

ADVANCING NEXUS IN THE MENA REGION BREAKING THE SILOS

RESEARCH AND DOCUMENTATION
OF THE STATE OF HUMANITARIAN
DEVELOPMENT-PEACE (HDP) NEXUS
IN THE MENA REGION

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A GLOBAL NGO NETWORK
FOR PRINCIPLED AND EFFECTIVE
HUMANITARIAN ACTION

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Founded in 1962, the International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA) is a global network of over 140 nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) active in 160 countries, operating at global, regional, national, and local levels, whose mission is to make humanitarian action more principled and effective by working collectively and independently to influence policy and practice. Based on its 2030 Strategy, ICVA promotes and facilitates NGO engagement in the development of humanitarian sector, with a focus on Forced Migration, Humanitarian Coordination, Humanitarian Financing, and Transformation of Change thematic areas such as (Localisation, Nexus, Climate change, PSEA and others).

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ABBREVIATIONS

3RF	The Reform, Reconstruction and Recovery Framework	ICCG	Inter-Cluster Coordination Group	PNGO	Palestinian NGO Network
ADB	Asian Development Bank	IDB	Islamic Development Bank	RC	Resident Coordinator
AIDA	Association of International Development Agencies	IDP	Internally Displaced People	RCO	Resident coordinator's Office
CBPF	Country based Pooled Fund	IFC	International Finance Corporation	RDNA	Beirut Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment
CCA	The Common Country Analysis	IFI	International Financial Institution	RG4	Result Group 4
CESVI	Participatory Foundation and NGO Italy	INGO	International NGO	RPBA	Recovery and Peacebuilding Assessment
CRP	The Crisis Response Plan	IOM	International organization for Migration	RR	Resident Representative
CSO	Civil Society organizations	ISIS	Islamic State in Iraq and Sham	SCHF	Syria Cross-Border Humanitarian Fund
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility	ISO	International Standards Organizations	SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
DAC	Development Assistance Committee	JCVA	Joint Common Vulnerability Assessment	SEF	The Socio-Economic Framework
DFC	Development Finance Corporation	JFA	Joint Funding Agreement	SGFPN	the Sector Gender Focal Point Network
DFI	Development Finance Institutions	JRP	Joint Response Plan	SIERY	Strengthening Institutional and Economic Resilience in Yemen
DFID	Department for International Development	KfW	Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau	SSC	The Strategic Solutions Committee
DSRSG	United Nations Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General	LASER	The Lebanon Assessment, Survey and Evaluation	UK	United Kingdom
DTM	The Displacement Tracking Matrix	MENA	Middle East and North Africa	UNCT	UN Country Team
ECHO	European Civil protection and Humanitarian Aid Office	MOE	Ministry of Education	UNDAF	The United Nations Development Assistance Framework
EU	European Union	MoMD	the Ministry of Migration and Displacement	UNDP	UN Development Assistance Framework
GoJ	Government of Jordan	MoP	the Ministry of Planning	UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
HC	Humanitarian Coordinator	NCA	Norwegian Church Aid	UNOCHA	United Nation's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
HCT	Humanitarian Country Team	NDP	National Development Plan	UNSDCF	UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
HDP	Humanitarian Development Program	NGO	Non-Governmental Organization	UNSF	UN Strategic Framework
HDPG	Humanitarian Development Partners Group	NNGO	National NGO	UNV	UN Volunteers
HNO	Humanitarian Needs Overview	NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council	USAID	United States Agency for International Development
HPF	The Humanitarian Partners Forum	NTT	Nexus Task Team	WASH	Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene
HRP	Humanitarian Response Plan	NWG	The Nexus Working Group	WB	The World Bank Group
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee	OCHA	Office of Coordinator of Humanitarian Assistance	WFP	The World Food Program
		OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and development		
		oPt	occupied Palestinian territories		
		PM	Prime Minister		

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Triple Nexus or HDP Nexus is the intersection of humanitarian, development, and peace activities in humanitarian work. The concept of the intersection rather than sequential relationship of international aid for humanitarian emergencies, development work and peace building were first articulated during the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul, Turkey. By 2019, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC), formulated a set of recommendations that further clarified the scope of the HDP nexus and was binding on all OECD members that voted in its favour.

This research aims to better understand the current stage of the operationalization of the HDP NEXUS approach in the selected MENA region countries of Iraq, Syria, Syria cross-border from Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Yemen, and Libya. It documents policy changes and situational changes that reflect the NEXUS approach. It also makes good practices and good examples accessible to various actors to help them develop guiding tools and strategic thinking around inclusion of NEXUS approaches in strategies, programs, etc

Using a combination of desk study, perception surveys and key informant interviews, the research was able to identify some critical strengths, opportunities, and challenges in each of the target countries and in the region, some of which had also global implications. It was found that even though some significant progress has been made in implementing some components of the HDP nexus approach, the DAC recommendations have still not been fully met, with varying degrees of achievements in different countries of the region.

The research indicated that in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, HDP nexus has taken some significant strides to shape aid delivery on the ground. However, the operational level and effectiveness of HDP nexus varies significantly from one country to another. Despite the country-level differences, regional trends are apparent. Humanitarian actors across MENA face issues related to ambiguity on HDP Nexus definition, the lack of integration and institutionalization of Nexus, unsystematic or rare collaboration with government actors and other key humanitarian and development actors, and an insufficient amount of quality and flexible funding.

In spite of these challenges, some progress has been made by individual organisations in some countries to integrate HDP nexus programming into their work through projects, communication, and an uptake in policy dialogue. Jordan, and, to some extent, the occupied Palestinian territories (oPt) have demonstrated progress in ensuring that HDP nexus is in place and somewhat effectively operationalized. Other countries such as Lebanon, Yemen, Iraq, Syria/Turkey-based cross-border Syria operations have undertaken some significant steps but are still in early stages in embracing NEXUS approaches. They still face a different range of structural challenges that impact their ability to deliver on global commitments around HDP Nexus.

The research concluded that all 8 targeted countries in the MENA region require clear workplans to integrating the HDP nexus into the aid delivery network within their communities. Additionally, the research shows that there is a need for a multi-stakeholder approach and to clarify the exact roles for those various actors who need to integrate HDP NEXUS in the country plans, including Donors, Government, Humanitarian NGOs, Development NGOs, Coordination Bodies, UN System, local and national actors, etc. While Nexus operationalization must adhere to the internationally made commitments, it should be contextualised and in the best interest of the targeted population. It is vital to further strengthen accountability and trust with affected communities, and to provide the required support to the local and national actors who have demonstrated a significant number of positive practices on the HDP nexus.

To ensure adherence to the Nexus principles, collective outcomes, joint and collaborative approaches, and joint context analysis should be prioritised in the country plans to ensure making progress on operationalising Nexus.

While most actors have acknowledged the importance of the HDP Nexus approach, many have mentioned the lack of “know-how” on how to operationalize the HDP nexus in their organisations, at the strategy and at the implementation of programs levels. They are challenged with how to incorporate development and peace building work into humanitarian programs and vice versa require tailored guidance. Based on the findings of this research, INGOs and LNNGOs need more support on knowledge and tools on integrating humanitarian, development and peace components and should engage in more long-term, sustainable, and equal partnerships.

Given the identified achievements, opportunities and challenges faced in these countries, this research concluded with the following suggested points for considerations:

- 1) **Moving beyond rhetoric:** there is a huge need for consistent language across the different actors around HDP coherence. Using consistent definitions and concepts on issues of HDP coherence and the nexus, will lead to developing a common understanding, common objectives and will provide clarity in the roles and responsibilities of different Humanitarian, development actors and those who work on the peace component.
- 2) **Being inclusive and listening to the people concerned:** key entry point for collaboration across the nexus is to put the people at the core of HDP strategy and plan, carefully Listening to them and planning intervention to respond to their needs and support them in accessing their rights would be the real indicators that we are progressing on the nexus approach. Moreover, working with the diversity of the local actors and building on their leadership and working towards equitable and meaningful partnership would be another real indicator on how HDP approach is operationalised
- 3) **Flexible multiyear qualitative funding:** flexible multiyear quality funding is the cornerstone of HDP nexus. This is key to build programming that reflect the voices of the people concerned, support the building of trust among partners and enable a shift from development to humanitarian programming and vice versa as the context changes. Quality funding will enhance leadership by local actors, while making sure that organisationally they are better equipped to respond to the various risks, challenges faced and ensure quality of programming.

THE RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

This research aims to better understand the current stage of the operationalisation of NEXUS approach in the selected countries throughout MENA. It documents policy changes and situational changes that demonstrate NEXUS approach. It also exhibits good practice and good examples accessible to humanitarian, development, and peace actors. Moreover, the research aims to identify reflections towards addressing the silos and bridging the gap among the humanitarian, development, and peace actors. It also looks at how HDP nexus approaches can be integrated and operationalised globally, in the MENA region, and in each of the target countries.

INTRODUCTION

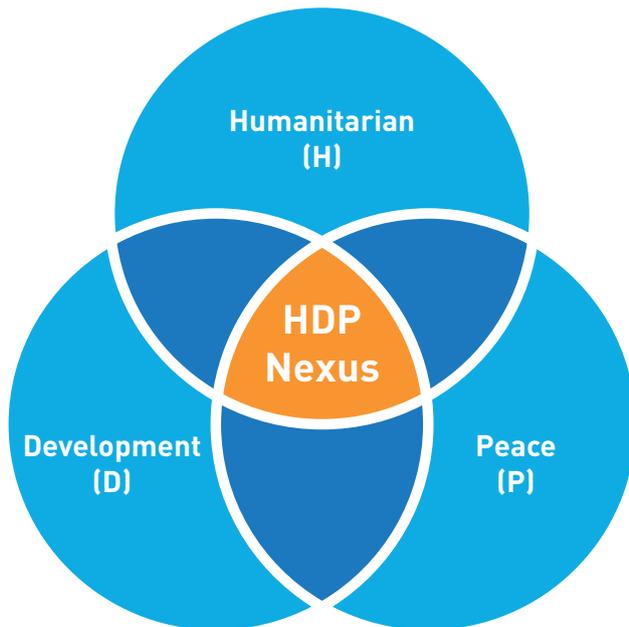
For many decades, humanitarian assistance has been set up to serve and meet the immediate needs of the vulnerable population. With disasters and conflicts increasing, and the rise of protracted emergencies, it is evident that the structure of assistance must be modified to meet a wider range of needs. Not all assistances are conducive to sustainable socio-economic prosperity. Concerns related to creating dependency on international assistance, negatively affecting the social fabric, undermining free market economy and sustainable economic development, gave rise to the developmental aid concept of “Do No Harm,” which was coined in the 1990s (CDACollaborative, 2021).

“Do No Harm” has been part of the understanding of a sequential relationship between humanitarian assistance, development aid, and peacebuilding for years. It was believed that the transition from humanitarian assistance to development cooperation should be coordinated (CDACollaborative, 2021) and should also be closely linked with state and peacebuilding initiatives in countries with fragile socio-political situations. This approach was called “early recovery” or “whole-of-government” (Hoevelman, 2020).

The overwhelming challenge in delivering effective and sustainable aid to people in countries with natural and political emergencies can be traced back to the independent channels and systems (silos) used by various types of assistance. Humanitarian assistance is mostly built around urgent relief activities which are short-term, omni-dimensional interventions in targeted areas and communities. Development aid responds to ongoing structural issues and is based on long-term, integrated, multi-sectoral interventions throughout the entire region or the country.

In the MENA region, there are stable countries with national development programs, as well as countries that are active conflict zones and fuel humanitarian emergencies across borders. The majority of the existing humanitarian emergencies are due to environmental and political causes. They are significantly protracted, requiring both humanitarian and development assistance, with linkages to peace building and peace keeping initiatives.

In the recent past, donor inter-agency humanitarian plans have lasted an average of seven years and their resource allocation has increased by 400 per cent (OCHA, 08/2019). There was a need to look closer at the intersection of these plans and develop strategies that enable a more coherent, well-coordinated, and, as a result, more effective system of aid delivery to target communities. Following the adoption of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 2030 Agenda in 2015, recommendations from the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) in 2016, the UN's "new way of working" in 2017 called on "humanitarian and development actors to work collaboratively together, based on their comparative advantages, towards 'collective outcomes' that reduce need, risk and vulnerability over multiple years" (United Nations, n.d.).



As a result, humanitarian and development actors were called upon to coalesce around a common objective of reducing vulnerability and risk by implementing well-coordinated and sustainable approaches. Humanitarian assistance, development aid, and peacebuilding, called "triple Nexus or HDP Nexus, were no longer seen as independent forms of assistance but rather as inter-linked initiatives. In 2019, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC), which has 30 member countries, defined "**Triple Nexus as a collective effort "to reduce overall vulnerability and the number of unmet needs, strengthen risk management capacities and address root causes of conflict"**". DAC also produced a set of recommendations for humanitarian actors, including **guidance on coordination, programming, and financing of the humanitarian, development, and peace (HDP) nexus**. The recommendations constitute the standards against which HDP nexus actions are evaluated for all voting OECD members.

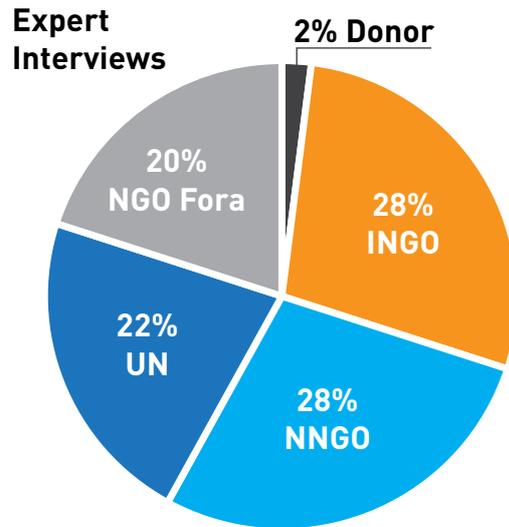
Policy Framework

To effectively address the interlinkages among the humanitarian, development, and peace actions, a series of dialogues, policies, and framework agreements have been crafted by various entities, which build the foundation of the HDP nexus. Some of these policies include:

- OECD DAC Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus
- The Global Compact on Refugees
- The Grand Bargain Agreement
- The New Way of Working
- Council of the EU conclusions on the Integrated Approach to External Conflicts and Crises
- Council of the EU conclusions on the operationalization of the Humanitarian-Development Nexus

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

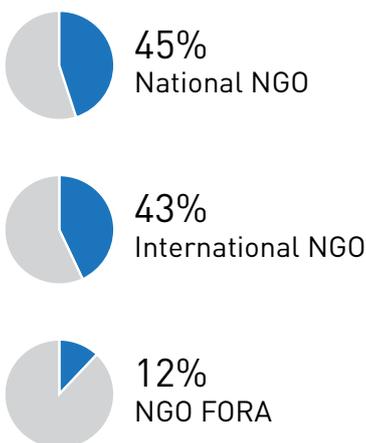
The research consisted of both quantitative and qualitative data collection. Qualitative data for this research is grounded in an extensive review of relevant literature on policies, data, or trends on NEXUS in MENA and as a series of key informant interviews conducted remotely with humanitarian practitioners in a sub-set of countries: Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Syria, Syria/Turkey hub, and Yemen. Interviews were semi-structured, held with 50 participants from across the region. INGOs accounted for 28 per cent of interviews (14 participants), NNGOs accounted for 30 per cent (14 participants) and the remaining are from coordination bodies (20 per cent), UN Agencies (22 per cent), and one donor representative. Over 40 per cent of interviewees were women, with a comparable ratio of men-to-women among NNGO interviewees.



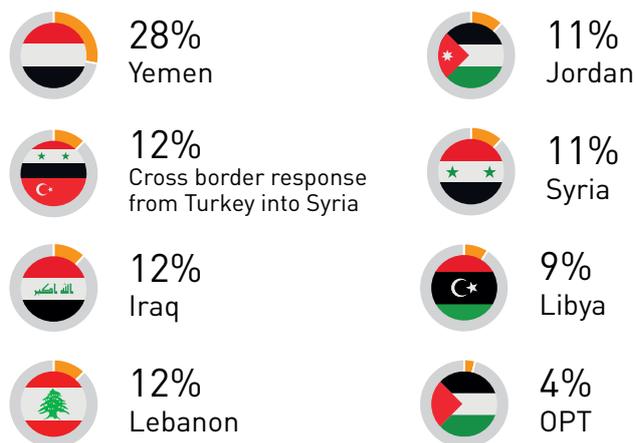
The interviews were structured as an open discussion aimed at learning from the practitioners' experiences on the ground with their respective organisations as well as in other countries in which they had served or were serving. They were asked about the type of challenges faced by their organisations, initiating genuine, frank, and insightful conversations that provided accurate depictions of the HDP nexus implementation in their respective country of operation and the wider MENA region. Some limitations in this research include not directly addressing the role of governments at an in-depth level, and no interviews conducted with government personnel. The information and perspectives of the national governments in selected countries were not included as part of the scope of study, so their perspective is not reflected. Another limitation includes travel restrictions related to the global Covid-19 pandemic preventing field-level research.

At the start of the research, a quantitative perception survey was carried out with INGO, NNGO and NGO Forum's representatives in 8 countries. Altogether 72 persons participated in a comprehensive survey, in which NNGOs accounted for 45%, INGOs (43%) and NGO Forums (12%). All targeted countries for this research were represented in the survey with 28 per cent representing Yemen, 12 per cent Lebanon, 11 per cent and 12 percent representing Syria and cross border from Turkey to Syria respectively. Iraq accounted for 12 per cent, Jordan at 11 per cent, Libya at 9 per cent, and oPt at 4 per cent. 52 per cent of respondents were female and 48 percent male.

Type of organisation



Country of operations



The intent of the quantitative survey was to gauge the perception of practitioners throughout the region about the progress that HDP nexus has made thus far and the areas of concern that they feel is hampering further progress. It also provides insight into the penetration of the HDP nexus into the day-to-day operation of the practitioners.

“Strengthening the coherence between humanitarian, development, and peace efforts is the aim of effectively reducing people’s needs, risks and vulnerabilities; supporting prevention efforts; and thus, shifting from delivering humanitarian assistance to ending need.”

(OECD/DAC)

Given the specific circumstances in the targeted region and in each targeted country, it is critical that progress made to achieve HDP nexus are compared against clear standards. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has produced a legal instrument titled **“OECD, DAC Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus,” (OECD/LEGAL/5019)**. It outlines the findings of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) after its Senior Level Meeting on February 22, 2019, stating that at the center of “strengthening the coherence between humanitarian, development, and peace efforts is the aim of effectively reducing people’s needs, risks, and vulnerabilities; supporting prevention efforts; and thus, shifting from delivering humanitarian assistance to ending need.”

This research will revert to the standards set by the DAC recommendations to implement the HDP nexus in the MENA region as a whole and in each targeted country.

The DAC recommendations are divided into three categories: coordination, programming, and financing.

The Coordination recommendations: include a joint analysis of root causes of structural drivers of conflict, positive factors of resilience, and the formulation of collective outcomes that incorporate humanitarian, development, and peace measures. It also includes the provision of appropriate resources to empower leadership for cost-effective coordination across the HDP architecture.

The Programming recommendations: include prioritising prevention, mediation, and peacebuilding, as well as investing in development while immediate humanitarian needs are met. It also recommends that people are put at the center, while tackling exclusion and promoting gender equality. Activities should do no harm, be conflict sensitive, avoid unintended negative consequences, maximise positive effects across the HDP actions, and allow joint programming to be aligned with the risk environment. Under the programming recommendations, strengthening of national and local capacities, and investing in learning and evidence across the HDP actions are also critical.

The Financing recommendations: provide evidence based HDP financing strategies at the global, regional, national, and local levels, while taking into consideration appropriate layering and sequencing of adequate financing flows. It recommends the use of predictable, flexible, multi-year financing, wherever possible.

It is to be noted that the DAC recommendations target humanitarian actors as does the scope of the project –granted that interactions with development actors have also been included.

KEY FINDINGS

Findings of this research have been divided into regional level and country-level. The Regional level findings reveal common progresses, opportunities and challenges identified by all actors throughout the region. The Country-level findings reveal progresses, challenges, and opportunities that actors experience under the country-specific conditions.

Regional-Level Findings

The study revealed that across the MENA region, there is a high level of motivation and desire among the various actors to incorporate and operationalise the HDP nexus, although there are various constraints such as lack of inclusive, participatory, and transparent programming, equal access to funding, availability of quality funding, lack of awareness on the goals, policies, and implementation measure of NEXUS at the country level, and a lack of experience sharing and joint analysis..

The perception survey showed that around **27** per cent of respondents believed that HDP policies were in place in their country of operation, while **73** per cent of the respondents either believed that there was no HDP nexus policy (33 per cent) in place or that they did not know about it (40 per cent).

Are HDP Nexus policies in place at your country of operation?



Irrespective of existence of an HDP nexus policy in their country of operation, 71 per cent of the respondents believe that HDP nexus was generally being implemented (23 per cent) or somewhat implemented (48 per cent). 13 per cent believed that HDP nexus was not being implemented, while 16 per cent were not aware about its implementation status.

Is HDP Nexus being implemented by your country of operation?



Joint analysis and sharing of experiences around the HDP nexus are prevalent with 52 per cent stating that it either was fully exercised (5%) or somewhat exercised (47 per cent), with 48 per cent stating that it was not being exercised at all. This shows that there is a need for further collaboration in this area.

Is there joint analysis and sharing of experiences around HDP Nexus?



A critical aspect of the HDP nexus implementation is the ability of all actors in humanitarian arena to pool their coordination mechanisms to achieve common objectives. The survey showed that the target countries are faring quite well with respect to pooling of their coordination resources (77 per cent), while 23 per cent believed that there was no pooling of coordination resources in their country of operation.

Is there pooling of coordination capacities being implemented in your country of operation?



The cornerstone of HDP nexus is long-term (multi-year), flexible, and predictable funding. In this area, all target countries in the MENA region are unsatisfied to a larger extent with the nature and quality of their funding. 44 per cent of respondents believe that funding is mostly available for emergency relief projects. There appears to be some development funding available, as only 10 per cent of respondents believed that there was no development funding at all.

Quality of funding seem to be below expectation with low prevalence of critical factors such as long-term funding (10 per cent), flexible funding (8 per cent), predictable funding (9 per cent), and not earmarked or softly earmarked funding (11 per cent).

How would you characterize funding available for projects implemented in your country of operation



The general perception of respondents is that NNGOs do not receive equal access to funding. Only 11 per cent of respondents believed that NNGOs have equal access to funding, while 35 percent believed that they do not have equal access to funding.

Is there equal access to funding for local NGOs (LNGOs)?



It also appears that good practices are not always being promoted and used as a learning tool within the HDP nexus community, with **70** per cent stating that they are either not (**36** per cent) or mostly not (**44** per cent) being promoted and used.

Are good practices being promoted and used as a learning tool within the HDP nexus community?



73 per cent of respondents believe that inclusive, participatory, and transparent planning and programming for HDP nexus is not being undertaken in their country of operation, while only **27** per cent believe that it is happening with a gradual progress. Apparently, the political will to launch and operationalise HDP nexus programming is lacking (**63** per cent), while funding for capacity strengthening and knowledge sharing in support of HDP nexus is also unavailable (**84** per cent).

Is inclusive, participatory, and transparent planning and programming for HDP nexus being undertaken in your country of operation?



Key Findings from the Interviews

The interviews with the key actors and experts in selected countries, provided an in-depth insight in understanding the inner dynamics of HDP-nexus implementation in the MENA region. The following are some of the key findings:

Lack of Clarity - Across the board in the MENA region, there is ambiguity regarding the definition of the HDP nexus in each context. As a result, many practitioners encounter general level of discomfort when engaging with HDP NEXUS and discussing ways forward. Throughout the MENA region, the level of awareness about the objectives and intentions of the HDP nexus is relatively low, there is a general perception that HDP is too complex and theoretical and difficult to implement. Interviewees cited a combination of misunderstanding, misperceptions, and partial awareness of NEXUS HDP. There was consensus among the key participants interviewed, that efforts are needed to demystify nexus, simplify the language and, thus, create clarity around the HDP nexus. The interviews revealed that there is a need to have clear definitions and contextualised awareness creation.

Institutionalisation of HDP Nexus - The research indicated that many of the achievements in integrating the HDP Nexus Approach, are solely based on initiatives led by individuals or individual entities within donors, UN agencies, and NGOs, rather than having a holistic and a systemic effort and approach to HDP nexus. The participants who were interviewed voiced their concerns that HDP nexus has not yet been institutionalised within the region and, therefore, there is a lack of a conscious, coherent, systematic and efficient process working specifically towards achieving the HDP integration objectives.

Collaboration with Government Actors – Some countries of the region, such as **Iraq, Lebanon, Jordan, and oPt**, have a national development plan in place. In these countries, some humanitarian players consider the engagement with the governments as ineffective or even, in some cases, counter-productive in achieving progress in sustainable and effective delivery of aid to the humanitarian beneficiaries. Competition between government and the humanitarian aid community, lack of coordination between humanitarian and development actors, and internal political challenges faced by officials and civil society organisations, have made it difficult to adhere to HDP nexus objectives. As a result, a systemic approach to HDP nexus has been constrained. In countries with multiple power structures – such as **Yemen, Syria, oPt, and Libya** – the lack of engagement with the national or regional authorities has negatively affected the HDP nexus. Most experts interviewed recommended that active collaboration with national and de facto governments or authorities must be maintained that goes beyond merely addressing access related issues.

There is a strong need for closer interaction with government authorities, including non-state actors, serving as de facto authorities, to enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of international humanitarian and development assistance.

Coordination - Throughout the region, coordination of humanitarian activities is very well structured using a network of clusters and technical working groups that are led by NGOs and UN agencies. The participants interviewed were, however, concerned that no noticeable changes have been made to align the coordination mechanisms with the HDP nexus requirements. **Joint data collection and analysis as well as joint planning and programming to solve critical operational problems is often not exercised.** Although, there are good intentions by all involved members and participants, to share experiences, and aim for effective coordination to implement the DAC recommendations. The limited progresses that are achieved so far, are often due to ad-hoc efforts, engagement, and contribution of the chairperson of the committees and some active agencies, rather than based on a systematic and consistent approach toward having an effective coordination among all actors.

Quality Funding – Multi-year, flexible, predictable, and unearmarked or softly earmarked funding is considered quality funding. This is applied only by a very small pool of donors. Almost all interviewed participants reported that DAC recommendations appear to be valid for other contexts or other environments but unfortunately not specifically for countries in the MENA region. In some cases, such as in Iraq, one NNGO representative stated that “one-year funding is seen as a luxury, while four to six-month funding seem to be the norm”. In Palestine, Jordan and Lebanon, multi-year funding is more prevalent. In Palestine, some donors have also demonstrated flexibility and predictability in funding. In Yemen, the tendency towards longer-term funding is growing, especially for INGO programs. The general expectation of interviewed participants was that donors will eventually adhere to their own DAC commitments of providing quality funding for humanitarian and development actors in the MENA region.

Involvement of International Financial Institutions-IFIs in HDP Nexus - (IFIs) and Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) such as the World Bank (WB), International Finance Corporation (IFC), the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the Islamic Development Bank (IDB), KfW, Development Finance Corporation (DFC), and others have recently started to engage with HDP nexus as a way of doing business. Their engagement in Jordan is more prominent than in some other markets, where they have made less prominent contributions and a meaningful collaboration and cooperation with the humanitarian actors, whether in the context of the HDP nexus or other related approaches to humanitarian activities. Most interviewees expected that IFIs and MDBs become more actively engaged in coordination and collaboration with other humanitarian aid actors to avoid ineffective strategic and operational actions that could undermine other HDP nexus actors' work.

“Humanitarian crisis can avail lots of opportunities, but we often miss or ignore those opportunities. We need to find verticals that cut across all types of crisis and problems and structures to ensure that we achieve the target.”

(UNDP Syria Response)

Country-Level Findings

This research revealed many similarities across different countries including the nature of the protracted humanitarian situation and key stakeholders involved (donors, UN agencies, INGOs, and local and national actors.) For this section, two categories of countries are identified:

A) Those with an active or emerging development program.

B) Those without an active or emerging development program.

Those with an active development program are already well established in implementing their plans, due to stability in their country. Other countries have either a newly developed program or an existing program that needs support or no program at all.

Status	Jordan	Lebanon	oPt	Syria	Iraq	Yemen	Libya
Active Development Program	×						
Challenged Development Program		×	×				
Emerging Development Program					×		
No Development Program				×		×	×

The research shows that Yemen, Libya, and Syria fall under the category of countries without an active development program. These countries do not have a national development plan and any aid-related activities are only able to be channelled through humanitarian assistance. Other countries – such as Jordan, Lebanon, oPt, and Iraq – have either an emerging development program (Iraq), an active development program (Jordan), or a quasi-suspended or challenged development program (Lebanon and oPt). In these countries, the humanitarian program co-exists with the development program and faces some challenges that sometimes undermine the effectiveness of both programs. In the case of Iraq, the humanitarian program is expected to phase out and be handed over to the development program, which is managed by the government. Some participants interviewed expressed significant concern that Iraqi government will unlikely be able to continue implementing transitioned programs in an efficient and effective manner, potentially leading to a collapse of humanitarian services to IDPs and others in need.

The country-level analysis of the state of the HDP nexus action are as follows:

Kingdom of Jordan

The government of Jordan has been involved in implementing a development program with the help of bilateral donors, coordinated by the United Nations' Development Program (UNDP) and other key actors. Funding flows to the government through on-budget interventions and bilateral agreements, implemented directly by the government itself. The humanitarian program in Jordan grew with the arrival of refugees after armed conflict broke out in Iraq and later in Syria. Today Jordan is home to more than 675,000 Syrians (UNOCHA Jordan, 2022), who are residing inside or outside refugee camps. While the government of Jordan extended welcoming arms to the refugees, the protracted nature of the conflict gave rise to expectations from the aid community to address sustainable co-existence and livelihood needs of the refugee population. Given the difficult economic conditions of the country and the level of hardships that Jordanians are facing, the notion of integration of the refugees into the social and economic fabric of Jordan faced some resistance. Some of this resistance was against critical refugee livelihood sustainability demands, including employment permits, permanent housing, more sustainable access to healthcare, educational services, and others.

There is a significant gap in the level of coordinated engagement that is based on collective outcome and joint programming.

With active engagement of UN agencies, donors, and NGOs – both international and local – support for Syrian refugees as well as refugees and immigrants from other countries remain the centre of programming. Recently, the activities have included development work with host communities and support provided to the municipalities, water departments, and other service providers to mitigate some of the impacts caused by the refugee settlements on the existing physical, social, and economic infrastructure.

HDP Focus Area	Low	Medium	High
Written policies and strategies on HDP nexus in place			✘
Interaction with government & local authorities at humanitarian and development level	✘		
HDP nexus steering committee in place and actively operational		✘	
Collective outcomes are formulated and actively worked towards	✘		
Quality funding is available (flexible, multi-year, predictable, unearmarked).		✘	
Localisation is actively pursued through strengthening the capacities of NNGOs, local authorities and beneficiary communities.		✘	
Incorporation of Peace Component into Humanitarian and development scope.	✘		

Low: Some work has been done, but the output is not yet aligned with DAC recommendation.

Medium: Noticeable work has been done, but there is still much work to be done.

High: Significant alignment has been achieved with DAC recommendations on HDP nexus approach.

Progress, Opportunities and Challenges

HDP Nexus Structures - Jordan has seen significant progress in terms of developing the proper structures to enable HDP nexus to be mainstreamed in the humanitarian and development work. The signing of the Jordan Compact in 2016 led the way towards operationalisation of HDP nexus. “The compact is a fine example of a Nexus approach agreed and adopted between the Government of Jordan (GoJ) and the International Community to address the Syrian refugee crisis in a resilient and holistic manner” (UNOCHA). In addition, the aid community in Jordan has established a complex set of structures to cater to the need to implement HDP nexus in the country. These include the Humanitarian Development Partners Group (HDPG), which was established in 2018; the Humanitarian Partners Forum (HPF), which is a sector level forum; and the Nexus Task Team (NTT), which was established in 2019 to explore the humanitarian-development nexus.

HDP Nexus Focus - According to UNOCHA, “The RCO Jordan along with OCHA and UNHCR are leading the Nexus discussion in Jordan and with generous support from donor governments. A secondee from the Swiss government has been assigned to work specifically on Nexus and as facilitator of the NTT. The Nexus focus was initiated by the UK in 2018 when the United Kingdom’s Department for International Development (UK/DFID) seconded a Nexus adviser who laid the ground for today’s work, which is continued by the Swiss secondment and builds on the preparatory framework laid down by the UK. With these structures in place, the aid community in Jordan hopes to be able to make significant strides in realising the HDP nexus.

Joint Assessments and Analysis - Joint analysis is an important aspect of the HDP nexus. In Jordan, several assessments were undertaken that contribute to more effective understanding of the scope of humanitarian and development work. They include a Joint Common Vulnerability Assessment (JCVA), which was part of the Vulnerability Assessment Framework and addresses the changing needs of the most vulnerable; and the Common Country Analysis (CCA), which was conducted in 2020 and analysed the changing context and forged a common understanding across the UN system and the IFIs.

Joint Planning - Planning is also done through a structured system with the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP), which structures the humanitarian response efforts; the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), which regulates the UN’s contributions and plans in Jordan; the Jordan Response Plan (JRP), and Joint Funding Agreement (JFA), which allows for funding of special sectors under the government’s leadership; the Socio-Economic Framework (SEF), in which the UN Country Teams (UNCT) developed a response to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 pandemic, and other similar plans. At the programming level, while humanitarian needs are prioritised, prevention, mediation, and peacebuilding, as part of the humanitarian assistance program, are less emphasised. While some efforts in resilience building measures are implemented, development with the aim of achieving sustainability and self-reliance of beneficiaries and communities, especially within the scope of humanitarian assistance, is less effectively targeted. Several participants interviewed stated that there does not appear to be reasonable levels of effective action to ensure that interventions by aid organisations are conflict sensitive, because programs are not collectively planned and designed using joint analysis. UN agencies, NGOs, and donors often plan their interventions in isolation, and often without effective coordination or collaboration.

Coordination - At the coordination level, several committees and groups have been established to enable effective collaboration, cooperation and coordination among the donors, UN agencies, INGOs, NNGOs and the government. Some of these groups include the Humanitarian Development Partners Group (HDPG), the Humanitarian Partners Forum (HPF), and the Strategic Solutions Committee (SSC). Under the HPF, HPF Advisory Group, the Inter-Sector Working Group, the Sector Gender Focal Point Network (SGFPN), and a series of task teams for localisation, Humanitarian-development nexus and policy engagement/advocacy have been established. UN agencies, Donors, the World Bank, NGO Forums, and others jointly co-chair some of these committees. There is also a good opportunity to build on this existing and effective Coordination platform in Jordan, in which Clusters and Technical Working Groups are fully active and bring together UN and NGO representatives. They can be further refined to focus on HDP nexus

objectives and channel their data collection and analysis in a more joint basis, enabling the beneficiaries, their communities, and local government officials to participate more closely in this coordination effort. Moreover, they can expand their collaboration to increase data sharing and sharing of good experiences around the HDP nexus approach. Additionally, because of the stable government structures, and the good level of engagement of national and local authorities in different aspects of humanitarian assistance, this close collaboration can be seen as a good opportunity to further expand and include development assistance actors and to expand engagement of the local authorities and local communities.

The DAC recommendations are not always used as a guide for program coordination. Therefore, factors such as risk-informed analysis of root causes, identifying drivers of conflicts, and reinforcing positive factors of resilience are not as well represented in planning and programming. While coordination mechanisms are available through cluster and technical working group meetings at the national and regional levels, there are only limited resources provided to mainstream HDP across the existing coordination architecture.

Collective Outcomes: Despite significant progress in Jordan, the state of HDP nexus implementation is still not systematic nor standardised. Even though significant dialogue between the government of Jordan, the donor community and UN agencies exist, there are no collective outcomes formulated for the humanitarian assistance.

Case Study

A Spectrum of Humanitarian, Development and Peace Initiative – Empowering Each Other in Jordan

In order to ultimately have an environment that is free of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence, Arab Renaissance for Democracy and Development (ARDD), a CSO in Jordan, developed a program Utilising a HDPN approach.

Humanitarian Approach: Focusing on the camps and host communities, a training of trainers was provided to the women living in the camps to enhance women's access to training and skills with the aim of expanding their participation in civic engagement. In addition, a women's parliament was created in the camps to identify main issues faced by women, and to raise their awareness through several channels.

Development Approach: This program was coordinated so the Ministry of Social Development (MoSD) operates the community centers. This program aimed at enhancing the capacity of these community centers to increase the quantity and quality of their services, enable them to respond to SGBV survivors, and provide them protection and referral services.

Peace Building Approach: With recognition of the gender dynamics in the refugee and host communities, ARDD worked to ensure that this project addressed internal social cohesion dynamics among refugees and local communities, and the promotion of gender equality and woman empowerment, through intense training problem-solving tactics and provision of tools.

Localisation through partnership with NNGOs – Some INGOs such as Oxfam, NCA, Save the Children, CARE, and some others, have global localisation strategies, which focus on a sustainable and equal partnerships with local NGOs. They identify partner NGOs and work with them over years to enhance their capacities and to support their sustainability. NGOs are typically not involved in the planning, design, or other related activities, and if they are included at early stage, there is a limit as to how they can influence certain changes. Sustainability of NNGOs is often overlooked. When capacity development is provided, it is generally associated with implementing a certain project or an initiative, such as proposal writing, M&E, and reporting that aim to allow for NNGOs to become better “implementing partners”. No consistent, sustainable investment is available in the partners’ capacity to stay and deliver, better analyse the context, and manage risks. According to UNOCHA Humanitarian Partnerships and Capacity Exchange Analysis 2021, out of US\$ 775 million in total funding for Jordan, only US\$ 7 million (or 0.9 per cent) was channelled directly to local NGOs. 11 per cent of these funds came from bilateral donors, while 89 per cent came from UNOCHA Humanitarian Fund. In total, only US\$ 56 million (7.2 per cent) were awarded to NNGOs, while US\$ 232 million (30 per cent) was awarded to INGOs – some of these funds were channelled from UN agencies to INGOs and NNGOs – and US\$ 690 million (89 per cent) to UN agencies.

Funding - At the financing level – despite some ongoing activities to coordinate at the global level among multilateral partners, IFIs, governments, and the private sector – according to some participants interviewed, discussions have not translated into noticeable operational changes. As a result, IFIs, the private sector, and governments are less actively engaged in closing financing gaps. According to UNOCHA, around 23 per cent of financing was 3 years or more in duration, with 3-year funding at 10 per cent, 4-year funding at 6 per cent, and 5-year funding at 3 per cent. Funding duration of six to fifteen years was around 4 per cent. **57 per cent of funding duration was between one and two years. 19 per cent of all funding was for less than one year.** Financing does not appear to always be supported by informed joint analysis. Some participants interviewed were concerned that funding by most donors often do not support greater coherence between HDP actions. Flexible, predictable, and unearmarked or soft earmarked funding is mostly absent.

Private Sector - Engagement of the private sector in the humanitarian sphere is still miniscule. Financing opportunities that bring together HDP stakeholders and involve the private sector are scarce.

Republic of Lebanon

Lebanon is currently undergoing one of the worst economic crises it has ever faced and the inability of the government to overcome its own inefficiencies and address the donor demands for “badly needed reforms,” is making matters more difficult. As a result, much of the development assistance for the country has been frozen, which has rendered the National Economic Vision 2025 somewhat unrealistic. As this research was being finalised, the government of Lebanon announced the ‘bankruptcy of the state and the central bank of Lebanon’. Lebanon is continuing to suffer severe economic crisis and has been described by the World Bank as a “deliberate depression.”

The recent free fall of the Lebanese Pound against the US Dollar is eroding the population’s purchasing power and creating a challenge for investments. The contribution of the private sector toward economic development of the country is being eroded, unemployment is skyrocketing, and social cohesion is gradually being challenged.

Under these challenging conditions, the influx of Syrian refugees and their protracted stay in the country adds yet another layer of tension in the country.

HDP Focus Area	Low	Medium	High
Written policies and strategies on HDP nexus in place	✘		
Interaction with government & local authorities at humanitarian and development level	✘		
HDP nexus steering committee in place and actively operational	✘		
Collective outcomes are formulated and actively worked towards	✘		
Quality funding is available (flexible, multi-year, predictable, unearmarked).		✘	
Localisation is actively pursued through strengthening the capacities of NNGOs, local authorities and beneficiary communities.		✘	
Incorporation of Peace Component into Humanitarian and development scope.	✘		

Low: Some work has been done, but the output is not yet aligned with DAC recommendation.

Medium: Noticeable work has been done, but there is still much work to be done.

High: Significant alignment has been achieved with DAC recommendations on HDP nexus approach.

Progress, Opportunities and Challenges

In Lebanon, great effort to promote the HDP nexus approach took place. Actors are relatively well informed about HDP nexus; however, the study revealed that an additional operational awareness is needed. The research participants from UN, INGOs, NNGOs and NGO forums stated that there are ample opportunities to further strengthen the implementation of various aspects of the HDP nexus.

Policies, Plans and Strategies - According to Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Result Group (RG) 4 (IASC Lebanon, 2021), the UN Country Team implements the HDP nexus through the UN Strategic Framework (UNSF) in Lebanon. Some operations plans have been developed such as the Crisis Response Plan (CRP), the Humanitarian Appeals and the Reform, Reconstruction and Recovery Framework

(3RF) – 3RF is focused on Syrian refugees in Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey and inside Syria. The UNOCHA-developed Human Response Plan (HRP) provides a venue for donors, UN agencies, and NGOs to provide the desperately needed relief that refugees as well as host communities require to overcome current hardships. With these operational plans, humanitarian assistance, emergency relief, and longer-term reconstruction and reform work are harmonised.

The UNOCHA-led Lebanon Humanitarian Fund has an advisory board, which also includes two local NGOs. A Nexus Advisor has not yet been appointed, but the Resident Coordinator's office serves as the Nexus Secretariat. According to UNOCHA, Lebanon does not have an HDP nexus strategy. The Common Country Assessment (CCA) is expected to help in producing a new UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF), which will be the primary basis for nexus approaches in Lebanon. The current UN Strategic Framework (UNSF), which was developed for 2017 to 2020 and has been extended until the end of 2022, includes HDP nexus outcomes that cover ongoing HDP activities, including social, political/peace and security/governance, economic, and environmental priorities. According to UNOCHA, despite the recent economic challenges, UN agencies and partners have been improving common analyses and rolling out joint programs that were aligned with agreed priorities. The key gap currently seems to be "lack of a common funding strategy to support nexus approaches in Lebanon."

According to some participants interviewed, the quality of NNGOs' work is relatively high, and community resilience programs have been launched for the past few years. The unprecedented explosion of the Beirut Port in Lebanon was met with a prompt response by local and national civil society actors. The aftermath of the blast demonstrated the important role of gathering information, access, and speed in delivery of services. Additionally, civil society has played a major role in social and political change, therefore, the active role of local NGOs and the continuous engagement with those local organisations can pave the way for further efforts towards enshrining the HDP nexus into the humanitarian and development sphere.

Joint Analysis – The UNSF was developed based on Common Country Analysis (CCA) that brings together analysis from various UN pillars, providing input on peace, security, and development. Together with the humanitarian partners, the Lebanon Assessment, Survey and Evaluation Registry (LASER) was put together. LASER is an online repository of planned, ongoing, and completed assessment, surveys, and evaluations. CCA is repeated every year and the information is shared with all partners, also through clusters and Technical Working Groups. Although good example exists of joint analysis, NGO members interviewed indicated that joint analysis is relatively rare and this is a challenge. Information shared with clusters or technical working groups are less often used to support or guide planning or programmatic decision-making.

Joint planning and Programming – According to IASC, the HDP nexus is applied at the strategic level through the UNSF with the operational response plans addressing their well-coordinated implementation. 'An example is the Beirut Port explosions response implemented through a three-phase', joint process, including humanitarian needs assessment and response, recovery, reform, and reconstruction. Likewise, the 3RF was a result of a collaboration between the different actors on a Beirut Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment (RDNA) conducted right after the Beirut Port explosion." (IASC Lebanon, 2021).

Coordination - Coordination within the clusters and the technical working groups is reasonably well structured, although they are not aligned with the HDP nexus considerations. Exchange of views is normal during coordination meetings, even though the programmatic implication of the HDP discussions and exchanges are rare.

Collective Outcomes – According to UNOCHA, there is an opportunity to utilise the 3RF plans through the UNSF design process to prepare collective outcomes that combine the humanitarian-development-peace nexus. However, to date, no collective outcomes have been formulated for Lebanon, although it is expected that the revised UNSF will incorporate common outcomes around the peace, security, development, and humanitarian actors.

Funding – Despite reluctance of donors to actively engage and support the dysfunctional government, expecting reforms, donors are well motivated and ready to invest in long-term funding. There is opportunity to increase the quantity and quality of funding and allow for more direct funding to NNGOs. In 2021, total of more than \$1.4 Billion was disbursed for different types of activities, including in the areas of food security, education, healthcare, basic assistance, social protection, and other sectors. For 2022 there is also a strong contribution by the donors, albeit there is still an outstanding commitment of around \$600 million. (United Nations Lebanon, n.d.) While there are opportunities, the challenge also lies in the gradual decrease of financing due to distrust of the government and misperceptions. In 2021, total of US\$1.2 billion has been disbursed to Lebanon (96 per cent by top ten donors), out of which just under 7.5 per cent (US\$ 28.6 million) has been allocated for humanitarian programs. Participants interviewed for this research stated that even though some donors are committed to quality funding, most donors still hesitate to provide multi-year, flexible and predictable funding.

Case Study

Building Sustainable Partnerships – Protection Services in Lebanon

With the idea of improving protection prospects for both refugees and host communities by empowering right holders to exercise their rights, ABAAD Resource Center for Gender Equality designed a program employing a bus tour, reaching the most marginalised and remote areas bringing protection services to the community.

Humanitarian Approach: The approach included localisation of coordination with the aim of building sustainable partnerships with municipalities, community leaders, and partner NGOs. The bus tour utilised a variety of awareness raising activities, including information sessions, video screening, live discussions, theatrical performances, and community events. These methodologies are utilised to share information on health, and legal and protection resources and providing quality services.

Development Approach: The project modality is based on the concept of building the resilience of local communities and work towards strengthening their self-agency, so that they take informed decisions that affect their lives. Project rounds are conducted based on the local coordination with the aim of building sustainable partnerships with municipalities, community leaders and partner NGOs.

Peace Building Approach: The tour is challenging social tensions and bringing different community groups together to attend various events and ensuring the intervention is inclusive of all. This protection led initiative, focused on addressing immediate protection needs for local and refugee communities.

Coordination – Clusters and Technical Working Groups are fully active and bring together UN and NGO representatives. They can be further refined to focus on HDP nexus objectives and channel their data collection and analysis in a more coordinated effort and enable the beneficiaries, their communities, and local government officials to participate in their work more closely. They can also expand their collaboration to increase data sharing and sharing of good experiences around the HDP nexus approach. Coordination across clusters and technical working groups are less prevalent, which results in less well-structured, adequately synchronised delivery of humanitarian aid across different sectors. NEXUS needs to be a fixed agenda point across the coordination mechanisms.

Engagement with Authorities – As the government of Lebanon is changing every year and the cabinet Ministers are frequently replaced and their positions are divided among political and religious parties, donor trust has somewhat faded. However, local governments are relatively stable and can deliver services and contribute towards enhanced HDP nexus implementation in their regions. Hence, there is an opportunity to build their capacity, and enhance their effective involvement in implementing HDP nexus approach.

Inconsistent understanding HDP Nexus – During the interviews, one participant expressed that “The government suffers from a lack of good understanding of the HDP nexus, resulting in confusion as to what falls under humanitarian or development sector, as it relates to rolling out the HDP nexus.” The effectiveness of the government in promoting HDP nexus planning, programming, and action is rather negligible. Inconsistent understanding of HDP nexus is also seen among UN agencies and NGOs, where different perceptions on the nature of HDP nexus exists, and its operationalisation continues to be a mystery for many. Capacity development that is aimed at promoting HDP nexus and enhancing the capabilities of the CSO community are rare and mostly only available through some INGOs with global localisation strategies.

Occupied Palestinian Territories (oPt)

Palestine is struggling with a severely politicised environment, in which the HDP nexus related efforts appear to conflict with various levels of Political challenges both from the Palestinian side as well as the Israeli side. In the process, many donor countries are left with no alternative but to try to balance the two conflicting positions with programmatic approach that appear to be falling short of the HDP nexus aspirations. The protracted nature of the conflict further exacerbates the situation, as the sustained nature of the need cannot be effectively addressed by the aid community. Ineffective government, coupled with sanctioned Hamas authorities, who govern the Gaza strip, and the area C related Israeli restrictions to operate offer additional constraining factors in ensuring sustained delivery of aid to communities.

<i>HDP Focus Area</i>	Low	Medium	High
Written policies and strategies on HDP nexus in place	✘		
Interaction with government & local authorities at humanitarian and development level	✘		
HDP nexus steering committee in place and actively operational	✘		
Collective outcomes are formulated and actively worked towards	✘		
Quality funding is available (flexible, multi-year, predictable, unearmarked).		✘	
Localisation is actively pursued through strengthening the capacities of NGOs, local authorities and beneficiary communities.		✘	
Incorporation of Peace Component into Humanitarian and development scope.	✘		

Low: Some work has been done, but the output is not yet aligned with DAC recommendation.

Medium: Noticeable work has been done, but there is still much work to be done.

High: Significant alignment has been achieved with DAC recommendations on HDP nexus approach.

Progress, Opportunities and Challenges

HDP Nexus Strategy, Policy, and Collective Outcomes - According to UNOCHA sources, the UNCT is actively engaged in UNSCDF planning which will affect the development of an HDP nexus strategy. The previous 2018-2022 UNDAF was not implemented for “political reasons” and no formal HDP nexus policy was developed. The Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) and UNCT will develop the HDP nexus policy for oPt and the collective outcomes as the 2023 UNSCDF is developed. So far, no collective outcomes have been formulated for oPt, although it is expected that the 2023 UNSCDF will incorporate common outcomes around the peace, security, development, and humanitarian actors. According to UNOCHA, the process is expected to be inclusive and consultative, including with NGOs, beyond those who sit at the HCT. As part of the process to develop the HDP nexus policy, the RCO is considering appointing an “Advisor” and UNOCHA has already identified a donor likely to provide funding support. OCHA has recruited a United Nations Volunteer (UNV) to assist in their processes to join up with those of the RCO on the HPD Nexus.

Evidence creation on Nexus practices has been positively supporting the operationalisation of Nexus. In 2021, the most recent document was produced by the Palestinian NGO Network (PNGO), titled “The Operationalisation of Triple Nexus, Challenges and Opportunities, the Case of Palestine.”

This paper outlines nine specific elements that will drive the HDP nexus approach in Palestine. They include setting the strategic direction, coordinating, adapting financing arrangements, carrying out joint analyses, deriving collective outcomes, deriving joined-up implementation plans, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating, and capacity building. According to PNGO representatives interviewed for the research, some NNGOs are now actively engaged in developing their own organisational HDP nexus strategies.

In November 2020, the INGO forum, called the Association of International Development Agencies (AIDA), organised an HDP nexus roundtable discussion, which yielded some recommendations, including the call for an inclusive, participatory, and people-centred process to enable better analyses and accountability through a bottom-up approach that involves the local CSO as well as human rights defenders across the green line; community resilience with a focus on short-term and long-term needs and aspirations of local communities; a shared commitment to the localisation agenda; a focus on the promotion of joint analysis, including of different levels of conflict; and promotion of a flexible, i.e. adaptive, cross-sectoral and area-based, approach to aid delivery. The recommendations also emphasised the need for defining the peace element of the triple nexus. Peace should not be confined to “big conflict issues but also look at conflicts at lower levels, including within the Palestinian society, at a community level, as well as on individual security.”

Several INGOs such as CARE Palestine, WeWorld, DCA/NCA, and others are also implementing various programs with HDP nexus approach incorporated. These projects are multi-year, with some flexibility, have a significant localisation component and address all three pillars of the nexus.

According to some participants interviewed, the quality of NNGOs' work is relatively high. NNGOs have the knowledge and expertise and tools to articulate a midterm to long term strategy in which the integration of all programmes is fully achieved. Some examples linked to community resilience programs have been launched for the past few years. Because of the challenged government structures, donor trust has somewhat declined, while in the Gaza Strip, Hamas is sanctioned by most donors. However, outside of the Gaza Strip, local governments are relatively stable and can deliver services and contribute towards enhanced HDP nexus implementation in their regions. Hence, there is an opportunity to build their capacity, and enhance their effective involvement in implementing HDP nexus approach. Access to adequate and quality funding to strengthen their institutional sustainability is still one of the key barriers for local actors.

Joint Analysis – To collect data and carry out analysis, UNOCHA relies on its Inter-Cluster Coordination Group (ICCG), which managed the Gaza ICCG and West Bank ICCG. Documents collected through various technical working groups are collected by the UN/HCT Data Group and then shared with the aid community for further analysis. According to IASC Country Brief (IASC oPt, 2021), for the year 2021, UN entities, the Government of Palestine, and national and local civil-society actors will jointly carry out a survey of 7,500 households for the Multi-Sector Needs Assessment (MSNA). “By the end of 2021, the RC Office will launch an interactive, online platform to visualise and analyse the nexus approach, including data on needs, risks and vulnerabilities.” While some work is being done on joint analysis, the majority of interviewees named it a challenge. Most of participants interviewed indicated that joint analysis is relatively rare. Information shared with clusters or technical working groups are less often used to support or guide planning or programmatic decision-making. Some NGO representatives reported that even though the UN and donors generate comparable documents, they sometimes do not share them with the NGO community, which hampers closer coordination and cooperation among the whole of the aid community. It was stated that meetings often held by UN agencies and donors are attended by one or two NGO members, whose point of view do not find the needed attention and support.

Joint Planning and Programming – According to IASC (IASC oPt, 2021), joint approach will be used across the development and humanitarian efforts of the upcoming programming cycle. The Common Country Assessment (CCA), the Humanitarian Needs Assessment (HNO), and Cooperation Framework/HRP processes are expected to be launched. Discussions are ongoing with the Palestinian Authority and key international partners to implement a medium- and long-term response and recovery program for Gaza. The World Bank is expected to be fully engaged in the upcoming process.

Coordination - Coordination within the clusters and the technical working groups is reasonably well structured, albeit they are not aligned with the HDP nexus considerations. Coordination across different clusters and technical working groups do not exist, which results in the failure to see a well-structured, adequately synchronised delivery of humanitarian aid across different sectors. There is an opportunity at the coordination level, clusters, and technical working groups to be more and fully active and bring together UN and NGO representatives. They can be further refined to focus on HDP nexus objectives and channel their data collection and analysis in a more joint basis,

Funding - There is an opportunity to increase the quantity and quality of funding and allow for more direct funding to NNGOs. Some INGOs are already receiving longer-term funding, which could be further extended to include NNGOs as well. While some donors such as the Canadian government, the Swiss government and few others have supported and funded HDP nexus projects, nexus is still not the predominant requirement to funding decisions. Everyone interviewed for the research agreed that donor support has shrunk. Distrust of donors towards the Palestinian Authorities, constraints in perception of donors that some NNGOs may be associated with “terrorist organisations”, and the general tendency of donors to lose focus on such a protracted humanitarian crisis, were mentioned as some of the reasons for the shrinking funding.

Case Study

Communities As Agents of Change – Occupied Palestinian Territories

In the West Bank and Gaza Strip, Dan Church Aid/Norwegian Church Aid initiated a unique project focusing on building resilient communities and empowering the communities by supporting them to become their own agent for change. This project was designed addressing immediate needs and plan for mid-term and long terms strategies on mainly engaging and empowering local communities. The intervention was based the understanding that crisis-affected communities are first responders. Community based groups were formed and enabled to address their community risks, understand the needs, and advocate for their rights. Small grants were provided to help implement action plans established by the groups.

Humanitarian Approach - The project incorporated capacity strengthening and learning to communities to self-mobilise, self-organise, anticipate, and design their own projects. Thus, a power shift toward local actors was achieved and increased sense of local community ownership and leadership facilitated. The approach builds a new work culture within the community, so that community members shift their thinking from individual interests to communal interests.

Development Approach - The nature of this project considers the power relations within societal group categories like women and youth that are interrelated with age, family, social status, political affiliations, and economic situation. It has focused on enhancing the woman's role in society and changing the perception of women's role and dwelling on their key role and successes in creating social cohesion and peacebuilding efforts.

Peace Building Approach - Creating Agents of Change aligns with the organisations' commitments to the Community for Change (C4C) and the localisation agenda. It changes the concept of victimisation and empowers the community members to make real change on their terms during dire and emergency situations and simultaneously addressing local long term sustainability issues. This is a long-term approach requires flexible funding to be replicated. Unique coordination is required with donor community, INGOs, national authorities and local actors to ensure a cohesive approach and to get the commitment on continued support to partners who have dual mandates focusing on emergency and immediate needs while planning for long term sustainable issues.

Unified understanding of HDP Nexus – According to a donor representative interviewed for this research, there is significant ambiguity around the HDP nexus. For some, HDP nexus is a project, rather than an approach. Inconsistent understanding of HDP nexus is also seen among UN agencies and NGOs, where different perceptions on the nature of HDP nexus exists, and its operationalisation continues to be a mystery for many.

Over the past few years, the relations between the aid community, including the donor community, and the Palestinian Authority has deteriorated. As a result, donor support for the government has been shrinking and their active engagement in the HDP nexus process has reduced to negligible. It was mentioned by some experts interviewed for this research, that the Palestinian Authority often considers humanitarian and development assistance by NGOs to be in competition with their services. This position may have been the cause for not implementing the 2018–2022 UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for “political reasons”.

In the Gaza Strip, the situation is more dire, as most large donors have a no-contact policy towards Hamas, the ruling party. As a result, direct engagement of the authorities is avoided, resulting in some inefficiencies in coordinating around the HDP nexus.

Leadership of HDP Nexus – Despite the recent push by the HC to implement HDP nexus, several NGO representatives stated that, in the past, UN agencies have taken a backseat in the implementation of the HDP nexus. As a result, the coordinated initiatives were not considered to enable a sustained move toward the realisation of the HDP nexus on the ground. Effectively coordinated and multi-faced design of policies and strategies, as well as coordinated work toward the formulation of collective outcomes were missing in the oPt.

Capacity Development – Most NGO representatives interviewed for this research stated that capacity development that is aimed at promoting HDP nexus and enhancing the capabilities of the Civil Society Organisations (CSO), and the community are rare and mostly only available through some INGOs with global localisation strategies.

Republic of Iraq

In August 1990, the United Nations Security Council adopted resolution 661, which imposed sanctions on Iraq after the Saddam Hussein regime invaded Kuwait. The UN-sponsored Oil for Food Programme marked the start of humanitarian programming in the country. After the March 2003 US invasion of Iraq, a new emergency unfolded and resulted in an influx of Iraqi refugees into neighbouring countries as well as many internally displaced people. After the fall of Mosul in June 2014 to the Islamic State of Iraq and Sham (ISIS) forces, the third wave of humanitarian emergency was born, which has continued until today despite the fall of ISIS in November of 2017. Poverty, lack of employment, internal displacement, insecurity, terrorism, in addition to lack of adequate access to basic healthcare, education, and livelihoods services are some of the key features of the humanitarian emergency in Iraq.

HDP Focus Area	Low	Medium	High
Written policies and strategies on HDP nexus in place	✘		
Interaction with government & local authorities at humanitarian and development level	✘		
HDP nexus steering committee in place and actively operational	✘		
Collective outcomes are formulated and actively worked towards	✘		
Quality funding is available (flexible, multi-year, predictable, unearmarked).	✘		
Localisation is actively pursued through strengthening the capacities of NNGOs, local authorities and beneficiary communities.	✘		
Incorporation of Peace Component into Humanitarian and development scope.	✘		

Low: Some work has been done, but the output is not yet aligned with DAC recommendation.

Medium: Noticeable work has been done, but there is still much work to be done.

High: Significant alignment has been achieved with DAC recommendations on HDP nexus approach.

Progress, Opportunities and Challenges

HDP Nexus Strategy, Policy, and Collective Outcomes - According to Inter-Agency Durable Solutions Strategic and Operational Framework (Government of Iraq, 2021), to resolve internal displacement in Iraq, the durable solutions coordination architecture was established in 2021. This architecture is developed by the Prime Minister's (PM) Office, the Ministry of Planning (MoP) and the Ministry of Migration and Displacement (MoMD), under the leadership of the United Nations Deputy Special Representative of the

Secretary General (DSRSG), as well as the RC and the HC. The objective is to bridge the humanitarian-development-peace nexus, bring together United Nations agencies, non-governmental organisations and other actors specialising in humanitarian, development, stabilisation, and peacebuilding programming, and support the Government of Iraq to implement its national durable solutions plan. The mechanism serves as a common platform for coordination and implementation of activities which contribute to durable solutions to internal displacement. It has three main objectives, which are: “(1) create the space to bring different actors together from across the nexus for the purpose of addressing protracted displacement; (2) support in organising and integrating their activities in a way that supports durable solutions outcomes; and (3) develop and adopt frameworks and approaches for the Iraq context which promote adherence to international standards.” This mechanism is expected to “support the ability of aid actors to perform a complementary role to the Government at national and local levels, recognising that local and national authorities bear the primary responsibility to create the conditions for – and support – durable solutions for internally displaced populations.”

Transition from Humanitarian Aid to Development Assistance - Even though humanitarian needs are still prevalent in the country, because of the sustained nature of such needs, the government of Iraq and UNOCHA have agreed that the Humanitarian Response Program (HRP) will end by 2023 and all remaining humanitarian activities will be formally handed over to the Iraqi government. The present UNOCHA-led humanitarian program is focused on northern Iraq, where people were displaced due to ISIS oppression. Presently, only one IDP camp remains, which is expected to remain open for still some time as there are ongoing social conflicts in the residents’ places of origin. The UNOCHA-led humanitarian program has been predominantly focused on returnees rather than IDPs.

The development program is led by UNDP and is called the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF), which is a five-year development program signed between the UNDP and the Iraqi government. While the UN is suggesting a durable solutions component of the development program, the Iraq Development Trust Fund – the body exclusively available to UN agencies – will be managed by the government’s development program. It will include a peacebuilding component but no humanitarian component. Hence, a purely humanitarian program is transitioned to a double nexus approach with development and peacebuilding, but void of a humanitarian component.

There are opportunities to significantly increase the meaningful partnership among NNGO-INGO to enable enhancement of the NNGO capacity and improving the effectiveness of INGO programming and outputs. Some collaboration and engagement of local authorities as well as local communities, including beneficiaries exists, even though there are limited engagement in decision making and planning processes.

Because of the changed nature of humanitarian needs, Humanitarian Response Program (HRP) will end by 2023 and all remaining humanitarian activities will be formally handed over to the Iraqi government.

(UNOCHA Iraq)

Funding - According to UNOCHA, funding for humanitarian assistance is shrinking. As of January 31, 2022, funding has reduced from more than US\$ 600 million to around d US\$377 million for HRP, serving around 960,000 people compared to 1.1 million people in 2021 (UNOCHA Iraq, 2022). Around 4 per cent of this funding is provided to NNGOs, while 77 per cent has been channelled to INGOs, 18 per cent to UN agencies and 7 per cent to pooled funding mechanisms. In addition to the HRP funding, additional \$217 million was provided through non HRP mechanisms, for total of US\$ 594 million in funding for Iraq. Some of the funding is used for durable solutions, which also includes some development activities. Funding for development and peace building programs will continue through bilateral and multilateral channels and will be undertaken under the direct auspices of the government. NGO representatives interviewed for this research are confident that future funding for NGOs will continue, even though the size and scope are not yet clear.

Joint Analysis – To collect data and carry out analysis, UNOCHA relies on its cluster coordination mechanisms that collect data for “the Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM); and operational activities such as housing and infrastructure reconstruction, livelihoods, cash for work and community engagement, in addition to direct support in facilitating voluntary returns for IDPs who have faced protracted displacement.” (United Nations Iraq, 2021, n.d.). The challenge is to make this data available for the entire aid community and to engage in collective analysis with the intent of planning and program design that ensures collaborative approach to achieving collective outcomes. Joint data collection and analysis, joint planning, and joined-up programming – including formulating collective outcomes – as well as collaborative monitoring and evaluation to enhance program effectiveness – are mostly or completely absent.

Coordination - There are well-established clusters of humanitarian work and Iraq is the only country in the MENA region which has a functional mixed forum (comprised of national and international NGOs). The coordination mechanisms are relatively well enforced and have served the humanitarian assistance programs. According to a UNOCHA representative, the future of the coordination mechanism is dependent on the structure of the Iraqi HDP nexus approach which will be decided upon in the coming months. Moreover, Clusters and technical working groups are fully active and bring together UN and NGO representatives and expand their collaboration to increase data sharing and sharing of good experiences around the HDP nexus approach.

Collective Outcomes – According to UNOCHA, collective outcomes will be formulated “in the coming months”. Some collaborative workshops have been held with NGOs and UN agencies to gauge their collaboration space. According to UNOCHA representative interviewed for this assignment, several questions have been sent to the clusters and their response will help shape the next steps in formulating collective outcomes.

Quality of funding - As described above, only 4 per cent of all HRP funding goes to NNGOs, while 71 per cent goes to INGOs. NNGOs interviewed for this study indicated that quality of funding is shrinking at an alarming rate with four to six months funding durations being the norm. One-year funding cycle appears a luxury and multi-year funding is mostly absent unless it is part of the development program. Quality of funding – which also includes flexibility, predictability, and unearmarked or softly earmarking funds – are also mostly absent. Capacity building funding for NNGOs and in support of the HDP nexus are scarce. Donors are not well motivated to invest in humanitarian and development activities. Most experts interviewed for this research stated that donors believe that since Iraq is a rich country they should assume responsibility for the social and economic wellbeing of their people. Engagement with the Government of Iraq on an HDP nexus program would go a long way to ensure that funding for future humanitarian, development, and peace activities can be ensured.

Strategy and Policy - Inter-Agency Durable Solutions Strategic and Operational Framework is the foundational document that addresses the HDP nexus. However, when interviewed, most of the NGO experts were not aware about the existence of this document and were concerned that the cessation of the HRP in 2023 would result in a vacuum that may cause hardship for the most vulnerable people and affect the conflict in a negative manner. When UNOCHA was inquired about nexus related policies and/or strategies, they responded that “Iraq is currently working on transition plans with the clusters and HCT and these will be developed in the coming months.”

Coordination – The overall coordination mechanisms used in Iraq was not set up to serve an HDP-focused program, which, according to several participants interviewed for this research, has resulted in the lack of an HDP-focused programmatic approach in Iraq. With the quick changes taking place in Iraq, the coordination mechanisms should ensure that HDPN Approach is a priority, addressing the concerns of the NGOs in place a HDPN strategy should be initiated in a transparent, inclusive, and participatory manner.

Awareness about HDP Nexus - Several participants interviewed for this research showed concern over the lack of adequate awareness about terms used to describe the HDP nexus, its requirements, and ways to operationalise its approach, and the roles and responsibilities of the various actors. Even though there may be a will to institutionalise it, there is insufficient understanding of what it takes to

make HDP nexus a reality. There is vocalised hesitancy when speaking of government responsibilities to implement a HDP Nexus approach.

Partnerships between INGOs and NNGOs – Most NNGOs interviewed complained that meaningful partnerships between INGOs and NNGOs is very rare and only the case when INGOs have a global localisation strategy in place. In most cases, INGO and NNGO partnerships are in response to donor requirements. As a result, the local partners are perceived as a partner to implement projects with a short-term approach related to implementation rather than focusing on building meaningful and equitable long-term relationships.

Uncertainty about the Future - What will happen to the aid community? How will the IDPs and others requiring emergency humanitarian assistance fare after the end of the HRP? These two questions are concerning all humanitarian actors in Iraq. Understanding, planning, and implementing the HDP nexus is not yet a reality in Iraq and requires dedicated, committed, and focused action by the aid community – led by the example of both the donor initiative and UN system.

Syrian Arab Republic / Turkey Hub

The Syrian refugee crisis was triggered by the humanitarian emergency resulting from the Syrian civil war that began in March 2011. As a result, over half of Syria's population has been forced to flee their homes in search of safety. According to UNHCR, more than 13 million Syrians need humanitarian assistance, including nearly seven million internally displaced people.

Because of influx of more than 3.5 million refugees into Turkey, many INGOs and some NNGOs set up bases in Turkey to serve Syrian refugees as well as to work across the border and provide various humanitarian, and later development services, to Syrian communities. According to an ICVA Regional research on 'the Meaningful Participation of Local actors in Humanitarian Leadership (ICVA - International Council of Voluntary Association, Jan 2021)', a "UN-led Whole of Syria (WoS) framework" provided an umbrella structure that was led by the Humanitarian Coordinator in Damascus, and was supported by operational hubs in Turkey and Jordan, covering cross border activities into north-eastern and north-western Syria. "Inter-agency humanitarian activities from Turkey were led by the Humanitarian Liaison Group (HLG) and supported by clusters, all linked through the WoS framework.

HDP Focus Area	Low	Medium	High
Written policies and strategies on HDP nexus in place	✘		
Interaction with government & local authorities at humanitarian and development level	✘		
HDP nexus steering committee in place and actively operational	✘		
Collective outcomes are formulated and actively worked towards	✘		
Quality funding is available (flexible, multi-year, predictable, unearmarked).	✘		
Localisation is actively pursued through strengthening the capacities of NNGOs, local authorities and beneficiary communities.	✘		
Incorporation of Peace Component into Humanitarian and development scope.	✘		

Low: Some work has been done, but the output is not yet aligned with DAC recommendation.

Medium: Noticeable work has been done, but there is still much work to be done.

High: Significant alignment has been achieved with DAC recommendations on HDP nexus approach.

Progress, Opportunities and Challenges

HDP Nexus Strategy, Policy, and Collective Outcomes – The 3RP - Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan - is the regional and strategic foundation of the aid community's operation in Syria, Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq, and Egypt, where most of the Syrian refugees and internally displaced people reside and involves 270 organisations. "The 3RP is a strategic, coordination, planning, advocacy, fundraising, and programming platform for humanitarian and development partners to respond to the Syria crisis." (3RP - Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan, 2022). The 3RP has a refugee component, which addresses the protection and humanitarian assistance needs of refugees, and the resilience component, which addresses "the resilience, stabilisation, and development needs of impacted individuals, communities, and institutions, aiming to strengthen the capacities of national actors.

3RP as a regional coordination and strategic body co-chaired by UNHCR and UNDP, has continued to focus at a strategic and regional level on HDP Nexus, primarily by demonstrating the collaboration across the humanitarian and development actors. Moreover, the 'resilience for all' components in the 3RP refers to building resilience for both refugees and host community members through the interventions focus on livelihoods, job creation, building partnership, and including refugees into national service provision and institutions.

Funding - The Syria Cross-Border Humanitarian Fund (SCHF), which is a multi-donor Country-Based Pooled Fund (CBPF) established in 2014 following UN Security Council Resolutions 2139 and 2165, has some indications of integrated programming. The fund supports the Syrian Humanitarian Response (HRP), which recently transitioned to also include resilience programming. Even though the fund is designed to provide predictable, timely, and consistent resources for cross-border and conflict lines, participants interviewed for this research stated that more improvements are needed to make this funding opportunity more consistent and timelier. The HDP nexus approach toward humanitarian funding is not funded under this program.

Quality funding is mostly not provided by donors to actors working in Syria, whether they are inside Syria or cross-border actors. Funding typically does not last more than one-year, with multi-year funding only occasionally provided by some donors such as the Swiss and the Norwegians. The German government and ECHO have also started some multi-year programming, but they are relatively limited in nature. Flexibility as well as predictability of funding are also rare, while unearmarked or softly earmarked funding is almost altogether absent.

Community resilience programs have been launched for the past few years. This provides an opportunity to strengthen collaboration and cooperation with local authorities, including de facto authorities. One of the NNGO representative interviewed, stated that around 10 per cent of NNGOs are connected to INGOs with long-term meaningful partnerships. There is opportunity to increase this number significantly

“Donors demand compliance with rights-based programming, audited financials, duty of care, and other requirements. Yet, they are not willing to pay for them to be delivered.”

(NGO Forum Representative)

Joint Analysis – To collect data and carry out analysis, UNOCHA relies on its cluster coordination mechanisms that collects data throughout Syria and in the neighboring countries. The challenge is to make these data available for the entire aid community and to engage in collective analysis with the intent of planning and program design that ensure collaborative approach to achieving collective outcomes.

Coordination - There are well-established clusters of humanitarian work. The coordination mechanisms are relatively well enforced and have served the humanitarian assistance programs. According to a UNOCHA representative, the future of the coordination mechanism is dependent on the structure of the Syrian HDP nexus approach which will be decided upon in the coming months. Clusters and Technical Working Groups are fully active and bring together UN and NGO representatives. They can be further refined to focus on HDP nexus objectives and channel their data collection and analysis in more collaborative manner.

Development Work - In North-West Syria, security challenges render recovery and development work more challenging. In other parts of Syria there are opportunities for development work and the government of Syria would like to cooperate. There are discussions ongoing with the UN to facilitate such programs, but they have not yielded any significant results.

Collective Outcomes - According to UNOCHA, collective outcomes will be formulated “in the coming months”. Additionally, the 3RP aims to include the development of collective outcomes for the whole of Syria program.

Comprehension/Acceptance of the HDP Nexus Approach - The humanitarian assistance program in Syria has not transitioned toward the HDP nexus. According to numerous participants interviewed for the research, while some recovery, reconstruction and resilience work has started – with some funding from donors such as USAID – most of the programs are still purely humanitarian in nature and represent the distribution of food packages, basic healthcare, and some basic education services. Other participants noted that there is limited understanding of the HDP nexus from majority of on the ground actors.. When the consultants reached out to the UN office to ask about the HDP nexus policy or strategy for Syria and whether collective outcomes had been formulated, and if there was an HDP nexus steering committee and platform in place, or if there were any interventions/dialogue/collaboration occurring around nexus, the response was that “these issues are not currently applicable in the context of Syria.”

Capacity Development of NNGOs - Capacity building and development of NNGOs or the local community or authorities are mostly only funded when it aims to enable local organisations to comply with donors’ compliance and requirements, such as reporting and auditing requirements. Institutional capacity development that enables organisations to deliver better quality work for the beneficiaries are limited. One participant interviewed for the research stated that, “donors demand compliance with the duty of care principles to compensate for on-the-job injuries to workers, yet they are not willing to pay for such costs.” These practices cause NNGOs to find themselves financially and operationally stretched to comply with donor requirements, while ensuring that program objectives are effectively met. Local organisations are sometimes in a bind on what funds to use to enhance their personnel and institutional capacities, so that they can sustain themselves after the project funds expire.

Republic of Yemen

The conflict in Yemen started in 2011 and has by now resulted in forcing more than four million people to flee their homes. Now, more than 20.7 million, or 71 per cent of the population, need some form of humanitarian assistance or protection for their survival, including five million people who are on the brink of famine and almost 50,000 who are already experiencing famine-like conditions, according to the UN.

The international aid community's response has been in the form of humanitarian assistance, covering the distribution of food, basic healthcare services, malnutrition-related support, WASH services, shelter, and other traditional emergency humanitarian services. The assistance is predominantly provided to people residing in IDP camps even though emergency needs of the host communities and resident population are very dire.

HDP Focus Area	Low	Medium	High
Written policies and strategies on HDP nexus in place		X	
Interaction with government & local authorities at humanitarian and development level	X		
HDP nexus steering committee in place and actively operational	X		
Collective outcomes are formulated and actively worked towards	X		
Quality funding is available (flexible, multi-year, predictable, unearmarked).	X		
Localisation is actively pursued through strengthening the capacities of NNGOs, local authorities and beneficiary communities.	X		
Incorporation of Peace Component into Humanitarian and development scope.	X		

Low: Some work has been done, but the output is not yet aligned with DAC recommendation.

Medium: Noticeable work has been done, but there is still much work to be done.

High: Significant alignment has been achieved with DAC recommendations on HDP nexus approach.

Progress, Opportunities and Challenges

HDP Nexus Strategy, Policy, and Collective Outcomes – According to the HDPN Process for Yemen 2022 Working Paper, Yemen became a key testing ground for the HDPN globally when it was selected as “one of the seven pilot countries in the World Bank (WB)-UNDP HDP Initiative, including creation of a HDP Platform, chaired by the Humanitarian Coordinator (HC)” (UNOCHA Yemen, 2022). Some experiments in an HDPN approach have been made across agencies, such as the close WB-UNDP cooperation with a humanitarian+ focus. The working paper provides a 9-item objectives table with associated mechanisms, management, and resource guidance on how to operationalise HDP nexus in Yemen. These objectives cover suggestions including more frequent sharing of fund information, increased sharing of existing analysis and studies, undertaking joint analysis, undertaking joint comprehensive assessment, collaboration through peer review of donor strategies at draft stage, consolidation of experiences, providing a contemporary monitoring and evaluation process, developing a collective donor nexus strategy with focus on priority sectors, and establishing forums for rapid decision making on the nexus “to help ask and answer tough questions”.

The aid community has also developed “A Strategy for Strengthening Humanitarian, Development and Peace (HDP) Effort in Yemen, 2020-2021” document and an option paper titled “Strengthening Collaboration Across the Humanitarian, Development and Peace Nexus in Yemen” (UNOCHA Yemen, 2020). Both documents provide additional guidance on how HDP nexus can and should evolve in Yemen.

The HCT has tasked UNDP with the leadership in operationalising the HDP nexus in Yemen. A first draft of the strategy was prepared in 2019 after extensive consultation. The draft was revised in June 2020 to account for impacts of COVID-19. UNDP is currently internally using the strategy. The strategy has, unfortunately, not yet been integrated into wider aid processes. According to UNOCHA Yemen, at present collective outcomes have not yet been formulated, even though “a Socio-Economic Framework has been tabled.”

According to UNOCHA, “HNO/HRP (Humanitarian Programme Cycle) has been ongoing in Yemen for years, and that in January 2022 the UNSDCF also came into force but is not co-signed by the Government of Yemen.” The Nexus in Yemen working group is an informal group led by Germany and UNDP. They are presently “preparing the ground for a more formal Steering Group”. The working group is attended by the RCO, OCHA, and some “interested donors and the World Bank”. Presently there is no Nexus Advisor appointed for Yemen.

Government Involvement - Since the government is split between the Houthis in the north and the internationally recognised government in the south of the country, there is not a single government source to coordinate the humanitarian assistance work. As a result, aid organisations must work with dual and multiple operational strategies. While the World Bank and a few other donors are engaged in some collaboration with the government in the south, when it comes to delivery of recovery programs and resilience activities that could fall under the development category, USAID and the EU are working with the UNDP through the Strengthening Institutional and Economic Resilience in Yemen (SIERY) project to reinforce the resilience of local governance systems and recovery of conflict-affected communities. According to this program, local authorities can more effectively fulfil their mission in terms of: (A) core functions; (B) basic service delivery; (C) emerging needs such as conflict resolution, humanitarian aid, disaster management, internally displaced people; (D) economic recovery.

Funding – Several donors are taking steps ‘to model’ the HDPN internally attempting to integrate better their humanitarian and development programming.

Coordination – In March 2021, Germany installed a dashboard on development and stabilisation to be used as an instrument on coordination towards HDPN. However, coordination challenges are extensive in Yemen. Coordination at the national and sub-national level takes the shape of monthly cluster and technical working group meetings, which are led by the UNOCHA. Due to restrictions, only informal local and international NGO coordination mechanism are in place. The sharing of data and experiences occur at the technical working group meetings. The level of sharing and exchange of experiences is not part of the structure of the meetings, but it’s rather dependent on the level of engagement of the chairperson of the working group.

Interviews and data in this research revealed that there are key challenges and Opportunities in Yemen context, such as access, negotiating with national authorities, funding level and how people are impacted by the protracted crisis in Yemen. According to the working paper on “HDPN Process for Yemen 2022”, additional challenges and opportunities include the following:

- Information including existing analysis, studies, and mapping, is not effectively shared to developed shared HDPN approach across all donors.
- Joint conflict and context analysis as well as planning for such analysis, is not undertaken by donors, resulting in less efficient use of resources.

- There is no joint comprehensive assessment undertaken along the lines of the Recovery and Peacebuilding Assessment (RPBA), which is a valuable tool that brings together UN Development Group, The European Commission, and the World Bank, it is not elaborated in conjunction with host government and requested by them.
- Collaboration on donor programming is not up streamed. As a result, they occur as after the fact coordination rather than strategies that are jointly developed with peer review for donor strategies at draft levels.
- New and enhanced collaboration is not informed by past experiments, because lessons learned from past HDPN experiments are not incorporated into future strategies and programs.
- The UNDP drafted HDP strategy is an informal document and has no mandatory bearing on the donor, UN, NGO operations in the country. Consultation with the governments is also not part of the operational strategy, thus minimising the effectiveness of humanitarian and development work.

Joint Analysis - Donors have conducted sectoral analyses to encourage sector-specific collaborations and actions on the HDPN. For example, the WB has carried out an analysis on social protection, while the EU has carried out an analysis on WASH.

State of Libya

After the fall of former Libyan President Muammar al Qaddafi in October 2011, Libya faced a significant protracted conflict, with a weak central government and numerous armed factions operating in different parts of the country. As a result, according to the UNOCHA, an estimated 1.3 million Libyans are in need, of which 451,000 people are vulnerable with the most severe needs. These affected populations include internally displaced people (IDPs), non-displaced Libyans, returnees, migrants, and refugees, residing in all 22 Mantikas in the country. They are targeted for humanitarian assistance through the Libya Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP), which was recently extended until May 2022. The humanitarian response will then cease and be replaced with the development cooperation program, which will be mostly channelled through the government. However, given the present uncertainty with regards to elections and the political conflicts that prevail, it is likely that the HRP will be extended further to cater to unforeseen situations.

<i>HDP Focus Area</i>	Low	Medium	High
Written policies and strategies on HDP nexus in place		✘	
Interaction with government & local authorities at humanitarian and development level	✘		
HDP nexus steering committee in place and actively operational		✘	
Collective outcomes are formulated and actively worked towards	✘		
Quality funding is available (flexible, multi-year, predictable, unearmarked).	✘		
Localisation is actively pursued through strengthening the capacities of NNGOs, local authorities and beneficiary communities.	✘		
Incorporation of Peace Component into Humanitarian and development scope.	✘		

Low: Some work has been done, but the output is not yet aligned with DAC recommendation.

Medium: Noticeable work has been done, but there is still much work to be done.

High: Significant alignment has been achieved with DAC recommendations on HDP nexus approach.

Progress, Opportunities and Challenges

HDP Nexus Strategy, Policy, and Collective Outcomes - According to the IASC Country brief on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus (IASC RG4 Libya, 2021), a Joint Country Assessment (JCA) was carried out in 2018 and The Libya Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP), which was recently extended until May 2022, was developed. In addition, preparations for Recovery and Peacebuilding Assessment (RPBA) are ongoing, after a desk review was completed last year. Furthermore, a Strategic Framework (2019-2022), and a dedicated Nexus Working Group was established in 2019. The Swiss government seconded a Nexus Focal Point to the World Food Programme (WFP). This position is now coming to an end and a new Nexus Advisor position is presently being discussed. With an area-based focus, the WFP chose to focus the HDP nexus attention on the southern city of Sabha and the northern city of Tawergha. While the city of Sabha faces significant structural underdevelopment challenges, Tawergha has been mostly destroyed during the armed conflicts, forcing most of its population out of the city. They're now gradually returning.

HDP nexus strategies were planned to be developed for both locations. The Sabha HDP Nexus program has been mostly driven by the WFP with participation from a small number of INGOs in the early stages. As the participation of INGOs increased, it proved to be even more challenging to achieve agreement on the next steps. Additionally, some security incidents hindered the ability of the INGOs and UN staff to visit Sabha and eventually resulted in the halting of any further progress. As a result, operationalisation of the HDP nexus strategy has not yet taken place.

Tawergha has faced a different set of challenges. Social and political conflicts led to the mass displacement of the population. With the population returning, issues of justice, rights, and cohesion still prevail, which demand the engagement of the aid community through an HDP nexus approach. Some mapping of the conditions in Tawergha have provided information about the general social dynamic of the city, but a strategy has not yet been developed and collective outcomes have not yet been formulated.

According to WFP, so far little progress has been made on the "operationalisation and the setup of a results framework". While three outcome areas (governance, economic and basic services) have been identified, no collective outcomes have been formulated yet. The setup of the "UNSDCF for 2023-25 offers new entry points to define outputs and make reporting against them, for a larger number of stakeholders, feasible and realistic.

The Nexus Steering Committee - The Nexus Working Group (NWG) is the official steering committee for operationalising the HDP Nexus. The NWG includes UN agencies, NGOs, INGO forums, peacebuilding institutes, bilateral donors, the World Bank, and other local actors.

Joint Analysis and Sharing of Analysis - According to IASC RG4 country brief, the RPBA "provides the basis for a common understanding of needs and vulnerabilities in areas such as peace and reconciliation, migration, governance, economy, infrastructure, social services, and social protection. The new Common Country Analysis (CCA) process, scheduled for August 2021, will further build on this analysis, and will be informed by the Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO)."

Due to conflicts and security constraints, most of the international NGOs and UN agencies are based across the border in Tunisia, while all LNGOs are based inside Libya. Therefore, the ability of LNGOs and INGOs to collaborate closely with each other and be part of the cycle of aid delivery through coordination, data sharing, joint assessment, planning, and programming has remained very limited.

(INGO Forum)

Collective Outcomes – The upcoming development of the 2023-2025 UNSDCF will provide a good opportunity to formulate collective outcomes. Political turmoil may hamper this process but there is hope that the opposing parties may be able to reach an agreement and work on HDP nexus can proceed as intended.

Funding - Donors are to certain extent motivated to invest in humanitarian and development activities. The Sabha and Tawergha initiatives enable an area-based approach that will attract quality funding from donors. Thus, replication of those initiatives and this approach in other parts of the country may be possible.

Coordination – According to the WFP, there is a plan for a new Nexus focal person to be appointed at the RC office soon. This will enable closer coordination among all players to ensure sustainable HDP nexus initiatives. Additionally, since the NWG is attended by donors, NGOs, UN agencies, WB, and others, the possibility of sustainable coordination are relatively real. Several NGOs, including GVC WeWorld, CESVI, NRC, and others have developed their own HDP nexus plans and programs. They are mostly interlinked with the Sabha strategies. However, the interviews revealed that UNHCR and IOM had presented collective outcomes in one of the meetings that were not well aligned with those previously drafted in the Sabha strategy. This demonstrates a challenge of how more effective coordination and alignment are highly needed among the different UN agencies, especially in partnership with the INGOs, which could cause a misalignment of objectives and negatively impact the HDP nexus action. The appointment of an HDP Nexus Advisor or Coordinator at the Resident Representative's office will help to overcome these challenges and will boost the engagement with the different stakeholders to accelerate the HDP nexus for Libya.

NGO Partnerships and Localisation – due to conflicts and security constraints, most of the international NGOs and UN agencies are based across the border in Tunisia, while NNGOs are based inside Libya. Therefore, the ability of NNGOs and INGOs to collaborate closely with each other and be part of the cycle of aid delivery through coordination, data sharing, joint assessment, planning, and programming has remained very constrained. Even large INGOs with extensive partnerships with NNGOs in other country contexts are self-implementing. Very few organisations that were part of this study have had meaningful, sustainable, and equal partnerships with local organisations that remotely they collaborate with. Interviews for this study revealed that the capacity development of NNGOs and local authorities is suffering due to the lack of geographic proximity. Thus, the potential for future engagement between the local actor and the international partner are constrained and do not allow for more avenues and focus on strengthening the existing capacities of local actors or even sharing learning strategy among international and local actors. Looking at opportunities; The Sabha and Tawergha initiatives open the opportunities for collaboration with local authorities and NNGOs in various aspects of the HDP nexus, which may facilitate an enhanced partnership between INGOs and NNGOs and enable empowerment of NGOs and other local actors. This in turn, would provide a positive momentum to scale up different localisation initiatives.

Collaboration with the Government - Due to the lack of sustainability of national government, Libya has not been able to formulate a national development strategy, which has also hampered the ability of the aid community to develop well-integrated and comprehensive outcomes. This challenge may be overcome when the 2023-2025 UNSDCF is formulated.

CONCLUSION

Over the past decade, the MENA region has faced humanitarian crisis fuelled by conflict leading to forced migration and an undeniable need for humanitarian assistance. The volume, cost, and length of this assistance has continued to grow, and the emergencies have become protracted crises. Most stakeholders at the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) in 2016 identified strengthening the humanitarian-development nexus as a top priority. Through this research, we have come to understand that operationalising the HDP Nexus approach poses a significant challenge in the MENA region. Lack of clarity on what constitutes HDP nexus is affected by failure to formulate a unified definition, purpose, and objectives. As a result, operationalisation and integration of co-existing humanitarian, Development and peace strategies, programmes, and actions has offered a significant challenge to the respective actors.

At the country levels, absence of a clear leader with a mandate and the necessary power to influence strategic direction and decision making by formulating and then enforcing the operationalisation of collective outcomes has made it difficult to find common ground. Humanitarian actors are still reluctant to integrate peace building or peace keeping strategies and programmes in their humanitarian response and do not always find it easy to maintain impartiality during their discussions with different authorities and other stakeholders.

The commitments made at the World Humanitarian Summit and the produced New Ways of Working have not adequately addressed the structural obstacles associated with NEXUS at the country, and the MENA regional levels. Progress on this front will depend on the ability of multi-lateral stakeholders, UN agencies, NGOs, donors, coordination bodies and governments to reduce the structural inequalities that hamper any progress on NEXUS, share responsibility, coordinate learning, and exchange best practices. They need to engage in joint planning and programming, and ensure ample time is provided to implement. Learning exchanges must be frequent, and transparent dialogue and discussions must take place with all actors across the aid sector. The UN agencies must lead on the development of the collective outcomes in an inclusive manner, and ensure the monitoring mechanisms is transparent, inclusive, and all actors are aware of it. Local actors should not just be included in the discussions, they should become agents of change and the drivers of programs and strategies. The unique role and contribution of international actors should not be lost in this discussion. Their ability to mobilise quickly, at scale, and to apply decades of experience drawn from across the globe are an invaluable complement to national capabilities. For this reason, equitable partnerships must be the way to move forward.

Since the research was carried out in collaboration with donors, UN agencies, INGOs, NNGOs, NGO Coordinating bodies and, through desk research considering government roles, the following reflections are made to all actors to ensure effective operationalisation of HDP nexus.

SUGGESTED WAYS FORWARD

Based on the data collected through interviews, surveys, and desk research, the following are some of the key suggestions moving forward:

1. Moving beyond rhetoric

This study showed that despite the different commitments undertaken by many of the key actors, throughout the region progress on nexus remains inadequate. At the country level more can and should be done by clarifying definitions, the peace component and by systematically conducting joint analysis and sharing information, good practices and lessons learned to help further action-oriented progress on the nexus approach.

The study also concludes on the need for an enhanced leadership role for a more result-oriented coordination across the HDP architecture. HDP should be integrated as much as possible in existing platforms and discussions at country level, instead of resulting into efforts to build a parallel system. In many of the countries in the region, the leadership, with the support of all actors and donor agencies should seek for strengthened coordination among development, humanitarian, and peace actors, regional and local governmental bodies and financing institutions in full respect of international humanitarian law, human rights law and the humanitarian principles.

2. Being inclusive and listening to the people concerned

Whilst at the regional level we still face pressing needs to bring further conceptual clarity, draft HDP nexus strategies and agree on common objectives, at a smaller scale at local level and national level, a significant number of positive practices can be found on the HDP nexus. Many of these positive experiences come from national and local NGOs, which by their nature work in a nexus approach. National and local NGOs respond to the situation they see on the ground combining all the required elements, without necessarily differentiating whether they are peacebuilding, humanitarian, or development as such. The people we work for are also less interested into these classifications. Listening to them and planning our intervention to respond to their needs and support them in accessing their rights would be the real indicators that we are progressing on the nexus approach. Moreover, by working with the diversity of the local actors and building on their leadership, and working towards equitable and meaningful partnership, we will further strengthen accountability and trust with communities, enabling thereby effective programming of a nexus approach as relevant.

3. Flexible multiyear qualitative funding

This study identified that currently throughout the region, possibilities for multi-year, flexible, predictable and unearmarked or softly earmarked funding remain very limited. This does not correspond to the nature of the crisis in the region. Neither does it reflect donors and UN Agencies commitments to the nexus. As such, it needs to be urgently addressed. Flexible multiyear quality funding is the cornerstone of HDP nexus. This is key to building programming that reflects the voices of the people concerned, support the building of trust among partners and enable a shift from development to humanitarian programming and vice versa as the context changes. Quality funding will enhance leadership by local actors, while making sure that organisationally they are better equipped to respond to the various risks, challenges faced and ensure quality of programming.

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