

CO-ORDINATION ACROSS THE HUMANITARIAN- DEVELOPMENT-PEACE NEXUS

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Abstract

This paper provides a detailed analysis of co-ordination amongst organisations engaging in fragile and conflict-affected contexts. Co-ordination is the first pillar of the DAC Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) Nexus adopted by the Development Assistance Committee in 2019. Effective co-ordination is critical to the success of HDP Nexus approaches. However, despite a limited donor base and implementing entities, challenges persist in co-ordinating actions across humanitarian, development, and peace sectors. Exploring a spectrum of co-ordination approaches, this paper aims to inform policy discussions with a renewed attention on development effectiveness and coherent approaches.

Foreword

The OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) Nexus was born in 2020 of the need to rethink traditional ways of working. Three years later, the HDP Nexus Interim Progress Review allowed adherents to take stock of implementation across three areas: co-ordination, programming, and financing.

While the review found evidence of progress in co-ordination, some stubborn bottlenecks remain. The report noted strong momentum in setting up pilot co-ordination processes and instruments at country level, and broad acceptance of UN Resident/Humanitarian Co-ordinators as providers of Nexus leadership, organisation, and communication between activities. However, it highlighted patchy evidence of meaningful commitment by signatories to delivering a nexus approach under a single strategy.

Part of the challenge appears to reside in understanding of how better co-ordination across the Nexus would look in practice. Although the DAC Recommendation posits elements of co-ordination, joint analysis, collective outcomes, empowered leadership, and multi-level engagement, it is not prescriptive about what forms these should take. This working paper therefore aims to help DAC members translate donors' support for the DAC Recommendation into progress by reviewing existing co-ordination practices, and discussing related structures, processes and human-resource dimensions. In addition, it identifies areas for action and attention.

Because the implementation of the co-ordination component of the DAC Recommendation involves broad, national and international stakeholders – notably, signatories to the Recommendation beyond DAC members – the draft of this document was shared for review via the DAC-UN Dialogue.

Further, this working paper draws on a review of literature and interviews with informants covering knowledge networks, donor agencies, researchers, civil society organisations, multilateral agencies, and individual practitioners involved in implementing the DAC Recommendation on the HDP Nexus.

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Abbreviations and acronyms

CCA	Common Country Analysis
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DCD	Development Co-operation Directorate
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
EU	European Union
HCT	Humanitarian Country Team
HDP	Humanitarian-Development-Peace
HRP	Humanitarian Response Plan
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INCAF	International Network on Conflict and Fragility
INGO	International Non-Government Organisations
JAT	Joint Analysis Team
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
ODA	Official development assistance
RCO	Resident Coordinator Office
RPBA	Recovery and Peace-Building Assessment
RSA	Resilience-System Analysis
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UN	United Nations
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNITAMS	United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan
UNRC	United Nations Resident Coordinator

Executive summary

The OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) Nexus aims to strengthen policy and operational coherence and complementarity across these three pillars of international intervention in fragile and crisis-affected contexts. As a result, co-ordination and its mechanisms between organisations engaged in these contexts feature prominently in the Recommendation.

Dictionaries define co-ordination as a process of organising people and groups so that they work together efficiently and well. On the face of it, co-ordination of action in fragile and crises-affected contexts should not be hard. Peace, development, and humanitarian programmes are funded by relatively few donor countries and financial institutions and implemented by a small number of multilateral entities and civil-society organisations used to working together in these complex environments.

In the HDP Nexus, the humanitarian pillar's co-ordination system is the most systematically and extensively established. However, co-ordination remains an enduring challenge: stakeholder priorities differ, and systems and structures do not align with each other. In addition, support for co-ordination is fragmented, making the centre of gravity for co-ordination unclear or contested.

Co-ordination takes several forms and is highly dependent on context. Levels of co-ordination follow a continuum from co-existence (informed mutual awareness but no joint action) to alignment (voluntary co-ordination of separately planned autonomous actions), collaboration (joint planning of separate actions towards a common goal), and co-operation (creation of unified plans of action). Co-ordination must happen in global policies, at strategic, financing, and implementation levels within each organisation and entity, and between them. The resulting complexity increases co-ordination costs and duplication. Co-ordination also raises questions of governance, such as which institutions should be the centre of gravity for directing co-ordination, and who should be involved at each stage. Further, co-ordination raises questions of accountability, such as who is accountable for co-ordination, and of measuring how much co-ordination is done by all actors.

Effective co-ordination is critical to the success of HDP Nexus approaches. With renewed attention on development effectiveness and coherent approaches, there is a window of opportunity to address these issues.

Experience shows that a range of structures and processes have evolved at global and country levels, and within and between organisations. The Interim Progress Review of the implementation of the DAC Recommendation on the HDP Nexus shows that, despite promising initiatives at country level, these are largely ad hoc and leave significant gaps. Three conclusions can be drawn:

- **Co-ordination solutions must be tailored to the country context.** Only a dynamic understanding of the context (including causes and drivers of crisis) can meaningfully address the challenges of working together in fragile and conflict-affected situations. For example, fundamental tensions between state-owned co-ordination and humanitarian principles demand unique and situationally-informed solutions.

- **Organic co-ordination is important, but clear goals must be the norm.** The most successful models to date at country and global levels are largely driven by self-selecting coalitions of individuals and institutions developing approaches where there is the most fertile ground for progress. Growing the number of these willing individuals, such as through dedicated in-country Nexus capacity and the Nexus academy, will encourage like-minded institutions to put resources into co-ordination structures to reach collectively agreed outcomes.
- **Efficiency gains require effort and investment.** Co-ordination across the HDP Nexus should reduce, not increase the burden. A HDP Nexus approach should be an opportunity to review and streamline complicated and duplicative structures. Initial investment of extra time and resources might be required to kick-start and embed new approaches, and to support political will to change thinking and behaviour patterns.

The HDP Nexus is not its own sector but an enhanced form of collaboration. Therefore, HDP Nexus co-ordination must work with what exists. At the same time, a HDP Nexus approach to programming is an opportunity to review ways of working that no longer make sense for the context, and to make space for new models of collaboration. Co-ordination structures are not meant to be permanent. Ending a co-ordination mechanism such as a thematic group does not mean that the co-ordinated issue is not important. On the contrary, it shows that the topic is dynamic, and its co-ordination structure adapts to evolving needs.

Engaging donors early in co-ordination platforms or collective outcomes processes ensures that they support and incentivise HDP Nexus approaches. This requires intra-donor co-ordination to mobilise their full bilateral offer and diplomatic efforts to address the drivers of risk and vulnerability. In this respect, the financing strategies called for in the DAC Recommendation on the HDP Nexus must be associated with the review of co-ordination structures, to avoid reducing co-ordination to mapping and information sharing.

Much attention has been given to the role of the United Nations Resident Coordinators (UNRC), and there is a need to ensure that suitable, strong leaders are appointed to these posts in fragile contexts, supported by adequate resources/capacity. UNRC leadership also needs support and buy-in among the in-country leaders of agencies, donors, and national governments, to ensure their full engagement in co-ordination across the HDP Nexus.

Having people with the right skills, will, time, and resources is key to initiating and implementing a successful HDP Nexus approach. Dedicated HDP Nexus advisers within donor agencies or Resident/Humanitarian Co-ordinator (RC/HC), or Peace and Development advisers in RC/HC offices have proven critical to establishing and embedding collective HDP Nexus approaches in several contexts. However, funding and deployment mechanisms for these are unpredictable and fragmented. As demand grows, donors can work together to make it easier for UN country teams to navigate and access resources and capacity.

1 The 'What': Key concepts

Why is co-ordination across the HDP Nexus a problem?

For donors working in fragile contexts, taking a Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) Nexus approach can overcome deep-rooted co-ordination problems. On the face of it, co-ordination should not be hard: the bulk of Official Development Assistance (ODA) for humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding comes from relatively few donors, is implemented by highly professional organisations, and represents a relatively small proportion of global financial flows (Development Initiatives, 2020^[1]).

However, co-ordination remains a challenge, especially in the fragile and conflict-affected settings where it is most needed. Four problems are:

- **Systems developed separately.** The aid system comprises institutions that have their own structures to respond to their mandate and principles across the humanitarian, development, and peace pillars. A new system, created from scratch to be complementary and collaborative, would likely not look the way it currently does. The humanitarian system is highly co-ordinated: co-ordination is formalised, invested in, and incentivised, particularly at the operational level (Poole and Culbert, 2019^[2]). In contrast, development co-operation tends to focus on the strategic level, aligned to bilateral political dialogues, with proportionately less formal co-ordination and few incentives to change this. Meanwhile, the peace pillar of the HDP Nexus encompasses diverse approaches, from diplomacy to political dialogue and development programmes in key sectors, and to security or peacebuilding missions. This pillar bears little resemblance to the others: it entails many different activities and mandates, including security operations, with different understandings of what contributes to peace (Barakat and Milton, 2020^[3]).
- **Priorities do not align.** It is a particular challenge to co-ordinate stakeholders who operate with different mandates, purposes and financing sources, and in different locations. Humanitarian, development, and peace actors have divergent objectives, attitudes towards risk, and metrics for success. Decades of discussion about linking short and long-term aid attest that this divergence is not new (Macrae, 2019^[4]; Thomas, 2019^[5]). As a result, co-ordination mechanisms across the nexus pillars are rare, seldom allow for alignment of action, and even less for a collective vision. Further, large parts of the aid effort (such as budget support) get overlooked and do not feed into a common understanding of what is done in each context.
- **Support for co-ordination is fragmented and its cost is high.** Co-ordination has a cost: engagement in fragile or crisis-affected contexts is delivered through a wide and complex web of stakeholders. The essential elements of co-ordination – knowledge, time, skills – are dissipated and unevenly distributed across these actors, and the centre of gravity for co-ordination can be unclear or contested. In operational environments with high security risks, a lack of stakeholders addressing non-humanitarian needs is an additional barrier to co-ordination. For example, international partners engaged in the Yemen crisis often operate from distant locations, such as Amman, Jordan. Despite the obvious case for co-ordination to improve efficiency and effectiveness, doing so requires concerted effort and investment.

- **Financing mechanisms can be barriers to co-ordination.** Humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding budgets channel through very different mechanisms, which is at the core of many co-ordination challenges across the HDP Nexus. United Nations-led appeals are co-ordinated across agencies and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and consolidated at country level under the overall responsibility of the UN Emergency Relief Coordinator. But fundraising is not consolidated. Individual organisations fundraise and receive funds directly from donors, generally based on the consolidated appeal. The humanitarian response thus relies heavily on each organisation’s capacity to fundraise, which impacts the level of incentive for operational co-ordination. Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) allocations (available to UN agencies) or UN Country Based Pooled Funds (accessible to UN agencies and international or local NGOs) have a collective decision mechanism for fund allocation, implying co-ordination by design. The share of this pooled humanitarian financing is increasing, reflecting a trend towards co-ordination and accountability. Development funds, including most peace-related funds,¹ are mainly channelled bilaterally and according to political dialogue between donor and national government. However, these funds also have different sources within government, such as Ministries of Finance or of Foreign Affairs, other technical ministries, and development agencies.

While these points are heavy counterweights to co-ordination across the HDP Nexus, there is evidence of ways to minimise their effects, as explored in the second part of this paper.

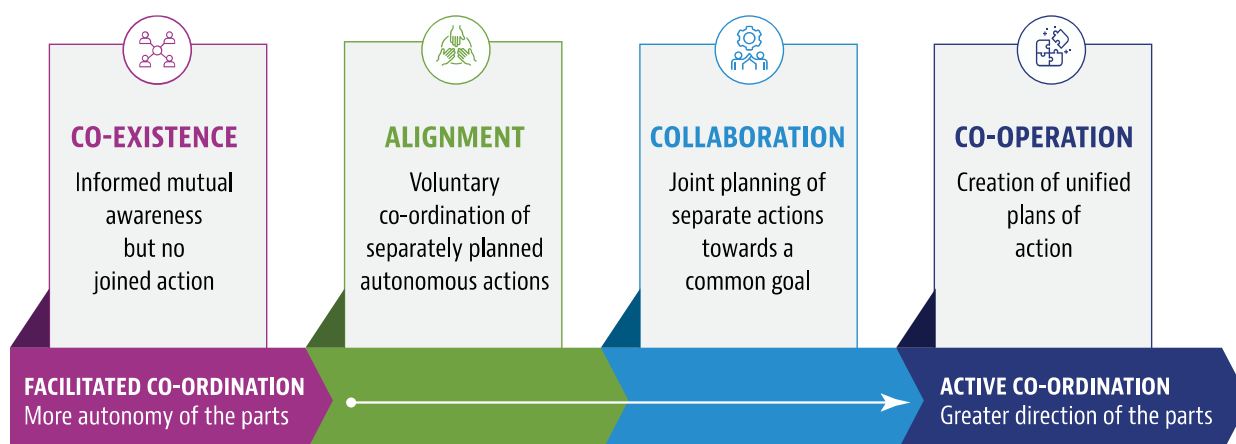
Definitions and types of co-ordination

For such a central and familiar term as “co-ordination”, surprisingly, no shared definition is readily available in the humanitarian or development co-operation domains. This is more important than semantics: diverging expectations and concerns about the HDP Nexus stem from different interpretations of what co-ordination means. For example, assuming it means a default to joint operations across all sectors can still underlie worries about preserving humanitarian principles.

Therefore, it is worth laying out two fundamental premises: (1) a simple dictionary definition of co-ordination as “the process of organising people and groups so that they work together efficiently and well”²; and (2) that co-ordination is not an end but a means to achieve the aims of a HDP Nexus approach – more complementary and collaborative action to reduce people’s needs, risks, and vulnerabilities (OECD DAC, 2019^[6]). Because co-ordination has time and financial costs, it is an investment that must yield a better result than the sum of individual actions.

Co-ordination is a spectrum (Figure 1.1). At one end is *co-existence*, or a loose alignment of autonomous parts. At the other is *co-operation*, or the creation of a unified effort (Knox-Clarke and Campbell, 2016^[7]). It also ranges from *facilitated co-ordination* (information sharing, communication, and strategic alignment) to *active co-ordination* (aligned tactics, shared responsibility, and fused programmes). There is no “right” place on this spectrum to co-ordinate across the HDP Nexus. The features of co-ordination systems depend on the context, constellation of stakeholders, and stage of programme implementation.

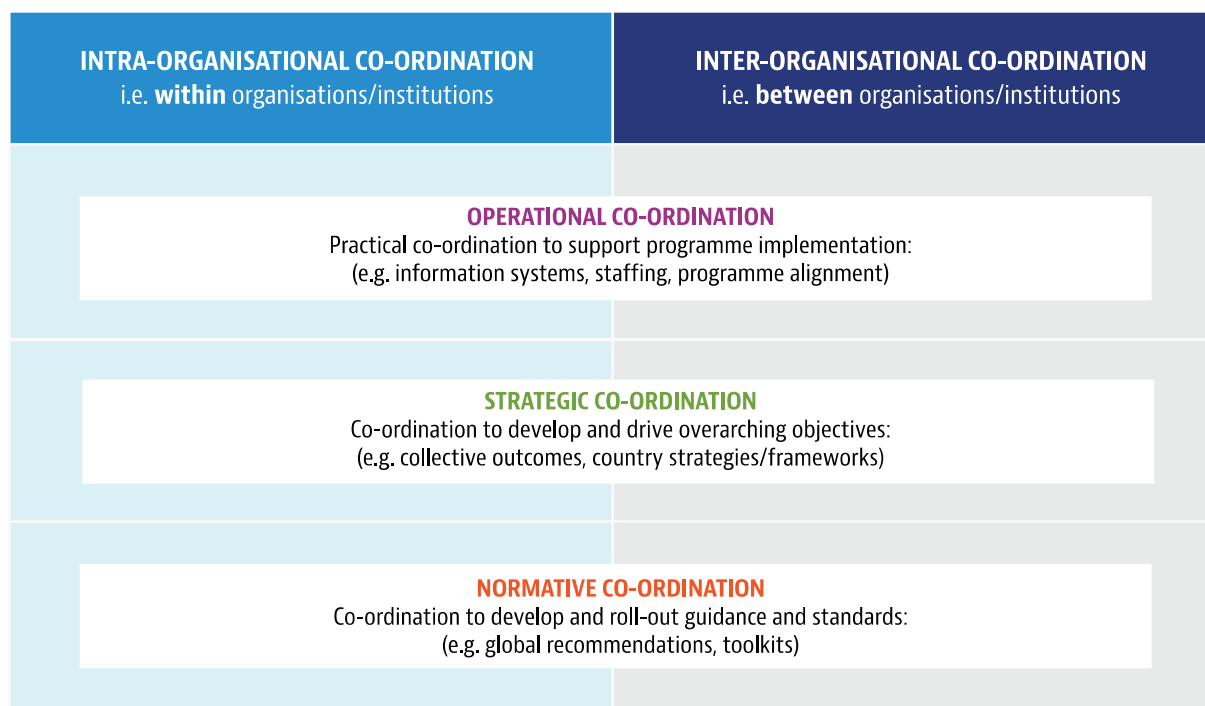
Figure 1.1. Forms of co-ordination



Co-ordination also happens at different levels (Figure 1.2): *normative* (setting shared standards and principles); *strategic* (ensuring joint analysis and setting overarching goals in each context); *operational* (supporting implementation). For donors and other large institutional stakeholders, co-ordination needs to happen horizontally (weaving together approaches across government entities) and vertically (connecting threads between normative, strategic, and operational levels) so that high-level orientations and field realities inform each other.

Strengthening a HDP Nexus approach demands both *inter-* and *intra-*organisational co-ordination. Intra-organisational co-ordination is an enduring challenge for OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) members, but organisations that cannot connect across internal administrations will find it hard to co-ordinate externally with others. Given the legal, administrative, and institutional barriers in organisations, DAC members are rightly pre-occupied with addressing their internal issues first. Germany, Ireland, Sweden, Switzerland, the United States of America (USA), and others have reviewed the HDP Nexus-appropriateness of their institutions or reorganised their policies and structures to improve internal coherence. The European Union (EU) HDP Nexus pilots (EU, 2022^[8]) sought to increase co-ordination between EU humanitarian and development institutions at the level of in-country delegations. Similarly, strategies at the World Bank (World Bank, 2020^[9]) and International Monetary Fund (IMF, 2022^[10]) make co-ordination a priority, creating space for stronger partnerships and exchanges with DAC members and other in-country stakeholders across the HDP Nexus.

Figure 1.2. Levels of co-ordination



Stakeholders in the HDP community

Decisions about what to co-ordinate and by whom are central to how co-ordination works. The stakeholders involve five main groups:

1. national and local government institutions
2. bilateral and multilateral donors
3. UN entities and other multilateral organisations
4. international non-governmental organisations
5. local civil society.

While national government institutions lead and give strategic direction regarding collective, medium-to-long term peace and development objectives, other stakeholders are accountable to additional constituencies and function according to their own mandates and compliance frameworks. Co-ordination thus raises questions of structure: governance, implementation, and consultation (Figure 1.3). Which institutions should be at the centre of directing co-ordination, especially when national authorities cannot play that role? Further, who should be involved at which stage and how? Inclusivity does not mean all stakeholders can or should be involved at all levels and all times. Rather, they should be engaged smartly and selectively in the three levels of co-ordination structures.

Figure 1.3. Structures of co-ordination



Current efforts at co-ordinating optimum groups of stakeholders uncovered three considerations:

1. **Engagement with national authorities depends on context.** The scope of this engagement is at the heart of many debates about the HDP Nexus. Development co-operation is broadly premised on the centrality of government in development programmes. In contrast, humanitarian action is not, even while recognising the State's primary responsibility (UN, 1991^[11]). Further, while development effectiveness principles centre on country ownership, humanitarian principles centre on the needs of individuals and an assumption of state incapacity or unwillingness to protect and serve its people in conflict or emergency situations. However, the interaction between humanitarian, development, and government actors at different levels could begin to converge in certain contexts as development actors grapple with “doing development differently” in fragile contexts, and as humanitarian actors find spaces to work with state institutions especially as the scope of what constitutes a humanitarian response is widening (Macrae, 2019^[4]).
2. **A UN focus risks skewing a more nuanced reality.** The UN system spearheads global efforts in HDP Nexus co-ordination. The 2015 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and agreement on a New Way of Working (NWOW) at the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit impacted how the UN advances humanitarian-development collaboration, including the repositioning of the UN Development System and creation of the Joint Steering Committee to advance Humanitarian-Development Collaboration³. In 2021, approximately **76%** of peace and development ODA to fragile contexts from DAC donors and multilaterals was channelled through mechanisms other than multilateral agencies and NGOs. In contrast, **79%** of humanitarian ODA to fragile contexts from these same groups is channelled through multilateral agencies and NGOs, particularly through the UN system (52% of all humanitarian ODA to fragile contexts). (OECD, 2023^[12]). While this balance differs across contexts, a UN-centric approach brings the risk of a partial and lopsided HDP Nexus approach focused on where UN entities are most active: humanitarian assistance. For development assistance, bilateral donors and international financial institutions have no alternative or complement to the UN Resident Coordinator (UNRC) system. While the role of multilateral development banks (notably, regional banks, the World Bank, and IMF) across the HDP Nexus in fragile contexts grows, their engagement is not consistent across countries.
3. **Sub-national government and local civil society engagement in co-ordination is minimal.** Localising aid is a constant challenge for the international aid system. Despite commitments and limited progress, practical and political reasons prevent routine inclusion of national stakeholders (including civil society) in co-ordination structures, let alone devolution of resources and decision-making to local development actors. While local and national NGOs are recognised as key in HDP Nexus guidance (OECD DAC, 2019^[6]; IASC, 2020^[13]), studies and anecdotal evidence suggest that their engagement has been minimal across HDP Nexus co-ordination processes (Fanning, 2019^[14]; Ndeda and Birungi, 2018^[15]). Addressing this presents strategic and practical questions

of how to support small civil-society partners' or umbrella NGOs' access to and participation in co-ordination and aid financing processes.

Principled co-ordination and the role of context

Differentiating between contexts is key to escaping ideological debates about state-alignment or state-avoidance and moving towards principled co-ordination. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee's (IASC) guidance on collective outcomes identifies contexts according to the willingness and capacity of state authorities (IASC, 2020^[13]) and reflecting their interaction with the international development community⁴:

- **Constrained** – authorities are unwilling to uphold international obligations, limiting international engagement
- **Capacity-driven** – authorities are willing but have limited capacity and budget support
- **Consultative** – willing and capacitated authorities, but in a context of emergent peace or active conflict
- **Collaborative** – authorities are leading co-ordination and well-capacitated

The role of national authorities in HDP Nexus co-ordination varies. Authorities might be central in consultative settings but more marginal in politically constrained settings. Further, national authorities are neither geographically nor institutionally static nor monolithic. They comprise multiple parts, often connected through complex webs of relationships. Analysing the co-ordination landscape (The 'How': Platforms, processes, and people) requires granular understanding of sub-national and institutional structures.

2 The 'How': Platforms, processes, and people

The OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) Nexus focuses on processes, principles, and leadership for co-ordination rather than suggest a specific design to promote and facilitate these. This section reviews practices to identify what works and can be scaled. It finds three areas of progress: platforms, processes and people.

In many fragile and conflict-affected settings, the foundations for the HDP Nexus' co-ordination architecture and methods were laid by the United Nations (UN) and/or European Union (EU). This is no coincidence: these two multilateral organisations have the most-adapted combination of mandate, expertise, and capacities to play this role in many contexts.

Effectiveness of co-ordination platforms

This section reviews existing co-ordination structures at different levels, from global to local. It finds concerns about the linkages between the global level to regional and national levels, as well as between the national and local levels. It makes a point about donor co-ordination structures, given the importance of this constituency to create incentives for collaboration across the HDP Nexus. The section concludes with considerations about the way forward for co-ordination structures.

Three levels of co-ordination

The DAC Recommendation highlights that co-ordination mechanisms should operate at global, regional, national, and local levels. Structures and platforms exist and play distinct roles at each.

At the global level, these structures include the UN Joint Steering Committee (JSC) currently under review, the Inter-agency Standing Committee (IASC) Task Force 4, and the International Network on Conflict and Fragility (INCAF).⁵ These structures operate on a strategic level to set common norms and standards, advance the collective agenda, and facilitate joint learning around the HDP Nexus approach. At their best, they provide collective institutional backing, policy expertise, and pooled capacities to support country efforts.

At regional and national level, co-ordination mechanisms have emerged in at least 25 countries and contexts, starting in Haiti in 2015, mostly driven by country-based processes and the specific needs of each. This makes sense, as HDP Nexus co-ordination must fit within existing structures depending on where it can be most effective. Of the 25 pilot contexts identified in the HDP Nexus Interim Progress Review, 12 were initiated as part of the UN-World Bank's New Way of Working (NWOW), 3 are EU nexus pilots, and 10 are pilots for both the NWOW and the EU.

Box 2.1. Examples of platforms for country-level HDP Nexus stakeholder co-ordination

Several countries, including Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Ukraine, and Yemen have HDP-Nexus-specific co-ordination bodies. These evolved independently, according to the context in each country, and take the form of task teams, committees, or working groups with different configurations of stakeholders and national-authority engagement. Other countries have chosen not to establish new bodies but work through existing frameworks that directly support specific collective outcomes, such as durable solutions platforms in the Central African Republic, Somalia, and Uganda.

Cameroon's HDP Nexus task force was created by the UN country teams (UNCT) as an organic, but time-limited, platform. Originally involving two members from each stakeholder group – government, donors, UN agencies, and NGOs – it has grown to include over 130 members, about a third of whom are actively engaged in its monthly meetings. It situates itself at the analytical and strategic levels, identifying priorities and developing guidance, tools, and information exchange. Its goal is effective co-ordination at the municipal, regional, and national levels. The national level task force can become dormant once this is achieved, or revived on demand to provide support for specific issues.

In contrast, Niger's HDP Nexus task team was created by government decree. While this proactive initiative was a welcomed signal of government leadership and prioritisation, it also brought co-ordination constraints. For example, expanding the limited initial membership to a wider group of donors, UN agencies, and INGOs required the process-heavy issuance of a new ministerial decree.

At local level, co-ordination platforms and structures remain less prevalent. Where they exist, they have shown potential to increase ownership and relevance. After all, strategic-level collective outcomes only become meaningful if they are implemented through coherent programmes. Some countries are building on sub-national fora to facilitate co-ordination.

Box 2.2. Examples of local co-ordination mechanisms

The premise of Cameroon's HDP Nexus approach is that synergies must happen at the most local level. In late 2020, the HDP Nexus Taskforce identified geographic "areas of convergence" based on their risk and capacity profiles, and municipalities where efforts will focus on supporting synergies. The aim is for local governments – mayors and their offices – to become the centres of co-ordination, bringing together actors to provide a full picture of interventions in the area, enabling synergies, and feeding into an annual investment plan for the municipality. The national-level HDP Nexus Taskforce will support the establishment phase, including deployment and training of community volunteers to sustain the process and connect to a regional HDP Nexus adviser.

In Colombia, twelve local co-ordination teams in the regions are guided (but not directed) by capital-level UNCTs and humanitarian country team (HCT) co-ordination (Perret, 2019^[16]). In the Central African Republic, two subnational areas of convergence were prioritised for the HDP Nexus approach (UN, 2021^[17]). In Federally Administered tribal areas of Pakistan, co-ordination groups focused on collective outcomes have replaced the humanitarian clusters, bringing together government leadership and humanitarian and development actors (IASC, 2020^[18]).

While linking the global and national levels is a challenge, structuring of this support has started. The DAC-UN dialogue created to address challenges that only joint bilateral and multilateral action can solve is a promising vehicle for support to co-ordination analyses. OECD resilience-systems analyses (RSA) or

the process of developing financing strategies provide opportunities for in-country co-ordination reviews. In Sudan, a HDP Nexus adviser in the Resident Coordinator Office (RCO) spent several months working with a co-ordination review task team comprising UN, INGO and donor representatives to ‘audit’ current mechanisms and evaluate the best options for joint national and subnational co-ordination. In Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the task team also undertook a review process as part of designing their HDP Nexus approach.

The balance between national and local co-ordination requires careful design responding to the context. Capital-level co-ordination will always be necessary to link with national-level strategy and ownership, connect with macro-level development and peace approaches, and mobilise political engagement. But understanding local and decentralised governance models is key. For example, engagement with the Borno State authorities in Northeast Nigeria was critical to respond to internal displacement (Zamore, 2019^[19]). Some experts advocate for wholesale recalibration of humanitarian co-ordination efforts from national to sub-national level using an area-based model, citing its benefits for co-ordination across the HDP Nexus (Konyndyk and Saez-Worden, 2020^[20]). Area-based solutions, including with Area Based Co-ordination groups (ABCs), have enabled cross-HDP-Nexus programming, such as in Somalia or Iraq. Given the pressures on capacities that most organisations and authorities face in fragile contexts, the balance between geographic centres of co-ordination at sub-national levels needs to be considered against any new approaches.

In-country donor co-ordination across the HDP Nexus

By undertaking a political dialogue that is key to peace, and by engaging substantial financial means in fragile and conflict-affected contexts, donor co-ordination can provide the incentives for collaboration across the HDP Nexus. Conversely, donor fragmentation can undermine it. Analyses of HDP Nexus financing have shown the importance of both intra- and inter-donor co-ordination mechanisms (Swithern and Dalrymple, 2020^[21]; Poole and Culbert, 2019^[22]). These can range from facilitation (e.g., fora for donors to exchange information and align complementary commitments) to the active co-ordination of channelling commitments through multi-donor funds. Inter-donor co-ordination can involve the partner country government at various levels, from an exclusively international group to the use of country-led and country-owned platforms and facilities. Specifics will depend on the purpose of co-ordination and the nature of the political context.

The Somalia Development and Reconstruction Facility (Government of Somalia, 2017^[22]) shows a pre-existing, country-owned financial co-ordination mechanism that provides the foundation for a HDP Nexus approach. It is the central aid co-ordination architecture in Somalia and provides both a platform and financing framework to bring together bilateral commitments and multi-partner trust funds. However, it also illustrates the challenges, as donors are providing a small and decreasing portion of their reported support via the Facility, indicative of prevailing bilateral approaches (Zamore, 2019^[19]).

EU HDP Nexus pilots were launched following a 2017 EU Council conclusion (Council of the European Union, 2017^[23]). They were meant to enhance co-ordination at three levels: within and between EU institutions; between EU institutions and member states; and externally with others. Six pilot countries were selected: Chad, Iraq, Myanmar, Nigeria, Sudan, and Uganda. Early analysis in 2018-19 suggested that progress remained at the level of co-ordination between EU institutions and at the level of context analysis rather than strategy or implementation. Greater progress in Iraq and Uganda was attributed to the enabling environment of strong government ownership, donor interest, and existing country co-ordination. Elsewhere, in-country buy-in was limited by a low number of EU member states represented in-country, and lack of ownership by national authorities (Jones and Mazzara, 2018^[24]).

In the facilitation zone of the co-ordination spectrum, the donor group in Chad and the HDP Nexus working group in DRC (Box 2.3) demonstrate the potential of convening donors around the HDP Nexus approach.

Enabling factors in this context include strong donor presence in-country, and the committed and resourced leadership of a single active donor.

Box 2.3. The HDP Nexus Donor Group in Democratic Republic of the Congo

Donor presence and co-ordination is high in Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) compared to fragile contexts like Cameroon or Niger. For humanitarian issues, a Good Humanitarian Donorship group provides a convening forum. On the development side, the Partner Co-ordination Group (GCP) chaired by the UNRC/HC and EU brings together bilateral donors, and World Bank and UNDP representatives. There is also a multi-stakeholder HDP Nexus 'core team', including representatives of each international stakeholder group (Box 2.6).

A HDP Nexus donor working group was created in 2019 to connect the many technical and thematic groups, and to convene donors around collective outcomes and the two UN-designated HDP Nexus pilot areas: Tanganyika province and the Kasai region. The group meets monthly, its agenda covering activities from information exchange to developing advice and advocacy toward the Government of DRC, and practical processes to map and track resourcing against needs. Although the impacts of the group on funding behaviour are hard to measure, it has built broad and active donor engagement, with observable shifts in the pipeline of project commitments. Learning from this experience in DRC suggests that an effective donor HDP Nexus platform requires: (1) dedicated resourcing within the donor community to foster wider donor buy-in; (2) a clear focus and frame of reference, in this case the pilot areas and the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO) withdrawal; and (3) a light-touch model whose outputs have clear utility for donors, such as mapping and tracking work.

The way forward

There does not appear to be appetite to profoundly change the current aid architecture. While the need for a HDP Nexus approach partly stems from problems created by a fragmented global aid architecture, the obstacles to reengineering the global systems might outweigh the perceived gains.

Rather, context analysis must drive co-ordination structures. Stakeholders consulted for this research indicated that a bottom-up approach to in-country co-ordination structures was key to ownership. Successes in improved co-ordination – including in Sudan prior to the 2019 revolution – are partly attributed to buy-in, generated by processes grown in-country gradually and collectively, and supported from outside rather than imposed. In Sudan's case, in-country momentum was generated by senior staff in the RCO, with strong buy-in from a core group of UN agency heads jointly committed to the approach and efforts to engage other key constituencies (including the government and donor community).

A HDP Nexus approach should bring the opportunity to review and revisit structures and simplify them where appropriate. Co-ordination reviews in DRC and Sudan prior to the conflict in 2023 show a credible case that a HDP Nexus approach improves efficiency and reduces co-ordination costs by identifying areas of duplication. However, reviewing, adapting, or creating co-ordination structures that are fit for purpose and inclusive takes effort, time, financial, and human resources. New structures must therefore be clear about their purpose, which will change over time, and have an exit strategy. The extent to which co-ordination structures across the HDP Nexus meet their objectives could also be assessed regularly by external reviewers.

To determine the best model for enhanced development co-ordination, three principles and requirements can be applied. First, any structure should reduce collective transaction costs rather than create additional burdens. Second, it should build on what works and avoid creating duplicative structures: what does a new

group allow that is not possible with adapting in an existing structure? Finally, it should balance representation, efficiency, and agility.

However, there are heavy counterweights to donor co-ordination. Although donors widely subscribe to the HDP Nexus rationale, it has well-known barriers and disincentives to co-ordination (Bourguignon and Platteau, 2015^[25]; Poole and Culbert, 2019^[2]; Saez et al., 2021^[26]). Logistically, many donors must contend with limited in-country representation or cover programming in fragile contexts from multiple locations. Complex inter-ministerial and -departmental divisions of labour, legal and administrative barriers, and in some cases overriding of executive proposals by other branches of government can also present internal obstacles to co-ordination for bilateral partners. Politically, considerations of sovereignty, visibility, and risk tolerance influence donors' willingness to align commitments to collective outcomes in fragile contexts.

As a result, despite some good examples, inter-donor co-ordination remains ad hoc and largely in the co-existence zone of the co-ordination spectrum. In addition, even when development programming is decentralised to embassies, many donors' humanitarian allocations are decided centrally and implemented by partners, sometimes with limited engagement or influence by embassies or development agencies in-country. This dichotomy limits the potential for humanitarian assistance to be integrated within donor strategies – even in the most protracted crisis contexts, where structural actions could support humanitarian assistance and reduce humanitarian needs. Even when the ultimate objective of DAC members' engagement in crisis contexts is supporting the achievement of peaceful conflict resolution, peace is not a sector itself. Many varied international stakeholders, including donors, undertake peace actions (including within development co-operation activities), but these are hard to co-ordinate within a grand plan.

Co-ordination processes: Joint analyses and collective outcomes

The DAC Recommendation on the HDP Nexus calls for co-ordination around two processes: (1) the generation of joint analyses and (2) the identification of collective outcomes. The list of countries undertaking these processes is growing and lessons for co-ordination are emerging.

Concerning joint analyses, this section reveals abundant support tools. Paradoxically, it also shows that the resulting crowded and fragmented analytical landscape and lack of interoperability between different systems could hamper the same shared context analysis these tools aim to support.

Joint analyses

In highly complex contexts, joint analyses and analysis-sharing convene and forge connections between different sources of analysis rather than relying on a single analytical output. Making best use of the many existing analyses processes makes more sense than creating new ones. As IASC guidance on collective outcomes notes: “integrating joint analysis for collective outcomes into processes established for other mandated assessments is common sense” (IASC, 2020^[18]).

With many different analyses undertaken to underpin different plans – from humanitarian needs overviews to national development plans, peacebuilding plans, and agency, sector and donor-specific analyses, each with its own scope, units of analysis, and conceptions of risk and vulnerability – the problem appears to be an overabundance rather than a lack of analysis. However, bringing them together can reveal important gaps and duplications. Basic data is often missing in fragile contexts, including usable metrics on poverty and welfare for an estimated 71% of individuals living in fragile and conflict-affected contexts (Corral et al., 2020^[27]).

Several donors, including Belgium, Denmark, Germany, and Sweden, have internal multi-dimensional analysis assessment tools that periodically bring HDP colleagues together. Multilateral development

banks, including the World Bank and the African Development Bank, also have models of multi-dimensional and resilience analysis.

At the inter-organisational level, the OECD's RSA was used to generate joint analyses in thirteen countries, including DRC, Mauritania, Sudan, Syria, and the Liptako-Gourma region (Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger). In some of these, the RSA was used as an explicit step towards agreeing on collective outcomes. It convenes perspectives from multiple dimensions in a workshop approach, which fosters relationship-building and buy-in. Because the tool and facilitation use the OECD's impartial convening power, the analysis is independent of any operational agency or mechanism.

Recovery and Peace-building Assessments (RPBAs) led by the EU, UN, and World Bank are also designed to harmonise and co-ordinate analyses of the causes and impacts of conflicts and crises, bringing together a wide range of stakeholders and supporting governments through the process. These have also been used as the basis for HDP Nexus approaches in countries, including Ukraine after 2014 and Burkina Faso (where it was named the Prevention and Peacebuilding Assessment, or PPBA), where it is being adapted to encompass prevention as well as recovery. With built-in engagement of major donors and explicit commitment to supporting government stakeholders, the RPBAs offer a strong foundation for co-ordination. In practice, the process is demanding, meaning RPBAs can become one-off and quickly outdated documents rather than ongoing processes (Zamore, 2019^[19]), or can even slow implementation (Poole and Culbert, 2019^[21]).

The new way of conducting the UN's Common Country Analysis (CCA) offers potential to become an ongoing process. The new approach is intended to move from the static, consultant-driven, one-off event of previous UN country analyses to a real-time and risk-informed core analytical function. (UNSDG, 2019^[28]). The guidance explicitly sets out a shift towards encompassing multi-dimensional risk and conflict analysis, and a focus on the most vulnerable (UNSDG, 2020^[29]). The CCA will draw on but not replace other analyses, such as the humanitarian needs overview. However, the stated potential of the CCA has yet to be realised in most contexts. As it is rolled out and falls into sync with other analytical processes, a fuller picture will emerge of whether it can become the foundation for joint analyses to support collective outcomes and secure participation and buy-in beyond the UN system, including among donors. The 'Co-ordination in country' workstream of the DAC-UN dialogue aimed to pilot the approach in Mozambique and Niger in 2022.

Box 2.4. Joint analyses in Burkina Faso and Chad

The international community in Burkina Faso (the UN System in particular) has been working to connect its humanitarian, development, and peace analyses since 2016. As part of developing collective outcomes connecting the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) and the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), its CCA process reflected analyses by actors across the HDP pillars (Joint Steering Committee, 2019^[30]). The UN country team developed an analytical conception of resilience and drew on the Humanitarian Needs Overview analysis to map vulnerability in each region. The RPBA process provided the analytical foundations to identify linkages with peacebuilding. The joint analysis provided a base for developing collective outcomes and refining HDP priorities in government plans.

Chad identified the need for a Joint Analysis Team (JAT) anchored in the RCO to deploy capacity (e.g., agency secondments) supporting UN or Humanitarian Country Teams in adjusting and implementing collective outcomes for 2020-22. The JAT would also support strengthening the Government's capacity for statistical/data management, planning, resource mobilisation, and development aid tracking related to the National Development Plan.

The analytical landscape is crowded and disjointed. On the humanitarian side, sector-based approaches to analysis result in multiple, simultaneous and potentially duplicative assessments. On the development

side, analyses tend to be macro- and technical- rather than people-centred. Assessments can be cumbersome and infrequent, sometimes outsourced and de-linked from programming. The UN development system repositioning, the humanitarian Grand Bargain, and the DAC Recommendation on the HDP Nexus call for joined, comprehensive analyses, but system-wide progress is slow (Metcalf-Hough and Spencer, 2020^[31])

Further, lack of interoperability between systems prevents joint analyses. Sharing information is at the heart of co-ordination, even at the co-existence end of the spectrum of co-ordination mechanisms. But lack of information management hinders the interoperability of data systems in many settings (JSC/UNOCHA, 2019^[32]). Even between UN agencies, information, data, and communication systems are often incompatible. This is exacerbated by non-interoperable methodologies, incentives, and security concerns that favour “information-hoarding” (Zamore, 2019^[19]). Some UNCTs have created their own information management solutions, but there is no standard operating procedure for sharing information in protracted crises (IASC, 2020^[18]).

Collective Outcomes

Collective outcomes are about alignment and collaboration between complementary approaches wherever possible, not about a single overarching planning document. There are good reasons for having separate strategic and operational plans in the HDP pillars. Those sectors of intervention have different purposes, constituencies, timeframes, and units of analysis. Collective outcomes and common frameworks can cross-reference discrete plans to bring complementary perspectives, and country teams can choose the appropriate degree of integration. In Chad, collective outcomes bridge the HRP, UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, and national development plans. In the Central African Republic, the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework and HRP align to the comprehensive national recovery and peacebuilding plan, developed from the RPBA process. The challenge is understanding what cross-referencing to collective outcomes in separate plans means in practice. It is one thing for an HRP or co-operation framework to mention ‘fit’ with collective outcomes (the breadth of these makes it easy to articulate), but quite another to navigate the proliferation of plans to understand where complementarity lies and demonstrates relationship to collective outcomes.

Collective outcomes do not have pre-set co-ordination processes or methods – each country evolved on its own. They also developed at different levels (Zamore, 2019^[19]; Thomas, 2019^[5]): the inter-agency strategic level (e.g., Chad, where they link high-level strategic plans); the inter-agency programming level (e.g., Somalia, where agencies initially worked together around durable solutions); and the intra-agency level (e.g., IRC working towards more outcome-based processes).⁶

At the inter-agency level, the IASC Results Group on Humanitarian-Development Collaboration (pre-cursor to Task Force 4 on Humanitarian-Development Collaboration and its Linkages to Peace) developed ‘light’ guidance for agreeing collective outcomes, setting out factors and questions to consider in each context, including existing entry points, and the readiness and capacity of stakeholders. The guidance is clear about needing transparency and inclusion, but agnostic as to which co-ordination structures and process should be used to generate collective outcomes, either strengthening existing country team structures or building new ones as required (IASC, 2020^[18]).

While experience across countries implementing collective outcomes shows different models in practice, an important lesson is the need for synchronicity with other major planning processes – particularly national development plans and UN country frameworks, developed on a multi-year cycle unlike usually-annual Humanitarian Response Plans (HRPs). In Somalia, alignment with processes and priorities in the Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework was vital to ensuring that collective outcomes were strategically central rather than side-lined or superimposed.

Box 2.5. Co-ordinating to agree collective outcomes in Somalia and Sudan

Somalia identified collective outcomes setting out measurable goals for food security, durable solutions to displacement, climate-induced hazards, and inclusive basic services. These are grouped and refined into a broader set of outcome statements (IASC, 2020^[18]) integrated into country frameworks and plans. The process began in 2017, instigated by the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), involving other agencies at sign-off points. However, it was considered too top-down, not adequately and equally owned by all stakeholders. It was therefore revisited in 2020, involving a wider set of stakeholders and with the active engagement of all signatories to the Somalia Development Cooperation Framework (UN Somalia, 2021^[33]).

Prior to the 2019 revolution in Sudan, HDP stakeholders undertook a four-year process to join-up analyses, develop a HDP Nexus framework, and identify collective outcomes focused on the rule of law, resilience, and durable solutions. The process was enabled by an in-country HDP Nexus adviser and supported by a resilient-systems analysis facilitated by the OECD. After the revolution, a new approach was required, and the UN worked with the Transitional Government on a 'visioning exercise' to set strategic priorities across the HDP areas of action. These informed the mandate of the UN Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan (UNITAMS) and development of the Sudan Peacemaking, Peacebuilding and Stabilisation Programme.

The effectiveness of collective outcomes resides in how they drive programming. When interpreted and implemented consistently, collective outcomes can provide intermediate targets and benchmarks for a country or context. Developing outcomes that are truly collective, with joint approaches to planning and programming agreed by all stakeholders in each context advances coherence and complementarity. However, evidence that international actors are ready and able to meaningfully commit to delivering under one strategy remains patchy.

Prioritisation is about deciding what not to include. Broad, co-ordinated plans do not automatically drive co-ordinated action. When every sector and issue is a priority for a set of international actors, designing collective outcomes means choices need to be made. However, the international development system's very delimited sectoral budgets and agencies are not designed for easily making such choices. Without financial or mutual-accountability incentives to drive programmatic rethinking, collective outcomes risk simply retrofitting existing areas of action rather than identifying the common goals that have best chances to be reached.

Donor engagement early in collective-outcomes processes can make a clear difference, ensuring that financing and strategic plans develop in tandem. Still, strategic plans designed by UNCTs are too often presented for donors to fund once finalised. Donors are primary stakeholders in the design of collective outcomes, ensuring that these fit with their country strategies and thus making these collective outcomes fundable. Wider inclusion of strategic and operational partners is also key: national stakeholders (government and NGOs) need to be part of the process rather than consulted post hoc in processes that have historically felt "written by expatriates for expatriates" (Zamore, 2019^[19]).

Synchronicity of HDP Nexus planning processes with development funding cycles is key. Experience with EU nexus pilots and other planning processes shows that joint analysis conducted across the HDP Nexus after multi-annual funding decisions are made leaves room for only minor adjustments rather than a deeper realignment of programme support.

Co-ordinating people: Stakeholders across the HDP Nexus

Co-ordination cannot happen without the right people working together. Some practitioners argue this is all that's needed for a HDP Nexus approach to work – that structures and processes are mere enablers to propagate and institutionalise routine collaboration, and the success of the HDP Nexus lies less in platforms and collective outcomes than in whether people can work together. This section explores four aspects: leadership, staffing, and skills and mindsets.

Leadership

Empowered leadership is central to co-ordination. Organisational science recognises that good leadership can make or break effective co-operation (Faerman, 2001^[34]). Leadership by national authorities is often cited as a determinant of success (Zamore, 2019^[19]; Poole and Culbert, 2019^[21]), but ensuring engagement takes concerted leadership in each stakeholder group and institution and at each level – global, regional, national, and sub-national. There are as many models and functions of leadership as of co-ordination, from facilitative to directive, and from distributed to hierarchically managed.

The DAC recommendation on the HDP Nexus points to the roles of multiple actors in resourcing and supporting empowered leadership. It calls on adherents to resource appropriate UN leadership to provide cost-effective co-ordination across the HDP architecture.

Under the recent UN reforms, RCs are the locus for leadership of HDP Nexus co-ordination for UN-related international efforts (UNSDG, 2020^[29]). With their transfer from UNDP to the UN Secretariat, RCs have a direct reporting line to the Secretary General supported by a newly standalone Development Co-ordination Office. However, there are limits to the role they play. For example, their skills and experience are not consistent across fragile and conflict-affected contexts (UN, 2021^[35]). Leadership of the HDP Nexus appears to be largely self-selecting. It is championed at the global level by a small cadre of well-networked individuals in a handful of agencies and donors but is largely reliant at the country level on the commitment and tenacity of individuals.

Empowering RCs for their leadership role is in part a straightforward matter of skills, performance-management, and resourcing. But it is also a structural matter of matching expectations and political capital to its function. For RCs to be the strategic centre of HDP Nexus co-ordination and interface between the UN-linked system and national government, they need trust, power, and capacity (Zamore, 2019^[19]; UNSDG, 2020^[29]). The challenges and progress are echoed in the UN Secretary General's recent review of the functioning of the RC system, which found inter-agency competition to be a persistent problem (UN, 2022^[36]). The same review indicates that, despite progress, the co-ordination, leadership, and convening capacities of RCs face impediments related to staffing, accountability, and funding models.

Staffing

Building co-ordination and fostering collaboration demand staff time and focus. Sustaining a HDP Nexus approach should be mainstreamed in job descriptions. That said, dedicated capacity – sometimes deployed as “HDP Nexus advisors” – is important, at least in the initial phases of establishing a HDP Nexus approach. The precise role of this personnel differs according to context but must be clear and ring-fenced in time over a reasonable duration.

Investing in specific HDP Nexus staff is important for catalysing and supporting collective efforts, both in donors and institutions at the global level and co-ordination platforms at the country level. While short-term injections of global support – such as on-demand missions including from the OECD Secretariat to support financing analyses or strategies – can be valuable, in-country capacity is necessary to create demand and ensure follow-up. Ultimately, a HDP Nexus approach should be embedded in wider staff responsibilities but getting there can require staff with specific HDP Nexus facilitation responsibilities recognised by all

actors in country. Cameroon, DRC, and Sudan are among countries that have had HDP Nexus advisers or co-ordinators located in the RCO. These experts have a clear role and the trust and networks to convene and draw upon cross-pillar coalitions to support broad action around durable solutions.

In response to requests from RCOs, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) took the initiative to fund and develop a pool of deployable HDP Nexus advisers to support country efforts, building on its cadre of civilian experts. Deployment is entirely led by in-country demand and for a sufficient period to support meaningful progress. (As experience shows, it can take multiple years to develop trust, buy-in and approaches; contracts are usually one year with provision for and expectation of renewal.) At the time of writing this report, Swiss-funded HDP Nexus advisers were deployed to RCOs in Jordan and South Sudan. Similarly, the Swedish international development co-operation agency, Sida, has recruited regional and country HDP Nexus advisers. While these are deployed in Sida offices rather than external agencies, they play a key role in engaging in and mobilising cross-stakeholder initiatives. The case of DRC is a prime example and Sweden is committed to funding external HDP Nexus posts in DRC.

As part of its activity to champion, implement, and mainstream a HDP Nexus approach, the UN-DAC dialogue has led the development of a Nexus Academy to train personnel in global-, regional-, and country-level roles that can accelerate HDP Nexus approaches. Led and managed by the UNDP, an online module was launched in 2022, making the nexus training available globally.

Box 2.6. The HDP Nexus Advisor role: Cameroon and Democratic Republic of the Congo

In 2018, a senior adviser was deployed in Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) from the UNDP's crisis response unit roster to start the process that resulted in the agreement of collective outcomes at the end of 2019. Working in the Resident Coordinator Office (RCO), the advisor reported directly to the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General (DSRSG) and established a multi-stakeholder HDP Nexus working group (the 'core team') and stakeholder sub-groups to support the collective outcomes process.

At the end of the advisor's mission, Sweden agreed to fund the HDP Nexus advisory capacity for DRC, but in a different configuration to reflect the status and direction of DRC's HDP Nexus approach, showing the importance of listening to evolving needs. The new staffing model comprises a less-senior HDP Nexus specialist post in the RCO (with emphasis on convening rather than strategy and management) and two national HDP Nexus co-ordinator posts in Kasai and Tanganyika Provinces. In the interim, the Development Co-ordination Officer in the RCO performs HDP Nexus advisory and co-ordination duties, working with a newly formalised and expanded core team of technical representatives from all five stakeholder groups. An international UN Volunteer funded by Japan and the RCO's resources support the RCO on the HDP Nexus. In addition, the HDP and Partnerships Facility administered by the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) within the UN Peacebuilding Fund is funding a P4-level HDP Partnerships Advisor to be based in Goma and promote work between the UN and the World Bank on joint strategic priorities across the HDP Nexus.

In Cameroon, the HDP Co-ordinator role has been recognised as an example of good field practice that could be replicated elsewhere. Like the DRC adviser, the role sits within the RCO, reporting directly to the RC/HC, however it is unique in that it is a HDP Nexus co-ordinator rather than an adviser, with emphasis on co-ordination and supporting implementation at the community level.

The HDP Co-ordinator is responsible for leading the establishment of the HDP Nexus approach in Cameroon and ensuring buy-in from stakeholders through the HDP Nexus Task Force and beyond. The HDP Co-ordinator is also instrumental in cross-country learning. The current post-holder formerly held a regional HDP Nexus adviser role, so has been able to provide advisory support to the UN

leadership and Governments in Burundi, Central African Republic, Chad, and Niger, and to draw on learning from these countries in developing the approach in Cameroon.

The post was funded by the PBSO-managed UN-World Bank HDP and Partnership Facility and is currently funded by the UNCT on a cost-sharing basis. Japan funded a new UN Volunteer HDP Nexus Officer, who will report to the HDP Nexus Co-ordinator and a Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning Expert deployed and funded by Norwegian Capacity (NORCAP). A new HDP Nexus regional co-ordinator in the Far-North region and two HDP Nexus officers to support the municipalities are funded from the UN Human Security Trust Fund.

Creating a sustainable model of qualified staffing is complex and two challenges hamper securing dedicated HDP Nexus expertise. First, the pool of people with the right combination of experience across the HDP pillars and skills to facilitate co-ordinated approaches is small. It will take time to grow as HDP Nexus approaches take root and are supported by initiatives like the DAC-UN Dialogue Nexus Academy hosted by the UNDP. Second, funding for HDP Nexus advisers is scattered and precarious. In Cameroon, HDP Nexus advisers were first provided by UNDP and OCHA, followed by a post funded in the RCO's office by the HDPP facility. However, as sustained personnel costs are outside its normal remit, future funding is uncertain. Elsewhere, HDP Nexus posts have been funded by Japan and the UN Human Security Unit. A financial model to provide more predictable and sustainable support for inter-organisational co-ordination capacity remains to be developed.

Staff turnover remains a significant problem in protracted crisis settings and requires institutional-level HDP Nexus literacy. Among national authorities, interlocutors in ministries can change frequently due to changes in administration and brain-drain to international organisations. Meanwhile, international organisations have a mismatch between the need for long-term approaches to protracted situations and the short-term nature of posts due to living conditions, funding, and a tendency towards short-term technical consultancies. Given that international staff turnover seems inevitable, there is a need to expect HDP Nexus literacy from new recruits, and to invest in and draw on sustainable models of national staffing in a range of international and national institutions – which would align with commitments to locally led development. The sub-national HDP Nexus co-ordination posts in Cameroon and DRC (Boxes 2.2 and 2.6) might be a replicable model but will need sustained support and engagement.

Skills and mindsets

The operational success of a HDP Nexus approach requires a degree of 'trilingualism' among staff across stakeholders. Trilingualism as applied to HDP Nexus discussions refers to fluency in the 'languages' of the HDP pillars so that constituencies can understand the systems, approaches, tools and frameworks that inform and shape HDP actions. Building trilingualism is not about turning all staff into HDP Nexus experts but enabling them to situate their role in a wider framework. Having a clear organisational policy regarding the HDP Nexus helps establish this, as does developing generic and tailored training tools to enhance staff's technical expertise and acquire soft skills. UNDP has led the development of modules that speak to these aspects as part of the Nexus Academy training package. Experience in fragile and crisis contexts from Nigeria to Lebanon also highlight the importance of soft skills to manage relations with different stakeholders, including national or local authorities (Fanning, 2019^[14]).

There is increasing acceptance that "doing development differently" in fragile and conflict-affected contexts demands significant shifts in behaviours. Mindset shifts are required to overcome deep-rooted fears around the HDP Nexus: among development actors about diverting attention to humanitarian and peace actions; among humanitarian actors about losing space and resources for principled, life-saving action; and among peace actors about understanding the implications of development co-operation for their work. These fears are often rooted in misperceptions of the HDP Nexus as defaulting to the co-operation end of the co-ordination spectrum – i.e., imposed joint action – rather than context-specific joint consideration of the most

appropriate synergies (see Definitions in Section 1). As Macrae (2019^[4]) argues, humanitarian and development actors cannot continue to focus on their differences over fundamental issues such as state-centricity and humanitarian principles. Instead, they must create opportunities for “frank and informed debate” if they are to work together to solve the ‘wicked’ problems in fragile and conflict-affected contexts.

Meanwhile, the pressures on staff are mounting. While the COVID-19 pandemic strengthened the case and opportunities for HDP Nexus approaches, it also increased the demands and constraints that staff face. Workloads have increased and while remote work enabled new kinds of connections, it also froze the joint missions, deployments, and secondments that are effective in forging trilingualism.

Quick changes are necessary alongside long-term vision. Building skills and entrenching new cultures of co-operation towards a common objective in a single sector or organisation (let alone between them) will take time. There needs to be long-term vision for co-ordination, accompanied by operational and financial planning to see it through. The DAC recommendation on the HDP Nexus provides the frame to support such a long-term vision at global policy level. But establishing immediate-term changes is also important so as not to lose momentum towards the HDP Nexus and begin to show progress and measurable outputs from strengthened coherence and complementarity.

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Notes

¹ In the OECD's fragility framework, ODA to peace-related sectors is tracked using the following Creditor Reporting Sector codes: 15110 (*Public sector policy and administrative management*); 15111 (*Public finance management (PFM)*); 15112 (*Decentralisation and support to subnational government*); 15113 (*Anti-corruption organisations and institutions*); 15130 (*Legal and judicial development*); 15150 (*Democratic participation and civil society*); 15152 (*Legislatures and political parties*); 15153 (*Media and free flow of information*); 15160 (*Human rights*); 15170 (*Women's equality organisations and institutions*); 15180 (*Ending violence against women and girls*); 15190 (*Facilitation of orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility*); 15210 (*Security system management and reform*); 15220 (*Civilian peace-building, conflict prevention and resolution*); 15230, (*Participation in international peacekeeping operations*); 15240 (*Reintegration and SALW control*); 15250 (*Removal of land mines and explosive remnants of war*); 15261 (*Child soldiers (prevention and demobilisation)*).

² <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/co-ordination>

³ The UN's Joint Steering Committee to Advance Humanitarian and Development Collaboration (JSC) was created to support humanitarian-development co-ordination. Established in 2017 to support the New Way of Working, it brings together representatives of relevant UN agencies to improve collaboration between them, support Resident Coordinators (RCs) and UN country teams (UNCTs). The Inter-agency Standing Committee (IASC) Task Force 4 on Humanitarian Development Collaboration and its linkages to Peace convenes global level technical representatives from UN agencies, INGOs, the Red Cross/Red Crescent, the OECD and the World Bank. It is unique in that it includes representatives from all three of the international stakeholder groups. The OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC)'s International Network on Conflict and Fragility (INCAF) has taken a prominent role in facilitating normative collaboration. Although the DAC is a bilateral donor platform, INCAF also convenes a wider group of observers to further the implementation of a HDP Nexus approach in fragile contexts, through a dedicated DAC-UN Dialogue.

⁴ Crawford et al. developed another framework useful for distinguishing the viability of development interventions in different contexts, from constraining to conducive. It focuses on the space for livelihood interventions in protracted displacement settings, measuring scores across different dimensions of the enabling environment, then grouping them under a typology of receptiveness. <https://odi.org/en/publications/protracted-displacement-uncertain-paths-to-self-reliance-in-exile/>

⁵ The UN JSC to Advance Humanitarian and Development Collaboration was created in 2017 to support the New Way of Working on humanitarian-development co-ordination. It brings together representatives of UN agencies to improve collaboration and aims to increase its link with peace objectives support UN Resident Coordinators (UNRC) and UN country teams (UNCT). IASC Task Force 4 on Humanitarian Development Collaboration and its linkages to Peace convenes global-level technical representatives from UN agencies, INGOs, the Red Cross/Red Crescent, the OECD, and the World Bank. Uniquely, it includes representatives from all three international stakeholder groups. The DAC International Network on Conflict and Fragility (INCAF) takes a prominent role facilitating normative collaboration. Although the DAC is a bilateral donor platform, INCAF convenes a wider group of observers to further implementation of a HDP Nexus approach in fragile contexts through dedicated DAC-UN Dialogue.

⁶ Initial surveys by the DAC also show evidence of a range of interpretations of “collective outcomes, with many individuals understanding it at a project or programme level rather than a broader national or sub-national level.

