

Regional Dialogue Report

“Leaving no one behind - exploring the NEXUS approach in Yemen”

13 December 2023

Dialogue organizers

- The Global Community of Practice on the NEXUS (CoPN)
- The Inter Agency Standing Committee (IASC) on HDPN
- Issue Based Coalition (IBC) on HDPN for the Arab States (co-chairs, UNDP and IOM)

Summary

According to the OECD-DAC recommendations on the Humanitarian, Development, and Peace Nexus (HDPN), the Nexus refers to the interconnectedness between humanitarian, development, and peace actions, aiming to enhance collaboration, coherence, and complementarity. This approach leverages the strengths of each pillar to reduce vulnerability, address root causes of conflict, and manage risks in the face of protracted conflicts, political instability, and humanitarian crises.

The HDPN policy framework has gained traction in addressing conflict drivers and displacement in Arab States. To navigate this complex operational landscape, fostering "peer to peer" and technical dialogue among regional stakeholders is a priority. This document presents the outcomes of a dialogue on HDPN in the region (December 2023), where the experiences and lessons learned from UN agencies, INGOs, and local organizations in Yemen were presented and discussed with over 70 practitioners from the region and beyond. The dialogue focused on various aspects, including strategic and operational approaches, capacities of stakeholders and holistic targeting approaches, tools for community assessment, conflict and context analysis, and steps to advance from relief to resilience and recovery.

The conclusions of the dialogue align with recent global evidence and analysis on HDP Nexus practices and lessons learned, which include considerations on the importance of addressing coordination complexity, risk mitigation, financing, local level ownership, leadership, and accountability.

1. Introduction

The Global Community of Practice on the NEXUS (CoPN) and the Inter Agency Standing Committee (IASC) jointly with the Issue Based Coalition (IBC) on HDPN for the Arab States held a CoP dialogue (on-line) on Nexus in Yemen on December 13th, 2023, which was attended by over 70 participants from UN, donors and international partners, civil society and academia from the Arab Region and beyond. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) are co-chairs of the IBC.

The focus of the event multi-stakeholder dialogue was “**Leaving no one behind - exploring the NEXUS approach in Yemen.**” The objective was to promote dialogue on: *a) what experiences and lessons learned can be highlighted?, b) how the HDPN interventions on the ground could be best supported by the UN system; and c) how guidance may be more effective.*

In order to achieve this objective, the components of the session were:

- Overview of the coordination mechanism, *by United Nations Resident Coordinator Office (RCO) in Yemen.*
- Example of HDPN operationalization within United Nations programs, *by IOM and UNDP.*
- Coordination of the Dutch Relief Alliance consortium programme and the HDPN approach, *by CARE International.*
- Experience of a Yemeni organization, *by Abs Development Organization for woman and child (ADO).*
- Open dialogue / Questions and Answers

2. Presentations

Overview of the Coordination Mechanism

United Nations Resident Coordinator Office (RCO) for Yemen. Olaf Degroot, Senior Economist.

Olaf delivered an overview of the coordination mechanisms implemented by the RCO, focusing on the HDPN. The objective of these mechanisms is to enhance collaboration with partners in addressing the complex challenges faced by Yemen. The following key elements were highlighted during the presentation:

Context

- Contextual Flexibility of HDPN: Acknowledging the variability of the HDPN concept depending on the context and emphasizing the importance of cooperation with all possible partners during implementation.
- Collaboration with HDP Partners: RCO actively collaborating with HDP partners and engaging with international financial institutions. Recalling the separation between humanitarian (H) and development (D) in funding envelopes and programmatic approaches.
- Tailored Collaboration Strategies: Implementing innovative collaboration strategies, such as the Area-Based Approach (ABA) program in Taiz, to bring together local authorities, regional entities, civil society organizations (CSOs), and the private sector in a coordinated manner.
- Empowering Local CSOs: Recognizing local CSOs as partners rather than mere implementors and advocating for increased involvement of national NGOs to avoid a top-down approach.
- Yemen Partner Group Structure: Highlighting the work conducted by the forum that convenes the UN Country Team (UNCT) with Humanitarian (H), Development (D), and Peace (P) donors in high-level meetings every 2 to 3 months, with technical-level meetings taking place through the Yemen Partner Team and thematic working groups dedicated to Nexus-oriented work.

Yemen's Nexus Transition Challenges and Opportunities

- Humanitarian Development Transition Challenge: Addressing challenges in transitioning from humanitarian to development due to persisting humanitarian needs, with more than 80% of the population struggling to access food, health, and basic services, necessitating continuous humanitarian support.

- Pockets of Development Opportunities: Identifying opportunities for development within the "grey middle" between humanitarian and development efforts and stressing the importance of operating within this Nexus to capitalize on development potential.
- Operationalizing HDPN and Area-Based Programming: Highlighting efforts to operationalize the HDPN, concurrently supporting humanitarian work and linking with area-based programming, noting the challenging nature of transitioning from humanitarian to development endeavors in the current Yemeni context.
- Crucial Role of the Private Sector: Acknowledging the pivotal role of the private sector in shaping future development strategies.
- Operationalizing HDPN in Yemen: Emphasizing the importance of moving toward the implementation of nexus approaches within the country.

In conclusion, this presentation highlights the challenges of the HDPN in Yemen, emphasizing adaptability, collaboration, and the unique opportunities that exist within the Nexus.

UNDP & IOM – Yemen Country Offices. Example of HDPN operationalization within United Nations programs

➤ **Advancing the United Nations Programs on HDPN: UNDP's Approach**

Dennis Schleppe, Policy Specialist – Durable Solutions; Klaus Kristensen, Strategic Planning Specialist, Peace Support Facility

The presentation detailed the pursuit of effective HDPN strategies, with UNDP Yemen and IOM strategically employing area-specific approaches to operationalize collaborative efforts. The UN's initiatives prioritize the local level, where humanitarian interventions save lives, peace programs promote social cohesion, and development endeavors build enduring systems.

UNDP's Four Dimensions of Area-Based Approach (ABA)

- Government Ownership at Local Level: Empowering local authorities, actors, and organizations to ensure sustainability and community-driven solutions.
- Economic Productivity: Prioritizing economic empowerment to foster resilience and self-sufficiency within communities.
- Community Cohesion: Building social cohesion as a foundation for sustainable development, emphasizing inclusivity and local collaboration.
- Environmental Sustainability: Integrating environmental considerations to ensure the long-term viability of development initiatives.

UNDP Portfolios

- ABA Programs at Local Level: They are tailored to local needs, empowering local governments and host communities alike, operating across the HDP Nexus and programmatic silos, including but not limited to: Basic Service Rehabilitation & Livelihoods, Social Cohesion/Peace, Local Governance, Climate Change/Environment/Energy.
- Operationalized HDP Support: Collaborating with humanitarian actors to provide tangible support for HDP operationalization.

Examples of Operationalized HDP Programs

- Yemen Geobundling Approach: Shifting from emergency response to resilience-building, fostering longer-term community resilience through local collaboration.
- Strengthening Institutional and Economic Resilience in Yemen (SIERY): Utilizing a "Triangle Approach" to identify needs and build resilience through development committees.

Peace Support Facility

- Objectives: Supporting priorities identified by the special envoy and Resident Coordinator through conflict-sensitive initiatives, and striking a balance between implementing peace initiatives in the North and the South.

Peace Dimension Implementation

- Local Level Initiatives: Conflict-sensitive initiatives at the local level, aligned with the national peace agreement (e.g., rehabilitating Hodeida port).
- Subnational Peacebuilding: Addressing emerging needs and fostering support for the national peace process, with recent focus on mine action alongside community dialogues.

Peace Initiatives Framework

- Confidence Building Mechanisms: National-level initiatives such as rebuilding ports.
- Subnational Peacebuilding: Identifying community-based initiatives aligned with the peace agreement.
- Special Initiatives: Innovative approaches guided by OSEDSY and RCO for effective peacebuilding.

This dialogue provided a glimpse into UNDP's comprehensive and innovative approach to operationalize the HDPN in Yemen, emphasizing collaboration, durable solutions, community empowerment, and resilience-building across humanitarian, development, and peace domains.

➤ **High-Level Report on the Implementation of the HDPN in the Arab States Region: A Case Study on the IOM**

Katja Juric, Senior Programme Coordinator; Kimani DeShields-Williams, Programme Coordinator, Project Development and Programme Support Unit.

The presentation noted the practical application of the HDPN, with a specific focus on the initiatives led by the IOM within the Arab States region.

IOM's multifaceted and institutional approach on durable solutions to internal displacement revolves around the following core pillars:

- Community-Defined, Locally-Led Development Solutions: Prioritizing solutions that emerge from within communities, acknowledging local knowledge and context as central to effective responses.
- Strengthening Policy Governance and Planning: Advocating for robust policy frameworks and governance structures to guide interventions, ensuring alignment with long-term development goals.
- Data for Solutions: Stability Index and Others: Leveraging data-driven approaches, including the Stability Index, to inform decision-making and target interventions effectively.
- Partnerships: Cultivating strategic partnerships with diverse stakeholders to maximize impact and create a collaborative ecosystem.
- Prevention, Early Action, and Solutions from the Start: Emphasizing a proactive stance, aiming to prevent crises, take early action, and initiate durable solutions from the outset.

IOM's operationalization of the HDP nexus:

- Program focus: IOM's programs are characterized by a people-centered, locally-led, protection-focused, area-based, community-driven, evidence-based, and sustainable approach. Through concrete examples, such as adopting community-driven and conflict-sensitive methodologies, IOM addresses the root causes of conflict to reduce aid dependency. Initiatives encompass rehabilitation programs, peace-building, and capacity-building endeavours to empower local stakeholders.

- IOM's programming aims to address humanitarian needs whilst at the same time promoting resilience and supporting communities to transition out of the state of crisis through:
 1. Reducing dependency on humanitarian assistance
 2. Improving social cohesion
 3. Addressing drivers of conflict
 4. Supporting local capacity for continued service delivery
- Water access. One notable example revolves around enhancing resilience in vulnerable communities by addressing water-related conflicts. Through the rehabilitation of water support networks and capacity-building for local authorities, IOM exemplifies its commitment to sustainable solutions that address core challenges and provide access to water supply, sanitation, and livelihoods through irrigation interventions for local farmers, women and youth. IOM also ensures sustainability of its investment by capacitating local authorities and communities to enable them to better operate and maintain the systems.
- Another critical aspect is evidence based, participatory approaches that are contextually relevant and as such IOM also aims to assess on a regular basis intention of IDPs and levels of integration of IDP returnees.

The dialogue emphasized the critical importance of initiating recovery and durable solutions at the earliest stages possible. As we navigate the complex landscape of the Arab States region, IOM's pragmatic approach offers valuable insights and best practices that contribute to the broader advancement of the HDPN in the pursuit of lasting stability and resilience.

CARE International & Dutch Relief Alliance (DRA) Consortium: Advancing HDPN in the Arab States Region

Yousef Qutary, Coordinator of the DRA

This presentation explored the dynamic initiatives of CARE International and the Dutch Relief Alliance (DRA) consortium, comprising 23 organizations, including 8 International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) and 15 local partners. The consortium's strategic direction is marked by a pivotal shift towards enhanced localization and an intensified commitment to HDPN work, while maintaining the humanitarian mandate at its core.

Key Strategies and Activities for Strengthening the HDPN

- **Linking Relief to Resilience and Recovery:** Crafting specific strategies to seamlessly connect relief efforts with long-term resilience and recovery goals.
- **Flexibility and Adaptive Programming:** Embracing flexibility and adaptability in program design and implementation to respond effectively to evolving challenges.
- **HDPN Coordination and Collaboration:** Fostering coordination and collaboration within the HDPN framework to amplify the impact of interventions.
- **Locally Led Approach:** Emphasizing a locally-led approach as the cornerstone of the Nexus paradigm, transitioning from capacity building to a more collaborative model of knowledge and information sharing.

Main Program Focus Areas

- **Food Security, Livelihoods, and WASH:** Adopting a bottom-up approach in the implementation of programs that address core issues related to food security, livelihoods, and Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH).

Local Initiatives and Knowledge Sharing

- Recognizing that the essence of the Nexus is grounded in locally led initiatives, the consortium is actively shifting its focus from capacity building towards fostering collaborative knowledge and information sharing.

Exemplary Case: Transformative Approaches in Programming

- Group Cash Transfer: Instead of conventional unconditional cash transfers, the consortium advocates for Group Cash Transfers, engaging communities in decision-making and encouraging contributions to activities.
- Healthcare Support: Moving beyond mobile clinics, the consortium strategically supports hospitals and health centers, aligning interventions with local needs.

Development Focus in Yemen

- Acknowledging Yemen's unique context, the consortium prioritizes an ABA, tailoring interventions to the diverse needs at the local level, varying from area to area and district to district.

The dialogue emphasizes on the consortium's commitment to the transformative principles of the HDPN, emphasizing localization, adaptability, collaboration, and a profound understanding of the nuanced needs of communities in the Arab States region.

High-Level Report on the Yemeni Organization Experience: HDPN Initiative

Wafa Al-Madhagi, Director, Abs Development Organizations for Woman & Child initiative

This session presented the work conducted by a local organization on HDPN within Yemen. With a multifaceted focus encompassing Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH), health, livelihood, food security, nutrition, climate change, and protection. Their work exemplifies a holistic Nexus approach that bridges humanitarian and development projects for lasting peace at the local level. This structure forms the backbone of the project, and the lessons learned are as follows:

Phase 1: Programmatic Strengthening of Nexus Implementation

- Strengthening the application of the Nexus programmatically, ensuring a seamless integration of humanitarian and development projects.
- Enhancing the quality of project implementation, emphasizing the importance of building local organizational capacity on Nexus-oriented issues.
- Fortifying community engagement and accountability mechanisms to foster a participatory and inclusive approach.
- Elevating the visibility and informativeness of the Yemen Nexus Initiative.

Phase 2: Community-Based Funding with Ownership

- Prioritizing community-based funding approaches, reinforcing a model grounded in community ownership.
- Illustrative examples include WASH interventions addressing not only health concerns but also tensions between host communities and Internal Displaced Populations (IDPs).
- Implementing interventions with a focus on community engagement through committees to ensure responsiveness and relevance.

In sum, this organization exemplifies the tangible impact achievable through a comprehensive implementation of the HDPN initiative, successfully led by local expertise. By seamlessly linking humanitarian and development efforts, the organization has not only addressed critical sectors but has also contributed to peace-building in Yemen. The commitment to community-based funding and ownership underscores the organization's dedication to ensuring sustainable and locally resonant solutions.

This section of the dialogue emphasizes the importance of including “peer to peer” local expertise in the HDPN structure of the country. This approach also brings partner cooperation, programmatic coherence, community engagement, and innovative approaches to foster lasting peace.

3. Take aways from the discussion

Key highlights

- **Avoiding Duplication of Beneficiaries:** It is crucial to focus on preventing the duplication of assistance to ensure fair and comprehensive coverage, thereby preventing any communities from being overlooked.
- **Conflict and Context Analysis:** Emphasizing the importance of conflict and context analysis is essential to avoid inadvertently excluding or neglecting certain communities during intervention planning and implementation.
- **Tools for Context and Community Assessment:** UNDP-Yemen's collaboration with the Berghof Foundation to develop tools for assessing the context and communities enhances the precision of interventions, ensuring that they are well-suited to the specific needs of the local population.
- **Holistic Targeting Approach:** Recognizing the challenges of limited resources versus high demand is key when applying a holistic targeting approach. INGOs often face difficulties in addressing multiple needs in one community while potentially neglecting surrounding areas, which can lead to conflicts and tensions.
- **Partnerships for Comprehensive Interventions:** Emphasizing the importance of partnerships is crucial to effectively address diverse needs in different communities. Collaboration among organizations can help optimize resources and prevent conflicts arising from selective interventions.
- **Localization for Resilience Building:** The significance of localization in building resilience, especially in the complex context of Yemen, was stressed. This includes prioritizing funding for this approach by donors and UN agencies. The dialogue acknowledged the challenges and importance of tailoring interventions to the specific needs and capacities of local communities.

Looking ahead

The inputs and discussions of the CoP dialogue are in line with recent evidence (NRC, 2023; OECD, 2023) that suggests a set of recommendations for Implementing the HDPN in the Arab States Region.

Coordination is a crucial and dynamic activity essential for managing the complexities of collaboration across humanitarian, development, and peace efforts at the country level. This involves utilizing flexible financing mechanisms and cooperation mechanisms in various contexts. Therefore, ongoing dialogues on HDP that showcase national and local experiences are vital for promoting technical cooperation across diverse contexts. Furthermore, strengthening cooperation between the UN and other organizations is instrumental in designing an effective in-country architecture, distinguishing between normative, strategic, and operational levels, and minimizing transaction costs.

Risk Mitigation and Capacities. Engage in principled coordination by adapting to the capacities and roles of national authorities and local actors (e.g., NGOs), particularly in conflict-affected or low-capacity settings such as Yemen. This involves conducting a joint assessment of i) potential risks, ii) the roles of other key stakeholders, iii) the equal relevance of the Humanitarian, Development, and Peace Nexus components, and iv) the identification of collective outcomes in coordination processes, despite analytical challenges.

Financing, development Investments, and quality Funding. Employ financing tools such as pooled funds and multi-donor programs to encourage collaboration across humanitarian, development, and peace pillars. It is recommended to honor commitments for long-term, flexible, and predictable funding in fragile and conflict-affected contexts, while also considering climate financing.

Leadership and Accountability. NGOs and UN agencies should demonstrate thought leadership by aligning global policy requests with actions on the ground. This involves strengthening accountability among all stakeholders to ensure the effective implementation of Nexus approaches