (2020a), UNDP (2020b), ADE (2021), Betts et al. (2020), Zetter et al. (2019), Klausen et al. (2019), PRA (2019b), CARE Canada (2019).

2   Evaluations such as: Buchanan-Smith et al. (2021), WFP (2020a), ADE (2021), UNICEF (2021), Zetter et al. (2019), Klausen et al. (2019), CARE Canada (2019).

3   Buchanan-Smith et al. (2021), Taylor et al. (2021), WFP (2020a), UNDP (2020a), Zetter et al. (2019), PRA (2020).

4   Some examples exist, however, of donors focusing on the capacity to respond to future crises. For example, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) humanitarian projects in Haiti for infrastructure development and agriculture, pursued nexus thinking, building local governance and capacity to respond to future crises (in line with DRR good practice). There, nexus programming derived not only from strategic-level concepts, but also from project assessments relevant to many contexts (Klausen et al., 2019: 52). Another SDC example is South Caucasus, where the SDC's development and humanitarian colleagues plan handovers to government partners on issues related to internally displaced persons (IDPs) and DRR (ibid).

5   The FAO/DI/NRC learning synthesis suggests that risk management is at times reflected in nexus approaches to manage fragility and conflict. In Bangladesh, due to recurring seasonal monsoon floods and cyclones, partners invest heavily in DRR as a 'secondary, cross-cutting objective in infrastructure, urban planning, education, agriculture and food security programmes' (FAO, DI and NRC, 2021: 22).

6    'A risk-informed approach to programming sees disasters not as one-off events to be responded to, but as deep-rooted and longer-term problems that must be planned for' (Taylor et al., 2021: 21). Disaster risk reduction is seen 'not as a distinct sector, but as something that must be integrated into long-term development planning' (ibid: 21).

7   Sande Consultores, 2020: 3.

8   CARE International's nexus policy paper stresses that the 'nexus is particularly relevant to CARE's work on gender and in food security, resilience and disaster risk reduction' (CARE Canada, 2019: 9).

9   For instance, a 2019 WFP evaluation suggests that WFP approaches the nexus from two vantage points, namely disaster risk reduction and community-development outcomes and that 'consulted staff are generally closer to the disaster risk reduction perspective' (WFP, 2019: 36).

10  Notably the United Nations Agency for Disaster Risk Reduction does not appear to have any evaluations related to the HDP nexus to date.

11  These areas (i.e. those not funded by ODA) tend to be less frequently the subject of evaluations and some are not publicly available. There has been ,however, a previous OECD-DAC synthesis of evaluations looking at findings on whole-of-government and Defence, Diplomacy and Development (3D), and 'stabilisation and development intertwined' approaches in Afghanistan and in relation to other forced displacement settings. See: Morrison-Métois (2017) and Ruaudel and Morrison-Métois (2017).

12  These relationships were visible because peace-centred evaluations were intentionally sought to balance this synthesis; they include UNPBF, Search for Common Ground (SFCG) and numerous bilateral donor evaluations focused on conflict contexts (Germany, Norway, Sweden and the United States).

13  ADE (2021); Norway/NORAD (Bryld et al., 2020); CARE Canada (2019); Ernstorfer (2021); FAO, DI and NRC (2021); Buchanan-Smith et al. (2021); Finland/MFA (Betts et al., 2020); Canada/GAC (PRA, 2019a); Canada/GAC (PRA, 2019b); Knudsen and Hatlebakk (2018); UNDP (2020); UNICEF (2021); WFP (2019).

# 3. Linking actors: how are organisations making connections within and between themselves?

The HDP nexus is characterised by the need for better coordination, complementarity and coherence between actors and across organisations' own internal silos. Unsurprisingly, coordination and coherence are the most frequent themes in nexus evaluations. Nexus-related coordination can be considered at two levels: 'breaking silos' within organisations, as 'a process of [internal] self-reflection'; and 'bridging the silos' through coordination between organisations from different domains or sectors (Weishaupt, 2020: 8). At both levels, evaluations describe more challenges than successes. The need for a vast range of partnerships between actors is frequently highlighted by evaluations. This chapter explores internal and external coordination and coherence and looks at the types of partnerships and complementarity needed for successful nexus approaches.

## 3A. Breaking internal silos: what do evaluations reveal about internal coordination and the HDP nexus?

### Structures

Evaluations describe in detail how **divides between humanitarian and development programmes have remained doggedly persistent**. This can be explained not only by the difficulties in addressing structural barriers within organisations but also by the lack of changes in the overarching international aid architecture. Most bilateral donors have yet to move noticeably away from having separate funding mechanisms for humanitarian emergencies and longer-term development assistance (see Section 4A on crisis response financing). Many multilateral organisations have replicated this structure, managing funding with parallel functional units (or offices) for humanitarian or development work (see examples in endnote).[1] There are, however, a growing number of specific financing mechanisms and funds that are moving away from siloed funding (see Text box 8 for examples).

**No evaluative evidence highlights that dual-mandated organisations have advantages in the HD nexus,** nor in adopting the third domain, peace — despite appearing well-suited for nexus approaches. In fact, dual-mandated entities may face challenges due to their own internal structures which are often found not to be conducive to promoting nexus approaches. Indeed, one evaluation notes this is a common oversight in nexus approaches — that they tend to emphasise the 'links between humanitarian and development organizations rather than links within multi-mandated organizations' (Steets et al., 2019: 63). The 2019 SDC evaluation, however, did find in some contexts,

a 'tendency for SDC staff to see the nexus primarily as a question of internal coherence' (Klausen et al., 2019: 8). Evaluations frequently recommend that **dual-mandated entities examine how their internal structures can be strengthened to promote nexus approaches**. As a positive example of how this internal reflection has been undertaken, UNICEF's 2021 evaluation found that the organisation's dual (humanitarian and development) mandate and peace analysis help to 'inform the points of convergence for the two sets of principles guiding development and humanitarian work' (Taylor et al., 2021: 37).

**Within-organisation coordination reforms are being explored** by bilateral donors (such as Canada, Finland and the EU) and by NGOs that implement both humanitarian and development and/or peace work. However, evaluations have highlighted many instances in which different units within the same organisation have failed to coordinate internally, with teams often working independently of one another. For instance, a 2019 evaluation of the Finnish Strategy in Somalia reported the lack of consultation and coordination and the 'total independence' between internal units dealing with the nexus: namely, the Humanitarian Aid, Civil Society units and the work of the Political Department (supporting peace-making projects) (Zetter et al., 2019: 183). The EU also reports challenges, given the different 'systems, ways of working and lines of command and priorities' of the departments and units (e.g., DG INTPA, DG ECHO and EEAS) (ADE, 2021: 41). The EU has innovated with coordination structures: for instance, in Myanmar, where they used a 'mandatory Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) that included joint hearings, peer reviews and joint operations' to guide the Nexus Response Mechanism launched in 2019 for the Rohingya crisis, but so far outcomes are reportedly limited (ADE, 2021: 9, 41). A 2020 evaluation of Canada's work in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) noted that this coordination improves with proximity to the field, where teams may be smaller and the lack of coordination more visible. However, the evaluation found that: 'nonetheless, the centralized nature of the DRC program largely limited the mission's capacity to make strategic decisions on the integration of all streams in programming' (PRA, 2020: 14).

## Staffing, skill sets and increasing capacity-building initiatives

**To break silos internally and advance nexus ways of working with external partners, a large proportion of evaluations — almost one-third** (n=26 of 90) **— underline the need for further capacity-building in relation to the nexus**. Frequently, evaluations highlight the need for organisations to have staff with specific skill sets and expertise. Some evaluations highlight investment in this. Indeed, a large proportion of evaluations recognise the need for further capacity development. For example, UNICEF invests in internal coordination with 'a senior nexus adviser' in the DRC (Taylor et al., 2021: 54) and Sweden/SIDA recruited 10 'resilience or nexus-focused staff' to provide regional and country offices with the required 'skillset, prior expertise and the official job description' (Swithern, 2019: 43). Meanwhile, UNDP has Peace and Development advisers within UN Resident Coordinator Offices (UNRCOs).[2]

Most of these evaluations also highlight the specific skills that humanitarian, development or peace practitioners should develop to further advance their nexus approaches; examples are featured in Text box 4. Global Affairs Canada has

identified nexus competencies in formal staff training; created a 'nexus award' to incentivise staff; and now makes mandatory the inclusion of language on the nexus in executive staff performance evaluations (Laws, 2022: 15). A 2019 evaluation of CARE Canada recommended internal changes to improve nexus outcomes such as cross-team training, secondments for staff members, short job swaps, greater focus on learning, job descriptions and recruitment that articulate skills that span the three domains (CARE Canada, 2019: 23).

## Text box 4. Unique skills are needed to navigate the nexus

The various **skills in demand for nexus approaches**, as mentioned in the evaluations:

- **Trilingualists**: FAO's 2021 evaluation found that familiarity with the three 'H', 'D' and 'P' pillars is only held by 'a minority in the Organization' (Buchanan-Smith et al., 2021: 74). The evaluation called for 'multi-disciplinarity' FAO, DI and NRC, 2021: ix) and an 'understanding of how experts in different specialisms operate, the language and systems they use, and the challenges they face' (ibid: 35).

- **Timeframe travellers**: This was described in a UNICEF evaluation as the ability to understand both life-saving and livelihood-supporting timeframes and the ability to shift from a supply-driven emergency response to include a focus on 'quality teaching and learning' and on longer-term planning (Visser et al., 2019). Similarly, a UNFPA evaluation highlighted how: 'An understanding of how humanitarian response should be linked to longer-term (collective) outcomes and transition through early recovery back to normality and stronger development work' (Evaluation Office of UNFPA, 2019: 56).

- **Multi-mandate managers**: Grappling with 'dual-mandate' issues is no longer adequate. Nexus actors now need to navigate all three ways of working, and be able to jump readily from one silo to the other, inside or across organisations. A 2021 evaluation found that even multi-mandate UN agencies, however, lack peace-building as a central concern, including those who receive funds from the UN Peace Building Fund (Ernstorfer, 2021: 12).

Other soft and hard skills that evaluations identify as needed:

- **Systems-thinking, consensus-building and better brokering skills**

- **Strong, focused management**

- **Capacity-building to undertake and support risk and context analysis, including political analysis**

- **Enhanced expertise in-house on resilience, peace-building, capacity-building, all types of risk analysis**

- **Increased understanding on peace-building, including conflict sensitivity, gender, persons with disabilities, accountability to affected populations (AAP)**

- **Wider understanding of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls (GEEWG)**

- **Sustainable livelihoods and social cohesion**

- **Skills appropriate for preparedness, DRR and resilience-building interventions and risk-informed programming**

Sources for various skills: Buchanan-Smith et al., 2021; Sande Consultores, 2020; Taylor et al., 2021; Ernstorfer, 2021; Beck et al., 2021; IEO, 2020b; Lawday et al., 2020; Evaluation Office of UNFPA, 2019.

**Given a reported lack of guidance and the lack of common understanding among staff, nexus skill-building initiatives are emerging**. Under the auspices of the DAC-UN Dialogue on the implementation of the OECD DAC Recommendation, the UNDP launched the Nexus Academy in 2022, in order to fill nexus capacity gaps for bilateral donors and UN agencies. Delivered by the DAC-UN Dialogue group, the academy uses a modular design and numerous integrated techniques to foster learning and exchange to advance complementary HDP actions among international aid organisations. It has also developed an online version to help broaden reach.  In order to complement skills of nexus actors with 'peace responsiveness', Interpeace also launched a new initiative in 2020, the Peace Responsiveness Facility, to help operationalise the Sustaining Peace agenda for working with development and humanitarian actors, and supporting UN agencies (i.e., UNPBF) (see Text box 2 for more on the Peace Responsiveness Facility). In general, evaluations highlight the ways in which many actors are making investments to ensure their staff and rosters are 'fit for fragility' (IEO, 2020a). NGOs engaged in Denmark-funded nexus approaches, for example, recognise that they 'have to do major retraining of their own staff to manage the shift from humanitarian to more developmental modalities' (Denmark/DANIDA, 2018: 55).

## 3B.  Bridging silos across organisations: what do the evaluations say about multi-agency coordination?

**There is clear evidence that humanitarian coordination structures are embracing the nexus**. The United Nations' New Way of Working (NWOW) promotes a country-driven approach that aims to transcend the divides between humanitarian and development streams wherever possible. A UN Joint Steering Committee (JSC) to Advance Humanitarian and Development Cooperation was created, co-chaired by UNOCHA (representing the humanitarian domain) and UNDP (representing the development domain). The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) was mandated to strengthen collective humanitarian action and created the Results Group 4 on Humanitarian Development Collaboration (active from 2019 to 2022) to produce many products that promote nexus approaches.[3] In 2021, it reported that at least 10 emergency response operations have 'humanitarian-development nexus (HDN) platforms' varying from country to country (IASC, 2020c).

**Many 'slow-moving trends' at country level demonstrate improved coordination catalysed by humanitarian initiatives**. In Chad they include a 'High-Level Humanitarian-Development Forum'; in Niger a 'High Tripartite Committee'; and in Ukraine and Nigeria an 'HCT Working Group' on the nexus (CIC, 2019: 30). However, UN inter-agency coordination structures at headquarters and country levels were found in a 2021 evaluation not to promote gender mainstreaming adequately in the triple nexus process — and 'without this coordination, progress is likely to be limited' (Beck et al., 2021: vii).

**However, some hallmarks of the UN humanitarian coordination system for emergency management are found not to work well for nexus approaches**. Evaluations note a number of attempts to adapt or change existing coordination structures to align these better with nexus objectives, with mixed success.

Mixed experiences with nexus adaptations to humanitarian coordination systems include the following examples:

- **Backing away from humanitarian clusters**. A 2018 UNDP evaluation highlights how various coordination mechanisms are existing outside the clusters. It suggests that clusters in some protracted settings are 'overcome by developing new mechanisms', and that what is emerging represents a 'post-cluster' universe. Both Lebanon and Sudan have sectors, not clusters, and both have unified humanitarian and development programming in their nexus-related programmes (namely, 3RP in Lebanon and 3R in Sudan) (Murray et al., 2018: 46).

- **Moving to task teams and task forces**. A 2021 learning synthesis reported that UN resident coordinators established a 'nexus task force' in Cameroon and Somalia as strategic forums for HDP actors to work towards collective outcomes (FAO, DI and NRC, 2021: 14). Nexus task teams and working groups are also reported in the DRC and in Sudan — i.e., the Development and Reconstruction Facility (DRF) (CIC, 2019: 30).

- **Coordinating through funding channels, donor platforms and trust funds**. An increasing number of funding platforms and trust funds have been used for coordination, often with mixed evidence of success. Despite a lack of dedicated capacity and 'waning donor confidence due to costs' in Somalia, a UN Multi-Partner Trust Fund funded joint programmes, encouraging the UN system to 'deliver as one'. In Cameroon and Bangladesh, pooled funds are reported to 'explicitly link humanitarian and development approaches … to strengthen coordination among donors and implementing agencies' (FAO, DI and NRC, 2021: 29). However, a 2019 SDC evaluation reports that Switzerland used the donor coordination platform to promote the nexus, but with limited success (Klausen et al., 2019: 123).

- **Planning geographically**. So-called '**area-based planning**' has inspired 'hybrid next-generation coordination' with three evaluated nexus approaches suggesting that area-based planning can be used to address weaknesses found in humanitarian architecture. Area-based approaches address risk factors and needs holistically, aligned to a defined community or geography, thereby lending themselves readily to nexus approaches (Konyndyk et al., 2020). A refined version of good, contextualised development practice, area-based planning and coordination is now promoted in IASC guidance as a good coordination model (IASC, 2021b). A

joint 2019 UNHCR/DANIDA evaluation in Kenya used an area-based approach, reporting that such intervention logic helps to increase coordination (ADE, 2019: 98). Somalia has also experimented with area-based intervention (Jantzi et al., 2019), while UNDP used area-based planning in Sudan to promote 'multi-sectorial, durable solutions to IDP returnees' (Murray et al., 2018: 32).

- **An attempt at bundling sectors and domains had less success**. Striving to bridge organisations and sectors for a more holistic nexus approach at district levels, the Ethiopia Humanitarian Country Team devised a 'bundle approach' for better multi-sector integration. When development was added to the discussions in 2017, it became a 'bundle+ approach' (Steets et al., 2019: 18). However, the bundling approach failed to take hold, and even a joint 2018 mission to Ethiopia to collectively examine the bundle of food security, nutrition, and WASH sectors had only a limited positive effect. This was explained by misaligned geographic funding priorities, competition between organisations that hindered effective inter-cluster coordination, lack of dedicated follow-up from global support missions and poor relationships between cluster leads (Steets et al., 2019: 63).

As can be seen from the varied examples, **there is no clear evidence from evaluations that a particular coordination approach should be adopted in all contexts. Indeed, varied approaches to coordination at different levels may be needed**. There is some evidence, however, that joined-up as well as integrated programming or coordination may result in unwieldy or overly complex coordination models. For example, in the Syria Regional Refugee Response Plan (3RP), the EU requested coordination mechanisms that include regional and national steering committees and technical committees co-chaired by UNDP and UNHCR and 40 sectoral working groups, with 270 partners across the five countries. An evaluation found that this accentuated coordination remained nonetheless limited in providing a comprehensive response or collective outcomes, due to heavy architecture, redundancies and sustaining operations in a 'mode ... most suitable during immediate crisis response' (IEO, 2020b: xii, xix). This stresses the necessity of getting coordination right in nexus approaches, with more research and reviews of coordination mechanisms likely needed.

**Some actors suggest that there is little coordination of the development aid donor 'community' and few incentives to change this for nexus approaches at country level** (CIC, 2019). Nonetheless, development actors such as the World Bank are increasingly included within the United Nations country teams, and donor coordination platforms have been used to promote nexus approaches (Taylor et al., 2021). A 2021 learning synthesis recommends use of mechanisms co-chaired by the government, World Bank and UN resident coordinator and better use of the World Bank's country partnership framework negotiations to build effective collaboration on the nexus (FAO, DI and NRC, 2021).

**However, quite often the intra-organisational coordination of nexus approaches defaults to existing humanitarian structures and thus inherits their limitations. This humanitarian default is often seen as problematic given shorter-term funding cycles and less use of state structures**. A 2022 UNDP Independent Country Programme Evaluation in South Sudan and others suggests that efforts to widen coordination is primarily driven by humanitarian actors (i.e., development and peace actors are

largely absent) (IEO, 2022).[4] The 2021 FAO evaluation also highlighted how 'most coordination is led from the humanitarian side, with limited engagement with the development or peace pillars' and suggests that humanitarian actors have 'more incentives to invest in coordination than development actors' (Buchanan-Smith et al., 2021: 38). A UNFPA evaluation suggests that its country offices are also building on multi-sectoral coordination arrangements established in the emergency phase to support longer-term multisectoral development programming, including in Myanmar, Ukraine and Uganda (Barnes et al., 2018: 74). The default to humanitarian structures can be detrimental: it 'can undermine the coherence and effectiveness of financing and programming for the peacebuilding component' (Laws, 2022: 9).

## 3C. What can evaluations tell us about nexus partnerships?

**In describing approaches for nexus activities, many evaluations insist on the need for a broad range of partnerships and an expansion of coordination across actors**. Evaluations of HDP nexus approaches frequently highlight the need for humanitarian, development and peace actors to work in partnership with national governments/ authorities and local actors (NGOs and broader civil society) and with the private sector and regional actors. Evaluations tend to suggest that further guidance and more effort placed on building long-term partnerships may be needed to implement nexus approaches successfully.

### Partnering with governments

**HDP nexus coordination often includes national governments** — for example, when nexus practice focuses on policy coherence and promotion of development effectiveness. Although frequent, UNEG's 2018 evaluation synthesis found that national (host) government inclusion in nexus approaches (of any type) did not necessarily enhance coordination or synergies across the humanitarian and development interface (Christoplos et al., 2018). Despite inherent challenges, evaluations stress that engagement with government institutions is central to good development practice.[5] A 2019 lessons learned paper on Sweden's nexus approach found that in countries affected by crises, little ODA is channelled through the state, which leaves little scope to foster relationships with national authorities. The paper noted that SIDA 'may need to develop its experience of partnering with state actors at the nexus, particularly 'to fulfil the peace and development "legs"' of its nexus approaches (Swithern, 2019: 33). (For more information on how nexus actors may work with governments in varied contexts, see [Section 5B](#) on context typologies.) HDP ways of working at regional and country levels may also involve extending relationships beyond line ministries or adding strategic partnerships with regional authorities, such as with Regional Economic Communities (Buchanan-Smith et al., 2021: 78).

**Where government institutions lack capacity or in cases where governments are a party to conflict, some nexus partners — particularly humanitarian actors — may have concerns that partnerships could undermine humanitarian principles, such as neutrality and impartiality** (FAO, DI and NRC, 2021: 6). Interestingly, while many actors stress the importance of establishing or strengthening the organisation's commitment to humanitarian principles within an HDP nexus approach, there were no

concrete examples in the 90 evaluations of humanitarian principles being undermined — possibly an unsurprising finding given the overall lack of attention to humanitarian principles in evaluations (see Text box 5).

In contrast, **some nexus approaches choose to focus on building partnerships with non-governmental or civil society organisations rather than national governments**. The SDC prior to 2019, for example, generally encouraged funded NGOs/CSOs and multilateral partners to increase their work in the nexus. The 2019 SDC evaluation of humanitarian-development linkages found that their partners had been less active in engaging host-country government partners, often due to low levels of government capacity or weak relationships (Bryld, 2019: 43). Anecdotal evidence from a 2021 UNICEF evaluation suggests that there is often an either/or approach to developing government or civil society capacity, 'which runs counter to the goals of the nexus' (Taylor et al., 2021: 50). The evaluation recommended a stronger focus on context analyses containing aspects of risk and conflict, and guidance to support stronger nexus efforts.

## The private sector and market-based approaches

**Evaluations suggest that the private sector can also play an innovative role, offering new opportunities**. For example, the private sector often contributes to creating employment opportunities for refugees (Sande Consultores, 2020: 15; Evaluation Office of UNFPA, 2019; Aghumian et al., 2020) and can therefore support durable solutions that 'meet the needs of those who are most vulnerable/ marginalized' (Sande Consultores, 2020: 39). However, only 12 of the evaluations reviewed mentioned HDP nexus approaches that engaged with the private sector, with all 12 recognising its relevance. This suggests there is little evidence for systematic engagement of the private sector in HDP nexus approaches. FAO's evaluation highlights this, stating: 'there is little evidence of FAO developing partnerships with private sector actors that contribute to HDP nexus way of working'(Buchanan-Smith et al., 2021: 36).

**Evaluations call for greater inclusion of private sector actors, such as collaboration with trade unions and local businesses** (Buchanan-Smith et al., 2021: 47; UNHCR, 2020: 37; Zetter et al., 2019: 17). A report on market-oriented development for the Food and Business Knowledge Platform described as 'vital' cooperation and partnerships with private sector actors for meeting aid objectives in the HDP nexus. It argues that private sector actors can promote functioning markets that enable communities in fragile and conflict-affected settings to meet essential needs. This helps longer-term development and reduces local dependence on humanitarian aid (Bolling and Vrancken, 2020). The report includes research which captures: 'efforts to move the role of aid actors away from direct implementations, towards facilitation and market development via market actors and private sector partnerships' (Bolling and Vrancken, 2020: 7), building on the Market System Development (MSD) approaches to ask: 'to what degree markets (still) function' and focusing on 'ways in which markets rather than aid actors can deliver support and outcomes for target groups'.

Some examples from non-evaluative literature include:

1. The World Bank's efforts through the State and Peacebuilding Fund to 'integrate long-term development considerations' when working with humanitarian and peace-building actors, including through: 'facilitating engagement between humanitarian organizations and the private sector' (World Bank, n.d.).[6]

2. Mercy Corps working with its private sector partner to hold meetings in northeast Nigeria with the security forces, the transport union, company intermediaries, farmers and saving group representatives to exchange information on road closures and security to help prevent market losses (Bolling and Vrancken, 2020: 9).

3. Adam Smith International's ELAN programme in the DRC which uses an MSD approach for their work on coffee and cocoa value chains by supporting farmers and producers, facilitating access to finance by working with social impact lenders, and supporting industry associations' work advocating for decreased regulation and taxation (ibid: 53–54). (See Figure 3.)

## Figure 3. Adam Smith International's ELAN DRC Programme: an illustrative example of how an MSD approach can promote longer-term resilience
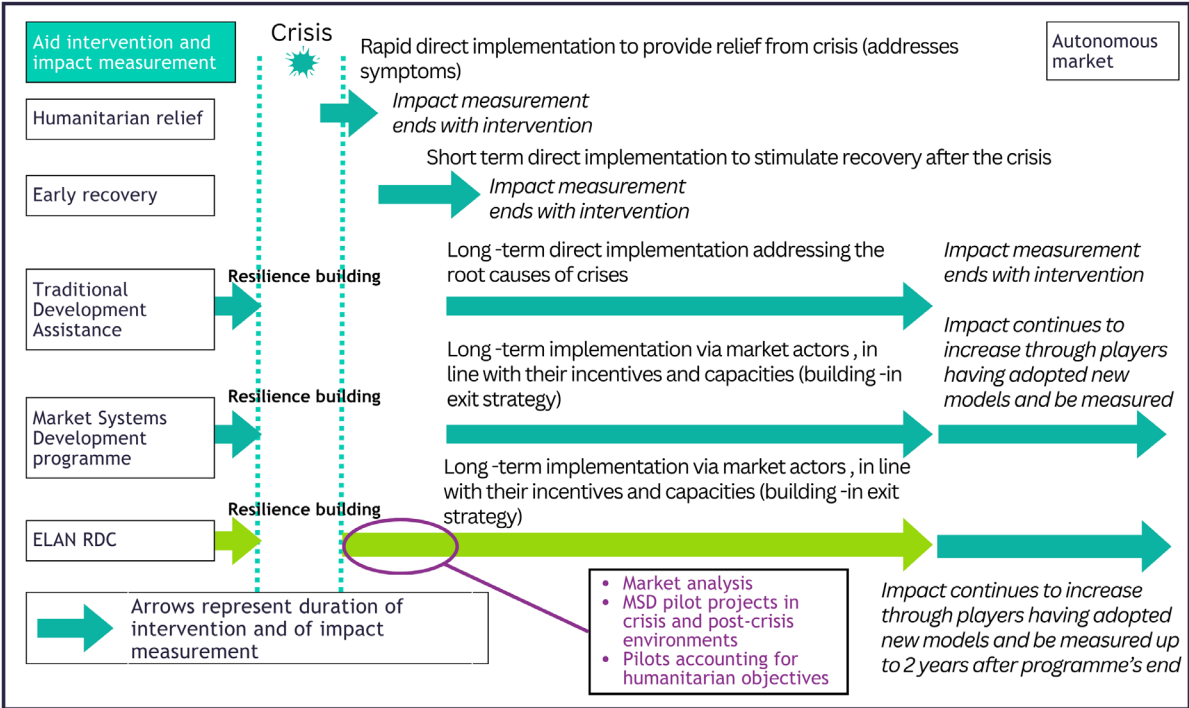


Source: Bommart, D., Beevers, K. and Venier, M. (2019) 'Changing Aid Norms: Applying the Market Systems Development Approach to the DRC's Aid Industry', Adam Smith International, cited in Bolling and Vrancken, 2020

Civil society actors have often insisted on the need for safeguards (e.g., corporate social responsibility, no back-door subsidy for firms from donor governments, and so on) to ensure that engagement with the private sector in nexus approaches produces equitable and inclusive solutions (Sande Consultores, 2020). Innovative examples in evaluations of including the private sector often entail public-private collaboration. Such innovative examples include: the Famine Action Mechanism (FAM) in the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) region in eastern Africa (Buchanan-Smith et al., 2021: 36); exploring alternative sources of funding from the private sector (UNDP, 2020a: 57); testing private health services (Klausen et al, 2019: 31); and protecting environmental resources, such as through the development of hotels and camps in parks/reserves which links to risk management of natural hazards and conflict sensitivity relating to shared resources (GEF IEO, 2020: 42).

## Multilaterals

Views on the role of multilateral organisations in promoting nexus approaches vary. Some evaluations suggest the need to involve multilaterals more systematically, while others instead suggest focusing greater attention on working with local organisations to promote nexus approaches. By adhering to the OECD DAC Recommendation (OECD, 2019b: 3), numerous multilateral and bilateral actors have agreed to strengthen normative and operational coherence to support nexus approaches (FAO, DI and NRC, 2021: 32). The past decade has witnessed the development of multilateral global frameworks that aim to promote a nexus approach and strengthen coherence

between donors and host governments (Burlin, 2021: 65). (See Text box 6.) Despite this, one evaluation found that good practices by multilaterals in advancing coordination with development and peace actors remains 'more of an exception than the norm' in evaluated nexus approaches (Buchanan-Smith et al., 2021: 35).

**Text box 6. Good practice with multilateral partnerships and building coherence between multilateral actors**

- The UK's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) organises its management, strategic planning and budgeting around country or geographic areas (as opposed to two separate HD teams in-country). This is seen to ensure that decisions on core funding to multilateral agencies are complementary and aligned with decisions to fund the same agencies at the bilateral level (Laws, 2022: 13).

- Among other multilateral actors, UNHCR identified building a strategic partnership with the EU as a priority. With the crisis in Syria and the more dynamic agenda on the humanitarian-development nexus, forced displacement has become an area of strategic focus for EU political and development institutions in addition to its humanitarian institutions (UNHCR, 2021: 30).

- FAO has made some progress, beyond its traditional collaboration in more peaceful contexts (Buchanan-Smith et al., 2021: 35). In Afghanistan, for example, it had its first Global Agriculture and Food Security Programme (GAFSP) project partnering with the Asian Development Bank. FAO was also working in partnership with the World Bank in Yemen to support smallholder farmers' ability to resume production in seven of the country's most conflict-affected provinces.

**Evaluations and reports recommend donor advocacy and engagement to improve the engagement of multilaterals in nexus approaches**. The 2019 SDC evaluation promotes 'broadening and strengthening the use of multilateral linkages and adding the notion of nexus to the global programmes and the thematic networks' (Klausen et al., 2019: 2). The evaluation encouraged the SDC to produce internal guidance and to engage in more proactive advocacy with multilateral partners 'to help resource and scale up nexus programming' (ibid: 11). The lessons learned paper on Sweden's nexus approach recommended that they 'create a cross-team Sida-MFA working group to connect their approaches to multilaterals and support wider policy coherence' for nexus approaches (Swithern, 2019: 41). A 2020 Finnish evaluation recommended strengthening nexus approaches by advocating with multilaterals in their design (Betts et al., 2020: 61).

**Some bilateral donor positions on the types and modalities of HDP nexus partnerships remain unclear, and evaluations suggest that more efforts may be needed**. For example, while Sweden has been actively engaging with multilateral and NGO partners at country and global levels to make connections at the nexus,

the 2019 lessons learned paper found that Sweden's partner engagement beyond the Humanitarian Unit remained ad hoc; this was because there were no overall obligations or specific requirements for partners to consider work at the nexus, 'nor indeed clarity as to what partners should expect from Sweden as a donor in this regard' (Swithern, 2019: 5). Similarly, a 2019 evaluation found that Finland's multilateral budgetary contributions, generally 'achieve complementarity and influence, and are valued by partners; but there is a lack of evidence that this influence has been used to promote … the humanitarian-development nexus thinking and policies' (Zetter et al., 2019: 20). The 2019 evaluation found that for Finland's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, there was 'little indication that Finland's actions are explicitly aligned' with or proactively engaged in-depth 'with HDN' (ibid: 67). It has been suggested that donors, such as Sweden, 'co-develop a systematic approach of integrating nexus considerations into ways of working with partners, particularly with multi-mandate organisations' partners' (Swithern, 2019: 32).

## Local actors

**The inclusion of local actors is also highlighted by evaluations as a way to advance nexus approaches**. A CARE learning review on the HDP Nexus suggested 'utilizing localization, local ownership, and local participation as core drivers for Nexus programming and not just national, donors or multilateral organizations' agendas' (CARE Canada, 2019: 20). Indeed, Sweden calls for more research to understand how multilateral instruments can be democratised, implemented on national and local levels, and 'translated into response and development plans' (Burlin, 2021: 67).

**Frequently, humanitarian, development and peace actors have the same partners in a given context which can further enable nexus approaches and promote the inclusion of more local actors**. A 2021 IAHE evaluation on gender equality highlighted localisation as a 'nexus glue' that successfully bridges gaps between the three domains (Beck et al., 2021: 6). A 2022 Roadmap for the Operationalisation of the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus in Cameroon by Cameroon's HDP nexus task force, argues that 'peace is inherently local' and 'built by local/national stakeholders'. It calls for international actors 'to ensure that their action contributes to reinforcing these actors and their legitimacy' and for 'the systematic integration of capacity strengthening of local actors as an intervention strategy'.[7]

**Yet, few** (only 4%) **of the evaluations reflect local/national leadership in nexus approaches, and only two evaluations mention 'community ownership' in the nexus approaches**. This lack of attention is striking and suggests that more work in this area may be urgently needed. Examples of reported good practice include enhancing local leadership capacity to aid the return, recovery, social integration and peaceful co-existence of displacement-affected, returnee, migrant groups and host communities, as in Somalia; and community awareness-raising initiatives (for instance, radio broadcasts in local languages) to build trust among parents, community members and local leaders about more long-term interventions (Al Nabhani, 2017; Jantzi et al., 2019).

The 2021 UNICEF evaluation on the humanitarian development nexus, while not focusing on local/national leadership, does clearly highlight that UNICEF's policy and strategy makes strong commitments 'to building local capacity, including that of

individuals and communities' (Taylor et al., 2021: 48). However, it also concludes that: 'In terms of the specific localization goals of the nexus, which involve shifting more financing and decision-making to local actors, the evaluation found little evidence of action.' (Taylor et al., 2021: 50).

Overall, from the limited evidence to date, it appears that **high-level policy commitments to the HDP nexus and localisation are not consistently translated into organisational strategy documents, operational planning or improved practice**. To date, evaluations show little progress in using localisation to promote the nexus approaches. Gaps remain for example in shifting financing, decision-making and ownership to local actors.[8] Capacity development mentioned in evaluations appears often to focus less on local civil society actors than on organisations' own staff and on national government (Taylor et al., 2021; Christoplos et al., 2018). See Text box 7 for ways in which **organisations use systems mapping or network analysis to understand these relationships**. Innovative solutions to include local actors in nexus approaches include pooled funds, NGO consortia, collaboration to develop plans, intermediary funding mechanisms and technical support (FAO, DI and NRC, 2021).

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### Text box 7. Systems mapping and network analysis are critical to explore nexus relationships

While still rare across the evaluation portfolio, **some actors are finding systems mapping and network analysis are critical to explore and understand relationships that could inform participation in nexus approaches**. For example:

- The OECD DAC has promoted resilient systems analysis since 2014 to offer insights that emphasise the management of resilience and risk as key features of nexus approaches (OECD, 2014).

- A nexus system mapping reported in a 2019 Global Affairs Canada evaluation (with OECD and UN partners) identified a tendency for international and national NGOs to work separately in the DRC (Canada/PRA, 2020: 35).

- To benefit from opportunities of the nexus, a 2019 CARE Learning review stressed the need for 'a nexus that is grounded in local realities by using immediate and root causes analysis, mapping and understanding local partners' (CARE Canada, 2019: 20).

- A 2021 UNPBF Evaluation recommended that systems maps should be required and screened to check assumptions underpinning gender-responsive peace-building (Merkel, 2021: 43).

- A 2020 World Bank Evaluation on convening power used systems mapping to identify, inter alia, 'external actors and internal champions … that the institution can help foster collective action' (Aghumian, 2020: 41).

- A 2018 UNHCR evaluation of livelihood strategies underscored that programmes need additional 'guidance on how to work effectively with "bigger players" …including how to undertake a systems mapping to identify

the gaps in systems or policies that are roadblocks to [PoC economic] inclusion' (Frankenberger et al., 2019: xii, 48).

- Norway's 2022 evaluation of Norwegian efforts with women, peace and security used network analysis to identify gaps in partnerships, efficiencies and areas meriting knowledge transfers (Fabra-Mata et al., 2022: 11).

### Transitioning between partners

**A common element seen in evaluations of nexus partnerships is an emphasis on transitions, often when describing the handing over of activities**. A majority of nexus evaluations (71 of 90) refer to transitions. At least nine evaluations describe experience with transitions of programming to government management.[9] The 2021 IAHE on gender equality suggests that a transition from humanitarian delivery to government is generally simpler than the transition between international humanitarian and development actors (Beck et al., 2021). Indeed, when there is an absence of development actors, creating and implementing transition strategies is challenging. This is the case reported for UNHCR which has struggled to get longer-term support of other stakeholders due to structural challenges within the UN system, such as incompatible budgetary systems (UNHCR, 2020: 44). Within UNHCR, and more broadly across UN agencies, this is characterised by, for example, an inability to enter into joint funding agreements or situations when one organisation cannot afford to offer beneficiaries the same package of support as another.

**Most of the references to transitions in the evaluations describe the flow from humanitarian to development or peace-building approaches.**[10] The SDC describes the transition as a continuum involving movement 'back and forth between emergency, recovery and development phases in a dynamic and iterative fashion' (Klausen et al., 2019: 17). Evaluations find such transitions to be rarely planned (Baker et al., 2020). One actor suggested that such plans will and should cease to exist in nexus approaches (i.e., once the transition is integrated into multi-year planning) (UNHCR, 2021). UNDP considers recovery (a priority immediately after the life-saving phase of humanitarian response) as the perfect transition between humanitarian and development domains (Murray et al., 2018). Another evaluation, however, highlights the artificial nature of such thinking, noting that 'programme design cannot presume that society is making a one-way transition from a "relief"… to a "development" environment' (Christoplos et al., 2018: 28).

## Chapter 3 summary

Evaluations highlight that many organisations recognise the need to improve internal coordination to address longstanding barriers between humanitarian and development assistance that are reflected within their own internal structures. Often evaluations highlight a wide range of skillsets that staff members will need to further improve nexus efforts. At the same time, there is a high level of attention given to partnerships and the need to improve interorganisational cooperation and partnerships practices to achieve greater coherence and complementarity. To this

end, a wide variety of coordination mechanisms have been used for nexus-related planning. Evaluations also highlight calls for renewed efforts to form effective partnerships with governments, local actors and private sector entities to advance nexus ways of working and promote successful transitions between internationally led humanitarian efforts and longer-term development approaches.

## Endnotes

1 EU/DG ECHO (ADE, 2021); CARE Canada (2019); UNEG (Christoplos et al., 2018); Finland/MFA (Zetter et al., 2019); Canada/GAC (PRA, 2019b); Canada/GAC (2020); SDC/Klausen et al. (2019); FAO (2019); FAO, DI and NRC (FAO, DI and NRC, 2021); UNDP (Murray et al., 2018); UNDP (IEO, 2020b); UNFPA (2018); UNHCR (Collinson and Schenkenberg 2019); UNHCR (2020); UNICEF (Taylor et al., 2021).

2 Based on information provided by the OECD DAC Secretariat staff to the authors; these posts can also be considered as 'nexus advisers'.

3 The IASC Results Group 4 has since changed names and is now called the IASC Nexus Task Force. Hence in some places we refer to Results Group 4 because that was in use the various guidance was made. In other places we use both the previous and the current active name. To note, the Result Group 4/ Nexus Task Force is a working group within the IASC. It does not have the same members nor governance as the broader IASC (organisations that are not IASC members can participate in taking more leading roles in these sub-bodies).

4 For other examples see also Mutsaka et al. (2019); WFP (2018a); Buchanan-Smith et al. (2021).

5 This is supported by both the New Deal for Fragile States of the development effectiveness agenda (Paris, Accra, Busan, etc.) and the Principles for Good Humanitarian Donorship.

6 State and Peacebuilding Fund (2020).

7 Peace in the Nexus in Cameroon (n.d.).

8 UNICEF (2020b); Beck et al. (2021: 48); CARE Canada (2019); Wencker and Verspohl (2019).

9  IAHE (Baker et al., 2020);  EU/DG ECHO (Murray et al., 2019); FAO, DI and NRC, 2021; IAHE (Beck et al., 2021); Denmark/DANIDA and UNHCR (ADE, 2019); UNHCR (2020); UNICEF (2019); UNICEF (Taylor et al., 2021).

10 IAHE (Baker et al., 2020); Sweden/SIDA (Bryld, 2019); Christoplos et al., 2018; EU/DG ECHO (Baker et al., 2018); DG ECHO (ADE, 2021); Finland/MFA (Zetter et al., 2019); Canada/GAC (PRA, 2019a); ILO (Baykal, 2020); IRW (Maillard et al., 2019); Oxfam (Sande Consultores, 2020); UNDP (Murray et al., 2018); UNDP (IEO, 2020a); UNDP (IEO, 2020b); UNDP (IEO, 2022); UNFPA (Barnes et al., 2018a); UNFPA (King and Fransen, 2018); UNFPA, 2019; UNFPA (Rojas et al., 2021); UNHCR (Hanley et al., 2018); UNHCR (2021); UNICEF (2018); UNICEF (Darcy et al., 2019); UNICEF (Lawday et al., 2020a); UNICEF (2020); UNPBF (Jantzi et al., 2019); UNPBF (Turnic, 2020); United States/USAID (Buchanan-Smith and Longley, 2020); WFP (2018b); WFP (2019); WFP (2021b); World Bank (Caceres and Flanagan, 2019).

# 4. Building practice: what do we know about common elements of nexus approaches?

As defined in HDP nexus policy documents, there are common areas of focus that have been suggested as important elements to advance nexus ways of working. Some of these are considered as prerequisites for effective programming efforts. This section explores how multi-year perspectives and funding mechanisms, joint analysis, collective outcomes and joint programming are covered in evaluations. It also looks briefly at some of the programmatic and sectoral activities that have been associated with HDP nexus ways of working, highlighting emerging practice and areas where more progress has been made.

It is important to note, however, that individual evaluations often only cover a few of these elements. **Indeed, nexus efforts vary widely. There is no pre-defined and agreed list of elements that should be assessed when aiming to measure nexus progress**. The lack of a **'minimum nexus package'**, or common definition of the areas to be addressed or included in 'nexus' approaches, means that different organisations and evaluators have interpreted HDP nexus ways of working differently.

## 4A. Practices considered important for supporting effective nexus implementation

**The most common practices covered in nexus evaluations are multi-year funding, collective outcomes and joint assessment**. Although visible in only half the set of 90 evaluations, multi-year funding (or multi-year programming) is discussed in 70% of the 14 nexus-centred evaluations. Collective outcomes are the second-most common practice (23% in the main set and 71% of the nexus-centred set). Lastly, joint assessment is the third most frequently cited. (See Annex 1 Table 4 for more detail in table format.)

### Multi-year perspectives and funding mechanisms

**Multi-year humanitarian funding is widely considered to be a prerequisite to effective nexus implementation, allowing relevant actors to adopt an HDP nexus approach based on longer planning horizons**.[1] A multi-year perspective typically describes a period of three to five years (King and Fransen, 2018). While most multi-year perspectives linked to nexus approaches refer specifically and above all to multi-year *funding*, many also reflect multi-year *planning or programming*. Almost half of the 90 evaluations indicate a use of multi-year perspectives (n=41) and just over half of those report the use of multi-year funding windows. For instance, UNHCR launched multi-year, multi-partner planning pilots across 22 operations, covering three to five years developed with national and international partners and longer funding windows, 'offering efficiencies

for nexus programming' and strong partnerships with local actors (CARE, 2019: 17). A good proportion of the evaluations note the absence of and/or need for multi-year perspectives, including for example, stronger financial partnerships with multilateral organisations (Klausen et al., 2019; UNHCR, 2021).[2]

**Nexus approaches may also require changes to existing financing mechanisms, such as greater flexibility, less earmarking and simplification** (WeWorld, 2020: 80). Indeed, a large number of nexus evaluations stress the importance of flexibility. While many nexus approaches report the use of flexible financing and adaptive management, others include flexible partnerships and tools and even flexible interpretations of an organisation's own organisational policies (FAO, DI and NRC, 2021; Ernstorfer, 2021; Klausen et al., 2019).

**Lack of appropriate financing is often raised as the main barrier for implementing organisations**. For instance, a 2021 UNICEF evaluation highlighted that UNICEF country offices continued to see the 'lack of flexible and appropriate financing for nexus approaches as the most significant obstacle to planning' (Taylor et al., 2021: 6).

> *UNICEF has been unsuccessful in its stated objective of mobilizing more LHD-friendly flexible funds from donors for LHD programming. Because most donor funding that UNICEF receives is siloed in either development or emergency channels, funding LHD requires either adding crisis modifiers to development funding or including rehabilitation/resilience-oriented activities under humanitarian funding.*
>
> (Taylor et al., 2021: 93)

In recognition of the link to higher-quality programme outcomes and effectiveness, many donors have started to make required changes (Barbelet et al., 2021: 45). The EU, Germany, Canada, Norway, the Netherlands, and Sweden have developed multi-year funding, joint strategies and funding facilities to incentivise cooperation across traditional divides. However, evaluations report that many donors may 'remain hesitant to provide' certain organisations (i.e., WFP) 'with funding that promotes a longer-term resilience approach' (WFP, 2019: 49). (For other examples, see: Bryld et al., 2020: 7; CIC, 2019: 5.)

**Financial agreements are often still conducted on an annual basis, even though planning is increasingly multi-year** (Bryld, 2019). Moreover, a 2019 SDC evaluation cited siloed internal funding and separate reporting structures as major barriers to complementary financing; it found that some SDC-led nexus approaches are initiated by the humanitarian aid team with no 'assurances that development cooperation will co-finance' (Klausen et al., 2019: 21). Evaluations also highlight how UN agencies with current multi-year funding have not passed these new benefits on to NGO partners.[3] (See Text box 8 for more detail on funding.) Overall, financing through siloed channels or mechanisms is a 'recurring issue, leaving funding gaps' across the HDP nexus (FAO, DI and NRC, 2021: 29) — a view echoed by the majority of the evaluations.

**Moreover, although an overarching goal of the triple nexus is 'ending humanitarian situations', most nexus funding today still comes from humanitarian sources** (Beck et al., 2021: 2). A 2020 UNICEF evaluation reported that 'while preferable to short-term

grants, multi-year humanitarian funding remains *humanitarian* and is not a substitute' for more long-term nexus approaches, especially in education (Lawday et al., 2020a). Indeed, Sweden/SIDA 'opened a specific window for multi-year humanitarian support … to adopt a transformative approach and avoid humanitarian dependency' (Klausen et al., 2019: 85). The 2021 UNICEF evaluation described large amounts of humanitarian funding as 'both an opportunity and a curse' for the nexus (Taylor et al., 2021: 96).

**Although flexible, multi-annual (humanitarian) funding is seen to encourage work across the nexus, it is 'not always helping' because it also often sets up parallel and confusing channels** (Visser et al., 2019: 72). According to a 2019 Global Affairs Canada evaluation, Canada's International Humanitarian Assistance (IHA) Bureau discourages use of humanitarian funding for 'crossover activities more closely aligned to development goals' (PRA, 2019b: 28). Similarly, leveraging humanitarian aid to capitalise on the private sector for a more holistic nexus response is reported as promising but premature (IEO, 2020b: 57).

Echoing these concerns, **some evaluations suggest that there is equally a need for more development funding for nexus approaches** (Taylor et al., 2021: 95). A 2019 World Bank evaluation highlights how development funding for the nexus has increased. This is bringing new challenges and opportunities as well as new actors, such as multilateral development banks and the International Monetary Fund (Caceres and Flanagan, 2019). Development financing mechanisms supporting nexus approaches include, for example, the World Bank's funding window tailored to crisis, fragile and conflict-affected contexts for host communities and refugees in Bangladesh and Cameroon; a Crisis Response Window (in Somalia); and the EU's Emergency Trust Fund for Africa, which is also focused on forced displacement (ibid: 38). In the DRC, Sweden's development funds were allocated to support the UN-managed humanitarian country-based Pooled Fund and in Bangladesh, development partnerships on maternal health were redirected to work on the refugee crisis (Swithern, 2019: 30).

**Budget support (or grants given by donors directly to low-income country governments to help with service delivery) is another classic development funding modality. But take-up of budget support has been slow, even though development partners have committed to use 'country systems' for services in fragile settings** (FAO, DI and NRC, 2021: 29). Direct budget support may be an opportunity to leverage other financing for the nexus. However, an increase in budget support also presents challenges for transparency, coordination and policy coherence, and the **extent to which budget support can be aligned with nexus priorities is unclear** (Poole and Culbert, 2019). One concern with development finance is its frequent focus on central government which, as one learning synthesis noted, is 'not reaching crisis-affected communities at the subnational level at sufficient scale' (FAO, DI and NRC, 2021: 26). Funded development programmes are seen to be locked into host government priorities and 'too slow and inflexible to move closer to the humanitarian space' (PRA, 2019b: 28). Overall, development funding directed towards nexus approaches is reportedly 'niche … poorly understood … and [insufficiently] integrated' (FAO, DI and NRC, 2021: viii).

**At the same time, many new financing mechanisms for nexus approaches have surfaced**. New trust funds and facilities aim to bridge the gap between humanitarian and development assistance. Many are partly focused on strengthening public services of host communities and livelihood opportunities for refugees or trapped populations. Facilities include mechanisms for Africa, Syria and Türkiye and the European Investment Bank's Resilience Initiative (Arroy, 2019), or the EU Trust Funds (UNHCR, 2021: 30). See further examples in Text box 8.

**Anticipatory finance and crisis modifiers are further examples of funding mechanisms that can support nexus-style programming. Anticipatory funding** (or more widely, disaster risk finance, DRF) is a growing field that aims to layer the management and related funding (contingency funds, insurance, etc.) of all types of risk by lining up pre-identified or rapidly accessible funding ready to deploy when a disaster is tracked, anticipated or in its immediate aftermath. **Crisis modifiers** are a mechanism used by many development donors (e.g. DG ECHO) that identifies risk scenarios during the design of longer-term projects or programmes. The risks and most feasible responses are estimated and included explicitly in approved budgets so that if or when they manifest, funds are immediately available to manage the risks without derailing the ongoing activities. The nexus has been seen as a 'vehicle for focusing more on risk [with use of] crisis-modifiers' — which are funds set aside at the design stage in anticipation of an emergency and pre-approved for their use (Christoplos et al., 2018: 19).

**Suggestions for improved financing on the nexus often include making greater use of pooled funds** (FAO, DI and NRC, 2021: 18, 36). While in-country pooled funds hold potential as flexible instruments to incentivise collaboration, they need to come with strong and dedicated management, analytical capacity, strategic focus and learning systems (ibid: 36). Supported pooled funds that span the nexus already exist in Lebanon, Nigeria, Uganda, Mauritania, and Sudan (CIC, 2019).

**Further investigations are taking place into the potential use of risk and contingency financing mechanisms and the establishment of intermediate funding mechanisms to support local actors.** A 2018 DANIDA evaluation on regional development and protection also recognises that 'core funding to local actors' may be an appropriate entry point to give partners space to apply their local knowledge in a rapidly shifting context, for more effective nexus approaches (DANIDA, 2018: 70). The 2021 FAO/DI/NRC learning synthesis highlighted the need for dedicated budget line support for joint programmes with a focus on collective outcomes and donor platforms that insist on the inclusion of all three domains at country or global levels (FAO, DI and NRC, 2021: 18, 36).

**Text box 8. New nexus-friendly funding mechanisms**

**The new UN-led Integrated National Financial Framework** (INFF) processes being trialled in more than 60 countries (examples are Bangladesh and Cameroon) involving EU support and multilateral development banks, hold the promise of bringing 'HDP actors together around shared financing priorities and build capacities on broader financing ... instruments' (FAO, DI and NRC, 2021: viii).

The Somalia Stability Fund, while small, is an example of a flexible, multi-donor fund, supported by strong in-country analysis, management and decision-making. This has enabled it to engage flexibly with Somali political and state-building processes (ibid).[4]

In 2022, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands launched the **Cooperation on Migration and Partnerships for Sustainable Solutions initiative** (COMPASS) as a global nexus-supporting initiative, in partnership with 12 countries. It is designed to 'protect people on the move, combat human trafficking and smuggling, and support dignified return while promoting sustainable reintegration' (ReliefWeb, 2022, citing IOM, 2022).[5]

A 2020 UNDP collaboration reported that after four years of the **Regional Refugee & Resilience Plan (3RP) for Syria** the implementation was still affected by fragmented funding and that any transformational processes occurred 'despite, rather than a result of, 3RP' (IEO, 2020b: 31). Another dynamic highlighted by the 3RP is a huge imbalance between the volume of humanitarian compared to development funding.

A 2018 UNFPA evaluation recommended the creation of a **global continuum fund window** within existing UNFPA funding mechanisms as a means 'to strengthen partnerships, accelerate the continuum approach, and scale-up innovation across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus' (Barnes et al., 2018: xiv).

The EU's **Regional Development and Protection Programme** (RDPP) adds value by supporting 'unique, close and flexible partnership that enables adaptation to emerging nexus approaches at both policy and community levels' (DANIDA, 2018: 50).[6] Informants emphasised that the RDPP was ready and able to finance the 'software' required to make the nexus work, especially on knowledge and capacities. In light of the trends towards large-scale funding windows, the RDPP also adds value by 'being able to fund smaller initiatives and organisations without the transaction costs and exclusionary tendencies of consortia and with minimal extra burden for donors' (DANIDA, 2018: 50).

**Some countries have developed dedicated funds (Cameroon) or financing agreements (Jordan) to support programming across the HDP nexus** (IASC, 2021a: 4). The Ukraine Humanitarian Fund 2020 standard allocation to government-controlled areas required all project proposals to contain a nexus component. Finally, some countries, such as Afghanistan and the Central African Republic, had made social (financial) protection a major focus of the nexus approach (ibid: 4).

UNDP is increasingly directing funds from the **Global Environment Facility** (GEF) to root causes of conflict, building a 'pipeline of innovative "environment-linked" solutions to livelihoods and poverty reduction' (IEO, 2020a: 44). One innovative GEF example is a solar power initiative that, as well as substituting fossil fuels and reducing emissions, has expanded agricultural livelihoods, including the addition of a second cropping cycle in rainwater-dependent areas, with the aim of lessening the risk of conflict (ibid).

A 2022 report by the Center on International Cooperation (CIC) highlighted five principles for donors to improve financing, many of which have direct implications for nexus approaches. Principle 1: Create single budgets for the triple nexus at the country level. Principle 2: Develop cross-domain/horizontal reporting lines, team structures and funding mechanisms. Principle 3: Decentralise decision-making and streamline approval processes. Principle 4: Organise around country or geographic priorities rather than particular sectors or themes. Principle 5: Support staff to work flexibly, collaboratively and embed a reward system in performance management (Laws, 2022).

### Joint/common assessment or analysis

**'Joint assessment' or joint analysis is often deemed 'a fundamental enabler of a nexus approach'** (FAO, DI and NRC, 2021), **but is still relatively rare in nexus approaches. It refers to multiple actors engaging together in a joint analysis of context, problems and needs and has been** a feature of humanitarian action for many years. Use of joint assessments is more frequently described in the 14 evaluations that focus mainly or primarily on the nexus (36%) compared to the wider set of 90 evaluations (21% of nexus documents overall). Not only is this surprisingly low, but most of the evaluations referring to 'joint analysis' explicitly do so by describing challenges or as part of recommendations. Indeed, few nexus approaches were described in evaluations as being positively influenced by joint assessment. The 2019 lessons learned paper commissioned by Sweden/SIDA on 'donors at the triple nexus', found that there is not enough robust joint analysis of risks, systems and root causes (Swithern, 2019). That said, numerous actors have developed methods for joint analysis — some of which pre-date their nexus approaches (see Text box 9).

Importantly, **joint analyses for the nexus should not be conflated with joint humanitarian needs assessments after a major crisis/disaster event**. Indeed, assessments needed for nexus approaches and multi-year planning require the differentiation 'of root causes from short-term needs' organised in medium- and long-term phases according to context (Christoplos et al., 2018: 15). However, it is not clear from the evaluations reviewed what is the best way of linking these joint assessments of multi-year priorities to immediate humanitarian needs as covered in humanitarian needs overviews (HNOs) and the Joint Intersectional Analysis Framework (JIAF) that underpins them. Nevertheless, an example of what a multi-actor assessment tool can look like is the partnership between the UN, World Bank and European Union which has led to the use of Recovery and Peacebuilding Assessments as joint analysis and planning methods that aim to develop a shared analysis of root causes and priorities. (See Text box 9.)

**Text box 9. Examples of common or joint assessment approaches**

**Common or joint assessment approaches** that may be used or adapted for the nexus:

- The UN promotes joint analysis or **UN Common Country Analyses** (CCAs) as part of the New Way of Working (Taylor et al., 2021; Ernstorfer, 2020). If CCAs become more risk-informed, regular and widely adopted, there is potential for them to serve as an analytical starting point for collective outcomes.

- The **EU-Conflict Analysis Screening Tool** is based on the EU guidance on conducting joint, integrated conflict analysis (Fighting Food Crises along the HDP Nexus Coalition, 2022), which is described as helping to lay 'the foundation for the integration of conflict sensitivity into the H-D-P nexus' (European Commission Directorate-General for International Partnerships, 2020: 5).

- Belgium's **Fragility Resilience Assessment Management Exercise** (FRAME) has been used as a tool to help the Belgian government identify and prioritise appropriate assistance modalities in fragile contexts. It is based on a multi-dimensional and systemic approach to fragility and resilience and has a strong focus on risk and risk management (Vervisch, n.d.).

- The **CADRI Tool for Capacity Diagnosis and Planning** was developed by CADRI, a partnership of UN and Red Cross partners to be used at the request of governments and UN country teams. CADRI's digital analysis tool focuses on hazards, disaster risk reduction and preparedness, climate change adaptation and risk information capacity, and it houses the data in a unified online system.[7]

- The **Recovery and Peacebuilding Assessment** is a nexus-related off-shoot of the World Bank's EU-supported Post Disaster Needs Assessment (originally designed as a post-crisis reconstruction assessment) to bring together national and international HDP actors to develop a shared analysis of the root causes of crisis and conflict, and to prioritise immediate and medium-term recovery and peace-building actions in support of the government (FAO, DI and NRC, 2021; Zetter et al., 2019).

- FAO has fostered and promoted joint analysis using, for example, the **Integrated Food Security Phase Classification** — IPC (Buchanan-Smith et al., 2021). Developed for use as a humanitarian tool, the IPC guides 'governments, UN agencies, NGOs, and other stakeholders [to] work together to determine the severity and extent of [both] acute and chronic food insecurity' (IPC 2022: 3). This parallel focus on acute and chronic issues is seen to be conducive to a nexus approach.

- The UK government employed an **HMG Joint Assessment of Conflict and Security** to link to development and peace-building (USAID, 2014: 77).

- WFP and UNHCR have conducted Joint Assessment missions such as reported in WFP's 2020 Evaluation in Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh but there is little evidence to suggest that these are being refined to promote nexus approaches (WFP, 2021b: 10).

## Collective outcomes

**Evaluations suggest that collective outcomes are not yet regular features, despite long being considered a hallmark of nexus approaches** (since the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016). They appeared in fewer than one-third of the evaluations reviewed for this synthesis (n=21). A collective outcome is defined by the New Way of Working as 'the quantifiable and measurable result that development, humanitarian and other relevant actors want to achieve over a multi-year period' (UNOCHA, 2017). For some nexus actors, a collective outcome is an expectation – 'the way forward at country level and aligned to SDGs and HDP nexus ways of working' (Buchanan-Smith et al., 2021: 37). Others describe collective outcomes as a requirement for nexus approaches (Murray et al., 2018). Many evaluations refer to collective outcomes matter of factly with few concrete details; others refer to it as aspirational or featured as one of a set of recommendations (GAC/PRA, 2019b; Bryld, 2019; IEO, 2020b). One evaluation highlights **the danger of collective outcomes becoming a parallel layer of planning that is insufficiently embedded in existing national development plans** (Buchanan-Smith et al., 2021). SDC and WFP evaluations suggest that Agenda 2030 and 'leave no one behind' themselves constitute the targeted collective outcomes (Bryld, 2019).

Collective outcomes were described in at least 10 evaluations as being attempted or implemented.[8] (See [Text box 10](#).) The IASC's 2020 Light Guidance on Collective Outcomes (IASC, 2020a) is reported by a UNDP evaluation to have 'considerable potential to strengthen nexus efforts, by promoting a common understanding of the concept and its application among donors' (UNDP, 2020b).

### Text box 10. Collective outcomes vary widely

**What are collective outcomes?**

For reference, the IASC defines a collective outcome as: 'A jointly envisioned result with the aim of addressing and reducing needs, risks and vulnerabilities, requiring the combined effort of humanitarian, development and peace communities and other actors as appropriate' (IEO, 2020b: 4).

The 2019 OECD DAC Recommendation has a greater focus on impact and 'root causes of conflict'. It says: 'Collective outcome refers to a commonly agreed measurable result or impact enhanced by the combined effort of different actors, within their respective mandates, to address and reduce people's unmet needs, risks and vulnerabilities, increasing their resilience and addressing the root causes of conflict' (OECD, 2019b).

**Collective outcomes are described by nexus actors with different levels, forms, characteristics and content**, as follows:

**Levels and forms**

- The World Bank 2020 evaluation on Global Convening Power distinguishes three levels of collective outcomes: 'fostering shared understanding, shared solutions, and shared implementation' (Aghumian et al., 2020: 18)

- The FAO 2021 evaluation suggests that 'collective outcomes are the way forward at country level — aligned to [Sustainable Development Goals] and HDP nexus ways of working' (Buchanan-Smith et al., 2021: 37)

- The SDC 2019 evaluation describes collective outcomes of 'different forms, with the ideas of sequencing, layering, complementarity, pivoting and differentiation' (Klausen et al., 2019: 39).

**Characteristics and content**

- The FAO 2021 evaluation suggests that to be effective, the collective outcome should be context-specific, engage the comparative advantage of all actors and draw on multi-year timeframes (Buchanan-Smith et al., 2021).

- 'Where possible, collective outcomes should build on and link with existing planning frameworks and be coordinated through existing forums rather than creating new, parallel processes' (FAO, DI and NRC, 2021: 18).

- A 2021 IAHE evaluation of Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls (GEEWG) found that 'key humanitarian, development and peace planning documents inadequately reflect GEEWG in collective outcomes'. In humanitarian response plans (HRPs), the disconnect between gender analysis and formulation of collective outcomes is notable. Even where stronger gender analysis exists, it does not always guarantee gender mainstreaming in collective outcomes. 'As a result, what actually gets measured and reported will provide inadequate attention to GEEWG' (Beck et al., 2021: vii; 14).

- A 2020 UNDP evaluation of the Regional Refugee Response Plan (3RP, a nexus approach tested in Syria coordinated jointly by UNDP and UNHCR) found that 'A predominant emphasis on humanitarian goals, a lack of collective outcomes and a weak common regional measurement framework for resilience-building activities reduced the effectiveness of 3RP as an integrated regional humanitarian and development strategy' (IEO, 2020b: 30).

## Joint programming and implementation

**Common planning or joint programming**. The 14 nexus-focused evaluations are unique in their consistent reference to joint or common planning and/or programming. This is expressed as a step further than joint assessment and is described as at least one step beyond 'coordination' but one step before joint implementation. A 2021 UNHCR evaluation on the humanitarian-development nexus reported that for numerous countries, 'UNHCR receives strictly earmarked funding for humanitarian-development cooperation, covering, for example, joint programmes with development partners… relating to the CRRF' (UNHCR, 2021: 50). A 2021 UNFPA evaluation highlights participation in the 'United Nations Joint Global Programme on Essential Services Package for Women And Girls Subject To Violence, a joint effort of UNFPA, UN Women, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the World Health Organization and UNDP, aimed at providing greater access to a coordinated set of

multi-sectoral services for women and girls; this programme has contributed to a growing number of countries with a multi-sectoral response' (Rojas et al., 2021: 36).

**Joint implementation is nearly absent in the nexus approaches described in the 90 evaluations** (across all commissioner profiles). Evaluations appear to convey that joint implementation — actual combined efforts towards the achievement of a common activity or objective — is less feasible or less ideal compared to joint programming which allows the establishment of parallel actions that are coherent and complementary without necessarily being implemented jointly. Two examples illustrate the range from positive experiences to more challenging situations. A 2021 FAO evaluation describes the Canadian-funded five-year Joint Resilience Initiative (to strengthen resilience in the DRC, Niger and Somalia) as showing positive levels of 'joint implementation [and …] a single inter-agency implementation team' (Buchanan-Smith et al., 2021: 55). Yet a 2019 WFP evaluation found that the 'Rome-based agencies have a long-standing resilience agenda, but … that joint implementation has been of varied quality' (WFP, 2019: viii). Challenges reported include the lack of convergence on target groups/geographic areas, lack of fund availability and no systematic approach or strategic incentives to systematise such approaches.

## 4B. Programmatic implementation of the nexus: successes and challenges

### Sectoral focus

More than one-third of the nexus-centred evaluations reviewed highlight **the cross - or trans-sectoral nature of nexus approaches — that is, to be more coherent and holistic, nexus approaches often combine multiple sectors**. However, evaluations also suggest that nexus approaches are often in fact introduced by organisations when opportunities arise within funded sectoral programmes — in other words, via sector-based channels.

**A nexus approach can be applied in a wide range of intervention areas based on what makes the most sense in each context or what aligns with the comparative advantage (or mandate) of nexus actors**. The 2018 UNEG evaluation synthesis found that nexus considerations tend to reflect 'agency positioning, spheres of influence and comparative advantages'.[9]

Sector-based nexus approaches come in many shapes and sizes. A variety of sectors are considered suitable entry points for a nexus approach due to natural synergies between humanitarian, development and peace programmes. **Depending on organisational mandates, specific areas of intervention are deliberately adjusted to promote the HDP nexus** (e.g., gender-based violence by UNFPA, food security by FAO; other examples in the endnote).[10] The most frequent sector cited relates to livelihoods (i.e., employment, jobs, income commonly linked to food security). Other sectors being used to lay the foundation for nexus approaches include health, education and nutrition. Less common but visible in subsets of nexus evaluations are the water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) sector and various activities focused on social cohesion. Table 1 provides examples for the most visible sectors in use to date.

## Table 1. Livelihood, health and education are the most common sectors of focus for nexus approaches

| Illustrative list of sectoral activities/themes used to advance nexus approaches | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Livelihoods and food** | **Health** | **Education** | **Water** | **Social cohesion*** |
| 88 out of 90 evals | 78 out of 90 evals | 74 out of 90 evals | 42 out of 90 evals | 41 out of 90 evals |
| Regional Development and Protection Programme, a multi-donor initiative using livelihoods to mitigate the impact of forced displacement in Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq[11]<br><br>Differentiated targeting by livelihood groups helps FAO enhance HDP nexus[12]<br><br>GEF innovated conflict-sensitive strategies focused on rebuilding livelihoods[13]<br><br>Nexus-specific analysis included above all in evaluations on food security, agriculture and livelihoods[14]<br><br>Others: WFP,[15] UNDP,[16] UNHCR[17] | Ebola programming in Sierra Leone[18]<br><br>Infrastructure and basic health services in Afghanistan, Yemen, Iraq and Libya[19]<br><br>Policy support and health extension in Latin America and the Caribbean and COVID-19 programming[20]<br><br>The SDC promotes basic health services as part of nexus approaches[21] | Considered important for longer-term impacts and priorities, education is a 'somewhat indirect' feature of the nexus[22]<br><br>DG DEVCO and ECHO coordinate on education programmes in Myanmar refugee camps[23]<br><br>UNHCR builds foundations for development through the provision of basic education needs[24]<br><br>The SDC promotes combining humanitarian action with basic services in education[25] | FAO pilots initiatives on the role of women in water conflict resolution[26]<br><br>Strengthening Ethiopian government awareness and capacity on gender, nutrition, and WASH[27]<br><br>UNDP efforts restore basic services including electricity and water security helping to address root causes of resource-related conflict[28]<br><br>UNHCR's Refugee Coordination Model integrates shelter, WASH, site planning and government or community services[29] | Social cohesion programmes for refugees and hosts found to be the most frequent way of integrating a 'peace perspective'[30]<br><br>Activities mainly sourced from peace fund in DG DEVCO's existing programme focused on social cohesion[31]<br><br>FAO pilot initiatives on improving social cohesion for Liberia youth in conflict-prone areas[32]<br><br>Community social cohesion and facilitating dialogue to promote peace, security in conflict contexts [33]<br><br>Bangladesh, Cameroon and Somalia: investing in host communities to promote social cohesion and acceptance (World Bank, 2019) |

*Social cohesion included as a common focus area, not as a sector.

## Nexus gains in approaches to forced displacement and social cohesion

In recent years, forced displacement and social cohesion have emerged as two particularly strong areas for focused collaboration and implementation of more joined-up immediate and longer-term support.

**The dynamic of forced displacement as a key HDP nexus theme is increasingly gaining attention and seems to be one of the areas where the most progress has been made in ways of working in a more nexus manner.** The 2021 FAO evaluation suggests that

forced displacement 'calls for an HDP nexus approach' because it is often 'both a cause and an effect of conflict and must therefore be understood as a humanitarian, development and peace challenge' (Buchanan-Smith et al., 2021: 34). A 2021 UNHCR evaluation reports that in the Syria crisis 'forced displacement has become an area of strategic focus for EU political and development institutions in addition to its humanitarian institutions' (UNHCR, 2021; 30). UNICEF commissioned a series of 'think pieces'; one of these covered navigating the humanitarian-development nexus in forced displacement contexts with a view to stimulating dialogue and new ways of thinking in order to address educational challenges (Visser et al., 2019: 44). The Development Response to Displacement Impacts Project (the Ugandan government's flagship programme for operationalising the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework) was found in an evaluation to offer an important 'signal to donors regarding strategic [stakeholder] intent relative to forced displacement on the humanitarian-development nexus' (Caceres and Flanagan, 2019: 45). In other contexts and prior to the Ugandan government's project, the evaluation said that 'donors have tended to operate through parallel implementing systems on refugee-related matters, such as through nongovernmental organizations'(ibid: 45).

**Overall, evaluations suggest that the HDP nexus is becoming well integrated into many actors' work on forced displacement**. This shift is likely driven by the focus on bridging silos in key policy documents such as the Global Refugee Compact and the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework, as well as previous learning by donors in relation to the Syria crisis, with greater investment and involvement by the World Bank in forced displacement also emerging in that period.[34] See Text box 11 for more on the Global Refugee Compact and Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework and the HDP nexus.

**Considerable progress has been made in establishing a collective agenda and common policy framework on durable solutions for forced displacement despite the still-persistent challenge of implementing and achieving durable solutions at scale in practice** (Bryld et al., 2020). Durable solutions include for instance, support to aid the local integration of refugees into host communities, a frequent focus of nexus approaches. Key nexus actors in this area, such as the World Bank, the EU and UNHCR, have clearly defined their comparative advantages or approaches in forced displacement settings and have established promising partnerships on the ground, although some aspects of their approaches have also garnered critiques.

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### Text box 11. Refugee frameworks can open doors to nexus approaches

The **Global Refugee Compact** (GRC) and **Comprehensive Refugee Response** Framework (CRRF) include a focus on addressing the drivers of displacement and improved coordination across HDP silos:

- While there is no specific mention of the nexus, the 2018 Global Refugee Compact (GRC) reflects the concepts of a nexus approach — namely that 'averting and resolving large refugee situations … [require] early efforts to address their drivers and triggers, as well as improved cooperation among political, humanitarian, development and peace actors'.[35]

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- In the 2016 New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, there is an explicit focus on the HDP nexus: 'We favour an approach to addressing the drivers and root causes … which would, inter alia, … ensure a strengthened humanitarian-development nexus and improve coordination with peacebuilding efforts' (par 37); and 'We strongly encourage joint responses involving all such actors in order to strengthen the nexus between humanitarian and development actors, facilitate cooperation across institutional mandates' (par 58).[36]

- In contrast to many other thematic or sectoral areas, **there are clear theories of change related to taking an HDP nexus approach in addressing forced displacement**. In particular, a 2020 joint UNDP/UNHCR theory of change for protracted displacement stands out. It underscores that the HDP nexus is operationalised by context, with activities per domain varying widely by setting: 'Sometimes the triple nexus will be the more important area of intervention. The relative importance of each element, each double nexus and the triple nexus changes over time in response to cycles of emergency and crises' (Roberts, 2020: 2).
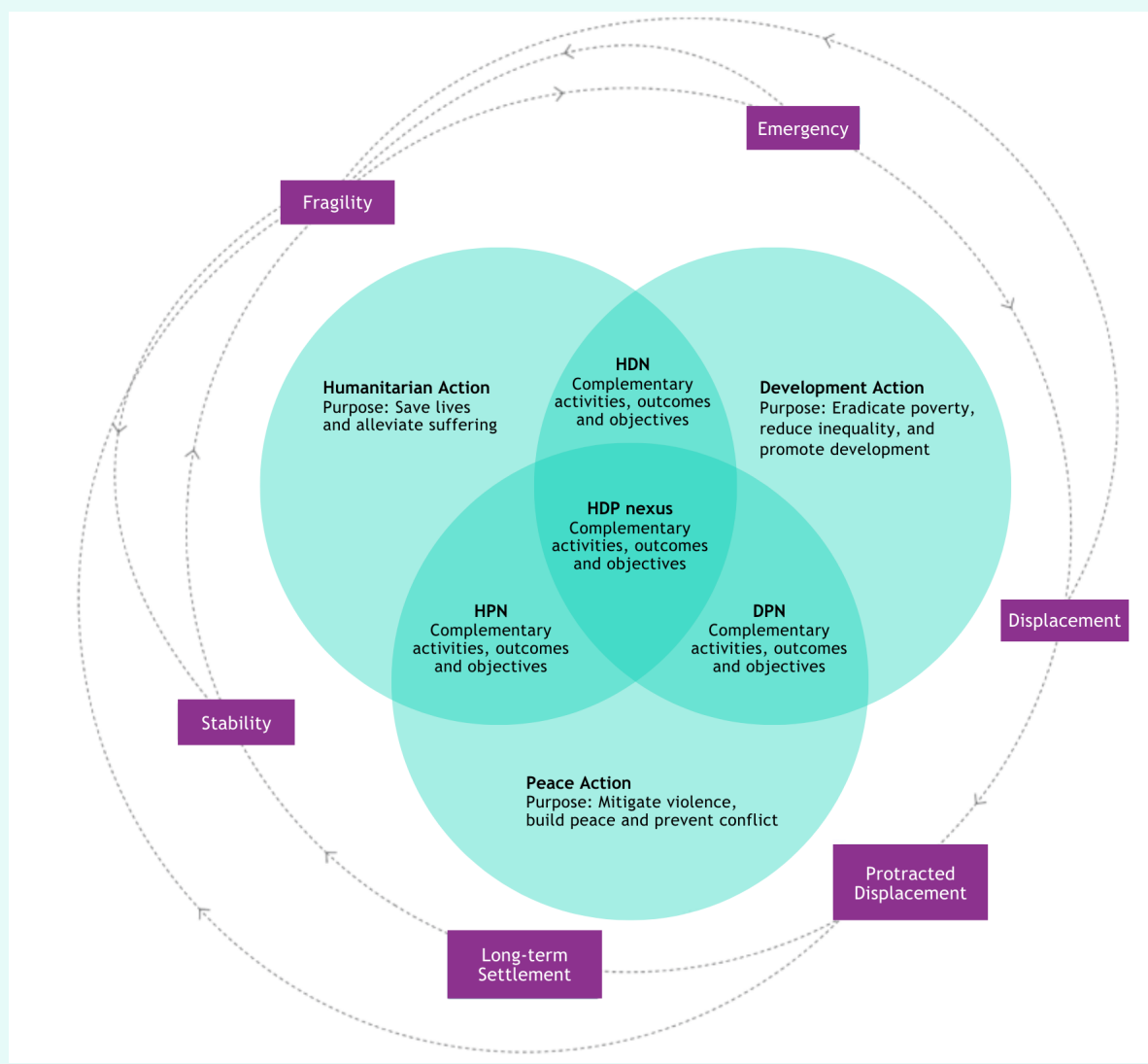
**Social cohesion is gaining increasing recognition and is widely reflected in evaluations as a way to advance 'peace'. However, evaluations have rarely assessed the effectiveness of work on social cohesion.** While there is no strong evaluative evidence to date on long-term outcomes for the greater attention to social cohesion, it is nevertheless emerging as one of the most common frameworks through which humanitarian and development actors are linking their activities to the peace component of the nexus.

Social cohesion, as referenced in the 90 evaluations, often refers to dynamics among refugees of different ethnic groups or with host communities. A 2021 FAO evaluation confirms social cohesion is increasingly important but 'not a fully recognized issue' (Buchanan-Smith et al., 2021: 65). Nexus activities in Myanmar funded by DG ECHO prior to the escalation of the 2017 conflict focused on social cohesion by allocating resources for food security and livelihood-related interventions (ADE, 2021: 41). A 2018 DANIDA evaluation found that nexus work promoted social cohesion through economically viable livelihoods and access to the social protection needed within national systems. But the evaluation reports that statements of impact are premature (Denmark/DANIDA, 2018: 68). A 2019 SDC evaluation meanwhile urged caution, warning that a focus on social cohesion 'could become a "traffic jam"', and 'potentially backfiring in terms of credibility of their work in the conflict zones' (Klausen et al., 2019: 103). A positive case reported by evaluations was WFP's 2021 Country Strategic Programme Evaluation for Lebanon, in which 'targeting of both Lebanese and refugee population groups had a direct effect on preventing conflict and supporting social cohesion at the community level' (WFP, 2021a: 38). A 2019 CARE evaluation reported mixed, premature but promising results with use of social cohesion as a feature of nexus approaches among Jordanian and Syrian youth and women entrepreneurs (CARE Canada, 2019: 8, 12).

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### Text box 12. Is addressing root causes at the heart of nexus approaches?

The OECD DAC Recommendation stresses that its driving aim is to address root causes of conflict (OECD, 2019b). At its core, therefore, the triple nexus is intended to make 'transformative changes to the structures and situations that cause conflict, poverty' (Beck et al., 2021: 7).

However, **only five of the 90 evaluations mention 'root causes'.** Many of these do so from the food security perspective, such as the 'Global Network against Food Crises' — an alliance of humanitarian and development actors working together to tackle root causes through collective outcomes to prevent, prepare and respond to food crises (Buchanan-Smith et al., 2021: 47). Also on food security, WFP's 2021 Bangladesh Country strategic programme evaluation (CSPE) reports that out of five strategic outcomes, one aims at 'root causes' (WFP, 2021b). Meanwhile, the 2021 IAHE evaluation highlighted an 'adequate consideration of the root causes of gender inequality', but stressed that they were not linked to the triple nexus (Beck et al., 2021: 15).

**Other reports and evaluations articulate an aspirational focus on root causes in their nexus approaches.** A 2019 evaluation commissioned by Finland's MFA suggested that a focus on peace-building could 'identify a convergent objective

in tackling the root causes of FD [forced displacement]' (Zetter et al., 2019: 153). The 2019 lessons learned paper on Sweden's approach to the nexus found 'not enough robust joint analysis of risks, systems and root causes', which 'can lead to solutions being misdiagnosed, misdirected or misguided' (Swithern, 2019: 19). In contrast, there are some limited examples of successful efforts to address root causes: a 2021 DG ECHO evaluation, for instance, reported that the EU response 'addressed the root causes of the Rohingya issues in Myanmar and the development needs of refugee-hosting Cox's Bazar district of Bangladesh' by focusing on land, livelihoods and education (ADE, 2021: Vol. 2 Annexes, 18).

A 2019 evaluation of CARE Canada's GAC-funded work reports an interesting conundrum. **While humanitarian work is leaning more frequently to addressing root causes, development projects are not considering immediate needs**. The evaluation explains that humanitarian projects lasting more than one year are 'unfailingly designed' to combine traditional humanitarian activities and more transitional ways to tackle root causes, for simultaneous implementation. By contrast, the design of GAC development projects rarely includes the potential to respond to crises that arise. It was 'very unlikely' for a development project to include activities to meet immediate needs (CARE Canada, 2019: 8).

## Chapter 4 summary

**What clearly emerges from evaluations is that the HDP nexus, as a concept and a way of working, is transversal and requires a fundamental shift in the way that assistance in ODA-eligible countries is provided**. How the nexus is interpreted for operationalisation and implementation varies considerably. New funding mechanisms and the development of appropriate tools and approaches are emerging (i.e., tools and methods for joint analysis, defining collective outcomes, and so on). Organisations are increasingly linking short-term and emergency programming with efforts to address longer-term needs and drivers of conflict and poverty in new ways, implementing activities that range from health-care interventions to education to water and sanitation programmes. While approaches related to forced displacement appear to be somewhat more advanced, a wide range of sectoral activities and programmes could (and do) benefit from working across HDP silos. It is beyond the scope of this paper to examine the specific activities per sector in depth, but evaluations do suggest that further sectoral guidance would be useful. Developing sector-specific examples of good practice with a more detailed mapping of activities and commonly used approaches would help organisations that are looking for practical examples on how to operationalise their nexus commitments. Hence, this area deserves further research and investment going forward.

# Endnotes

1   UNICEF (2020b); UNHCR (2021);  UNDP (IEO, 2020a); UNDP (IEO, 2020b);  Sweden/SIDA (Bryld, 2019); Denmark/DANIDA and UNHCR (ADE, 2019); UNICEF (Lawday et al., 2020a); UNRWA (2021); UNFPA (Rojas et al., 2021);  Finland/MFA (Betts et al., 2020); Canada/GAC (PRA, 2020); UNPBF, 2020b; Canada/GAC (PRA, 2019a); UNICEF (2019); Australia/DFAT (2019); Finland/MFA (Zetter et al., 2019); Sweden/SIDA, 2019c; UNHCR (Collinson and Schenkenberg, 2019); UNHCR (Frankenberger and Taban, 2019); World Bank (Caceres and Flanagan, 2019); UNHCR (Frankenberger et al., 2018); UNHCR (Hanley et al., 2018); UNFPA (Barnes et al., 2018a); DANIDA, 2018; EU/DG ECHO (Baker et al., 2018); WFP (2018); USAID (2014).

2   UNICEF (Taylor et al., 2021); UNHCR, 2021; UNFPA (Rojas et al., 2021); DG ECHO, 2021; Norway/NORAD (Bryld et al., 2020); WBG, 2020; Denmark/DANIDA and UNHCR (ADE, 2019); WFP, 2019; IRW (Maillard et al., 2019); UNPBF (Jantzi et al., 2019a); WFP (2021a); WFP (2020a); WFP (2020b); WFP (2020c); IAHE (Steets et al., 2019); UNICEF (2019); UNICEF (Lawday et al., 2020a).

3    Sweden/SIDA (Bryld, 2019); WFP (2020a); IAHE (Steets et al., 2019); UNICEF (Darcy et al., 2019).

4   https://stabilityfund.so/about/

5   https://www.iom.int/compass

6   https://www.rdpp-me.org/

7   See: CADRI Leverages Digital Solutions for Disaster Risk Reduction (https://www.unicc.org/news/2022/07/11/cadri-leverages-digital-solutions-for-disaster-risk-reduction/) and CADRI Tool Homepage (https://www.cadri.net/cadri-tool/home).

8   FAO, DI and NRC (2021); FAO (Buchanan-Smith et al., 2021); IAHE (Beck et al., 2021); UNFPA (Evaluation Office, 2019); UNEG (Christoplos et al., 2018); UNICEF (Lawday et al., 2020a); UNFPA (Rojas et al., 2021); Canada/GAC (PRA, 2020); UNICEF (Darcy et al., 2019); WFP (2020c).

9   UNEG (Christoplos et al., 2018: 1); Finland/MFA (Betts et al., 2020: 83); UNICEF (2021: 82);UNDP (IEO, 2020b: xi).

10  FAO, DI and NRC (2021); FAO (Buchanan-Smith et al., 2021); CARE Canada (2019); UNEG (Christoplos et al., 2018); UNDP (IEO, 2020a); UNDP (IEO, 2020b); UNHCR (Frankenberger et al., 2018); WFP (2019); Denmark/DANIDA (2018:8); UNICEF (Taylor et al., 2021); IAHE (Beck et al., 2021); UNHCR (2020); and others.

11  Denmark/DANIDA (2018: 8).

12  FAO (Buchanan-Smith et al., 2021: 57).

13  GEF IEO (2020).

14  UNEG (Christoplos et al., 2018: 12).

15  WFP (2020a).

16  UNDP (IEO, 2020a: xi).

17  UNHCR (Hanley et al., 2018: iv)

18  UNEG (Christoplos et al., 2018: 14).

19  UNDP (IEO, 2020a: 74).

20  UNICEF (Taylor et al., 2021: 7).

21  Switzerland/SDC (Klausen et al., 2019: 39).

22  UNEG (Christoplos et al., 2018: 14).

23  EU/DG ECHO (ADE, 2021: 41).

24  UNHCR (Frankenberger et al., 2018: ix).

25  Switzerland/SDC (Klausen et al., 2019: 39).

26  FAO (Buchanan-Smith et al., 2021: 32).

27  CARE Canada (2019: 8).

28  UNDP (IEO, 2020a).

29  UNHCR (Collinson and Schenkenberg, 2019: 22).

30  FAO (Buchanan-Smith et al., 2021); UNEG (Christoplos et al., 2018); UNDP (IEO, 2020b); EU/DG ECHO (ADE, 2021); Denmark/DANIDA (2018); CARE Canada (2019); UNPBF (Bugnion de Moreta, 2019b); UNICEF (Taylor et al., 2021); IOM   (Bugnion de Moreta and Durand, 2019); UNHCR (Frankenberger and Taban, 2019); WFP (2019).

31  EU/DG ECHO (ADE, 2021: 41).

32  FAO (Buchanan-Smith et al., 2021: 32).

33  UNDP (IEO, 2020a: x).

34  See, for instance, the OECD DAC paper on lessons learned from evaluations on forced displacement (Ruadel and Morrison-Mêtois, 2017) and the subsequent OECD DAC Guidance on Forced Displacement (OECD, 2017).

35  UNHCR (2018b: 4).

36  2016 Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework /New York Declaration, par 85.

# 5. Exploring cross-cutting issues: common gaps and missed opportunities in nexus approaches

Nexus approaches are frequently flagged by evaluators as missing the opportunity to draw stronger links to other key humanitarian policy and operational priorities or as failing to capitalise on existing good practices. This chapter looks at cross-cutting issues that are often missing from nexus approaches as described in the evaluative literature. This includes an analysis of how nexus evaluations address (or fail to address) conflict sensitivity, 'do no harm', gender and climate concerns. The chapter also briefly explores how nexus approaches are adapted to contexts and the extent to which they are implemented in natural hazard and climate settings.

## 5A. Cross-cutting concerns and application of long-standing good practices

### Conflict sensitivity and 'do no harm'

Conflict sensitivity and the concept of 'do no harm' are rarely raised in the evaluations reviewed in relation to the nexus. Evaluations that do include these terms tend to highlight the lack of conflict sensitivity in nexus approaches (see Text box 13). Do no harm is explicit in fewer than half of the evaluations (although it is slightly stronger in the 14 nexus-centred evaluations, 64%). Evaluations refer to this concept with no concrete examples of harm done or avoided. This represents a striking lack of consistent attention to evaluating 'doing no harm' in conflict, fragile and violence-affected contexts. However, conflict analysis and 'do no harm' are emblematic of good programming in any domain (H, D or P) and not unique to nexus approaches.

> ### Text box 13. Conflict sensitivity and do no harm — not getting the attention they deserve
>
> **Conflict sensitivity** is often linked to the concept of '**do no harm**', and is based on thorough context analysis during project design. It aims to avoid future risks and mitigate current risks in any context. While required for projects in all domains, it is intricately linked to humanitarian action and to the peace domain. An Oxfam study describes the nexus as 'the embedding of conflict sensitivity across [humanitarian] responses' (Fanning and Fullwood-Thomas, 2019: 7). According to the 2019 lessons learned paper on Sweden's approach to the nexus, 'conflict sensitivity is ... built into the humanitarian approach, both as a basic "do no harm" consideration in analysis and in planning and programming' (Swithern, 2019: 10).

A 2021 FAO evaluation reported that development partners' maintenance of national systems during crises offered several benefits. Among them, was 'the opportunity to learn from humanitarian partners on integrating "do no harm" principles in their approaches' (Buchanan-Smith et al., 2021: 10).

**Numerous evaluations report that nexus approaches lack conflict sensitivity**. Some examples of their absence or limitations follow:

- A 2021 German evaluation on gender equality in post-conflict zones recommended that BMZ should 'anchor the promotion of gender equality in post-conflict contexts and the implementation of the "Women, Peace and Security" Agenda at the strategic level' (Brüntrup-Seidmann et al., 2021: xv). It proposed that 'the gender-conflict nexus' be incorporated as an important theme, alongside considerations such as human rights, disability, inclusion and conflict sensitivity.

- A 2021 UNRWA Evaluation in the Occupied Palestinian Territories suggested that the organisation 'could benefit from applying conflict and political economy analysis perspectives to some of its future programming decisions' to enhance their staff's 'deep understanding of the operational context'; it suggested that the triple nexus approach 'requires agencies to apply a conflict sensitive lens to their work' (UNRWA, 2021: 23).

- A 2020 Country Strategic Programme evaluation of WFP in Cameroon found that WFP 'developed operational strategies to address the development—humanitarian nexus but did not mainstream conflict sensitivity or peace work' (WFP, 2020c: viii).

- A 2020 Mercy Corps study highlighted the limitations of building a nexus approach from a single perspective. 'Typically, peace and conflict actors approach the nexus from a "climate sensitive, conflict approach," and climate science actors approach the nexus from a "conflict sensitive, climate approach."' Starting from a single/sector-specific approach may limit 'understanding of the scale of risk — and the generation of evidence on effective solutions' (Mercy Corps, 2021: 18).

- A 2020 WFP evaluation in Cameroon recommended translating 'the triple nexus agenda to operational principles and priorities, building on lessons learned on the effects of WFP actions on conflict dynamics and the do no harm principle' (WFP, 2020c: 57).

- A 2019 SIDA evaluation identified room for improvement and little guidance on 'providing the best framework for partners to work on peacebuilding' and on 'the risk to beneficiaries in terms of ensuring Do No Harm' (Bryld, 2019: viii).

- A 2021 UNICEF evaluation on the nexus highlighted capacity issues, finding that UNICEF 'country offices generally lack skills and capacities for conflict analysis, conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding' and made suggestions on how to better embed conflict sensitivity into its existing approaches (Taylor et al., 2021: 84).

A more positive example is a 2019 SDC evaluation which highlighted the SDC's active adherence to **Conflict Sensitive Program Management (CSPM) principles** in funded projects. It highlighted how development partners emphasised CSPM and how international actors were expected to focus their activities on 'supporting vulnerable groups in conflict-affected areas, including non-ceasefire areas, which can be contentious' (Klausen et al., 2019: 112). The SDC has promoted conflict sensitivity through CSPM Guidance documented in 2017 to support the programme cycle for both development cooperation and humanitarian aid. Sweden uses a parallel tool of nearly the same name — Conflict Sensitivity in Programme Management (Bryld et al., 2019: 125).

*FAO's capacity for carrying out context/conflict analysis has been strengthened but there is still a long way to go to build and embed this capacity further and more uniformly at all levels, especially at regional- and country-levels. Context/conflict analysis tends to be done as a one- off rather than as a dynamic ongoing process. It is not yet adequately informing programming. Ongoing conflict and contextual analysis, as well as risk analysis, is essential to equipping and informing senior FAO leadership in-country.*

(Buchanan-Smith et al., 2021: 42)

### Gender, inclusion and 'bottom-up' approaches

**Gender-sensitive, inclusive and 'bottom-up' efforts are seen as important for nexus approaches**. Four of the 90 evaluations, all of which were published in 2021, featured gender explicitly in their titles.[1] The 2021 IAHE highlighted localisation work led by CARE that confirmed 'the best way to operationalize the triple nexus in a gender-sensitive way is through a bottom-up approach based on nine core principles' (see Text box 14) (Beck et al., 2021: 12). The importance of localisation and local actors as nexus partners is discussed above in Chapter 3.

Gender issues are critical to the nexus. As reported in Buchanan-Smith et al. (2021), the international Agenda on Women, Peace and Security is highly relevant to the peace component of the nexus. It is underpinned by UN Security Council resolution 1325, which places women at the centre of efforts in conflict prevention and peace-building (Buchanan-Smith et al., 2021). Furthermore, the OECD DAC Recommendation promotes several gender commitments, including: 'Undertake joint risk-informed, gender-sensitive analysis of root causes and structural drivers of conflict'. This aligns directly with the aims of the nexus and is signed by many organisations (OECD DAC 2019: 7). A 2021 German DEval evaluation conceded that 'it is reasonable to assume that the goals of **"peacebuilding" and "gender equality" can mutually reinforce each other'** (Brüntrup-Seidemann et al., 2021: 12;  text emphasis added by this paper's authors).

**Gender in the nexus — more progress is needed**. The 2021 IAHE evaluation on gender and women's economic empowerment and the HDP nexus deemed that 'the international system is in new territory when considering promoting **gender**

**mainstreaming into the nexus process** in its current iteration' with no strategic vision, operational framework or coordinating structures to enable gender to offer what it should to nexus approaches (Beck et al., 2021: vii). The evaluation recommended a two-year task force and a few two-year pilots to iron out the ways in which gender should be integrated into nexus approaches. Indeed, FAO sees the HDP nexus as 'an opportunity for transformational work on gender equity' but recognises the need to first mainstream gender in FAO's context/conflict analysis work, with FAO's nexus evaluation finding 'insufficient articulation on gender in the guidance materials on context/conflict analysis' (Buchanan-Smith et al., 2021: 79, 51-52). A 2021 UNICEF evaluation also found room for progress, as gender advisers were rarely 'well enough connected with emergency teams to ensure that emergency programming is ... linked to gender-responsive development programming' (Taylor et al., 2021: 74).

> *It is challenging to consider how to link gender-responsive programming across the humanitarian and development spheres when the basics of humanitarian response are not in place. Along the gender continuum (from sensitivity to responsiveness to transformation) there is significant work to do to achieve responsiveness. The hope is that nexus programming will enable transformation by taking advantage of opportunities for women that can open up during crises (e.g., shifts in social norms or employment opportunities)*

(Taylor et al., 2021: 74)

 A 2021 UNFPA evaluation found **strong aspirations backed by a lack of clarity in the field and recognised shortfalls on integrating gender**; it recommended that UNFPA develop an explicit and clear gender framework and gendered impact objectives and priorities for its youth, peace and security programming (Rojas et al., 2021: 30). Similarly, a 2021 Germany/DEval evaluation recommended a more consistent anchor and promotion of gender equality in its country strategies for post-conflict countries (Brüntrup-Seidemann et al., 2021). Finally, a 2019 Finnish MFA evaluation recommended a 'lessons learned evaluation on the intersection of gender programmes with the nexus and in FD [forced displacement] contexts' (Zetter et al., 2019: 96).

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**Text box 14. 'Core principles' and community priorities shape bottom-up nexus approaches**

**Bottom-up is best**. As highlighted in the 2021 IAHE evaluation, CARE's approach in the Middle East and North Africa region suggests that a gender-sensitive triple nexus needs '**a bottom-up approach based on nine core principles: localization, participation, evidence-based analysis, politically smart programming, gender-transformative empowerment, resilience-based programming, adaptive management, experimentation and piloting, and re-investment in program quality and accountability**' (Beck et al., 2021: 12). The SDC also reports that recent nexus projects/programmes are designed by integrated embassies[2] as bottom-up efforts making use of both humanitarian and

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development cooperation instruments. Some INGOs aim to counter the UN, WB and EU triple nexus top-down approach 'with a bottom-up approach, **enabling the priorities of local communities to drive the agenda'** (CARE, 2019: 2).

## 5B. Developing context typologies and implementing nexus approaches in natural hazard and climate contexts

### Adapting nexus approaches to different contexts and use of context analysis

**Strong system-wide understanding of regional, country and local contexts is widely considered critical for nexus approaches in the evaluations**. The 2018 UNEG evaluation synthesis suggested that it is the context more than the programmatic sectors or building blocks that orients a nexus approach. It notes a 'recurrent call for greater attention to context analysis to inform programming ... sensitive to nexus-related concerns and challenges' (Christoplos et al., 2018: 10).

Surprisingly, however, context analysis is largely absent in nexus approaches evaluated, although some actors are experimenting with how nexus approaches should vary across contexts. Context analysis (often integrated as part of a joint assessment but wider than 'conflict analysis') is rare; only 10% of the 90 evaluations of nexus approaches describe use of it. (See Chapter 3 for more on joint analysis.)

### Developing context typologies to help guide nexus approaches

**Various nexus actors have developed context typologies or scenarios to support nexus approaches**. Two examples of context typologies come from evaluations and one from the IASC Nexus Task Force's work:

- According to UNHCR's 2021 'Evaluation of Engagement in Humanitarian-Development Contexts', the focus on livelihood programming relies on **'context typologies'**. The analysis of political and economic context typologies shows both major constraints and increased fluidity of operating environments. In contexts with strong political and economic enabling environments, UNHCR's role is best as facilitator, linking people of concern to government and private sector systems. These contexts hold potential for going to scale, working on transformative capacities and institution-level change. In contrast, in operations with poor political and economic enabling environments, UNHCR is primarily focused on protection and safety nets, namely, absorptive capacities. In this context, UNHCR still has a role in building the foundation for self-reliance and development through the provision of basic needs (such as education) and advocating with government, donors, private sector and development actors to invest in refugee livelihoods (FAO, DI and NRC, 2021; Frankenberger et al., 2018: ix).

- UNICEF's 'Humanitarian/Development Nexus: A Framework for UNICEF's South Asian Region' suggests that use of three **scenarios can guide nexus design** while protecting humanitarian principles. **In 'Context A: There is political will & disaster affects the national population & there is a functioning state; Context B: Disaster affects non-nationals and Context C: Disaster affects national population but there is no political will or fully functioning state'** (Taylor et al., 2021: 139).

- IASC's nexus task force has proposed a **typology of humanitarian-development-peace-building response and engagement based on five scenarios, which capture three key factors: 1) a government or authorities willing to uphold its responsibilities; 2) its capacity; and 3) the level of security/access.** The scenarios range from 'Constrained' contexts in which government/authorities are unwilling to uphold their obligations and responsibility to protect, to more 'Capacity-driven' contexts in which governments are willing to uphold their obligations but lack capacity. There are also both 'Consultative' and 'Collaborative' scenarios in which capacity is high. Finally, there is the scenario seen as the least desirable in which a government or authority shirks responsibility amid active, high-intensity conflict, which is referred to as a 'Comprehensive' scenario. Each of these scenarios is defined by the type of engagement that international actors might have in the given context, with the government/local authorities and in terms of the type of support provided (that is, approach to capacity-building and overall approach to service delivery.[3]

These typologies may be a good reference point for international humanitarian and development actors (and their funders) to help inform the design of future nexus approaches in varied contexts.

### Adopting nexus approaches in natural hazard settings

**A common perception among practitioners is that most nexus approaches are applied in protracted crisis settings**. The 90 evaluations were examined to confirm this perception, seeking to compare nexus approaches as described in protracted, fragile and natural hazard contexts (see Annex 1, Table  for the analysis table). **A focus on protracted crises and fragile contexts is indeed the most prominent across the evaluations** — highlighted by authors in 19 out of 90 evaluations (21%).[4]

**Eight evaluations reflect nexus approaches in natural hazard contexts**. While small, those eight evaluations suggest that the nexus can be equally applied to natural hazard contexts, where it can help to bridge the divide between short-term disaster relief and longer-term vulnerability. See Text box 15.

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### Text box 15. Implementing nexus approaches in natural hazard contexts offers opportunities

- **Haiti earthquake and hurricanes**: A few years after the 2010 earthquake, support provided to Haiti expanded to include both humanitarian response and reconstruction and resilience-building. The 2019 SDC evaluation noted 'a clear shift' towards making greater efforts to articulate humanitarian and development assistance. The importance of linking humanitarian and development interventions was further underscored in the 2019 SDC evaluation by efforts to mitigate impact of Hurricane Matthew in 2016 (Klausen et al., 2019: 120).

- **Somalia and drought**: A joint analysis (Somalia Drought Impact and Needs Assessment and the Recovery and Resilience Framework) in 2018 led

by the Federal Government of Somalia produced joined-up planning. It brought together many actors both to assess the impact of the drought on communities and the economy and to identify ways to promote resilience to disaster and climate change risks. According to a 2021 learning synthesis, the analysis process was 'explicitly designed to complement the humanitarian response plan and create a framework for humanitarian and development cooperation' (FAO, DI and NRC, 2021: 17).

- **Bangladesh and deforestation**: FAO created a partnership with IOM and WFP, for a Safe Access to Fuel and Energy Plus Livelihoods (SAFE Plus) project at Cox's Bazar refugee camp aiming to 'mitigate deforestation and improve livelihood opportunities …. supporting both host and refugee communities in a complementary manner and diminishing tensions between communities', focusing on 'long-term solutions for IDPs and refugees together with host communities' (Buchanan-Smith et al., 2021: 34).

- **Kenya and drought**: UNICEF and the Kenyan Ministry of Education collaborated on educating refugees in an example of institution-level programming across the nexus divide. A 2021 evaluation described how institutionalising emergency response planning for nutrition, namely the drought/famine early warning systems, helped to maintain relationships with the same partners for emergency and long-term development programming (Taylor et al., 2021: 54).

Aspirational nexus approaches and/or challenges were also highlighted with natural hazards:

- **Landslides and cholera in Bangladesh and Myanmar** (refugee camps): DG ECHO and other donors experienced challenges in supporting more holistic and sustainable solutions due to restrictive policy environments concerning what refugees were allowed to do (movement, employment etc.) following landslides and during the cholera outbreaks in both countries. This was reportedly a challenge given a clear and recognised 'need to move to more sustainable and dignified solutions … for displaced populations' (ADE, 2021: 32).

**Nexus approaches are just as feasible and beneficial in natural hazard contexts, despite being most prominent in protracted crises contexts**. This synthesis compared the focus of the 90 evaluations across the three key elements that are common in a nexus approach (see Table 2). Recognising the small sample of cases assigned to each context, the comparison nonetheless reveals that **natural hazard contexts routinely describe multi-year funding, joint assessment and collective outcomes more regularly than protracted and fragile settings**.

### Table 2. Nexus components by context

| Context # average appearances of the terms per evaluation | Multi-year funding | Joint assessment | Collective outcomes |
|---|---|---|---|
| Protracted (19 evaluations) | 9.3 | 2.5 | 7.2 |
| Fragile (16) | 8.6 | 3.0 | 7.9 |
| Natural (8) | 12.9 | 4.5 | 9.1 |
| All 90 evaluations | 4.2 | 1.1 | 1.8 |

This evidence suggests that approaches taken by international actors working in **natural hazard contexts can also support nexus ways of working, particularly where there is already a focus on multi-year funding, joint assessment and working towards collective outcomes**. As described in a UNICEF evaluation: 'In Indonesia, [Linking Humanitarian and Development] discussions had previously focused almost entirely on natural hazards' (Taylor et al., 2021: 107). When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, the response drew on the (already established) capacities of humanitarian and development teams in ways that were completely co-mingled and, in practical terms, represented a mainstreaming of disaster risk management approaches across the country office and its technical sectors. In a 2018 UNFPA evaluation in highly vulnerable contexts, programming across the nexus was considered to be critically important, in both protracted crises and in situations where there was a high risk of natural hazards (King and Fransen, 2018: 38).

### Climate contexts and mainstreaming climate into HDP nexus approaches

Climate change is widely recognised as a profound and unique risk multiplier. It increases a wide range of humanitarian crises and development challenges, and increases and exacerbates inequalities as well as driving conflicts over access to natural resources. **Climate risks therefore may be seen as fundamentally central to the HDP nexus**. For instance, Oxfam reported in 2019 that collaboration in nexus approaches can help to ensure 'greater awareness of the wide range of risks people face … [to] facilitate acknowledgment of the overlaps and interlinkages between climate and human-made risks' (Fanning and Fullwood-Thomas, 2019: 40).

**Despite this, climate is rarely noted as a meaningful element considered in nexus approaches** (only six of the 90 evaluations did so; some illustrations of climate nexus links made in evaluations feature in Text box 16). This lack of attention to climate and the environment was pointed out in the 2018 UNEG Humanitarian-Development evaluation synthesis which found that 'limited attention is given to the implications of programming in relation to protecting the environment' (Christoplos et al., 2018: 24). A Finland MFA 2019 evaluation similarly found that climate was a significant gap in the 'policy coverage of the nexus and forced displacement' (Zetter et al., 2019: 15). While 'climate change is [considered] highly relevant to the HDP nexus', a 2021 FAO evaluation reports that the organisation is not 'well-positioned to play a strategic leadership role on climate change and the HDP nexus', due to its work being 'somewhat fragmented and lacking coherence' (Buchanan-Smith et al., 2021:

29). Moreover, tools to help navigate the nexus/climate combination appear lacking: in 2020 Mercy Corps conducted a landscape review of climate-conflict assessment methodologies and categorised them as 'do-no-harm additions to existing methodologies, rather than examples of robust, cross-cutting analytical integration' (Mercy Corps, 2021: 4).

**Text box 16. Examples from South Sudan highlight importance of climate nexus linkages**

Although climate is rarely a clear focus in nexus approaches and programmes as described in the evaluations reviewed, two evaluations focused on South Sudan provide clear links between climate and the nexus that can inform future nexus programming:

- A 2020 mid-term evaluation of USAID's Sustainable Agriculture for Economic Resiliency (SAFER) project focused on conflict, climate and economic instability in South Sudan in recognition of the nexus of humanitarian and development programming. It did so by promoting sustainable livelihoods, as well as strengthening agricultural production practices and intercommunal resource-sharing and management practices (Buchanan-Smith and Longley, 2020: 10).

- A 2022 UNDP Country Strategic Programme Evaluation in South Sudan described a model developed under the cooperation of UNDP, the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) Civil Affairs Division and FAO working with state government and the South Sudan Peace and Reconciliation Commission (SSPRC), and local partners on conflict prevention and mitigation. The model and linked policy development were a 'solution to climate-induced seasonal movement of cattle (which is a trigger of conflict in areas such as Northern Bhar El Ghazal)' and successfully helped to manage 'interstate cattle movement and seasonal migration' (IEO, 2022: 34).

## Chapter 5 summary

Overall, evaluations suggest that nexus ways of working are increasingly being used in contexts of natural disaster and could be further promoted. That said, explicit inclusion of climate as a central feature in most organisations' nexus approaches and programming appears to be relatively rare. As this evaluation mapping and synthesis does not focus specifically on climate-focused evaluations, it likely does not capture all relevant evaluative evidence on this topic. More research and mapping of approaches, evidence, good practices and tools to better integrate climate and environmental issues into the HDP nexus approaches of bilateral donors and UN agencies is likely needed.

## Endnotes

1   IAHE's 'Review of progress: mainstreaming gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls (GEEWG) into the humanitarian, development and peace nexus agenda' (Beck et al., 2021); the evaluation of UNFPA support to gender equality and women (Rojas et al., 2021); Germany/DEval, 'Supporting gender equality in post-conflict contexts' (Brüntrup-Seidemann et al., 2021a); and UNPBF's 'Thematic review of gender-responsive peacebuilding' (Merkel, 2021).

2   Integrated embassies are those where the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) is merged with the embassy in the country.

3   See: IASC (n.d.) Typology of Humanitarian-Development-Peacebuilding Response and Engagement Scenarios, https:// interagencystandingcommittee.org/iasc-task-team-strengthening-humanitariandevelopment-nexus-focus-protract-ed-contexts/documents-73

4   Of these, seven focus uniquely on protracted contexts and do not consider fragile or natural hazards as well. Three evaluations are common to both fragile and protracted contexts (Zetter et al., 2019; Murray et al., 2018; GAC/PRA, 2019b). Eight of the subset of 19 cover all the contexts and one mentions natural hazards. Fragile contexts are common to 18% of the portfolio (n=16), including the eight multi-context evaluations. Five of the 16 focus uniquely on fragile contexts (i.e., not protracted crises nor natural hazards).

# 6. Conclusions

This paper identifies **12 key lessons from evaluations** that are relevant to future discussions on how to advance progress:

**01** Despite years of policy-level discussion on the HDP nexus, evaluations reveal substantial differences in how different actors view and conceptualise the nexus, including how it relates to other pre-existing frameworks such as resilience.

**02** The HDP nexus has yet to be fully translated into concrete, operational guidance, despite the policy commitments made.

**03** Peace is not fully integrated into the HDP nexus concept for many actors, according to evaluations.

**04** All too often 'conflict analysis', 'context analysis', attention to 'do no harm' and 'gender analysis' do not take place in programmes that strive to adapt HDP nexus ways of working.

**05** A clear need exists to build staff capacity further, to develop 'trilingual' practitioners and staff who have appropriate skill sets that are fit for working in fragility.

**06** Several evaluations suggest the importance of focusing on a bottom-up inclusive approach to the nexus. There are clear opportunities to strengthen the voice and participation of local actors and affected populations in HDP nexus planning, including in the development and monitoring of collective outcomes.

**07** Greater support and guidance are needed on how to promote private sector collaboration and partnerships across the HDP nexus and how to promote market-based approaches.

**08** Further investments are required in joint analysis, joint assessments and inter-organisational cooperation.

**09** Despite long-standing concerns that taking an HDP nexus approach could undermine humanitarian principles, no evaluations highlighted any specific cases where this occurred.

**10** Evaluations highlight how nexus approaches can be applied in response to disaster risk reduction, natural disasters and in addressing climate and environmental risks, but they suggest that these areas are still rarely explicitly included in many humanitarian and development approaches.

**11** There is a striking need for multi-stakeholder guidance on how to monitor, measure and evaluate progress when working towards HDP nexus approaches, including practical advice on indicators, the collection of relevant data and good practice examples.

**12** Finally, policy silos are deeply entrenched and embedded in the funding architecture of the international aid system. The inadequacy of funding overall and the imbalance of funding between actors can undermine HDP nexus approaches.

Positively, we know that a range of efforts are currently under way to address many of the issues identified in the 12 key lessons. This includes the important work of the IASC nexus task force, as well other ongoing efforts led by actors not captured in this paper. Simultaneously, many individual organisations are taking concrete actions to strengthen or further consolidate their HDP nexus policies, strategies and ways of working. As ALNAP has a specific focus on system-wide issues affecting the delivery of humanitarian assistance and the broader aid architecture, we offer further reflections below on the key systemic issues that need to be addressed collectively, as these hamper more tangible and concrete progress.

## Progress, but deeper systemic challenges persist

**Overall, while there are many areas of progress in advancing HDP nexus ways of working, there are clear areas identified in the evaluations where progress has stalled**. Primarily, progress appears to have halted on issues related to the deeper, systemic shortcomings of the current international aid architecture. These include the following:

1. **Lack of progress in overcoming the long-standing division of humanitarian and development funding, and the siloed approach to peace-building** ('big P'). Divided and largely disconnected funding streams for humanitarian, development and peace initiatives have led to structural divisions in the set-ups of bilateral donors, multilaterals and implementing partners along these same lines. While there have been efforts to undertake nexus planning and to pool resources across the HDP divide, in practice there are too often funding gaps that limit the effectiveness of HDP nexus efforts. Evaluations show this is a structural issue deeply embedded into the architecture of the international aid system and hence one that is resistant to change.

*UNICEF's overall approach to the humanitarian, development and peace nexus is inadequate. The current framing of 'linking' humanitarian and development programming neglects the peacebuilding dimension and reinforces the notion that these are two discrete ways to programme. This notion is, in part, a reflection of the heavily bifurcated assistance architecture that has developed over time. External humanitarian and development aid structures remain separate, as do modes of operation...*

(Taylor et al., 2021: 117)

*...the peace and conflict components of the work are seen as belonging more to the humanitarian and resilience teams, while personnel working on development programmes are more reluctant in recognizing their actual or potential contributions...This internal feature of the FAO working culture is compounded by similar characteristics of the UN and aid sector in general, where the humanitarian, the development and the peace architectures remain by and large distinct and, despite the systems' efforts to coordinate across the HDP nexus, there is still a significant degree of competition between actors, levels and modalities.*

(Buchanan-Smith et al., 2021: 74)

2. **Existing coordination structures are not fit for purpose and tend to not bring all relevant actors together (particularly peace and local actors)**. There is a lack of a global coordination structure at the UN level to plan international assistance bringing together humanitarian, development, peace and national actors. (The current default model is over-reliance on humanitarian coordination structures, such as the IASC.) There is also a general lack of adequate coordination structures at the country level to bring together those same actors along with local and national CSOs, local and national authorities, leaders of affected communities and relevant bilateral donors and private sector actors. Currently HDP nexus coordination is largely ad hoc. Too often the development and articulation of collective outcomes relies on humanitarian coordination structures or HCTs, often with little involvement of all relevant stakeholders, particularly local actors.

   Relatedly, coordination structures end up being duplicated, creating a potential need to streamline existing and often overlapping platforms and forums. This could be done, for instance, through a singular, unique coordination mechanism at country level, with a clear focus on aligning analyses of needs, collective outcomes and financing strategies. Various pilots are ongoing now that may help to address this. These may be useful for looking at the trade-offs between greater inclusiveness and efficiency in coordination (in terms of time and effort to reach consensus or make decisions), namely the value of having a more standardised approach to country level coordination versus the advantages of allowing for ad hoc or emergent structures which are more adaptable to individual contexts.

3. **There is a lack of progress in developing a clear vision of how local and national actors are expected to play a leadership role in nexus approaches, and how international actors can help to better promote a bottom-up, context-specific approach to the nexus**. This largely also reflects the broader lack of progress on 'localisation' commitments in the humanitarian community, with little humanitarian funding going direct to front-line responders. There are many commitments made, but relatively little tangible progress in promoting locally led action. While the high level of attention and leadership of large multilateral actors on nexus issues (such as the World Bank, UN agencies, the EU) is laudable, it is unclear if current approaches are sufficiently focused on putting affected communities at the centre — with clear calls for more inclusive approaches.

4. **Surprisingly little progress has been made in understanding and clearly articulating the importance of attention to gender and gender mainstreaming in implementing effective HDP nexus approaches**, despite increased political attention paid to the importance of gender, peace and security (including by aid providers, in UN resolutions and as embodied in 'feminist' foreign policies). Many organisations are concurrently committed to promoting gender equality and supporting the 'HDP nexus' without having fully integrated the two. Evaluations suggest that many actors have indeed failed to integrate attention to gender into their nexus policies, guidelines, approaches and the formulation of collective outcomes.

5. **There are no clearly articulated, internationally agreed frameworks to hold bilateral donors and multilateral actors accountable for their HDP policy commitments**. No agreed set of progress indicators or commonly agreed multi-stakeholder monitoring frameworks exist. **There appears to be a lack of strategic vision on what a 'minimum nexus package' would look like and how key actors are expected to report on progress**. Given the lack of clarity of what elements are considered essential or necessary to deliver on nexus commitments, different organisations have quite varied understandings. While some organisations have undertaken significant internal reforms and made important changes in their approach to funding, many have not. Despite the laudable OECD DAC Recommendation and its subsequent adoption by several UN agencies, the importance of developing clear metrics and guidance on what success and progress look like, and how it can be measured, appears to have been an afterthought.

Ultimately, the objective is to deliver better assistance to affected communities, breaking out of self-imposed silos and narrow mandates. But, as this evaluation synthesis shows, **there has been little focus, as of yet, on attempts to measure how taking an HDP nexus approach is leading to better *outcomes***.

In conclusion, if the international community is to get serious about making substantial progress, adopting HDP nexus ways of working and overcoming deeply entrenched silos, then the evaluative evidence base suggests that these areas of stalled progress must be addressed. High-level policy objectives will remain aspirational without clearer commitments by key actors to undertake meaningful, regular assessments of collective progress that allow for rapid course corrections and systemic learning to drive broader shifts (or reforms) in policies, approaches and practices.

# 7. Key HDP nexus evaluation summaries

**Independent Evaluation of the Linkage of Humanitarian Aid and Development at the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)** (Klausen et al., 2019)

- **Timeframe**: 2013–2017

- Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC): **Development** mandate

- **Geographical focus**: Global scope with field visits to Haiti, the Horn of Africa, Mali and Myanmar as well as remote data collection in Pakistan and South Sudan

- **Evaluation questions** focused on the outcomes of the nexus cooperation (effect on sustainable development, resilience of communities, response needs); on the coherence of the SDC's instrument; its institutional environment; its alignment with its major international commitments and to global good practice; and finally on the relevance of its HD cooperation with regards to contexts and partner country strategies.

- **Main findings**: This evaluation shows that the SDC **has preferred to partner with NGOs and CSOs rather than with host governments**. It provides an overview of how partnerships with those entities and multilateral partners have enabled both the SDC and these partners to pursue a nexus approach. Indeed, the evaluation revealed that the SDC has been particularly successful in encouraging its NGOs/CSOs and its multilateral partners to promote the nexus in their programming. The collaboration also served to conceptualise the engagement of the SDC's approach to the nexus, although the evaluation detected a tendency among SDC staff to understand the nexus primarily as a matter of internal coherence. During the interviews, the NGO/CSO partners showed their motivation and expressed that they felt supported by the SDC to take risks and engage in innovative activities. This support materialised in particular through the transparency of their process, the use of 'crisis modifier funds', multi-year humanitarian funding, or core funding to support the Somalia NGO platform, which counts 85 organisations. This allowed flexibility meaning that partner NGOs were able to adapt in unstable contexts. In addition, Swiss NGOs received programme contributions which they can use as they see fit for both development and/or humanitarian operations.

- **Integration of peace component**: As the title of the evaluation suggests, peace-building efforts have not been included in nexus considerations. Many staff viewed this as a weakness of the SDC's nexus approach, which could potentially harm the benefits to the target population. The evaluation suggests closer collaboration between the Swiss Human Security Division and the SDC to ensure the relevance of the triple nexus and the SDC's role in it.

- **Key recommendations**:
  - **Develop and communicate a common institutional definition/ understanding of the SDC's nexus approach and institutionalise nexus good practices**: develop staff understanding of the SDC's nexus approach and definition; develop context-specific, nexus theories of change and institutionalise joint analysis; seek common outcomes; and enhance partnerships that promote the nexus.
  - **Encourage partners to develop and pursue innovative approaches** to continuously test and enhance the relevance and effectiveness of new and existing nexus approaches. This includes encouraging the monitoring of outcomes.
  - **Broaden and strengthen the use of multilateral linkages and add the notion of nexus to the global programmes and the thematic networks**.

**German Development Cooperation in Fragile Contexts** (Wencker and Verspohl, 2019)

- **Timeframe**: 2006–2016 for the evaluation synthesis (N/A for the portfolio analysis)

- German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and **Development** (BMZ)

- **Geographical focus**: Global scope

- **Evaluation questions** focused first on the concepts of state fragility and their suitability for the management of German development cooperation, on allocation patterns and their relationship to strategic recommendations, and on continuities and changes in German strategy (portfolio analysis). They then focused on the effect of fragile contexts on the quality of evaluations and on the rating of projects (evaluation synthesis).

- **Main findings**: This evaluation illustrates **the need for nexus actors to include governments and authorities in their approach**, referring notably to whole-of-government approaches and support to nationally owned policies towards clearly defined goals. Previous evaluations have even recommended that German development cooperation reduce its support to non-state actors. Here, the conceptualisation of state fragility is understood as having multi-faceted causes and symptoms linked to a wide range of socioeconomic, environmental and political consequences. The evaluation found that German aid provides significant support to public institutions (ministries, national parliaments or local governments, in countries with weak governance). Given the fact that low-capacity states are among those most in need of external support but are also those with the lowest success rate of development projects, the evaluation suggests resolving this conflict of objectives by **prioritising capacity-building measures in low-capacity partner states**, possibly through reform partnerships. The evaluation also noted an increase in transitional aid commitments to non-partner countries in conflict or in transition. Structuring transition aid is seen as a way to bridge the gap between humanitarian aid and long-term approaches.

- **Integration of the peace component**: By examining how development cooperation can be adapted to the challenges arising from state fragility, the evaluation integrates the peace component of the nexus. The evaluation mentions a rise in commitments for conflict-prevention programmes in those states. It is in this context that the conflict-sensitive 'do no harm' principles emerged. Moreover, Germany's joint strategy for targeting fragile states stems from two complementary approaches: peace-building and institution-building (long-term governance). The evaluation finds that maintaining the two institutional specialisations within the BMZ seems fit for purpose, with a clear separation between peace and security and governance within the BMZ. However, the two approaches exist 'in parallel'.

- **Key recommendations**:
  - **Defining and measuring state fragility**: Clearly defined criteria should be used to properly assess state fragility. The potential complementarity of existing approaches should also be assessed. BMZ should ensure that the results are presented to political decision-makers for a more comprehensive approach that does justice to the multidimensional nature of fragility.
  - **Strategies and allocation**: The evaluation suggests that the BMZ should maintain its practice of dealing separately with peace and security and governance issues. This is guided by the concern to avoid duplication and redundancy. However, evaluators stress that the BMZ should ensure coordination and complementarity whenever possible between the responsible organisational units. Where concept designs complement each other, efforts should be made for sharing indicators and data collection.

**Evaluation of UNDP Support to the Syrian Refugee Crisis Response and Promoting an Integrated Resilience Approach** (2020)

- **Timeframe**: 2015–2019

- UNDP: **Development** mandate

- **Geographical focus**: Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and Egypt

- **Evaluation questions** were focused on UNDP's contribution to four key outcomes: the improvement of livelihoods, services and social cohesion for host communities and refugees; the strengthening of national (and local) capacities and institutional processes in the Syrian refugee crisis response; the implementation of resilience-based development approaches and Regional Refugee and Resilience Plans (3RP); joint United Nations coordination efforts. This includes specific attention to context adaptation, strategies relevance, sustainability and the positioning of UNDP to promote global and regional debates on resilience and the humanitarian-development nexus.

- **Main findings**: This evaluation addresses the **structural divide between humanitarian and development programmes** and, by extension, highlights UNDP's efforts to bridge refugee and host community programming silos. The evaluation found that partnerships with UN agencies and specifically with UNHCR were instrumental in reaching this objective. It sheds light on the significant UNDP contribution to resource mobilisation with UNHCR and their co-led coordination processes, leading to the evaluators' statement that this partnership 'has immense potential to strengthen the HD nexus'. Other examples of joint programmes with UN agencies have also been optimised in terms of complementarities and comparative strengths. While UNDP's resilience approach plays an important role for the nexus, its implementation has been complicated by the fragmentation between humanitarian and development funding, confirming the importance of an effective coordination architecture. Moreover, the evaluation provides insights into the **benefits of livelihoods and social cohesion programming**, two 'building blocks' for which UNDP led sectoral coordination and whose cross-sectoral nature has given UNDP opportunities to catalyse nexus efforts. Actions for employment, targeting both the Syrian population and vulnerable host communities, sit on the border between development and refugee-response initiatives, with short- to medium-term outcomes.

- **Integration of the peace component**: UNDP strategy is to prioritise strengthening the nexus approach in conflict-related refugee crises. Efforts to enhance social cohesion are considered to go directly hand-in-hand with efforts to ensure peace. The generation of employment opportunities was for example used as a modality to promote peace and develop conflict-dialogue mechanisms in the most vulnerable communities. Finally, UNDP's goal to support initiatives addressing root causes of forced displacement should entail conflict prevention, institutional development and policy processes.

- **Key recommendations**:
  - **Promotion of practical HDP nexus**: UNDP should now invest resources to provide thought leadership on the matter and ensure that its resilience offering promotes linkages with humanitarian response rather than as a parallel activity. UNDP should also play a role in the making of regional strategies.
  - UNDP should **prioritise data and subnational assessments** that would inform humanitarian, development and nexus initiatives.
  - UNDP should play a catalytic role in **enabling private-sector solutions** to promote the resilience of both host communities and Syrian refugees. This would allow UNDP to address context-specific issues and institutional bottlenecks; and to develop mechanisms to de-risk the policy environment to facilitate investments for sustainable livelihoods and employment.

**Synthesis Review 2020: Drawing on evaluations and evaluative exercises of initiatives supported by the Fund** (Ernstorfer, 2021)

- **Timeframe**: 2020

- UN Peacebuilding Fund (UNPBF): **Peace** mandate

- **Geographical focus:** Global scope

- **Evaluation questions** focused on relevance and effectiveness in peace-building engagements through the examination of 2020 evaluative exercises, steps UNPBF has taken to follow up on the recommendations outlined in the 2017–2019 review and new evaluative approaches with which UNPBF experimented in 2020 (travel restrictions, etc.).

- **Main findings**: The neglect of the peace agenda is repeatedly noted as an underlying issue for the relevance of nexus approaches and results. This awareness has highlighted **the need to strengthen peace-building capacities of HD organisations**. This can be pursued by hiring staff with relevant peace-building skills and expertise, integrating new conflict-sensitive internal processes and mechanisms, including the use of conflict analysis as a basis of programming and supporting a common analytical and strategic framework at the portfolio level. However, this evaluation, while acknowledging that these efforts are encouraging, argues for **deeper commitment to reach enhanced peace-building results on the ground**. This involves, among other initiatives, long-term organisational commitment, an alignment of organisational incentive structures, a commitment at all levels of UN agencies, funds and programmes, and a commitment to adaptive programming and ongoing learning. The evaluation also mentions efforts in engaging in research partnerships on peace-building, the conduct of internal evaluative reviews of UN agencies' contributions to peace-building and the articulation of joint positions on peace-building as a path of actions. It also stresses the importance of conducting impact evaluations of UNPBF-funded projects. UNPBF funding often targets one element of larger strategies and portfolios of UN agencies, funds and programmes, enabling nexus approaches. Its impact remains nonetheless highly dependent on available peace-building programming and the peace-building design, monitoring and evaluation skills of regional and national officers.

- **Integration of the peace component**: N/A, as it is the main focus of the evaluation.

- **Key recommendations**:
  - **Leveraging UNPBF's 'niche value'**, notably by providing funding that is timely, risk-tolerant, and that catalyses peace-building processes and additional funding. It is also recommended that UNPBF invest more in the thematic review of programme areas in which UNPBF has a clear niche and which are innovative (i.e. cross-border peace-building).
  - **Facilitate a more proactive process of learning**: Many of the findings that emerge from the evaluative exercises can only be acted upon as joint efforts between UNPBF and the recipients of its funding. UNPBF is well placed to act as a convener and facilitator to engage UN Country Teams and focal points in HQ units in a more active dialogue regarding the learnings and findings.
  - **Develop UNPBF guidance and requirements in relation to conflict sensitivity**: Making conflict sensitivity a clearer requirement will have the best chances of succeeding if it is embedded within explicit mechanisms for peace-building programme adaptation and learning.

**Evaluation of UNHCR's Engagement in Humanitarian-Development Cooperation** (2021)

- **Timeframe:** 2016–2020

- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees: **Humanitarian** mandate

- **Geographical focus**: Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Jordan and Niger as case-study countries; 21 additional countries via survey

- **Evaluation questions** focused mainly on the levels and types of UNHCR's engagement in humanitarian-development cooperation, the internal and external factors that facilitate or hinder it, the relevance and effectiveness of the measures taken, and the effects of this cooperation on UNHCR, development actors, host governments and affected people.

- **Main findings**: The evaluation reveals the **importance of involving a wide range of actors in nexus approaches**. In this regard, UNHCR acts as a 'facilitator and a catalyst' rather than simply implementing interventions funded by development actors. HD cooperation is perceived among UNHCR staff as **'an effort to bring other actors into the response, rather than to change UNHCR's own operations'**. In this sense, the partnership between UNHCR and the World Bank (WB) is considered as a model: UNHCR has acted 'by ensuring that the WB invests a large portfolio in refugee-hosting areas and on leveraging their influence on host governments, rather than focusing on gaining a share of these resources for UNHCR's own programming'. In addition, UNHCR has made it faster and easier for development actors to plan and implement their programmes in displacement-affected areas, sometimes directly influencing programme design. A clear policy commitment exists to strengthen cooperation with the UN development system and increase **cooperation with individual UN agencies** through global agreements (Blueprint for Action with UNICEF, memorandums of understanding with UN HABITAT, FAO and ILO, and Global Joint Action Plan with UNDP). UNHCR engaged more systematically with the **EU, the OECD and some bilateral development actors** (at the organisational and sometimes operational level), including by providing input on displacement challenges. As 'cooperation depends heavily on **external factors, such as host government policy positions and donor policies and priorities**', it is urgent for UNHCR to engage with them to support the implementation of policy changes (i.e. regarding work permits) and to produce sustained capacity. Finally, the evaluation regrets that the **cooperation with other multilateral development banks, the private sector and NGOs is not as advanced** as with other actors, the latter stating that they are only rarely involved in joint discussions on how to develop transition strategies or approaches. Staff in charge of HD cooperation at the country level report a **lack of guidance on the forms and types of actors they should prioritise for cooperation**.

- **Integration of peace component**: Peace was not mentioned in this evaluation.

- **Key recommendations**:
  - **HD cooperation understanding**: Make UNHCR's support structure for HD cooperation more effective by **clarifying the role of the regional bureaux**.
  - **UNHCR protection expertise**: Make the role of protection in HD cooperation more explicit and exercise this role more actively, especially in terms of planning and analysis, providing operational advice, monitoring the situation of persons of concern to UNHCR and cooperating directly with development actors.
  - **HD cooperation actors and content**: Strengthen UNHCR's engagement with the UN development system, to expand cooperation with development actors on the rule of law and access to justice; explore opportunities to cooperate on internal displacement and to better prepare UNHCR for its facilitation, supervision, monitoring, reporting and advocacy role.

**Development actors at the nexus: Lessons from crises in Bangladesh, Cameroon and Somalia** (FAO, DI and NRC, 2021) Synthesis

- **Timeframe**: Brings together findings from three country studies carried out in 2020

- **Development Initiatives (DI), FAO, Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)**: Both **humanitarian** and **development** mandates

- **Geographical focus**: Bangladesh, Cameroon and Somalia

- **Research questions** aimed to explore the value of effective partnership, coordination, prioritisation and planning, programming, financing and finally effective internal organisation within the nexus at the country level.

- **Main findings**: On how to operationalise the triple nexus, this study in part explores 'partnerships and strategy', trying to look beyond partnerships with governments to find complementary approaches (direct and bottom-up approaches). **It thus focused on collaboration with local civil society and the private sector**. Only 2% of total developmental ODA was channelled to private sector institutions. Engaging with the private sector is seen as an effective way to advance the localisation agenda, especially in protracted crisis contexts. However, due to the current lack of engagement, funding and support, it is recognised as a challenge for development actors that nexus approaches could help if they focus on 'how can HDP actors work together to bring about a change in the way local actors are financed and supported?' Innovative solutions mentioned in the evaluation include pooled funds, NGO consortia, collaboration to develop plans and intermediary funding mechanisms, and technical support. Nevertheless, further research is needed to analyse existing mechanisms to support the local private sector and how it could promote livelihoods, generate employment and support peace. **Another good practice is the use of area-based planning, programming and, more innovatively, area-based coordination**, to avoid the fragmentation of aid (often by sector/cluster or target group) and achieve greater coherence. Fostering participatory approaches, area-based models for operational coordination can align with HDP interventions. Area-based approaches also help strengthen engagement with local actors and multiple stakeholders and can promote local ownership and leadership.

- **Integration of the peace component**: The report fully integrates the peace component in its analysis and advocates for participatory development planning undertaken in a conflict-sensitive way, in order to 'create space for dialogue, build trust and enable local actors to identify interventions that will support peace' (page 8). Finally, the study mentions the perception that development actors overlook local authorities and crisis-affected regions by engaging primarily with the central government, in settings where power is highly centralised, or authority is weak. By doing so, they are over-emphasising top-down policy and institutional reforms rather than building local capacities, accountability and better inclusion that would help to ensure long-term peace.

- **Key findings**:
  - **Area-based coordination should be field-tested** as a way to enhance HDP collaboration and to evaluate and learn from existing frameworks for joint assessment and planning and joint programming.
  - HDP actors need to **investigate how existing financial allocation mechanisms and modalities can better incentivise collaborative action** across the nexus and improve targeting of protracted crisis regions at the subnational level.

**<u>Evaluation of FAO's contribution to the humanitarian–development–peace nexus 2014–2020</u>**
<u>(2021)</u>

- **Timeframe**: 2014–2020

- FAO: **Development** and **humanitarian** mandate

- **Geographical focus:** Global scope

- **Evaluation questions** focused on the relevance of the HDP nexus regarding FAO's mandate to defeat hunger and the effectiveness of its strategic positioning; the results of FAO's effort for the nexus and the lessons learned from its programming experience; and finally, its organisational performance.

- **Main findings**: This evaluation is an interesting case with regard to **structuring nexus concepts, such as the transversal concept of resilience**. Indeed, resilience is inherently a theme that no single actor can appropriate, due to its scope and its cross-sectoral nature. Along with other subjects addressed in the evaluation such as climate change adaptation or forced displacement, it is therefore recognised as a nexus catalyst. The nexus agenda is even referred to in this evaluation as the 'central tenet of the resilience aid paradigm'. FAO defines the nexus as a 'joined-up, multi-partner, flexible and adaptive programming across the three HDP pillars that is anchored in context analysis and evidence and is people-centred and inclusive'. FAO's pioneering work on resilience measurement could become a potentially important tool for the HDP nexus, the evaluation notes, if it can fully embrace a **collaborative and participatory approach**, inclusive of local populations' perspectives. Resilience, therefore, fosters HDP collaboration efforts as it led FAO to commit to 'joint strategies and plans', across a broad range of countries and regions. However, the evaluation found that this coordination does not necessarily imply joint or complementary implementation in practice but rather parallel ones.

- **Integration of the peace component**: The peace component is fully integrated in this evaluation, particularly with regard to **context analysis**, which is used as a cornerstone to inform conflict-sensitive programming, rights-based frameworks and people-centred approaches to achieve inclusive and peace-sustaining results. These analyses are informed by FAO's work on resilience that contributed to building a better understanding of conflict drivers. To better understand conflict and peace dynamics, the evaluation suggests that FAO adopt an area-based approach as a first point of entry. Anticipatory analysis, scenario planning and risk analysis can be used to complement FAO's existing mechanisms to ensure the continuation and re-focusing of its development activities when a humanitarian crisis intensifies or in a new-onset conflict.

- **Key recommendations**:
  - **Partnerships**: FAO needs to broaden its partnerships on food security monitoring, resilience measurement, early warning/risk analysis and anticipatory action, to include a more diverse range of actors participating in the analysis.
  - **Participation**: FAO needs to promote and incentivise people-centred approaches as a critical way of linking its humanitarian and development programmatic work. It should also ensure that conflict, context, food security and resilience analysis and data are systematically used not just at the design stage of programmes but throughout implementation of activities on the ground.
  - **Organisational environment**: FAO should engage with UN-wide initiatives that encourage HDP ways of working, for example, common guidance on resilience and collective outcomes.

**Formative Evaluation of UNICEF Work to Link Humanitarian and Development Programming** (Taylor et al., 2021)

- **Timeframe:** 2018–2021
- **UNICEF**: Dual **humanitarian-development** mandate
- **Geographical focus**: All UNICEF Country Offices with a particular focus on 53 countries labelled as 'fragile'
- **Evaluation questions** covered nexus understanding (definitions and policy), coherence and principles, strategy and planning, effectiveness, efficiency and finally resources to achieve nexus-related commitments to draw out UNICEF's overall approach to the nexus.
- **Main findings**: The understanding of the nexus concept is **highly specific to each country office's political and operational context**. Most of UNICEF's humanitarian action takes place in complex and fragile environments that involve conflict or considerable socioeconomic and political challenges, such as risk of civil unrest and government attitudes towards national and/or international NGOs. The relationships of donor governments and crisis-affected states can have an effect on the double nexus: when a donor does not want to engage with a government for political reasons, humanitarian funding instruments are often used as the only and best option. Contexts can therefore hinder UNICEF's ability to apply its humanitarian, development and peace mandate coherently and tensions between them may arise. The potential tensions, for example, relate to the incompatibility of the humanitarian independence principle on the one hand and development commitments to working with states on the other. It can also refer to the fact that HD programming can sometimes exacerbate conflicts, hence the 'do no harm' principle. The evaluation calls for rigorous assessments, monitoring and evaluations to be done on a case-by-case basis. The evaluation also acknowledges the need for HDP actors to rely on funding that supports the whole range of programming. Nevertheless, it says, 'country offices continue to see the lack of flexible and appropriate financing for nexus approaches as the most significant obstacle to planning for and implementing these approaches'. The rigidity of UNICEF financing systems is considered a main constraint, as much as the weak capacity to undertake contextual, risk analysis, socioeconomic and conflict analysis in regional and country offices.
- **Integration of the peace component**: The evaluation found that peace-building is generally treated lightly in UNICEF procedures, is not well articulated in the organisation's planning processes and programmes, and is under-prioritised in UNICEF's human resource management. The evaluation regrets that the neglect of the peace-building dimension of the nexus in comparison to the HD components led to two siloed modes of programming and a 'heavily bifurcated assistance architecture (…) (reflecting) the operational reality in some contexts'.

- **Key recommendations**:
  - **Nexus comprehensive understanding**: Rather than 'linking', emphasis should be to strengthen cooperation, coherence, coordination and complementarity internally across UNICEF and externally through United Nations-wide mechanisms. Efforts should be made to ensure that this new approach and language are integrated fully and prominently into the next UNICEF Strategic Plan, including by developing an improved set of specific indicators to track the prevalence of nexus approaches.
  - **Peace component integration**: Articulate a clear statement of UNICEF's role and contribution in relation to the peace dimension of the nexus. All major programming tools, including annual and rolling work plans should reflect an explicit, coherent and collaborative approach across humanitarian and development programming, including contributions to peace-building.
  - **Internal systems and procedures**: At the country level, harmonise and combine work planning processes for humanitarian and development programming using stronger context, risk and conflict analysis. At the headquarters level, wherever possible, harmonise and combine guidance on development and humanitarian programming.

**IAHE Review of Progress: Mainstreaming gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls into the humanitarian, development, and peace nexus agenda** (This was a companion publication to a 2020 evaluation by the IAHE on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls (GEEWG) (Bizzarri, 2020))

- **Timeframe:** 2015—2020

- IAHE (Inter-Agency **Humanitarian** Evaluations) / UNOCHA: **Humanitarian focus**

- **Geographical focus**: Global scope, with three light country-level consultations in the DRC, Somalia, Sudan

- **Review questions** focused first on the drivers for greater inclusion of gender equality and empowerment of women and girls (GEEWG) considerations in the planning and implementation of the triple nexus agenda; and secondly on the short- to medium-term practical measures that IASC governance can undertake to deal with these constraints.

- **Main findings**: This review examines the triple nexus through the lens of GEEWG, as these themes allow for cross-sectoral approaches. It **advocates for gender to be more integrated in collective outcomes across organisations and stresses the need for stronger coordination mechanisms and for localisation**. While the review regrets the lack of gender-related indicators in the formulation of nexus collective outcomes and the lack of strategic vision that this implies, the report identifies as a key lever the fact that actors of the three components of the nexus tend to work with the same women-led/gender equality local organisations. This intersection in the networks of collaborating actors could be an opportunity for adopting nexus approaches. This seems all the more relevant when interviewees mentioned the difficulty of developing collective outcomes and of mainstreaming gender considerations in terms of technical capacity. Finally, the review advocates **the inclusion of gender equality as a point of collaboration and focus** that could notably be jointly deployed across UN-World Bank Group (WBG) partnerships and it recognised that organisations specialising in gender could trigger coordination on these thematics, such as UN Women and its coordination mandate.

- **Integration of the peace component**: Women, Peace and Security is a clear area of study of this report which also aligns with the localisation agenda. Support for local women's organisations in peace operations is recognised as a catalyst for successfully mainstreaming gender perspectives into the triple nexus. The rooting of women in communities and their detailed knowledge of contexts is mentioned and valued as bridging short-term and longer-term needs. It is why the report defends a bottom-up approach to mainstream gender in the nexus, while regretting the lack of funding for such initiatives.

- **Key 'next steps'**:
    - **Coordination**: Determine how **accountability** for gender mainstreaming should be strengthened, for example by including additional minimum standards in existing frameworks, such as the requirement that at least one collective outcome focuses specifically on GEEWG, and/or all other collective outcomes are gender mainstreamed.
    - **Gender analysis**: Undertake **two-year pilots** in two countries, notably to ensure that gender analysis is reflected in the formulation and operationalisation of collective outcomes and that key strategic planning documents adequately reflect GEEWG.

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# Annex 1: Tables and figures showing evaluation examples from analysis

Annex 1. Table 1. Evaluations and evaluation syntheses* with a main or significant focus on the nexus

1.  FAO, DI and NRC (2021) Development actors at the nexus. Lessons from crises in Bangladesh, Cameroon and Somalia.*

2.  FAO: Buchanan-Smith et al. (2021) Evaluation of FAO's contribution to the humanitarian—development—peace nexus.

3.  UNICEF: Taylor et al. (2021) Formative Evaluation of UNICEF work to link Humanitarian and Development Programming.

4.  IAHE: Beck et al. (2021) Review of progress: Mainstreaming gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls (GEEWG) into the HDP Nexus Agenda. (Companion piece to Bizzarri et al., 2020)

5.  UNHCR (2021) Evaluation of UNHCR's Engagement in Humanitarian-Development Cooperation.

6.  UNDP: IEO (2020a) Evaluation of UNDP Support to Conflict-Affected Countries.

7.  UNDP: IEO (2020b) Evaluation of Support to the Syrian Refugee Crisis Response and promoting an integrated resilience approach.

8.  Evaluation Office of UNFPA (2019a) Evaluation of the UNFPA capacity in humanitarian action.

9.  UNPBF: Ernstorfer (2021) Drawing on evaluations and evaluative exercises of initiatives supported by the Fund.*

10. UNICEF: Visser et al. (2019) Evaluation of UNICEF Contribution to Education in Humanitarian Settings.

11. Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC): Klausen et al. (2019) Independent Evaluation of the Linkage of Humanitarian Aid and Development.

12. Denmark/DANIDA and UNHCR: ADE (2019) Joint evaluation of the integrated solutions model in and around Kalobeyei, Turkana, Kenya.

13. Government of Germany/German Institute for Development Evaluation (DEval) (2019) German Development Cooperation in Fragile Contexts.*

14. UNEG: Christoplos et al. (2018) The Humanitarian-Development Nexus — What do evaluations have to say? Mapping and Synthesis.*

*Syntheses or learning exercises

## Annex 1. Table 2. The triple nexus: which pillar of the nexus do actors focus on?

| *Illustrative* list of evaluation commissioners (out of the 90) that explicitly apply nexus thinking | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Commissioning body** | **Triple Nexus (30 evals)** | **Humanitarian-Development (26 evals)** | **Development-Peace (16)** | **Humanitarian-Peace (2)** |
| Bilateral donors and World Bank evaluations (23) | Canada/Global Affairs Canada (PRA, 2019a)<br>Canada/Global Affairs Canada (PRA, 2020)<br>Finland/MFA (Zetter et al., 2019)<br>Finland/MFA (Betts et al., 2020)<br>Germany/DEval (Roxin et al., 2021)<br>Norway/NORAD (Bryld et al., 2020)<br>Switzerland/SDC (Klausen et al., 2019)<br>United States/USAID (Buchanan-Smith and Longley, 2020) | Australia/DFAT (2019)<br>Denmark/DANIDA (2018)<br>EU/DG ECHO (Baker et al., 2018)<br>EU/DG ECHO (ADE, 2021)<br>Norway/NORAD (Knudsen and Hatlebakk, 2018)<br>World Bank (Caceres and Flanagan, 2019)<br>World Bank (Aghumian et al., 2020) | Canada/GAC (PRA, 2019b)<br>Norway/NORAD (Fabra-Mata et al., 2022)<br>Sweden/SIDA (Bryld et al., 2019)<br>Sweden/SIDA (Bryld, 2019)<br>Sweden/SIDA (Brett, 2019)<br>United States/USAID (2013)<br>United States/USAID (2014)<br>World Bank (Caceres and Flanagan, 2019)<br>World Bank (Kelly and Nogueira-Budny, 2021) | |
| United Nations evaluations (37) | **FAO, DI and NRC** (2021)<br>**FAO** (2021)<br>**IAHE** (Beck et al., 2021)<br>**IEO** (2022)<br>**UNDP** (IEO, 2020a)<br>**UNDP** (IEO, 2020b)<br>**UNFPA** (2019a)<br>UNFPA (Rojas et al., 2021)<br>**UNHCR** (2020)<br>UNICEF (Visser et al., 2019)<br>**UNICEF** (Taylor et al., **2021**)<br>UNPBF (Jantzi et al., 2019a)<br>UNPBF (Bugnion de Moreta, 2019) | IAHE (Steets et al., 2019)<br>IAHE (Baker et al., 2020)<br>ILO (Baykal, 2020)<br>UNDP (Murray et al. 2018)<br>**UNEG** (Christoplos et al. 2018)<br>UNFPA (Barnes et al., 2018)<br>UNFPA (King and Fransen, 2018)<br>**UNHCR (2021)**<br>UNHCR (Frankenberger et al., 2018)<br>UNHCR (Hanley et al., 2018)<br>UNHCR (Collinson and Schenkenberg, 2019) | UNDP (Murray et al., 2018)<br>UNEG (Christoplos et al., 2018)<br>UNICEF (2018)<br>UNICEF (Darcy et al., 2019)<br>UNPBF (Turnic, 2020)<br>**UNPBF (Ernstorfer, 2021)**<br>UNPBF (Merkel, 2021) | UNICEF (2018) |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | UNPBF (Ernstorfer, 2020)<br>UNRWA (2021)<br>WFP (2018b)<br>WFP (2020a)<br>WFP (2020b)<br>WFP (2020c)<br>WFP (2021a)<br>WFP (2021b) | UNHCR (Frankenberger and Taban, 2019)<br>UNICEF (2019)<br>UNICEF (Darcy et al., 2019)<br>UNICEF (Lawday et al., 2020)<br>UNICEF (2021)<br>WFP (2019) | | |
| NGO evaluations (4) | **FAO, DI and NRC (2021)** | DEC (Mutsaka et al., 2019)<br>Oxfam (Sande Consultores, 2020) | -- | SFCG (Al Nabhani, 2017) |

Notes:

- **BOLD** = among 14.
- Evaluations featured in the blue column (triple nexus) are not repeated in the other column/combinations unless they also use the non-triple combination.
- 6 evaluations describe multiple combinations explicitly (see cyan): World Bank (Caceres and Flanagan, 2019); UNEG (Christoplos et al., 2018); UNDP (Murray et al., 2018); UNICEF (2018); UNICEF (Darcy et al., 2019); UNPBF (Ernstorfer, 2021).
- 33 evaluations use H, D and P at least once in same sentence but with no explicit use of 'nexus' nor a focus on interactions between them (thus not portrayed here).
- * joint authorship.

## Annex 1. Table 3. How evaluations describe the links between resilience and the nexus

| Examples of how nexus actors (based on the 90 evaluations reviewed) address the linkages between resilience and the nexus | |
|---|---|
| **Term** | **Examples of how resilience is described in relation to the 'nexus'** (*not exhaustive, chosen to show diversity of organisations among subgroups*) |
| **Resilience** (out of 30 evals reflecting both terms together) | **Resilience contributing to the nexus approach** (16 evaluations), including:<br><br>UNDP (IEO, 2020a): Resilience reinforces the nexus<br><br>Norway/NORAD (Bryld et al., 2020): Resilience brings coherence to nexus<br><br>SDC (Klausen et al., 2019): Resilience is a key element of nexus<br><br>UNDP (IEO, 2020b): Resilience as a vehicle to catalyse nexus<br><br>UNFPA (Rojas et al., 2021): Resilience helps bridge the nexus<br><br>WFP (2019): Scaling up resilience leads to nexus<br><br>**Synonymous or synchronous** (16 evaluations), including:<br><br>Most evaluations refer vaguely to relations between 'resilience and nexus' or 'nexus and resilience'<br><br>Norway/NORAD (Bryld et al., 2020: 70): enabled partners to have a longer-term focus on resilience, thus supporting the HDN<br><br>Sweden/SIDA (Bryld et al., 2019): reports an interchangeable use of the terms; SIDA now recruits resilience/nexus-focused staff<br><br>**Nexus contributing to resilience** (11 evaluations):<br><br>USAID (Buchanan-Smith and Longley, 2020): nexus is central to resilience<br><br>Finland/MFA (Zetter et al., 2019): nexus supports resilience<br><br>World Bank (Caceres and Flanagan, 2019): advance nexus to promote resilience |

| | |
|---|---|
| | EU/DG-ECHO (Baker et al., 2018): nexus aims to strengthen and result in resilience |
| | **Nexus and resilience as different concepts** (12 evaluations), including: |
| | UNEG evaluation synthesis (Christoplos et al., 2018: 2): 'sparse reference to the nexus' in resilience evaluations and 'it may be difficult to use resilience as a rallying point for taking a more holistic approach to understanding the nexus'. |
| | IAHE (Steets et al., 2019: 105): 'Despite … efforts to strengthen the humanitarian-development nexus, there is no unifying conceptualization of resilience or of how the two systems can work together effectively and coherently.' |

## Annex 1. Table 4. Nexus features: elements and tools that are common in nexus approaches

| Illustrative list of organisations most frequently employing specific features to advance nexus approaches as described in evaluations | | |
|---|---|---|
| **1. Multi-year financing/ Programming** | **2. Collective outcomes** | **3. Joint assessment/Analysis (and context analysis)** |
| 41 out of 90 evaluations (41%) | 21 out of 90 (23%) | 13 out of 90 (14%) |
| Canada/GAC (PRA, 2019b) | FAO (Buchanan-Smith et al., 2021) | Switzerland/SDC (Klausen et al., 2019) |
| Switzerland/SDC (Klausen et al., 2019) | IAHE (Beck et al., 2021) | FAO (Buchanan-Smith et al., 2021) |
| Denmark/Danida and UNHCR (2019) | FAO, DI and NRC (2021) | WFP (2020a) |
| UNHCR (Frankenberger et al, 2019) | Switzerland/SDC (Klausen et al., 2019) | FAO, DI and NRC (2021) |
| UNHCR (2020) | UNDP (IEO, 2020a) | UNPBF (Ernstorfer, A., 2020) |
| UNHCR (2021) | UNDP (IEO, 2020b) | UNPBF (Merkel, 2021) |
| UNICEF (Taylor et al., 2021) | UNICEF (Lawday et al., 2020) | UNDP (IEO, 2020a) |
| DG ECHO (2021) | UNEG (Christoplos et al., 2018) | |
| ODI (Barbelet et al., 2021) | UNFPA (2019a) | |
| IAHE (Steets et al., 2019) | | |
| FAO (Buchanan-Smith et al., 2021) | | |

## Annex 1. Table 5. Nexus contexts in evaluations: protracted, fragile and natural hazard

| Illustrative list of contexts mentioned in relation to nexus approaches (not exhaustive; limited to the set of 90 evaluations) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **1. Multi contexts** (all 3: protracted, fragile and natural) | **2. Protracted** (not repeating multi) | **3. Fragile** (not repeating multi) | **4. Natural hazards** |
| 8 out of 90 evals (9%) ALL in Nexus-Core 14 | 19 out of 90 evals (21%) | 16 out of 90 evals (18%) | 8 out of 90 evals (9%) |
| Switzerland/SDC (Klausen et al., 2019) | Denmark/DANIDA (2018) | Finland/MFA (Zetter et al., 2019) | DG ECHO (ADE, 2021) |
| FAO, DI and NRC (2021) | EU/DG ECHO (ADE, 2021) | Finland/MFA (Betts et al., 2020) | IAHE (Baker et al., 2020) |
| UNICEF (Lawday et al., 2020) | UNDP (2018) | Canada/GAC (PRA, 2019b) | IAHE (Steets et al., 2019) |
| UNICEF (Taylor et al., 2021) | Finland/MFA (Zetter et al., 2019) | Canada/GAC (PRA, 2020) | |
| UNEG (Christoplos et al., 2018) | Canada/GAC (PRA, 2019a) | Germany/DEval (Wencker and Verspohl, 2019) | |
| FAO (Buchanan-Smith et al., 2021) | Canada/GAC (PRA, 2019b) | Germany/DEval (Brüntrup-Seidemann et al., 2021a) | |
| UNDP (2020a) | UNHCR (Frankenberger et al., 2018) | UNICEF (Darcy et al., 2019) | |
| IAHE (Beck et al., 2021) | WFP (2019) | UNDP (Murray et al., 2018) | |
| | UNFPA (Barnes et al., 2018) | | |
| | UNFPA (King and Fransen, 2018) | | |

# Annex 2: Methodology note

This concept and methodology note provides information on the ALNAP HDP nexus evaluation synthesis, including its purpose and scope; the questions it aims to answer; and the approach and methodology that was used to recruit, screen, select, group, code and analyse evaluations.

## Purpose and scope

The purpose of the HDP nexus synthesis is to integrate and share key findings from a wide evidence base in an accessible format and to inform policy and practice recommendations. The overall aim is to shed light on how organisations have advanced their version of a nexus approach, and the successes and challenges they encountered. As such, the synthesis enhances the utilisation of existing and emerging evaluative evidence to enhance wide learning. It should be noted however that, as for all evaluation syntheses, this is neither an accountability exercise nor a substitute for a system-wide evaluation. The intended audience of this synthesis are humanitarian, development and peace practitioners and policy experts at HQ and country levels, both within and beyond ALNAP Membership.

The scope of this evaluation synthesis is as follows:

- **Thematically**, the synthesis focuses on the triple HDP nexus — explicit or implicit links between at least two of the three domains — and how organisations have developed or advanced related policies, programmes, and activities.

- Evaluations with the **HDP nexus as a focus** (main or minor) will be recruited and screened prior to inclusion (see criteria below) with other evaluative literature[1] used to fill identified gaps. Evidence available to answer the research questions at the time of writing will be a key determinant of the final synthesis scope.

- The **temporal** scope covers January 2018[2] to April 2022.

ALNAP's synthesis considers and complements existing collaborative and joint learning by humanitarian, development and peace actors, and compared findings to the 2018 UNEG Synthesis, upon which it builds.[3]

## Approach and methodology

Aiming to move beyond the increasingly documented and regularly contested nexus terms and concepts, this evaluation synthesis was designed to answer the following *overarching and pragmatic research questions*, to the extent enabled by the evidence base:

| Overarching: **What progress/challenges have organisations made/encountered as they operationalise the HDP nexus approach?** |
| --- |
| 1. What **entry points** have organisations most commonly used to advance a nexus approach, and why? |
| 2. What has been learned about the operationalisation of an HDP nexus approach in **varied contexts?** |
| 3. What **good practices** and challenges have emerged regarding the connectedness/ coherence/ complementarity of various actors working across the HDP nexus? |

The selection of questions above aimed to assemble insights on key challenges as well as trends in recommendations. Greater detail on what each evaluation question contains is provided in the section below on coding framework; sub-questions are also listed below.

## Recruitment of evaluative literature

The study team recruited evaluations from the ALNAP evaluation portal and engaged in outreach to Members and other networks and portals (especially peace-building actors) to solicit additional evaluative literature for consideration. Recruitment was also driven by domain and author balance:

- An effort was made to recruit evaluations from each **domain/pillar** of the triple nexus: humanitarian, development and peace (with a minimum of two domains/ pillars clearly mentioned). We did so in recognition that such distinctions are not trivial given overlap, blurred distinctions, organisational ideology, dual mandates and the inability to isolate peace-building efforts, for example, from humanitarian action. The team, rather, relied on author use of key terms (explicit and implicit)[4] in evaluation titles or executive summaries. Given the ALNAP mandate and Membership, it is very likely that selected evaluations are skewed towards the humanitarian domain.

- An effort was also made to seek a balance in organisational **authorship**[5] (aiming for the best possible balance of ALNAP Members/partners: donors, UN, NGO, etc).

These balances are important to make the synthesis of a very complex topic as diverse and inclusive as possible. The final sample has been adjusted to balance representation, with the inclusion of additional evaluations at the discretion of the study team.

## Screening of evaluative literature

To determine the final selection among recruited evaluation reports, the team assessed the relevance[6] of each recruited report to confirm whether the evaluation set out to capture explicit information on the links **between at least two of the three nexus pillar**s.[7] Evaluative literature was thereafter sorted based on the extent to which this link or the nexus is an explicit main, implicit main,[8] or a lesser but valuable feature (namely, deliberate but minor focus e.g., one paragraph but not featured as the name of any evaluation question or structured report section). The relevance

screening involved a manual review of the table of contents and official titles, executive summaries, evaluation objectives and specific evaluation questions. All recruited documents with nothing beyond a simple mention in passing of nexus or domain links were removed, including those that mention the nexus only as a solution in recommendations.

For each evaluation retained, we also confirmed **generalisability**[9] — that is, the extent to which the evaluation reflects a system-wide, multi-sector, or joint approach. Those with a narrower focus such as a single country, single actor or project-level evaluation were nonetheless retained to ensure a balance in geographic focus (striving for the widest possible range of regions). Coded segments appearing only in documents considered to be less generalisable and/or of lower quality,[10] were more carefully vetted prior to inclusion in the synthesis.

## Coding framework

Selected documents were set up in a MAXQDA project[11] with an initial coding framework structured around the three research questions. The aim was to build on the coding of evaluation reports previously completed by ALNAP in 2021 for the 2022 *State of the Humanitarian System* (SOHS) report, adding new evaluations and new codes. While structured, the framework left room for iterative development of many unplanned codes during the process. Although some of the sub-codes were employed in the recruiting, screening or document grouping, the proposed analytical and coding framework below contains the full set. Each code already appearing in the original set of documents used in the nexus chapter in the 2022 SOHS report and its MAXQDA coding is marked with an asterisk.

| Parent code | Sub-codes (*codes with SOHS including 12.0 nexus subset) |
|---|---|
| **Research question 1:  What entry points have organisations most commonly used to advance a nexus approach, and why?** | |
| **Entry point\*** <br><br> *Definition: technical sector or theme strategically (or inadvertently) used to advance nexus approaches* | employment, jobs, livelihoods\* <br> self-reliance <br> social-protection; social safety nets <br> infrastructure <br> education <br> health care (e.g. COVID-19) <br> markets |
| **Key components** <br> (inputs, outputs and outcomes) | joint analysis <br> context analysis\* <br> collective outcomes <br> joint plans/programming\* <br> joint implementation\* <br> new way of working (NWOW)\* <br> conflict sensitivity, do no harm <br> localisation\* <br> local leadership\* <br> community ownership\* <br> cross-sector,\* multi-sector\* <br> alignment\* <br> flexibility\* <br> multi-year funding\* <br> coordination\* <br> transition\* <br> pilots |

| Research question 2: What has been learned about the operationalisation of an HDP nexus approach in varied contexts? | |
| --- | --- |
| **Protracted crises**<br>[see also document sets] | protracted*<br>conflict*<br>natural hazard<br>climate*<br>environmental degradation* |
| **Fragility**<br>[see also document sets] | fragile state<br>least developed (country)<br>middle income (country) |
| **Displacement contexts**<br>[see also document sets] | refugee*<br>internally displaced/IDPs<br>other populations of concern<br>camp, urban<br>host community* |
| **Contextual particularities**<br>[presence/absence] | context appropriateness*<br>political context*<br>violence<br>legal framework<br>focus on needs of people of concern<br>geographical characteristics |
| Research question 3: What good practices and challenges have emerged regarding the connectedness/coherence/complementarity of various actors working across the HDP nexus? | |
| **Domain**<br>[see also document sets] | humanitarian*<br>development*<br>peace*<br>DRR, recovery,* resilience* |
| **OECD DAC Nexus Recommendation terms** | system coherence*<br>connections/connectedness*<br>complementarity*<br>comparative advantage, joined up<br>bridging, interlinkages, collaboration,<br>integration, continuum |
| **Implementer type:** *Type of organisation leading /implementing the nexus actions (not necessarily evaluation authors)*<br>[see also document sets for commissioners / authors] | organisational nexus strategy*<br>donors*<br>United Nations<br>NGO (international), national/local (see localisation and level)<br>private sector*<br>regional actors* |
| **National government engagement** | state/national government*<br>national priorities* |
| **Level of focus** | local, national, regional (multi-country) |

## Analysis framework: extracting key findings anchored in context

The coded segments were analysed to identify, refine and frame key findings relating to the focus areas outlined above. Additionally, a parallel grouping[12] of documents was examined to the extent possible to support a systematic review of trends aiming to anchor the analysis in the nexus context, which has been noted by many as a gap in nexus thinking. While the document sets were uneven,[13] the grouping served as a new unit of analysis across which the codes were examined, such as organisational or report nexus domain or disaster.

| Document set | Explanation |
|---|---|
| **A. Domain of the nexus** | |
| **1. Triple nexus** | All three domains are referred to explicitly or implicitly in relation to each other as a key focus |
| **2. Humanitarian/Development** | Two domains are referred to explicitly or implicitly in relation to each other (such as in evaluating how they link, overlap, are connected, etc.) |
| **3. Humanitarian/Peace** | |
| **4. Development/Peace** | |
| **B. Disaster or crisis event triggering or addressed by the evaluation (only single country reports)** | |
| **1. Protracted/complex crisis**[14] **(yes/no)** | Explicit use of term and/or focused on at least one country determined to be enduring a protracted crisis |
| **2. Protracted/natural hazard explicit (with/without)** | Same as above but with *visible inclusion* of natural hazards in the evaluation evidence |
| **3. Fragility/conflict/violence**[15] **(high/med/low)** | Looking through WB classifications of country by fragility, conflict and violence level |
| **C. Organisation type (main evaluation commissioner)** | |
| **1. Donor** | *In the internal review, donors were the second-most frequent* |
| **2. United Nations** | *In the internal review, two-thirds of the reports were about or by the UN* |
| **3. NGOs and Red Cross** | *In the internal review, less than one quarter were from NGOs* |
| **4. Other entities** | *In the internal review, one evaluation was identified* |
| **5. Joint/more than one group above** | *In the internal review, one evaluation was identified* |

## Evidential strength and quality control

Evidential strength for synthesis findings is not indicated in the final report but was taken into consideration for the analysis. This has been done through triangulation — i.e., trends supported by multiple evaluations (minimum three) or shared in text boxes as anecdotal but illustrative examples.

## Limitations

The synthesis was based on the evaluation reports and evaluative literature identified (either on ALNAP's archive or through active outreach). The quality of the key findings relies on the quality of the evaluations. Attempts to conduct a comparative review of evidence from evaluations across three pillars are hampered by several challenges. The main limitation is the challenge to produce an even set of documents from each domain/pillar and type of organisation. Another is control for confounding factors and context (an evaluation question and a document grouping have been used specifically to address this). Yet another is variability of the evaluand: much of the material is domain, organisation or sector-specific and there exists no firm consensus on terms and outputs. A final factor common to most nexus evaluations is variability in the methods of investigation adopted, and the way in which results are recorded; most of the available evidence is qualitative. The time lag in conducting evaluations is also a challenge.

# Endnotes

1   Evaluative literature such as lessons learned / review documents were also considered, especially in validation of evaluative trends.

2   The year after UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres made the HDP nexus a central element of the UN agenda (UN, 2017).

3   Christoplos et al., 2018.

4   Specific implicit terms included for the humanitarian pillar: humanitarian, response, disaster; for the development pillar: development, poverty, livelihood; and for the peace pillar (negative and positive): peace, conflict, violence, social cohesion and security.

5   Evaluation recruitment aimed to balance — to the extent possible — the number of evaluations across ALNAP Member constituencies. Also, where an organisation has completed its own synthesis of nexus evaluations, the synthesis study may be used instead of each individual evaluation.

6   Relevance is defined here as the degree to which a piece of information relates to the proposition that it is intended to prove or disprove. Definition taken from ALNAP (2017): www.alnap.org/help-library/strengthening-the-quality-of-evidence-in-humanitarian-evaluations.

7   Some terms used to determine relevance to demonstrate links across at least two domains included collaboration, coordination, connectedness, alignment, complementarity, coherence fusion, transition (see also coding tree).

8   Explicit indicates using the term 'nexus' directly, whereas implicit refers to a focus that uses any term to convey deliberate linking across two or more domains (see evolving list in 'key components' of coding framework).

9   Generalisability is defined here as the degree to which evidence from a specific context can also be expected to reflect other situations. Definition taken from ALNAP (2017): www.alnap.org/help-library/strengthening-the-quality-of-evidence-in-humanitarian-evaluations.

10  Quality may be assessed based on the extent to which the methods and limitations are clearly explained and appropriate; the report's conclusions flow logically from the central findings; clarity of research questions; the quality and quantity of data and new ways of working. Evaluation quality will not be used to exclude evaluation evidence.

11  The MaxQDA project file started with all evaluations (approximately 50) that had some nexus-related codes from the 2021 ALNAP internal exercise, drawing on SOHS coding. All newly selected evaluation reports were imported prior to the grouping and new layer of coding for this synthesis.

12  For document grouping into sets, we used only evaluations focusing on single countries, and we relied on external empirical evidence such as WB country classifications (poverty level) or DI's protracted emergency country list. The use of document sets in MaxQDA allows reports focused on multiple contexts (e.g., three countries) to be placed into more than one set (i.e., when the contexts described in one evaluation differ).

13  While most evaluations appeared at the start to be in the protracted crisis set, comparing code results between large and smaller sets of documents often yields useful insights.

14  Development Initiatives (2021) defines countries experiencing protracted crisis as those 'with at least five consecutive years of UN-coordinated humanitarian or refugee response plans...Protracted crises often involve more than one crisis happening at once (such as conflict, displacement and natural disasters). They combine acute and long-term needs, requiring strategic support to meet immediate needs and to address structural causes and reduce vulnerabilities to new shocks'. Protracted crisis is where 'a significant proportion of the population is acutely vulnerable to hunger, disease and disruptions to livelihoods over prolonged periods'  (FAO, 2019).

15  OECD State of Fragility, WB FCV Strategy and FY22 List of Fragile and Conflict-affected Situations.

# ALNAP