Global Protection Cluster

# NEXUS APPROACHES IN HUMANITARIAN SETTINGS – A GUIDANCE NOTE FOR THE PROTECTION CLUSTER

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# 1 Foreword

The challenges looming before conflict-affected communities are now larger than ever, with recurrent and protracted conflict, waves of displacement, compounded by food insecurity, climate effects and systemic challenges to peace, rule of law and access to justice. Limited resources and, more importantly, constraints in humanitarian and protection space, are also proving to be major obstacles for protection actors around the world. Today's challenges demand a more holistic approach involving real, concrete collaboration by humanitarian, development, peace and protection actors, necessary to reduce protection risks and vulnerabilities and promote both peace and a human rights-based approaches.

This Guidance Note is meant to help protection cluster coordinators apply nexus approaches in a practical way by, providing concrete steps and means to address prevalent or long-standing protection issues, risk patterns, trends and chronic vulnerabilities. The guidance calls for a practical, problem-solving approach that seeks opportunities to identify and collaborate with actors beyond the humanitarian sphere and address deep-rooted protection issues. Not every context permits nexus approaches – especially where emergencies are still flaring and conflict dynamics so unsettled that the future is uncharted. Ultimately, I see this Guidance Note as a tool for protection cluster coordinators, not as a one-size-fits-all approach, but to empower and encourage them to seek opportunities beyond the humanitarian sphere and adapt them to the operational context and protection needs of conflict-affected communities. The protection analysis, perspective and voice of the cluster is needed by development and peace actors, and so are they needed by the protection cluster. I hope that this Guidance Note will help Protection Clusters set the tone for holistic action, and shape our knowledge and practices in the years to come.

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Global Protection Cluster Coordinator

# 2 Terminology

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| **The New Way of Working** | The 2016 World Humanitarian Summit called for a new way of working, shifting from delivering humanitarian assistance to ending need and gradually moving towards self-reliance and sustainability of affected people. It is at the centre of efforts to strengthen coherence between humanitarian, development and peace actors to effectively reduce people's needs, risks and vulnerability. The concept is not new; it stems from previous frameworks and approaches that have evolved over time. |
| **OECD-DAC Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus** | Considered a general framework for the nexus and widely endorsed as providing a common understanding and conceptual consensus on the approach. The Recommendation was adopted in 2019 and consists of eleven principles, intended to guide DAC[1] members and adhering UN agencies in better aligning their actions in coordination, programming and financing to reduce risks and vulnerabilities. |
| **Nexus pillars** | Refers to the respective mandates and operational remit of humanitarian, development and peace actors, often also referred to as 'the triple nexus'. |
| **Comparative advantage** | Demonstrated capacity and expertise (not solely limited to a mandate) of an individual, group, or institution to meet needs or address specific issues. |
| **Collective outcome** | A commonly agreed measurable result or impact enhanced by the combined effort of different actors to, within their respective mandates, address and reduce people's unmet needs, risks and vulnerabilities, increasing their resilience and addressing root causes of conflict. |

[3] The Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

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| **Protection outcome** | A response or activity is considered to have a protection outcome when protection risks to affected persons are reduced. Risks are reduced when threats and vulnerability are minimised and, at the same time, the capacity of affected persons is enhanced. Protection outcomes are the result of changes in behaviour, attitudes, policies, knowledge and practices of relevant stakeholders. A protection outcome is different from an output, which is a manifestation of a protection activity. |
| **Joined-up collaboration** | The coherent and complementary coordination, programming and financing of humanitarian, development and peace actions, based on shared risk-informed and gender-sensitive analysis and ensuring that humanitarian action remains needs-based and principled at all times. |
| **Trilingualism** | Refers to increased awareness across the three nexus pillars to ensure that respective actors have a better understanding of the systems, approaches, tools and frameworks that inform and shape humanitarian, development and peace actions. |
| **Protection issues** | Refers to protection risks, threats or vulnerabilities. |
| **Protection risk** | The actual or potential exposure of affected persons to violence, coercion, or deliberate deprivation. |
| **Protection mainstreaming** | The process of incorporating the protection principles of safety and dignity, access, accountability, participation and empowerment in all humanitarian sectors and at all stages of the programme cycle. This is to ensure that activities target the most vulnerable and promote and protect the human rights of beneficiaries without perpetuating or contributing to abuse, violations or vulnerabilities. |
| **Area-based approach** | An approach that defines an area, rather than a sector or target group, as a primary entry point for activities or interventions. It responds to local problems with a multi-sector approach and places emphasis on community and wider stakeholder engagement; recognising that identifying and solving problems requires not only formal inclusion, but also the active participation of all relevant stakeholders in the area. |

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# 3 Rationale

With humanitarian crises lasting up to 20 years or longer and affected populations remaining in acutely vulnerable situations and depending on humanitarian aid over long periods of time,[2] the limitations of short-term interventions in addressing structural causes of insecurity, conflict and displacement are becoming increasingly apparent. Moreover, growing numbers of displaced persons in urban areas require more institutional and sustainable solutions for housing, health, education, livelihoods and employment, while dwindling resources and shrinking protection space are making it challenging for protection actors to sustain the level of response and services they have been providing in protracted crises for years on end. These are some of the factors necessitating an approach, particularly in protracted crises, in which humanitarian, development, peace and other actors join forces to reduce or end recurrent and entrenched protection risks and vulnerability, promote peace and realise human rights.

[2] UNOCHA, Global Humanitarian Overview 2022.

# 4 Purpose and Audience

This guidance note aims to assist protection cluster members apply the nexus approach in a hands-on manner, by providing concrete steps to sustainably address prevalent or long-standing protection issues, risk patterns, trends and chronic vulnerability.

The steps and recommendations are based on lessons learned from field missions and technical country support, as well as from seminars and meetings with a wide range of stakeholders. As such, the guidance is field-focused and pragmatic, in order to facilitate an organic integration of the nexus approach in the activities of protection clusters.

While protection actors are encouraged to seek opportunities to identify and collaborate with actors beyond humanitarian response on deep-rooted protection issues, a nexus approach may not be feasible in certain contexts. The guidance calls for a practical, problem-solving approach and does not intend to exclude other approaches, or limit collaboration to specific sectors and actors.

The suggested steps should, therefore, not be seen as a one-size-fits-all approach and should be adapted to the operational context and capacities of the Protection Cluster and its members. Consultations with affected people and engagement with local actors may lead to more context-appropriate and effective ways of applying the nexus approach.

| What does the nexus approach mean? | What the nexus approach is not |
|---|---|
| The nexus is an approach. It strives to make the most of the comparative advantage of humanitarian, development, peace and all relevant actors in a given context to effectively meet immediate needs while also addressing the drivers and root causes of conflict to reduce chronic vulnerability, strengthen capacities to mitigate risks and promote sustainable peace. | The approach is not a successive process along a timeframe of short-, medium- and long term, nor is it a linear process from humanitarian response, to remedial and environment building.[3] It is rather a simultaneous engagement and shared responsibility of a diverse range of actors, based on their comparative advantage. |
| To achieve these objectives, the approach calls for complementary, aligned and well-coordinated action by all key actors in planning, programming, implementation and financing, formulated in collective outcomes over multiple years. | While it encourages joined-up efforts, the approach does not imply that humanitarian, develop, peace and other actors should merge their activities or integrate roles. It suggests instead that required interventions are sequenced and layered in all contexts, in line with the respective mandates and ways of working of the actors. |

[3] This refers to the protection egg model: ALNAP's protection guide for humanitarian agencies, pp 42-45.

Humanitarian, development and peace actors may use different terminology to refer to particular concepts. They are, however, all based on the same premise of protecting or ensuring the enjoyment of human rights. Practice shows that these differences do not present a barrier to more responsive planning, programming and action, if actors are jointly focused on issues of common interest that need to be addressed and have a common understanding of risk and vulnerability.

The nexus approach is not about shifting resources between the different pillars, but instead, about ensuring complementarity and synergies through enhanced collaboration.

The approach should not be confused with protection mainstreaming, which maximises the protective impact of humanitarian programming by incorporating protection principles into programme design and implementation. While protection mainstreaming can contribute to achieving protection outcomes, it is not aimed at achieving them. Furthermore, it mainly focuses on collaboration within the humanitarian system.

Nexus approaches may include protection integration, which is aimed at incorporating protection objectives into programmes of non-protection sectors to address specific protection risks or violations and achieve protection outcomes. While protection integration normally focuses on humanitarian programming, it may provide opportunities for nexus cooperation in situations where actors have a dual humanitarian and development mandate.

# 5 Key issues to consider

- For protection actors, the starting point and ultimate goal of any nexus approach is to achieve protection outcomes and lasting solutions. These may relate to gender-based violence (GBV), child protection, mine action, housing, land and property (HLP) or any other protection issues.

- The effectiveness of the approach will depend on whether the general context is conducive for collaboration and alignment with humanitarian, development, peace and other actors. Situations of acute armed conflict, for example, may not be favourable for addressing root causes and considering longer-term solutions.

- A successful approach will also depend on whether the specific protection issues can be addressed in the particular context. As an example, issues relating to the protection of civilians, peacebuilding or freedom of movement may benefit from a nexus approach in conflict situations, through collaboration with peace, security, human rights and non-state actors.

- A key component of the approach is for the various actors - including relevant authorities and affected populations - to sit together at the same table. This simple act can allow protection actors gain insights into non-protection or non-humanitarian aspects of issues that need to be addressed, but also in how objectives and plans can realistically be translated into

effective programmes. It may additionally broaden the pool of technical, human and financial resources protection actors could tap into.

- Protection actors may, in some contexts (e.g., conflict situations), be limited in their collaboration with development, peace and security actors by their commitment to the humanitarian principles of neutrality, independence, impartiality and humanity. However, opportunities for cooperation still remain, as actors from all pillars strive for the well-being of persons and recognise the importance of conflict-sensitive programming and the principle to do no harm.

- Protection actors must maintain and advocate for protection space in any context of cooperation. They should ensure in their collaboration with development, peace and security actors that:

  - *Protection response and services are directed to the most vulnerable.*
  - *Access to people at risk is not compromised.*
  - *Affected populations are not put at greater risk.*
  - *They remain neutral and impartial at all times.*

- Where appropriate and applicable, national laws may be invoked, if humanitarian principles are not being respected (e.g., national human rights provisions, policies for Internally Displaced Persons -IDPs-, etc.).

- Experience from field operations reveals that the nexus approach tends to be more successful when it is focused on a specific area or location and locally driven. A decentralised approach enables a more comprehensive knowledge of the socio-economic context, as well as local political and power dynamics. Local authorities (such as mayors) are also more inclined to consider the needs of the entire community - especially if they are elected to their position. Existing relationships with communities and unimpeded access to local authorities are additional factors that can facilitate a nexus approach in an area-based setting.

- Through this approach, protection is recognized as a core element of humanitarian work addressing protection problems and creating conditions conducive for durable solutions that are recognized as essential in development and peacebuilding efforts.

**Box 1:**
## An approach, not an objective

*It is key to bear in mind that the nexus is an approach, not an objective. The goal is, therefore, not to 'achieve nexus', but rather use the approach to reduce multi-dimensional risks, threats and vulnerabilities over time. As such, discussions on initiating the approach should not focus on when to apply 'the nexus', but on whether sustainable solutions can be found for root causes of specific protection issues in a given context.*

Photo credit: © UNHCR/Nana Kofi Acquah

# 6 Ways for protection actors to apply and engage in nexus processes

## Scenario A:

*Using the nexus approach to solve protection issues*

### Step 1.

**Prioritise one or two prevalent protection issues that require holistic solutions beyond humanitarian response:**

- These could be issues that are reflected in humanitarian frameworks such as protection strategies of Humanitarian Country Teams (HCT), Humanitarian Response Plans (HRPs), protection cluster strategies, etc., but could also be systemic protection issues that are not included in such frameworks.

## Step 2.

**Conduct targeted and in-depth analysis of underlying and root causes[2]:**

- Look for nuances and interconnected details that go beyond a basic analysis of cause and effect (who is at risk, why and how) and also look at when, where and why relations broke down, or processes and systems failed. Examine deeper linkages between drivers and potential triggers of crises and risk patterns. Outline root causes and contributing factors of vulnerability that are entrenched in social, political, economic, historic inequalities and discrimination within populations, as well as across groups and communities.

- If not already completed, conduct a comprehensive conflict analysis in crisis situations, including a stakeholder analysis detailing the roots of existing power dynamics, how they trigger or affect the conflict and their impact on the affected population.

**The in-depth analysis could start by consolidating existing data and analyses from humanitarian and non-humanitarian sources, such as:**

- *Protection Analytical Framework (PAF), Joint Intersectoral Analysis Frameworks (JIAF) and Humanitarian Needs Overviews (HNO).*
- *Context, conflict and human rights analyses.*
- *Peace agreements or peacebuilding plans.*
- *Protection of civilian strategies and Integrated Strategic Frameworks (ISF) - if developed in the context.*
- *Common Country Assessments (CCAs) and the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF).*
- *National and regional development plans (including urban development plans).*
- *Country strategies developed with bilateral donors or multilateral development banks.*
- *National and local poverty assessments.*
- *National IDP policies.*
- *National, regional and local disaster risk reduction (DRR) strategies.*
- *Gender and vulnerability analyses.*

- Conduct bilateral consultations with local actors, relevant government authorities and a diverse range of key informants from affected communities for deeper insights. National staff with comprehensive knowledge of the context or extended operational experience are additional valuable sources of information that are insufficiently tapped into.

[4] Protection Analytical Framework (PAF): The PAF Guidance is essential for the in-depth analysis.

- Consult a wider range of groups within the affected population - with particular focus on groups that are considered vulnerable - on the kind of solutions, measures or interventions that would reduce or end the protection risks, threats or violations; as well as on measures that would enhance their capacity to cope with them in a sustained manner. The different groups should be inclusive and could involve displaced persons and host communities, women and youth groups, racial or ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities, older people, social clubs, LGBTQI+ communities, etc.

## Step 3.

**Formulate sustainable outcomes or solutions for prioritised protection issues:**

- Outline the protection solutions or outcomes that need to be attained, including the components of the root causes and underlying factors that would need to be addressed to durably resolve the specific protection issues. This will help protection actors identify the relevant actors to address the various components of the issues and frame discussions.

> **Example:** the root causes of recurrent violent clashes in a region of a country may be grounded in discrimination, economic and political marginalisation of the dominant ethnic group; resulting in under-development and poverty in the region and manifesting in lack of access to basic services, livelihood and employment opportunities. Achieving a general protection outcome of, for example, sustained safety and security in the region, would require that the various components of the root causes are tackled (e.g., inequalities, exclusion and deprivation).

- The outcomes or solutions should go beyond day-to-day protection response and service provision and be guided by the thorough analysis of underlying factors and root causes, together with the solutions suggested by the affected people and communities. Consider underlying and contributing factors that are too sensitive to be shared externally, as they tend to be the exact sticking points that need to be addressed to achieve solutions.

- Formulating outcomes ahead of discussions with potential actors allows interventions to be centred around protection outcomes, rather than overall needs. It also enables protection actors to maintain focus on what they aim to achieve among themselves and would like to achieve as a group when they start engaging with other actors.

- Collaboration would be based on each of the actors committing to address the relevant components of root causes, underlying and contributing factors. Deliberations with the different actors should help shape the solutions or outcomes further and determine whether the components can realistically be achieved over time in the given context.

**Components of outcomes and solutions could include:**

- *Resolving housing, land and property (HLP) issues through dispute resolution, recognition of historical or traditional land ownership, land restitution and land reform.*
- *Striving to end protracted displacement through an integrated programming approach in areas of return, resettlement or local integration, including, for example, access of IDPs in urban settings to social housing and municipal services.*
- *Tackling root causes of gang violence through a comprehensive social cohesion programme and creating inclusive and equitable economic and employment opportunities.*
- *Ensuring access to documentation for IDPs and other vulnerable or excluded groups by strengthening institutional mechanisms for registration, issuance and replacement.*
- *Sustainably addressing the adverse impact of climate change, such as scarcity of natural resources causing periodic clashes among nomad and farmer communities as a result of competition over water, grazing and farming land.*
- *Addressing chronic vulnerability of communities or groups at risk in recurrent natural disasters through resilience-building interventions that strengthen the capacity of all groups that could be affected to withstand climate shocks; including, for example, gender-sensitive early warning systems, disaster risk reduction measures that mitigate and address forced displacement, or preventive measures to protect sectors that could be affected, to avoid loss of employment and livelihoods.*

## Step 4.

**Decide whether the context is conducive to addressing root causes through joint action:**

- Confirm whether the components of the formulated protection outcomes can be addressed in the specific context.

**Some questions to consider:**

***Is the security situation stable enough for safe collaboration and possible interventions without endangering the lives of potential actors and affected people, or create harm?***

***Is there any form of dialogue between national and local authorities, humanitarian and development actors, civil society organisations (CSOs) and the private sector that is conducive to collaboration?***

- *Are there environmental risks that should be taken into consideration?*
- *Is the political environment adequately stable and conducive for collaboration with national or local authorities on the protection issues and root causes?*
- *What is the role and capacity of the government? Is it, for example, committed to addressing or solving identified issues, or does it have a budget to contribute to programmes and interventions?*
- *Is rule of law established? What is the role of courts, justice and enforcement?*
- *Are appropriate actors present in the specific context who could be engaged for interventions (e.g., peace, security or disaster risk management actors)?*
- *Do donors (the private sector included) acknowledge the developmental needs of, for example, displaced persons and host communities? Are they willing to provide long-term funding?*

- Consider alternative approaches if the context does not enable broader collaboration with non-humanitarian actors for addressing root causes of prioritised protection issues (e.g., joint collaboration with other humanitarian actors).

## Step 5.

**Identify relevant actors:**

- Seek out actors who are committed and can achieve results. This can be an initial small group of technical and programme level actors who have the capacity, expertise and resources to address components of root causes and underlying factors of the specified protection issues. Other actors may be induced to join efforts if progress is made.

- If required, conduct a mapping exercise of all available actors in the context to obtain an overview of the potential pool of actors. The exercise should provide information about who is doing what, where, when and may include relevant national and local authorities; local Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs); CSOs; relevant networks of the affected people; development, peace and human rights actors; the private sector; financial institutions; bilateral donors; faith-based organisations, networks of the diaspora, etc.

- Bringing actors on board may require buy-in and involve a relationship of trust, built over time. Actors are likely to collaborate on a common prevailing issue, or on issues of mutual interest. This may involve protection risks or violations that impact programmes of non-protection and non-humanitarian actors. As an example, limitation in freedom of movement could limit opportunities to earn income, which might affect the ability to meet basic needs and result in health issues.

**Ways of obtaining buy-in from actors could include:**

***Underlining the common goal of striving for self-reliance, -sufficiency and resilience of affected people and communities.***

***Emphasising that collaboration could be cost-effective and allow limited resources to be used efficiently and sustainably.***

- *Highlighting how interventions would contribute to achieving their own objectives.*
- *Pointing out the ultimate impact joint interventions could have on the local economy or national resources (e.g., using the diversity and employment potential of young urban IDP population as leverage towards authorities and the private sector).*

- Establish links with actors in relevant geographical areas, whose activities align with components of the prioritised protection issues. Consider actors that have been suggested by local actors and the affected people.

- Prioritise and invest in local actors under the different pillars, whenever possible. Local actors can commit to long-term engagement in multi-year interventions, while their proximity and cultural affinity to affected people enable meaningful access. They generally maintain presence when humanitarian access of international actors is impeded, often becoming the sole providers of protection response and services.[5] Their continued presence and operations in times of political upheaval also ensure continuity and some form of constancy; particularly in situations where the national government gets overturned and local authorities are replaced.

- Include affected people and communities as key partners in initiatives to reduce or end their vulnerability. They may be able to set-up and manage community-based ventures. Enable them to play a significant role in the entire cycle of planning, programming, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. This gives affected communities shared responsibility and accountability for interventions to succeed. It also enhances positive outcomes and increases the chances that programmes are continued, when external support is withdrawn.

## Box 2:
### Community-based nexus approach - Somalia

*The Midnimo (unity) project in Somalia – designed as part of the Peacebuilding Priority Plan for Somalia 2016–19 and led by the Federal Government of Somalia, South West*

[5] E.g., due to deterioration of the security situation, or practical access constraints in the aftermath of a climate-change related disaster.

*and Jubaland States' Ministries of Interior, and jointly implemented by IOM, UN-Habitat and UNDP - has linked a community-based planning approach to a multi-dimensional community-driven response to displacement and instability. Communities and local authorities establish community action plans that are shared with local authorities, who then use them to coordinate the actions of other humanitarian and development actors. The Midnimo programme has gradually built synergies with other stabilisation and health programmes (e.g., mobile clinics, provision of medical supplies to maternal health and child clinics, etc.), which adopt an area-based approach. The programmes all place government counterparts at the forefront to ensure that it is credited for the outputs delivered. The programme is also being used as a means to deliver upon the outcomes of political reconciliation processes, by building on them and helping conflict parties deliver peace dividends to their constituents. The approach is conducted with mediation support from UNSOM in Balcad and Galkayo.*

**Source:** *Operationalizing the Humanitarian–Development–Peace Nexus: Lessons learned from Colombia, Mali, Nigeria, Somalia and Turkey – IOM, 2019.*

## Step 6.

**Decide on who should address what and when:**

- Bring identified actors together to decide which components of the prioritised protection issues can realistically be addressed to achieve envisaged protection solutions or outcomes. Clarify why they have been brought to the table and the reasons for selecting the identified protection issues. Share the results of the performed analysis on underlying factors and root causes.

- Ensure that all actors have a shared understanding of the general and protection context, their dynamics, how they impact affected people. It should be agreed from the onset that any form of collaboration will be guided by context-specificity, conflict-sensitivity, a do-no-harm and rights-based approach and that protection space will be respected by all.

- Collectively deliberate on the interventions and steps that will be required to address relevant components to reach desired outcomes, guided by the provided suggestions from the affected people and the dynamics and sensitivities of the context. The focus must be on feasible, achievable interventions that can, preferably, be translated into measurable objectives, spanning a timeframe of - on average - 3 to 5 years. Medium and long-term interventions may be initiated simultaneously with short-term interventions.

- Adjust, if required, the formulated protection outcomes to ensure that they are achievable and measurable.

- Outline:
  - *The level at which interventions will be undertaken (i.E., Individual, household, community, regional, national level, etc.).*
  - *How they will be layered or sequenced to have the best impact.*
  - *Assumptions.*
  - *The timeframe of actions.*
  - *Expected results.*

It should be clear to all actors how interventions and planned steps are linked to each other and to the protection outcomes.

**Questions to consider:**

***Should on-going protection activities be adjusted, following created linkages with other interventions?***

***How can local ownership be best supported, including through strengthening capacities of local institutions?***

- *Are local culture and strategies being respected?*
- *What are the positive opportunities that can be built on?*
- *What are the most cost-efficient options?*
- *How can potential negative impacts be best avoided or mitigated?*

- Each actor should indicate which of the interventions they can address based on their specific strengths, mandate, expertise, available resources and mode of operation, and specify how results will be achieved.

- Actors should be encouraged to take on interventions that are similar to those they are already implementing; or reorient existing ones, if their capacity and resources allow. This will help avoid fragmentation and duplication of efforts and allow a more efficient use of available resources.

- Outline how results will be measured over time, including baseline indicators and progress milestones (see also **step 8** on measuring progress). Ensure operational space to adjust interventions, if required.[6] Agreed course of actions and decisions could be outlined in a straightforward joint action-, workplan, or results framework, functioning as the joint accountability tool for all partners.[7]

[6] E.g., based on monitoring, feedback from the affected population, change in risks patterns, etc.
[7] See e.g.: Results-Based Management Handbook – UNDP (2011) and The Results-Based Approach-ICRC (2008)

- The entire process of collective reflection and decision-making can enhance joint vision and create mutual understanding of the specific role each actor can play and their respective responsibilities and capacities. Possible power dynamics or organisational interests can be navigated by setting clear roles and responsibilities, emphasising substantive objectives and shared goals, maintaining an operational focus and working closely with the affected population.

- In this particular scenario, the overall process should be coordinated by the Protection Cluster, as the aim for collaboration is to reach protection outcomes. Organisational and administrative tasks can be shared by all actors; including - where feasible - through a rotation system. Keep processes to a minimum, in order to enhance programming and action. As such, only retain a minimum of required structures for coordination and align - where appropriate - processes with existing ones, (e.g., with forums that are attended by the same set of actors). Coordination can also take the form of periodic and ad hoc meetings, as required throughout the entire cycle of planning, programming, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

**Box 3:**
## Example of sequenced interventions to achieve durable solutions to protracted displacement – Darfur, Sudan

*In Um Dukhun, a rural town in Central Darfur, a holistic approach was adopted to implement programmes to achieve durable solutions to displacement, by addressing conflicts between farmers, pastoralists and nomad communities over lack of natural resources, such as water, grazing and farming land, as well as addressing cyclical drought and poverty. Interventions first focused on activities to ensure sustained access to water for livestock consumption, the irrigation of vegetables and fruit farms, as well as for human usage during the rainy, winter and dry season. Sustained access to water would then enable implementation of activities for sustainable, improved agricultural and livestock productivity, which would consequently increase farm and livestock products.*

*Income-generation was a key cross-cutting element in the approach, as stable, continuous resources and income are crucial to long-term self-sustainability and -reliance. The programmes were therefore developed with income and profit-generating components, ranging from generating proceeds from water levies, to focusing on cash crops, establishing value chains, providing access to markets and linking up with the private sector for employment opportunities for the youth and profitable economic ventures. Proceeds from these income-generating activities could subsequently be used to contribute to government initiatives for ensuring access to basic services such as health and education, but also be spent on improving community assets, such as roads, markets, etc. Capacity-building was another cross-cutting component in the programme. It was integrated in activities concerning the construction of dams, irrigation systems, water pumps and their maintenance; and included knowledge-building in agricultural techniques and maintaining the health of livestock. Natural resource management and the sustainable use of natural resources were integrated in the programmes to prevent conflicts related to natural*

*resources. Access to water and community services were to be extended to nomad and pastoralist communities, who would also be included in local coordination mechanisms. Community-based conflict resolution mechanisms were to be set up to address potential conflicts.*

*The communities committed to contribute financial, material, human and in-kind resources to the implementation of the programmes, while the local mayor committed to provide:*

- *Police officers to ensure security; health and education personnel for health and education facilities.*
- *Technical government personnel for water and agriculture interventions.*
- *Financial contribution to the implementation of the programmes.*

**Source:** *ProCap Durable Solutions Advisor in Sudan, 2018.*

## Step 7.

**Identify possibilities for funding:**

- There is no funding attached to the nexus, as it is an approach and not a policy, project or programme. As such, there is no specific mechanism dealing with nexus financing. However, using the comparative technical advantage of the various actors to carry out interventions and programmes provides the possibility to spread resources and costs, allowing a more efficient use of available funds.

- Actors who commit to undertake components of planned interventions are expected to have the financial resources to do so. Some may already be implementing similar activities that can be aligned with. Others may have readily available funds for implementation, or be able to mobilise required resources through their own mechanisms.

- The envisaged average time frame for achieving outcomes and results under the nexus approach is three to five years, but in most cases reducing risks, vulnerabilities, strengthening capacities and improving resilience are unlikely to be achieved in that time frame. Aligning resources, securing funding continuity over a longer period of time and avoiding gaps between humanitarian and development funding streams may form a challenge.

- Conduct, if required, a financial analysis for clarity on available sources (public, private, domestic and international) and different mechanisms in the context. The analysis may be useful for mapping and aligning funding and financing against agreed objectives. Practical approaches that are broadly accepted by partners have proven to be effective. The analysis could also be used to advocate for timely allocation of required funds for interventions.

- Look into development, humanitarian and peace programme funding streams - e.g., through aid information management systems (AIMS)[8] - that provide information on who is funding what, where, and for how long.

- Examine opportunities for flexible, unearmarked, multi-year funding in the respective funding mechanisms of actors across the pillars. The type of financial resources that can be tapped into will differ per context and shift according to the time-frame of interventions. Involve in-country, regional bilateral donors and IFIs early on as partners in a nexus process, rather than as just 'funders'. This allows them to support the process more meaningfully over the medium to long term.[9]

| Short-term | Medium-term | Longer-term |
|---|---|---|
| Funding through humanitarian appeals in:<br>• Humanitarian Response Plans (HRPs)<br>• Central Emergency Respond Fund (CERF)<br>• Country-Based Pooled Funds (CBPF)<br>• Bilateral donors | • Stabilisation and peacebuilding funds<br>• Bilateral or multi-donor support for programmes<br>• Pooled funding mechanisms<br>• Funds from international financial institutions (IFIs) | International and national development funding mechanisms:<br>• Joint Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Funds<br>• Funding windows under the Official Development Assistance (ODA)<br>• Resilience funds, disaster risk reduction (DRR) funding instruments for climate related crises<br>• IFIs<br>• Bilateral or multi-donor support for programmes |

- Consider national and local budgets (e.g., linked to development plans, peace agreements, devolution packages, reconstruction or stabilisation programmes). Accessibility to national funds may, however, be limited in contexts where government practices in budget prioritisation and allocation are part of the root causes of inequality and vulnerability in the country.

- Make use of resources from less traditional sources like CSOs, the private sector, remittances networks, the diaspora, faith-based organisations, as well as the affected people and communities. They can contribute to programme implementation with know-how (e.g. on the use of effective traditional materials), labour, skills, financial and other resources: see

[8] Aid information management systems (AIMS) provide data about the aid that donors are providing to a country. It is generally owned by governments. The OCHA Financial Tracking System (FTS) is an example of an aid information management system, though not owned by the government.
[9] Bilateral donors are increasingly structuring their internal funding instruments to provide more flexibility and coherence across humanitarian, transitional, stabilisation and development priorities.

the example in Darfur in **box 3**. Another example is that of Nigeria, where local women in a remote area raised funds and purchased a car to transport pregnant women to hospital in cases of emergency: The vehicle that got a village smiling.

- Investing in local structures and capacities may also allow programmes to be handed over to national institutions in contexts that are transitioning out of the humanitarian phase (e.g., national human rights commission, legal aid services, or decentralised ministries and municipalities).

## Step 8.

**Measure progress and success:**

- Measuring progress and success in a nexus collaboration should focus on the objectives of the interventions that need to be achieved, thus not on the approach itself. How objectives will be measured and monitored must be decided during the planning and design phase of the intervention (**see Step 6**).

- Partners that are already carrying out interventions will most probably have monitoring systems in place, while others may use established frameworks under their respective pillars. Results could be directly pulled from existing systems and fed into a simplified collective monitoring mechanism to measure progress over time. This may be in the form of a results framework, aligned to relevant planning frameworks.

- Make use of flexible monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, as the situation on the ground may evolve rapidly. Particularly in conflict settings, violence may unexpectedly flare up and (re)shift the focus to humanitarian response, bringing development interventions to a standstill.

- Consider frameworks that go beyond measuring results through SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timebound) indicators and include those reflecting change or transformation,[10] such as SPICED indicators (see below).

**SPICED** Indicators are used when collecting subjective Information related to change.
They should be:

| | |
|---|---|
| **Subjective** | Contributors have a special position or experience that gives them unique insights which may yield a high return on the evaluators' time. What may be seen by others as "anecdotal" becomes critical data because of the source's value. |

[10] See also: Measuring protection outcomes: Emerging efforts and new opportunities – InterAction, 2021

| | |
|---|---|
| **Participatory** | Indicators should be developed together with those best placed to assess them. This means involving a project's ultimate beneficiaries, but it can also mean involving local staff and other stakeholders. |
| **Interpretable** | Locally defined indicators may be meaningless to other stakeholders, so they often need to be explained. |
| **Cross-checked and compared** | The validity of assessment needs to be cross-checked and compared, by comparing different indicators and progress, and by using different informants, methods and researchers. |
| **Empowering** | The process of setting and assessing Indicators should be empowering in itself and allow groups and individuals to reflect critically on their changing situation. |

**Source:** *Programme/project management: The results-based approach – ICRC, 2008.*

- Conduct continuous monitoring – including context and, where relevant, conflict-sensitive monitoring - to identify challenges and changes in patterns of risk, threat and vulnerability during implementation. Adapt interventions accordingly and avoid or mitigate unintended adverse effects.
- Involve affected people and communities in monitoring activities, as they are the ultimate judge of whether objectives are being achieved. Consult them through perception surveys and participatory mechanisms for feedback and complaints. Clarify how their comments and suggestions are being used to further shape interventions.

**Example:** The Everyday Peace Indicators Approach is an example of a bottom-up, participatory approach that can assist communities, practitioners, and policymakers in understanding and tracking changes in difficult-to-measure concepts like peace, reconciliation, governance and violent extremism.

## Box 4:
### Coupling context monitoring to pooled fund mechanism - Somalia

*In Somalia, a consortium of seven INGOs (Action Against Hunger, ADRA, CARE, COOPI, DRC, Oxfam, and World Vision) formed the Somalia Resilience Program (SomReP) to respond to the 2011 famine in Somalia. The consortium developed a system based on Early Warning Committees that have been trained to monitor indicators and develop contingency plans in their own communities for rapid onset (floods, conflict) and slow onset (drought, climate change) disasters. The consortium has been able to analyse information and act in a timely manner by linking the community level monitoring of indicators to regional early warning systems of food security and nutrition networks, through radio and SMS. SomReP, has coupled its Early Warning System context monitoring system with a pooled funding mechanism for Early Action.*

**Source:** *Operationalizing the Humanitarian–Development–Peace Nexus: Lessons learned from Colombia, Mali, Nigeria, Somalia and Turkey – IOM, 2019.*

Photo credit: © UNHCR/Nana Kofi Acquah

## Scenario B:

### *Engaging in initiated nexus processes*

- Nexus processes that are initiated by protection actors enable them to steer the process and ground the approach in protection. They may, however, lack the capacity to initiate the process, or face challenges in incentivising actors to join efforts. Protection actors should, therefore, also explore opportunities to engage in ongoing nexus approaches.
- Entry points for collaboration could be:

  - *Joint initiatives to formulate collective outcomes.*
  - *Activities conducted through durable solutions working groups (DSWGs) and nexus task forces.*
  - *Activities by dedicated nexus-, durable solutions- and development advisors.*
  - *Humanitarian Needs Overview and Humanitarian Response Plans: Through this planning process, collective priority needs and objectives are a means for collaboration with different actors;*
  - *Development Pillar: The common country analysis (CCA) and UN Development Frameworks enable the review of development priorities and incorporate the development, peacebuilding and humanitarian issues/priorities.*

- Secure access to the appropriate coordination bodies or individuals, whatever the entry point.
- Determine how the cluster could contribute to the process and interventions, depending on the collective focus and strategy for the process.
- Incorporate appropriate collective priorities and activities in relevant planning frameworks, such as the HRP, if not already done.

**Questions to guide decisions may include:**[11]

***Does the cluster have capacity and resources to join efforts in implementing programmes or activities?***

***Could the cluster benefit from activities in geographical areas where it has access or presence (e.g., area- and community based approaches)?***

- *Are issues being addressed that are relevant to the cluster? Do they, for example, overlap with priorities and activities reflected in the protection cluster strategy, HRP, HCT protection strategy or other protection planning frameworks?*
- *Has a conflict-sensitive and do no harm approach been adopted?*
- *Can protection space be maintained?*

[11] These questions are for guidance only and not exhaustive.

- Incorporate appropriate collective priorities and activities in relevant planning frameworks, such as the HRP, if not already done.

## The various steps in a nexus process:

# 7 Cooperating with development and peace actors

Some pointers are highlighted below on engaging with development and peace actors.

**Engaging with development actors**

- Development approaches are generally aligned with national priorities, which can lead to initiatives that are more political oriented. This may go against humanitarian principles and impede access to communities and acceptance by non-state actors.

- Some actors have dual humanitarian and development mandate and are, therefore, one and the same in many contexts. This provides good opportunities for nexus collaboration, but may also blur the lines in respecting humanitarian space and principles.

- Development actors are often already present in a country when disasters strike and may have a range of partnerships in place that can facilitate nexus collaboration.

- Development actors (including the private sector) tend to operate in stable environments,[12] but are increasingly 'staying and delivering' in crisis situations and refocusing longer-term programming efforts on community and whole of society approaches, including in contexts with no legitimate state authority.

- Humanitarian assistance tends to overtake the responsibilities of the government in emergencies where immediate response is required to save lives and the needs of affected communities exceed the capacity of the government to respond. In protracted crises, this may be seen as eroding ownership of the government, national and local institutions and should be avoided. Efforts should, therefore, be joined with government authorities and aligned with existing national frameworks, wherever feasible.

- Unlike the humanitarian system, the development sector has no overall coordination structure and usually coordinates programmes through technical government lead ministries. While development actors are increasingly joining nexus approaches, some actors may prefer to nurture relationships with national authorities and see less value in nexus coordination processes. This may make it difficult in some contexts to get development actors to join nexus processes and support them with resources. Protection actors should, in such cases, join development coordination processes.

[12] E.g., where rule of law or government institutions have been established.

**Some suggestions on how to link up with development actors:**

- Track the actors and donors behind development aid flows, including ODA funding in a country - accessible at Development - OECD.
- Participate in coordination structures that have been put in place by the government for development cooperation.
- Look into committees, working groups and ad hoc sub-groups established under national development plans and bilateral development cooperation strategies.
- Join forums or working groups that have been established by the UN Resident Coordinator (RC) and brings together bilateral and multilateral partners.
- Connect with development, nexus or durable solutions advisors attached to agencies, organisations or government, to provide entry points for collaboration and ensure a seat at the table of relevant coordination mechanisms.
- Invite actors to Protection Cluster meetings, where appropriate.
- Link up with area- or community-based development initiatives.

**Engaging with peace actors**

- The peace component in nexus refers to peacebuilding, conflict prevention and resolution. They involve activities at community level with actors that can influence or shape behaviour (e.g., community leaders, CSOs, faith-based organisations, local authorities, etc). Peace initiatives can also take the form of long-term investments to, for example, build the capacity of institutions to ensure access to justice, address conflicts over natural resources, provide equitable services to all groups in the society, etc. These approaches are often supported through development cooperation and enables linkages with development actors.

- Security and stabilisation are other elements of the nexus peace component. These include UN peacekeeping and special political missions, mandated by the Security Council (SC). Their activities are often political and military in nature and can limit engagement by protection actors.[13] Collaboration may still be possible, depending on the context and risks involved. As an example, political engagement could be required to advocate for humanitarian access, or respect for international humanitarian law (IHL). Protection actors also often rely on the extensive context and conflict analyses that are periodically produced by peace actors for protection analysis and monitoring.

- Protection actors should ensure that clear distinction is made between political and humanitarian objectives when dealing with peace actors under this component and ensure that protection space, IHL and human rights law are respected at all times.

[13] As an example, in some contexts security actors in peacekeeping missions conduct humanitarian activities to 'win the hearts and minds' of the local population for security and political purposes. This can lead to humanitarian actors not being perceived as neutral and affected people considered as 'traitors' and consequently targeted in attacks.

- In contexts with an integrated peacekeeping or special political mission, collaboration with UN peace actors is often governed by an Integrated Strategic Framework (ISF), which includes results from joint assessments, shared objectives and how national peacebuilding processes can be supported. The ISF is drawn up by the UN Country Team (UNCT) and the mission. Individual agencies can also establish bilateral agreements with the mission.[14]

- Protection actors may be involved in transition processes that are triggered by the drawdown or withdrawal of peacekeeping missions. The process is led by the UNCT, which develops transition plans with the broader international community. They address - among other things - how peacebuilding efforts will be continued and how identified long-term resource requirements will be filled.

- Protecting civilians in conflict situations may call for collaboration with actors within and outside the remit of peacekeeping operations. This may involve state and non-state actors and organisations such as the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). Long-term initiatives to protect civilians (such as security sector reform and establishing the rule of law in a country) draw on the expertise and capacity of a wide range actors (e.g., political, security, humanitarian, human rights and development actors), which may facilitate a nexus approach.

**Some suggestions on how to link up with peace actors:**

- Link up with human rights advisors, protection and protection of civilian advisors or coordinators in UN peacekeeping missions: invite them to Protection Cluster meetings and join their coordination bodies, if present in the operation.
- Participate in coordination meetings on the implementation of integrated strategic frameworks or peace initiatives.
- Connect and maintain relations with humanitarian civil-military coordination unit and actors.
- Connect and maintain relations with ICRC and organisations carrying out peace initiatives.
- Join area- or community-based stabilisation initiatives.

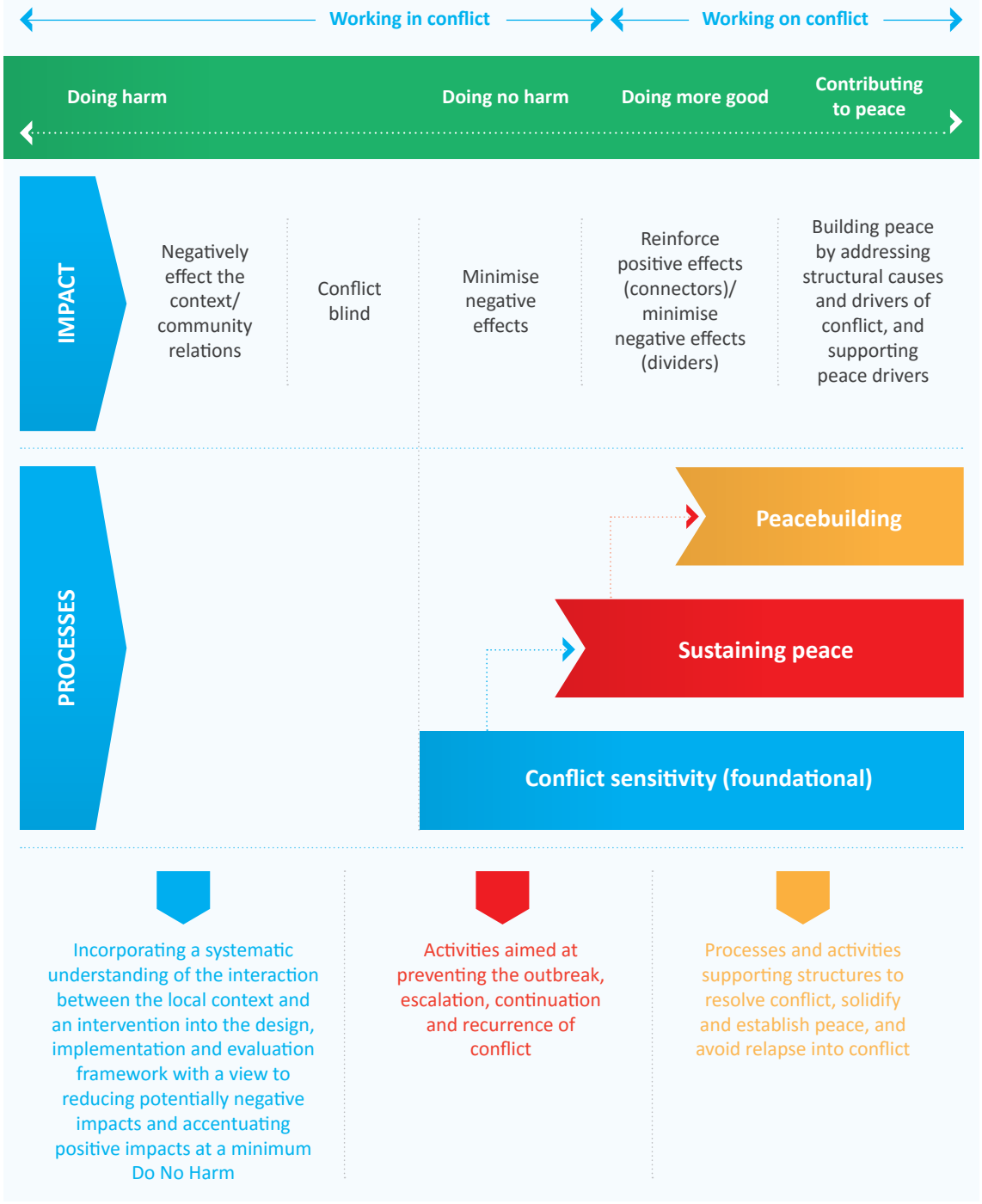
**Box 5:**
## Example of different approaches of humanitarian and development actors

*During a joint meeting with the Governor of Gambella (Ethiopia) the UNHCR officer asked: "Can we use your land for refugees?", while the representative from the World Bank asked: "What are your plans for your community and refugees?"*

**Source:** *Brown Bag session on UNHCR – World Bank collaboration, 9 December 2021.*

[14] E.g., in South Sudan, where collaboration between UNHCR and UNMIS is based on a Partnership Agreement.

## Box 6:
## Conflict sensitivity and do no harm approach in peace initiatives




**Source:** *Nexus Academy, adaptation from Global Affairs Canada & FAO resources.*

**Box 7:**
## Protection of civilians in UN peacekeeping operations

TIER I:

### Protection through dialogue and engagement

Tier I activities include active, structured and regular dialogue with perpetrators or potential perpetrators of violence against civilians; conflict resolution and mediation between parties to the conflict; advocating with the host government, its security institutions and other relevant actors to intervene to protect civilians; local conflict resolution and social cohesion activities; strategic communication; investigation; advocacy; reconciliation initiatives; reporting on human rights and protection concerns; and other initiatives that seek to protect civilians through communications, dialogue and direct or indirect engagement.

TIER II:

### Provision of physical protection

Tier II encompasses activities by all mission components to physically protect civilians, whether through protective presence, interpositioning, the threat or use of force, or facilitating safe passage or refuge. Notably, Tier II includes activities by uniformed components involving the show or use of force to prevent, deter, pre-empt and respond to threats to civilians. However, civilian mission components can also act as a protective presence through their regular, visible and direct engagement with civilian populations at risk.

TIER III:

### Establishment of a protective environment

Tier III activities are frequently programmatic in nature and designed with committed resources for peace- building and conflict prevention/ resolution objectives. Sometimes presented as separate mandated tasks under country-specific resolutions, activities under Tier III help create a protective environment for civilians, prevent the (re-)emergence of threats of physical violence, support the legitimacy of the host state and its capacity to protect civilians, and support the (re-)establishment of the rule of law and criminal justice chain.

**Source:** *Nexus Academy, adaptation from Global Affairs Canada & FAO resources*

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