

Issue Paper

EXPLORING PEACE WITHIN THE HUMANITARIAN- DEVELOPMENT-PEACE NEXUS (HDPN)

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Issue paper: Exploring peace within the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus (HDPN)

Executive summary

1. Crises require humanitarian, development and peace responses

Crises, whether they manifest as conflicts, disasters or socio-economic shocks often cannot be solved by one set of actions alone. Humanitarian, development and peace actions all have a role to play in many of these crises: humanitarian response to save lives and protect people, development assistance to address multi-dimensional structural challenges, and peace action to ensure that countries can sustain peace, i.e. prevent the outbreak, escalation, continuation and recurrence of conflict. That is why in conflict-affected and protracted crisis contexts, ensuring coherence, complementarity, and collaboration across the humanitarian-development-peace Nexus is so important in order to realize rights, reduce needs, vulnerabilities and risks, and address drivers and underlying causes of conflict over the long-term. A sequential approach has shown not to be an adequate solution, and synchronous humanitarian, development and peace actions are generally considered more effective.

In the context of collective outcomes, the IASC has recently used the following to describe the link with the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus (HDPN)¹: *"Humanitarian assistance, development cooperation and peacebuilding are not serial processes: they are all needed at the same time in order to reduce needs, risk and vulnerability. Collaboration can be achieved by working towards collective outcomes, over multiple years, based on the comparative advantage of a diverse range of actors. Collective outcomes have emerged as a strategic tool for humanitarians, development and peace actors to agree on a concrete and measurable result that they will jointly achieve in a country with the overall aim of reducing people's needs, risks and vulnerability. This has also been recognized by OECD DAC members when they put out their recommendations."*²

Collective outcomes are one entry point for collaboration and contributions to peace, and others exist. However, collaboration between humanitarian, development and peace actors must be context-specific and, particularly in situations of acute armed conflict, may not always be possible.

2. A wide range of peace actions are being delivered in crisis situations

Peace is not only about the absence of violence but also about sustaining peaceful societies - these situations are commonly referred to as negative and positive peace, respectively. We can sometimes distinguish between 'little p' actions focused on building the capacity for peace within societies, and 'Big P' actions that support and sustain political solutions and securitised responses to violent conflict. These actions may take the form of prevention, response or reinforcing peace and may focus on local level drivers and/or the deeper structural causes of conflict over the longer-term. A wide range of actors can be involved, depending on the context. These may include both national and international actors, from civil society to authorities as well as affected communities themselves, to peacekeepers, security sector

¹ No single agreed definition of the HDPN currently exists, but common tenets are a breadth of scope and a long-term frame of reference. For example, the OECD-DAC's definition of the purpose is: "...to reduce overall vulnerability and the number of unmet needs, strengthen risk management capacities and address root causes of conflict." (OECD DAC 2019). Throughout this paper the terms 'Nexus', 'HDP Nexus', 'HDPN' and 'Triple Nexus' are used interchangeably unless stated otherwise.

² IASC. 2020. Light guidance on collective outcomes.

reform actors, election and human rights advisors and others. Both ‘little p’ and ‘Big P’ approaches are relevant and important, but working through a ‘little p’ approach, in particular at the local level to address key drivers in the short-to-intermediate term, may create more opportunities across the HDPN, and also enables vulnerable populations to be targeted through direct programming.

3. All actions – humanitarian, development and peace – should engage in context and conflict analysis, and conflict-sensitive programming

Sharing context and conflict analyses and integrating conflict sensitivity approaches into programme and project design across humanitarian, development and peace actions can help avoid inadvertently undermining peace by creating perceptions of “winners” and “losers” among beneficiaries of assistance and resources. This can also help ensure a coherent and complementary approach across the Nexus and, where appropriate, have a positive impact on existing or potential conflict dynamics. The overall objective of collaboration between humanitarian, development and peace actors is to reduce people’s needs, risks and vulnerability by sequencing and layering their interventions in all contexts, each in line with their respective mandates.

4. Collaboration is not contrary to humanitarian principles

The humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence ensure that those most in need are assisted, particularly in conflict-affected settings, and that their rights and dignity are respected.³ Development and (positive) peace actions also share the commitment to humanity and follow complementary principles in terms of ‘do no harm’ and by integrating conflict-sensitive approaches. Humanitarian principles must be safeguarded, and humanitarian action primary focus is on addressing humanitarian needs. But humanitarians should also engage in conflict analysis, adopt conflict-sensitive programming, and collaborate with peace actors, where appropriate, to inform approaches which may ultimately contribute to peace outcomes.

Considering the importance of human rights based and people-centred approaches, and the fact that actions across all pillars have effects on each other, humanitarian, development and peace actors should develop the right level of collaboration required in each context. While in many contexts there are opportunities to advance collaboration between humanitarian, development and peace actors, the scope for collaboration might be limited in acute conflict situations by the need to abide by the principles of neutrality, independence and impartiality, and thus ensure unhindered humanitarian access to people in need. Whatever the context, collaboration must take place in a manner that neither undermines adherence to the humanitarian principles of independence and impartiality nor exposes populations affected or humanitarian workers to greater risks.

5. Implications for humanitarian programming

It is important that humanitarian actions are reflective of their impact on and potential contribution to longer-term actions to reduce humanitarian need, and how they link with efforts across the Nexus to forge a sustainable peace. Conflict-sensitivity, localization, context-specificity, rights-based approaches and sustainability, when put into action through targeted and complementary planning and programming across the Nexus, can become the building blocks for sustaining peace. To increase interactions across the HDPN, there are a range of options to consider, including:

³ https://www.unocha.org/sites/dms/Documents/OOM-humanitarianprinciples_eng_June12.pdf.

- Shared, joint or ‘joined-up’ context and conflict analyses across the Nexus
- Outcome-based planning, ideally based on collective outcomes⁴
- Flexible, responsive and agile programming that can adapt to an evolving context
- Increasing understanding of each other’s roles and responsibilities, activities and capacities and exchange of expertise by humanitarians of the development and peace actors, and vice versa
- Scaling up capacity for context and conflict analysis, and incorporating conflict-sensitivity into programme design
- Advocating for financing across humanitarian, development and peace programming, while safeguarding financing to respond to immediate humanitarian needs as they arise
- Adherence to the ‘do no harm’ principle as well as Accountability to Affected Populations, the centrality of protection⁵, ‘doing more good’ when possible, while responding to the local context and the voices and capacities of local people and communities

Section 1: Background and objective of the paper

Humanitarian need continues to grow, crises are increasingly protracted and largely driven by conflict: Conflict and violence are major drivers of humanitarian need, forced displacement, extreme poverty and hunger. Violent conflicts have become more protracted, the drivers and underlying causes more complex, increasingly have regional spill over effects, and involve more non-state actors.

*“Humanitarian action cannot prevent violent conflict, nor can it end humanitarian needs in the absence of political solutions to conflict”.*⁶ Major global processes and outcome documents, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the World Humanitarian Summit, the OECD DAC Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus, the New York Declaration on refugees and migrants, the twin resolutions on Sustaining Peace, and the Peace Promise have stressed that greater coherence across humanitarian, development and peace actions⁷ in conflict-affected and protracted crisis contexts is required. If enabled by political will to end conflict, greater coherence and coordination can help realize rights, reduce needs, vulnerabilities and risks, and address drivers and underlying causes of conflict over the long-term.

The UN and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) have made *leaving no one behind* and *ending needs* by reducing risks, vulnerabilities and drivers of conflict a shared commitment. The Joint Steering Committee to Advance

Box 1 - ‘Peace actions’

For the purpose of this paper, ‘peace actions’ refer to deliberate contributions to peace where sustaining peace is a principle objective, i.e. preventing the outbreak, escalation, continuation and recurrence of conflict, and addressing root causes and drivers.

(from UN Secretary General remarks to the Human Rights Council February 24 2020)

Peace actions are a comprehensive range of actions over the short-, intermediate- and long-term that contribute to preventing conflict and building, making, and sustaining peace.

⁴ Light guidance on collective outcomes, *op. cit.*

⁵ As set out in the IASC Policy on Protection in Humanitarian Action, 2016
<https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/protection-priority-global-protection-cluster/documents/iasc-policy-protection-humanitarian-action>

⁶ The Peace Promise, 2016
<https://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/Democratic%20Governance/Conflict%20Prevention/THE%20PEACE%20PROMISE%20v%203%201.pdf>

⁷ Includes tools, approaches and instruments. See Box 1.

Humanitarian and Development Collaboration, set up by the UN Secretary-General in 2017, specifically aims to include the important perspectives and contributions of peace and peace actors to ensure a more comprehensive approach to crises.

These bodies have adopted the concept of collective outcomes as a central approach to Nexus collaboration at the country level. Guidance developed by the UN and the IASC defines collective outcomes as follows: *“A collective outcome (CO) is a jointly envisioned result with the aim of addressing and reducing need, risk and vulnerabilities, requiring the combined effort of humanitarian, development and peace communities and other actors as appropriate. To be effective, the CO should be context specific, engage the comparative advantage of all actors and draw on multi-year timeframes. They should be developed through joint (or joined-up) analysis, complementary planning and programming, effective leadership/coordination, refined financing beyond project-based funding and sequencing in formulation and implementation.”*⁸

While the guidance specifically recognizes the importance of ensuring peace and prevention perspectives are built into collective outcomes, many questions remain and little consensus has emerged around what the ‘P’ means in the HDPN and what this looks like in practice.

There are limitations for the humanitarian sector in working more closely with some peace and security actors to ensure their assistance and protection is targeted to the most vulnerable, to not compromise access to people in need and to not expose affected populations or humanitarian workers to greater risk, or be perceived as anything but impartial and neutral. In practice, several countries have articulated collective outcomes based on joint analysis and as part of joined-up strategies and plans. While many countries recognize the importance of the peace dimension in collective outcomes, there is not yet sufficient experience from field implementation of peace related collective outcomes to date. This points to the need for further reflection on what the ‘P’ in this approach could look like.

Objective of the paper: This paper is not intended as a guide for field operations. The objective of this paper is to contribute to interagency reflections on what the Peace component of the HDPN might and can look like, with an emphasis on the possible engagement pathways along a ‘peace spectrum’, within humanitarian action. It has been said that while *“Others make peace, humanitarian action helps to make peace possible”*⁹. Collective outcomes are one possible form of collaboration and, building on the ‘Light Guidance on Collective Outcomes’ recently adopted by the IASC, further discussion will be required on how to operationalize humanitarian, development and peace collaboration. This paper will outline how humanitarian actors can ensure context and conflict analysis, and conflict-sensitivity in their own programming. The paper aims to provide clarity on the full spectrum of peace actions, in order to contribute to efforts to improve the complementarity, coordination and/or collaboration between humanitarian, development and peace actions. The common goal is to restore the safety, dignity and integrity, protect the rights of people affected by crisis, and reduce need, risk and vulnerability in the short-, medium- and the long-term, while avoiding negative consequences on conflict dynamics, recognizing that such actions may also have a greater indirect positive impact, including on peace.

Furthermore, the paper recognizes that collaboration does not intend an integration of roles, but can be undertaken whilst respecting mandates, roles and organizational independence. It also recognizes that humanitarian actors represent a range – from purely humanitarian to dual-mandated or government

⁸ Light guidance on collective outcomes, *op. cit.*

⁹ ICRC President Peter Maurer address, SIPRI Forum on Peace and Development, Stockholm, 14 May 2019 (<https://www.icrc.org/en/document/where-humanitarian-action-meets-peace-building>).

organizations – the latter of which may align themselves with peace objectives in a way that the former might not. In addition, it is recognized that any intervention along the HDP spectrum can have positive or negative impacts on conflict dynamics and peace just as actions in the peace pillar may have an impact on humanitarian or development work. Moreover, articulating and achieving peace objectives, whether as primary, secondary or indirect contributions does not necessarily require collaboration across the Nexus, especially when capacities exist within entities. Thus, this paper stresses the importance of conflict sensitivity¹⁰ and doing no harm as a minimum standard for working in protracted crisis and conflict-affected settings.

Intended audience: This issue paper is aimed at senior management as well as programme-level and programme development staff across the HDPN community (including UN agencies, NGOs, international, regional and bilateral organizations, donors, civil society, governments and businesses), all of whom hold the responsibility to effectively operationalize the HDPN to prevent and respond to protracted crises and fragility. This paper will provide a starting point for further discussions that are required between humanitarian, development and peace communities on how to operationalize the HDPN.

Section 2: The meaning of the ‘Peace’ component in the HDPN: the different elements of sustaining peace

In 2016 the General Assembly and the Security Council adopted the twin resolutions (A/RES/70/262 and S/RES/2282) which lay out a vision for ‘sustaining peace’ and describing the peace agenda in the most comprehensive and encompassing way to date:

“‘Sustaining peace’...should be broadly understood as both a goal and a process to build a common vision of a society, ensuring that the needs of all segments of the population are taken into account, which encompasses activities aimed at preventing the outbreak, escalation, continuation and recurrence of conflict”.

Sustaining peace is relevant during all stages of the conflict cycle – before, during and after – and includes a wide variety of possible interventions. As such, the concept of sustaining peace is an important reference point for this paper¹¹, recognizing that the concept is still evolving in its operationalization, “...while humanitarian action may support sustaining peace, the main purpose of humanitarian action will remain to address life-saving needs and alleviate suffering. Analysis and planning for sustaining peace should include humanitarian actors to ensure coherence and complementarity with other actors.”¹²

A priority on preventing crises, including violent conflict, was reiterated in the UN Secretary General’s *Prevention Agenda*¹³ and his *Call to Action for Human Rights*¹⁴ (2020).

While humanitarian action may support sustaining peace, it cannot be driven by a political end or purpose: to do so would risk politicizing humanitarian action and compromising the humanitarian principles that allow humanitarians to work and reach those in need. For humanitarian access to be sustained, it is crucial

¹⁰ The UN Sustainable Development Group *Guidance Note on Conflict Sensitivity, Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace* provides a definition of conflict sensitivity (forthcoming, 2020).

¹¹ As laid out in A/RES/70/262 and S/RES/2282.

¹² From the UN Sustainable Development Group *Guidance Note on Conflict Sensitivity, Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace*. This document provides definitions and clarifies the relationship between sustaining peace, peacebuilding and conflict sensitivity (forthcoming, 2020).

¹³ <https://www.un.org/sg/en/priorities/prevention.shtml>

¹⁴ <https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/statement/2020-02-24/secretary-generals-remarks-the-un-human-rights-council-%E2%80%9Cthe-highest-aspiration-call-action-for-human-rights-delivered-scroll-down-for-all-english>

that all stakeholders perceive humanitarian aid as neutral, impartial and independent from political activities. Joined-up efforts can undoubtedly benefit interventions as long as there is distinction between political and humanitarian agendas.

These policy frameworks recognize that peace actions make an important contribution to promoting and protecting human rights, building peaceful societies, bolstering recovery, and underpinning durable solutions and resilience over the longer-term by addressing the structural causes of violent conflict.

Element 1: Peace is not only the absence of violence: the concepts of negative and positive peace

The absence of overt, large-scale, or the fear of, violence is often referred to as ‘negative peace’. It can be politically negotiated and is often achieved through the establishment of the state having the monopoly on violence, and the use or threat of force, ceasefires or other enforcement measures. These can be mandated through Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, through actions undertaken by multilateral alliances (including UN peacekeeping missions or other security actions through entities such as NATO, G5 Sahel, African Union¹⁵ etc.), or through bilateral actions by member states.

‘Positive peace’ goes beyond the absence of overt violence. Positive peace comprises the attitudes, institutions and structures that create and sustain peaceful societies. It implies creating social relationships that contribute to mutual well-being, creating an optimum environment in which human potential can flourish. The same factors that create positive peace also lead to many other favourable outcomes that societies aspire to, such as thriving economies, inclusive development, low levels of inequality, and higher levels of resilience.

While negative peace reduces the immediate occurrence and impacts of violence, it also enables actions that support positive peace. Negative peace, for example, peace agreements and ceasefires achieved by diplomatic efforts and mediation efforts, can create space for humanitarian access and aid delivery, but can also support societal, political and peace processes, which can include reconciliation, promoting more inclusive and equitable social, political and economic outcomes, building social cohesion, and/or strengthening trust between the state and the population, and the rule of law and legitimacy.¹⁶

Negative and positive peace efforts are intrinsically interlinked and involve actions undertaken by a wide range of actors at different levels of society.¹⁷ Ensuring that multiple actors undertake their roles and responsibilities in a coherent, complementary and mutually reinforcing way is both the opportunity and the challenge posed by the HDPN approach. This requires a comprehensive understanding of the full range of actions and actors involved, the interactions among them, and the adequate prioritization, sequencing and layering of their actions.

The imperative to end violence and create the space for longer-term political and societal solutions invariably involves the engagement of security actors, including military and police forces, correctional officers, intelligence officers, and others. These actors can be engaged in a diverse set of activities such as peacekeeping, foreign military training, counterterrorism, counterinsurgency, policing and other enforcement activities.

¹⁵ The African Union currently operates the world’s largest peace operation.

¹⁶ For more information on the concepts of negative and positive peace, see Johan Galtung’s definitive *Peace by Peaceful Means: Peace and Conflict, Development and Civilization* (Galtung, 1996).

¹⁷ The concepts of direct and structural prevention are related. Direct prevention addresses the *symptoms* of conflict (violence), and structural prevention is more about addressing structural underlying conditions that are often the *root causes* of conflict, such as inequality and human rights abuses.

Security sector actions have the potential to positively or negatively impact humanitarian, development or peace-related programming and the likelihood of securing sustainable peace outcomes. Overly militarized or securitized responses frequently exacerbate grievances and drivers of conflict. For development and humanitarian action, security actions that contribute to ‘negative peace’ outcomes can facilitate access to vulnerable populations, as well as create the conditions for the resumption of economic activity, provision of basic services and extension of state authority.

Collaboration needs to be based on comparative advantage and within the limits of respective mandates, principles - and with respect for the mandates of others. Such an approach does not *necessarily* imply greater integration of the three ‘pillars’ of the Nexus. For example, more ‘joined-up’ analysis of humanitarian, development and peace issues, concerns and dynamics can ensure that there is a common understanding of the contextual dynamics, ensure coherence, complementarity and possibly synergies, promote conflict-sensitive decision-making and take better account of the need to build trust and cohesion at all levels.¹⁸

Element 2: The concept of ‘little p’ and ‘Big P’

Along the peace spectrum, activities contributing to sustaining peace can apply different approaches depending on the context and the specific objectives. Differentiating between ‘little p’ and ‘Big P’ peace approaches can help humanitarian actors and development partners understand where and how they may indirectly contribute to peace outcomes and collaborate with actors across the broad spectrum of peace interventions. However, it is important to note that, even with the examples listed below, whether a peace activity is ‘little p’ or ‘Big P’ is sometimes a matter of interpretation or implementation. These activities often overlap, and should reinforce one another to be effective.

‘Little p’ actions are focused on agency and the transformation of relationships, building capacities for peace and for conflict prevention and management within institutions and the broader society, which includes building trust and social cohesion. They usually involve actors (e.g. authorities, community leaders, civil society organizations, faith groups, and different population groups) that have an influence in shaping individual or collective behaviour when it comes to managing conflict and reducing violence, increasing trust in authorities at different levels, and improving inter-group relations. This may include activities to reduce violence in the short- and medium-term by designing and implementing interventions that mitigate immediate and anticipated triggers and risk factors for violence, including at the community level. Activities may focus on strengthening dispute resolution mechanisms, establishing rumour management committees between conflict groups, or addressing armed group recruitment. While these activities create enabling conditions for quick wins, they can also lead to larger changes that can influence broader dynamics along the peace spectrum at the sub-national or country level.

‘Little p’ activities may also be longer-term investments and focus on building the capacity and increasing accountability of institutions. These can be at various levels, such as making institutions more inclusive and responsive to the needs of all segments of the society; easing tensions and increasing trust between populations and the state including through equitable provision of social services and livelihood opportunities; addressing grievances over natural resources; promoting adherence to national reconciliation processes, etc. ‘Little p’ approaches are typically supported through development

¹⁸ Examples of successful efforts to ensure more complementary approaches can be found in the forthcoming OECD working paper, *Security Actors in Fragile Contexts* (OECD, 2020).

cooperation, and thus overlap with the development component of the Nexus, but can also be supported through other actions.

‘Big P’ interventions are related to the activities that are more directly aimed at a political solution or securitized response to violent conflict and may be supported by a UN Security Council mandate. They typically are at the national or regional level and could involve a peace agreement – though recognizing that ‘little p’ activities can also support an inclusive peace process that results in a peace agreement. These interventions are generally more visible as they might employ considerable means, including a large presence of foreign personnel (both military and civilian) on the ground. United Nations Peacekeeping and Special Political Missions are common examples of a ‘Big P’ intervention at country (or cross-border) level. ‘Big P’ interventions are typically higher profile than ‘little p’ activities.

‘Big P’ activities have declined in relative importance to ‘little p’ because of the changing nature of violent conflict and its increased complexity. Furthermore, horizontal and vertical inequalities have often been shown to be at the root of many conflicts, and these inequalities need to be addressed by interventions that often fall under ‘little p’. Since the end of the Cold War, formal peace agreements have declined; and the increase in asymmetric conflicts has meant that the necessity of using intrastate agreements has increased. Today’s peacekeeping operations, for example, are increasingly multidimensional. They are called upon not only to maintain peace and security, but also to facilitate political processes, protect civilians, assist in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) of former combatants, support constitutional processes and the organization of elections, protect and promote human rights, and assist in restoring the rule of law and extending legitimate state authority. At the same time, ‘little p’ initiatives can support peace agreements, negotiations and political dialogues.

Contributing to peace through ‘little p’ processes often implies working with institutions at the local, sub-national and national levels at the same time. While both ‘little p’ and ‘Big P’ approaches are relevant and important, working through a ‘little p’ approach, in particular at the local level, may create more opportunities across the HDPPN, and also enables vulnerable populations to be targeted through direct programming, creating a greater balance with state-focused interventions.

Element 3: Positive short/intermediate versus long-term peace – the imperative of conflict-sensitive programming

Humanitarian action respond to the impacts of shocks, both human-induced and natural disasters, and invest in preparedness actions.¹⁹ These interventions work *in conflict* to save and protect lives, alleviate suffering and maintain human dignity. Long-term durable solutions to protracted crises and forced displacement as well as transforming structural causes of conflict requires working *on conflict*. Both working *in* and *on conflict* must be conflict-sensitive, and ensure that structures, mechanisms and ways of working are designed in a way that facilitates – rather than impedes – other concurrent or future efforts that explicitly address conflict. Understanding conflict dynamics requires robust and regular context and conflict analysis to identify the interlinkages between systemic structural causes and the more visible conflict and peace drivers.

Conflict is inherent to all societies at the interpersonal, community and national levels, and originates from disagreements and disputes occurring over incompatible interests and needs. Addressing or managing conflict can incentivize innovation, develop social capital and demonstrate the effectiveness of cooperation over conflict. Conversely, societies fractured by exclusion, marginalization, inequalities and

¹⁹ These can include anticipatory action, as well as early warning and early action (EWEA) approaches.

insecurity are unlikely to possess the social structures to effectively manage and address conflicts. However, there may be local capacities for peace such as traditional/indigenous or grassroots conflict resolution mechanisms and it is important to identify and build on such local capacities. If these mechanisms do not exist, or have been significantly weakened, then peace actions can play a constructive role in facilitating locally driven peace initiatives and approaches.

Organizations working across the HDPN may orientate their activities to respond to the impacts of violent conflict, while also increasing the prospects for peace through approaches that focus on addressing key drivers while reducing people's needs, risks and vulnerabilities by working towards sustainable development. Objectives like the below could form the basis for collective outcomes. Of these, humanitarian actors could, for example, contribute to broader efforts aimed at establishing equitable service delivery and durable solutions, and an environment conducive to protection and compliance with international law:

- **Improving horizontal and vertical social capital:** Directly and indirectly encourage the strengthening of collaborative capacities and increase trust between population groups, and between population groups and formal and informal institutions, both with emphasis on inclusion and participation in planning and decision-making processes and the implementation of projects that respond to jointly identified needs and priorities. Feedback and grievance mechanisms should be included to strengthen further the responsiveness of authorities.
- **Gender:** Promoting gender equality, justice and women's empowerment, women's participation and leadership. Addressing Gender-based Violence (GBV) and transforming harmful or inequitable norms of masculinity to change gendered power dynamics.
- **Youth:** Promoting the participation of children and youth and other marginalized groups in civic institutions and processes, and increasing opportunities to obtain decent work and education, as appropriate.
- **Strengthening conflict prevention and management capacities:** Identifying and supporting inclusive capacities to identify, mitigate and resolve disputes, tensions and conflicts.
- **Equitable service delivery and effective public infrastructure:** Establishing the conditions for equitable delivery and access to key services including education, health, utilities and agricultural services. This includes assisting populations according to need, rather than status.
- **Functioning, inclusive and participatory administration (local, justice, land, security):** Strengthening administrations with technical and capacity support to improve their accountability and effectiveness with focus on community-based consultations and planning that includes women, men, male and female youth.
- **Increasing the opportunity cost of engaging in violence:** Developing viable, inclusive and equitable livelihoods opportunities, support to functioning markets, supply chains and employment with rights, social protection and a voice, giving people dignity and empowerment.
- **Improving the conditions for durable solutions:** Increasing the possibilities of safe and dignified solutions for displaced populations and the communities in which they reside, so as not to exacerbate tensions through perceptions of preferential treatment.
- **Accountability:** Integrating 'accountability' into the above interventions to provide gender-sensitive means and mechanisms for local populations to be involved in planning and implementation processes and provide feedback and voice satisfaction/concerns with the implementation of activities.

Peace-related outcomes in the Nexus are most effective when they are mutually reinforcing. For example, inequality may become institutionalized through a series of long-term policies at the national level

prioritizing access to public resources for some groups over others. The more visible effects of these policies may be at the community level, accompanied by perceptions of marginalization. When associated with other conflict drivers and absent of social structures to effectively and peaceably address disputes and tensions, violent conflict may become more likely.

In the short-to-intermediate term, conflict-sensitive programming may include targeting vulnerability and inequality at the community level, improving collaborative capacities and vertical trust between groups and local administrators, and may contribute to peace. These can include humanitarian and development actions that provide decent, inclusive work and support livelihoods, as well as equitable access to social services, and improved access for women, youth, and other vulnerable groups including IDPs and refugees, to representative structures.

These interventions can then support efforts to change policies, laws and institutional practices that have institutionalized inequality and fuelled perceptions of marginalization. Vice versa, changes in policies, laws and institutions can lead to addressing the socio-economic-political exclusions that lead to marginalization, exclusion and conflict.

For positive peace to become a reality, HDPN programming needs to respond to local level drivers, while at the same time acting to transform the deeper structural causes over the long-term. Achieving this fundamentally requires all who operate in these contexts to contribute. This will make it more likely to effectively address, transform and resolve conflicts, to allow for sustainable peace and development.

Section 3: Areas of synergy, opportunities for collaboration and ways for humanitarian actors to engage

a. Preventing violent conflict: effective in saving lives

The wide range of peace actions outlined above can be crucial in preventing the outbreak and recurrence of violent conflict when they are, 1) applied at the right ‘moment’ (e.g. mediation, negotiation or enforcement), 2) are of sufficient duration (e.g. strengthening social capital) and, 3) strengthen local capacities for conflict prevention and resolution – and thereby resilience. Conflict prevention is neither the entry point nor the primary objective for humanitarian response, but in protracted crises and conflict-affected contexts, it can over time lead to cost efficiencies for humanitarian and development partners to engage *proactively* and *systematically* with peace actions in prevention activities to save lives and protect development gains. Preventing violent conflict and its recurrence is demonstrably cheaper than recurrent humanitarian interventions and requires collaboration by diverse actors.

Preventing violent conflict significantly reduces costs, with the average net annual savings for nations and the international community estimated at almost USD 70 billion in the best-case scenario and USD 5 billion in the most pessimistic scenario.²⁰ On average, for every USD 1 spent on prevention, up to USD 16 can be saved in terms of the cost of conflicts.²¹ Despite this, investments in preventing conflict remain low, estimated at 2% of total ODA spend.²² This may be partly due to a lack of political will to invest in and

²⁰ Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict, 2018, pp. 3-4.

²¹ World Bank Group Strategy for Fragility, Conflict, and Violence 2020–2025

²² States of Fragility 2018, OECD, chapter 5

concentrate joint efforts on pre-emptive measures, a lack of incentives to do so, policies focused on short timelines, limited scope, and challenges in demonstrating ‘counter-factual’ outcomes.

The UNSG’s Prevention Agenda and the DAC Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus²³ emphasize the importance of early warning and early action in preventing violent conflict, with a focus on areas where risk of conflict and instability is highest. For the Nexus, the call in the Prevention Agenda to “...map, link, collect and integrate information from across the international system” is particularly relevant, and this is echoed in the DAC Recommendation. Prevention of conflict requires rapidly understanding, anticipating and addressing the multi-dimensional factors that could escalate into violent conflict. It also means identifying and building on existing positive drivers and capacities to strengthen societal relations, systems and institutions. Supporting national and local capacities for facilitation and dialogue, means ensuring that good offices, mediation, crisis response and peacebuilding services are easily and rapidly deployable.

b. Key considerations for humanitarians: the humanitarian principles

The humanitarian principles provide the ethical foundations and operational means for achieving the humanitarian imperative to save lives, alleviate suffering and protect human dignity during conflict, natural disasters, and other crises. The humanitarian principles are there to ensure that those most in need and most vulnerable are assisted and their rights and dignity respected.

Giving priority to protecting and saving lives and ensuring respect for the rights, wellbeing and dignity of human beings) is a core commitment for actors within all three fields - humanitarian, development and peace - and thus offers a potential common ground for engagement.

The principles of humanity and impartiality are foundational, while neutrality and independence are operational or ‘derived principles’ which support the realization of humanity and impartiality.²⁴ Thus independence (i.e. autonomy from political, military, financial or any other objectives) and neutrality (i.e. not taking sides in armed conflict) are a means to an end, not an end in themselves - recognizing that this does not mean that they can be compromised more readily. The principles of neutrality and independence thus help humanitarians navigate politically fragmented contexts and great efforts are undertaken, and caution applied, in order to safeguard access to people in need, the safety of affected populations or humanitarian staff, and organizational reputation. However, few interventions can be fully impartial, neutral or independent, despite efforts taken.²⁵

The complexities in being operational and implementing the humanitarian mandate in fragile and conflict-affected contexts have often limited the extent to which humanitarians can formally engage with certain peace actors, especially security or political actors, or identify opportunities to support peace actions. The fact that peace is often interpreted as actions aimed solely at securing a cessation of violence, i.e. ‘negative peace’, has undermined constructive engagement. The engagement with security actors may be less formal, and centred on specific issues (i.e. the protection of civilians) or focused on expertise and information required for access and operational planning.²⁶ However, other ways of informal engagement

²³ OECD. 2019. DAC Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus.

<https://legalinstruments.oecd.org/en/instruments/OECD-LEGAL-5019>

²⁴ Marc DuBois, May 2020, The triple Nexus – threat or opportunity for the humanitarian principles?, Centre for Humanitarian Action, p.8

²⁵ *Ibid.* This is further addressed in the section on context/conflict analysis and the importance of conflict sensitivity below.

²⁶ For example, the core of civil-military coordination is to negotiate humanitarian access.

<https://www.unocha.org/fr/themes/humanitarian-civil-military-coordination>

such as better understanding of respective roles or joined-up analysis are just as important. This ensures that decisions are taken in a context specific, politically- and conflict-sensitive, and mutually reinforcing manner - which can lead to greater complementary.

In addition, as this paper aims to demonstrate, the peace spectrum contains a wide range of possible peace-related actions beyond activities solely related to security. The level of interaction and engagement can vary from informal (e.g. information exchange), to formal, (e.g. joint or coordinated activities), as well as indirect contributions to peace. In addition, dual mandated agencies and organizations may directly contribute to peacebuilding objectives through their development and resilience programming.

It is possible for humanitarian actors to formally engage with actors and actions in the sphere of positive peace. Upholding the principle of humanity in its full breadth - encompassing the protection of life, rights, wellbeing and dignity - and the understanding that it is a *shared* commitment might further strengthen more effective operationalization. Put differently, Nexus-thinking may enlarge the scope and time dimension of the humanitarian principles²⁷, which in turn can strengthen humanitarian action by responding (or joining up to respond) more holistically to the needs as well as priorities of affected people and communities, saving more lives in the process.

For instance, for ‘little p’ interventions in particular, ‘those most in need’ (i.e. the principle of impartiality) may include a wider community and agents of positive change for peace (such as youth, women or community leaders), as these constituencies are critical to contribute to restoring the safety, dignity and integrity, protecting the rights and ensuring the wellbeing of affected groups and communities.

Furthermore, whereas it is true that ‘little p’ interventions in protracted crises and conflict-affected contexts imply (at least a degree) of working on the broader political dimensions and might require a re-balancing of socio-political and power dynamics, good peace project design gives peace interveners a neutral role (i.e. the principle of neutrality) in support to locally-driven and owned peace processes, and to efforts to create an enabling environment for peace by empowering communities. This can include activities to improve social capital, increase gender equality, women’s empowerment and youth inclusion, strengthen service delivery and effective public infrastructure, etc. When engaging with local authorities, peace interventions are designed with the aim of upholding the rights of crisis-affected people and encouraging administrators as duty bearers to fulfil their duty and mandate – not unlike humanitarians who, for example, negotiate access or conduct joint beneficiary selection criteria with the same local administrators, and with the same approach of enabling them to fulfil their obligations and responsibilities towards the population.

Concerted, sustained and focused efforts to engage with a state that lacks political will in order to improve accountability, capacity and its relationship with society is supported by the DAC Principles for Good International Engagement to Reduce Fragility.²⁸ As engaging with local (or national) government can carry risks and challenges, however, chosen approaches must always be assessed against objectives to provide lifesaving assistance, improve stability and peace, or support development. However, engaging with and empowering local actors, including local authorities, is not just relevant to increase the effectiveness of interventions and achieve project objectives, but is also in line with the global commitment on ‘localization’.²⁹

²⁷ DuBois, *op.cit.*

²⁸ OECD. 2007. <https://www.oecd.org/dac/conflict-fragility-resilience/docs/38368714.pdf>

²⁹ Grand Bargain commitment 2, Agenda for Humanity (2016) <https://www.agendaforhumanity.org/initiatives/3861>

To conclude, neutrality, independence and impartiality require constant attention and effort by *all* actors, and conflict sensitivity can be one way of preventing unplanned, negative impact(s) on the power and conflict dynamics within crises-affected populations. This is especially important in resource-poor societies where ‘winners’ and ‘losers’ can be created inadvertently through externally provided resources, whether for lifesaving, early recovery, resilience, development or peace-specific purposes.

c. Context and conflict analysis to do no harm and inform conflict-sensitive action ‘working in conflict’

Regular local, community-based context and conflict analysis that is both gender and age-sensitive, is needed to address the multi-layered and multidimensional nature of conflict and to inform all interventions across the peace spectrum - *before, during* and *after* crises, regardless of agency mandate. Context and conflict analysis contribute to good project, programme and strategy design and allows agencies to understand better its potential contribution to sustaining peace based on its own comparative advantage vis-à-vis its mandate.

Opportunities to share context and conflict analysis among agencies should be promoted where programming occurs in the same area for efficiency gains and to better identify opportunities and risks, and complementarity. Incentives to undertake joint, or ‘joined-up’, context and conflict analyses should be enhanced where similar objectives can be identified, especially if issues around data confidentiality can be overcome. The UN Common Country Analysis (CCA) calls for key national and international stakeholders to broadly articulate the country context, opportunities and challenges, encompassing sustainable development, human rights, gender equality, peace and security, and humanitarian perspectives. The CCA should include a multidimensional risk analysis covering disasters, epidemics, conflict, economic shocks, etc. and should be the singular analytical reference document for the entire UN system. As such a CCA can help frame more local context and conflict analyses, and shape common objectives, especially if participation is widened out to also include government, civil society, donors, and IFIs. The CCA can provide a basis for the articulation of collective outcomes, with a clear prioritization and planning for activities by humanitarian, development and peace actors, respectively, that can contribute to achieving these outcomes over time.

A robust understanding of context and conflict dynamics is essential to design conflict-sensitive interventions that at a minimum do no harm and to assess regularly the relevance and impact of activities. Within the context of the Nexus, and where there might be either secondary, or possible indirect contributions to peace, theories of change (ToC) are useful, and should be based on a rigorous understanding of conflict dynamics, including the interlinkages between systemic structural causes and more visible conflict and peace drivers, dividers and connectors.³⁰ This also includes stakeholders – their interests, positions, needs and capacities – and their relationships. A ToC allows for an assessment of whether and to what extent activities have contributed to peace, allowing assumptions to be tested and verified, and programming adjusted.

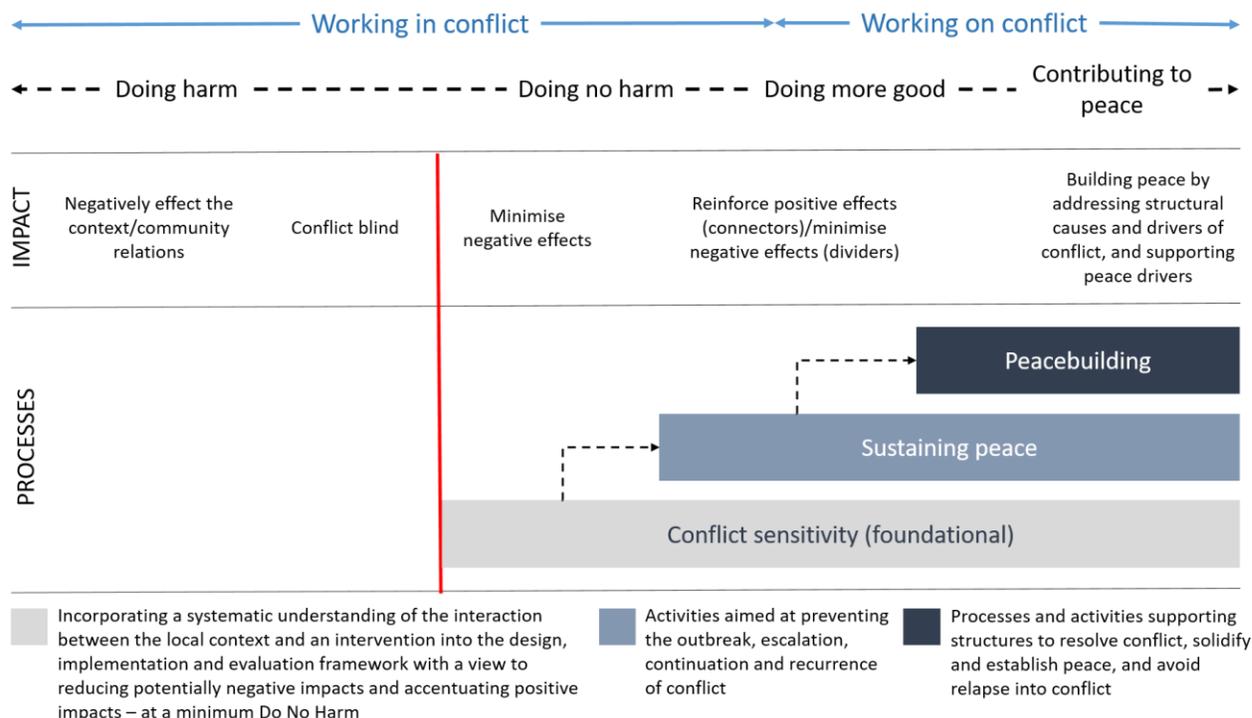
Ideally, context and conflict analyses should be inclusive, participatory and action oriented, with participants representing all relevant segments of the population. The outputs of this analysis then need to be integrated into programme design. This is in line with the ‘active commitment’ taken by

³⁰ Dividers and connectors can be systems and institutions; attitudes and actions; values and interests; experiences; or symbols and occasions <https://www.cdacollaborative.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Do-No-Harm-A-Brief-Introduction-from-CDA.pdf>

humanitarian actors under Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) and Centrality of Protection commitments.³¹

The peace spectrum is presented below (Figure 1). It highlights key concepts and how they relate to each other, as well as how robust and regular context and conflict analysis, and conflict-sensitive approaches, are foundational.

Figure 1: The Peace Spectrum



Interventions are never conflict neutral. The presence of activities and staffing, as well as the selection of beneficiaries impact the context, either positively or negatively, unintended or intended. Transfers of resources (food, shelter, water, health care, training, cash, etc.) into a resource-scarce environment can represent power and wealth. These resources can become an element of conflict, causing harm to affected populations if not programmed in a conflict-sensitive manner. Alternatively, programming can strengthen local capacities for peace, build on connectors that bring communities together, and reduce the divisions and sources of tensions that can lead to or reinforce conflict.

In short, conflict sensitivity is about managing or mitigating conflict drivers or triggers by taking existing conflict dynamics into account when designing, planning and implementing (and closing) programmes and projects with the aim of having a positive impact on existing or potential conflict dynamics. As an approach, conflict sensitivity entails understanding the context the interaction between the intervention and the context, and to act on that understanding in order to avoid negative impacts (Do No Harm, DNH) and, if possible, to maximize positive impacts (Do More Good). It does not need to have peace as a primary objective *per se*. Some have argued that the sustaining peace agenda compels international actors to move beyond the more limited interpretation of conflict sensitivity.

³¹ IASC Policy on Protection in Humanitarian Action 2016: <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/protection-priority-global-protection-cluster/documents/iasc-policy-protection-humanitarian-action>.

Approaches build on one another. In all cases, the minimum standard of DNH must be met, where conflict-sensitive approaches informed by at least a 'good enough' context and conflict analysis are foundational. Figure 2 outlines minimalist to maximalist approaches for actors working across the HDPN.

Figure 2: Minimalist-Maximalist approaches



d. Opportunities for interaction, collaboration and engagement

Given the above, where along the peace spectrum can different humanitarian organizations collaborate with peace actors? Areas of possible collaboration can include context and conflict analysis (to promote common understanding of the contextual dynamics), conflict-sensitive programme design, and in some instances indirect peace impacts can result from humanitarian action - which needs to be factored into Nexus collaboration.

While humanitarian organizations should proactively avoid doing harm using context and conflict analysis to inform conflict-sensitive programming, which may (indirectly) contribute to peace, the primary objectives of their programmes will remain humanitarian. Dual-mandated agencies, however, can often carry out programmes with specific peace-related objectives.

Figure 3 below - and the associated real-world examples - attempts to answer where along the peace spectrum can different humanitarian organizations collaborate with peace actors? The schematic is not intended to be exhaustive, and for the sake of clarity presents a somewhat linear and idealized process. That said, it attempts to reflect the heterogeneity of peace, and the cycles of shocks that require immediate life-saving humanitarian response. Conflict-sensitive humanitarian action not only lays the groundwork for more successful violence reduction and peace efforts, it can also increase community acceptance and reduce the negative effects of tensions and conflict-related shocks on all types of programming. Activities can include adaptation of ongoing programmes to align implementation approaches with changing conflict dynamics; having human resource policies that avoid primarily hiring national staff from one conflict or population group over another; ensuring inclusive composition of community-based committees; identifying and mitigating misinformation about assistance or its

beneficiaries; and recording and sharing lessons learned on successful relationship-building approaches with local actors.

In complex protracted crisis scenarios, humanitarian, development and peace aspects of the crisis occur in a parallel, non-linear fashion and influence each other. The purpose of collaboration across the HDPN is delivering assistance and implementing projects in such contexts when the limited set of issues any one action can address through a project - or even a portfolio of programmes - will not have an impact in solving the protracted crisis over a short time frame, but together can contribute to ending the crisis over the long-term. This is why it is essential to look at the longer-term implications of interventions - even when they are short-term. The concept of collective outcomes can be useful to think through the common results that humanitarian, development and peace actors want to achieve. For humanitarian action this means ensuring that actions can complement and transition more effectively to longer-term development and peace approaches, which can be implemented simultaneously. For the development side, their contribution could mean not giving up on essential public services even where governance structures are fragile or fragmented, and implementing development policies and investments that reach the most vulnerable. For peace actions, this entails being conscious not to undermine humanitarian access and helping to strengthen capacities for conflict prevention and management at all levels

Humanitarian action can enhance the resilience and preparedness of populations, making it more sustainable in the long-term. At first glance, this may seem contradictory, as humanitarian aid is often conceived to be short-term action, and the concept of sustainability suggests more long-term thinking. However, sustainability has a central role in the humanitarian sphere. It is key to thinking about humanitarian action as a first step in contributing to more peaceful societies. Many humanitarian organizations describe their need to think beyond people's essential needs about how they can strengthen resilience and sustainably improve a population's health or food security.³² This is particularly the case in protracted crises, where humanitarians are not only responding to immediate needs as they emerge, and where development continuity is essential. Humanitarian action can ensure development and peace gains 'stick' by helping maintain essential services, build on existing capacities and institutions, and supporting or rebuilding vital infrastructure.

Furthermore, and without jeopardizing their neutrality, humanitarian actors can call for a humanitarian truce or cease-fire that peacemakers or diplomats can then leverage to alter conflict dynamics and help parties move from violence and competition to peaceful political dialogue. Such initiatives can, in turn, begin laying foundations, however tenuous, for a political settlement.

Overall, this requires more risk-tolerant development actions, attention by all actors to not undermine the action of others operating in the same space, and a commitment from humanitarian actors to be reflective of how they affect longer-term actions and objectives that can reduce humanitarian need over time, and how to programme in a way that also facilitates other actors' efforts towards sustainable peace. It is important to recognize that the responsibility to create conditions that are conducive to resolve a conflict and support long-term peace ultimately remains in the political sphere, noting states' legal obligations and responsibilities toward their citizens.

e. Some implications for project/programme delivery

Given the preceding discussion, expected interactions across the HDPN may require changes to project/programme design and delivery, and could include the following areas – bringing together

³² ICRC. 2016. "Protracted Conflict and Humanitarian Action," p. 24, www.icrc.org/en/document/protracted-conflict-and-humanitarian-action.

humanitarian, development and peace programming. The below points are not exhaustive, and are not meant to be prescriptive, but a reflection based on recent observations by various entities exploring the HDP Nexus³³:

- As noted above, there may be opportunities for **shared, joint or 'joined-up' context and conflict analyses**, ideally locally-owned and informed, participatory and inclusive.³⁴ This implies the need for mechanisms to share, track and enhance knowledge across interventions that support the same population groups or geographic area, and a move away from siloed tools at an organizational level, in favour of shared or joint data collection and a 'living' analysis of the context. However, it will be necessary to maintain the capacity to rapidly intervene to ensure that lifesaving assistance can be provided, and to ensure that shared or joint data analysis and collection across HDPN actors is conflict-sensitive to local concerns and perceptions.
- Nexus approaches that contribute to more collective and holistic outcomes need to be grounded in **outcome-based planning**, with interagency efforts ideally coalescing around a set of collective outcomes. The recently published IASC Light Guidance on Collective Outcomes can help guide this process. Cross-country sharing of lessons learned will be important to strengthen efforts to this regard. Collective outcomes will support the development of longer-term country strategies that better contribute to systemic transformation and should ideally be included or at least referenced in UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks (UNSDCF), as per the UNSDG Guidance on Conflict Sensitivity, Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace. This is especially true in conflict-affected contexts, where achieving development and peace outcomes is a non-linear and slow process.
- Programmes and financing that engage across the HDPN will need to be adaptive, and will need to be **flexible, responsive and agile and adapt** to changes in context, as assessed through regular context and conflict analyses. Such analyses should be consulted by all involved in humanitarian, development or peace actions. This implies that monitoring and evaluation frameworks assessing project/programmes' impact on drivers of fragility and vulnerability over time will need to operate beyond project timeframes and be more unified in nature.
- A Nexus approach does not imply that staff need to be experts across all pillars of the Nexus. However, it does require individuals to **work in a more multi-disciplinary fashion**, understand each other's 'language', bringing a more 'wide-angle' lens to their area of specialization, and for entities to be open to leverage capacities, mandates and comparative advantages (e.g. through partnerships and collaboration).
- Given the importance of conflict sensitivity, there may be a need to **increase organizational capacity in context and conflict analysis, and conflict sensitive programming**. Broader shared understanding of the three pillars will also help in the identification of collective outcomes and a common understanding of who are the most vulnerable and what the needs and priorities of affected people and communities might be.
- **Financing** will likely need to be based on a clear articulation of the most effective outcomes that do no harm, grounded in a participatory context/conflict as well as risk analysis. Indeed, an insistence on

³³ These points are complementary to the 2019 UNSDG and IASC *Key Messages on the Humanitarian-Development Nexus and its Links to Peace*.

³⁴ In some contexts, multi-stakeholder platforms exist such as the Conflict Sensitive Resource Facility in South Sudan, which bring together information and organisations to support more joined up analysis. Similarly, some donors have been actively supporting preparatory steps towards joint analysis, with the support of UN agencies, as well as national and international experts.

demonstrating this is already being seen more explicitly, while the importance of flexible budgets to enable necessary adjustments to project/programme design based on results of updated analyses cannot be overstated. These might favour more effective layering of peace and development objectives throughout the response as a situation evolves. Thorough and timely analysis might also encourage funding for conflict prevention - which may help reduce humanitarian need.

- More focus on **doing no harm and a greater responsiveness to the local context and the voices and capacities of people and communities** in crisis might imply that humanitarian responses could be designed from a perspective that has longer-term objectives of peace and development in mind – saving lives and protecting rights and dignity in both the short and longer-term, as well as increasing the return on investment. Indeed, aspects of this are present in how multi-donor platforms, such as the UN Peacebuilding Fund, bring together partners across the Nexus to focus on specific peace-related outcomes.

f. Illustrative examples.³⁵

Illustration 1a: Humanitarian mediation and dialogue facilitation in the Central African Republic (CAR)

Experiences in CAR during 2014 show that third party neutral frontline mediation and dialogue facilitation are appropriate and efficient tools to address humanitarian access and protection of civilians in conflict situations. This has been shown to prevent or reduce the impact of outbreaks of violence leading to humanitarian crisis; improve humanitarian access to affected populations; facilitate access of affected populations to basic services, humanitarian assistance and fundamentals rights; and prevent forced displacement and facilitate returns. Interventions carried out in enclaves in Boda, Dekoa and Carnot have led to significant reduction of violence against civilians and/or greater freedom of movement for populations at risk. Others specifically aimed at improving humanitarian access (notably when NGOs have been threatened or directly targeted) have led to better access and acceptance of these organizations. Most localities with these kinds of interventions did not experience unrest and clashes during the episode of violence that affected CAR in September-October 2015. Third party neutral negotiation, mediation and dialogue facilitation represent practical ways to operationalize the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence. These processes also allow humanitarian partners to set the protection mainstreaming pillars' of Do No Harm, access, accountability and community participation into practice. The 2015 HRP recognized that *"...mediation carried out on local and community levels is a tool that complements traditional humanitarian assistance. Through inclusive forums, mediation opens a dialogue between representatives of civilian society, authorities, humanitarian actors, international forces and armed groups, leading to negotiated solutions that foster the reduction of violence, humanitarian access and protection of civilians"*.

Illustration 1b: Informing humanitarian response in a highly volatile conflict (Cameroon)

A violent crisis erupted over perceived marginalisation by the Francophone government in the English-speaking Western regions of Cameroon in 2016 between non-state armed groups and security forces. Significant violence against the civilian population triggered a major humanitarian crisis, with an estimated half a million people being displaced and schools and health facilities closed. The UN launched an emergency response plan in 2018 including interventions focused on IDPs and host populations in government and non-government-controlled areas. However, access constraints, volatility of the situation and its rapid escalation limited the UN's ability to monitor the situation, identify IDPs and to reach people

³⁵ All of these are actual field examples provided by IASC RG4 members and rendered agency neutral.

in need. Within the broader UN emergency response, one UN agency supported a rapid conflict scan and conflict sensitivity review that helped gain a better understanding of the conflict dynamics, provided inputs to an integrated emergency response strategy, and built capacities to continue assessing the situation and needs going forward. This work led to several adaptations in the humanitarian response. Firstly, it helped include a better understanding of risks into the response strategy. This included risks to children and communities, but also the ability to deliver lifesaving support. Secondly, it helped anticipate conflict trends to provide support to communities proactively. Thirdly, the exercise helped embed a ‘do no harm’ approach in the programme, to avoid unintended negative effects, for example in engagement with communities and armed forces. In addition, the review also identified entry points for longer-term support towards peaceful and inclusive development. Recommendations included dedicating security and programme staff to ensure regular conflict scans, a coherent response strategy, more agile ways of delivering assistance in a volatile context, and measures to ensure accountability to affected populations.

Illustration 2: Contributing to local peace, working with security actors (South Sudan/Sudan)

A UN intervention, working with local community groups, between 2015 and 2017 in the contested Abyei Administrative Area (AAA) between the Sudan and South Sudan reduced the risk of natural resource-based conflicts and enhanced community resilience. The Abyei Area is a grazing hub in which historically both the Dinka Ngok and the Misseriya tribal communities interact, sharing natural resources such as grazing land and water. However, natural resource use was an increasing source of confrontation, leading to frequent outbreaks of violence between the communities. The dual-mandated UN agency identified a window of opportunity by providing emergency community-based animal health services to both communities, as a rapid response to deteriorating livelihoods, working with local authorities. This was achieved in collaboration with the peacekeeping mission, the UN Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA), by facilitating cross-disengagement line movements in central AAA, and sensitising UNISFA to the link between natural resources, livelihoods and local conflicts. This allowed wider resource use issues to be addressed, including movement and humanitarian access concerns. In 2016, as a direct result of this work, a community level peace agreement over natural resource use was signed between the Misseriya and Dinka Ngok. The peace agreement also led to the establishment of a shared market in the heart of the demilitarised zone (with UNISFA support), facilitating trade and livelihoods, and leading to food price decreases.

Illustration 3: Community stabilization through intercommunal dialogue (Central African Republic)

A multi-mandated UN agency supports community stabilization in several conflict-affected contexts, as an approach to facilitate transition away from humanitarian displacement crises; as an incremental but necessary step towards the attainment of *Durable Solutions*³⁶. The community stabilization approach combines a specific focus on addressing the factors that destabilize communities, while at the same time addressing multi-sectoral early recovery needs – infrastructural, economic, or service related – with focus on collective action and inclusivity. For example, in response to high levels of localized violence in conflict and displacement affected communities in Ouham Pende, CAR, in 2018, the UN agency implemented a community stabilization project with the objective of strengthening intercommunal dialogue and capacities of communities, civil society, local committees, community leaders and local authorities to proactively and pre-emptively prevent and mitigate intercommunal conflict. To reduce violence and tensions, strengthen social cohesion at community levels, and improve trust in local leadership, community members were brought together to identify needs and define priorities that would benefit all community members, based on a planning process led by the local committees and local authorities. The

³⁶ “When internally displaced persons no longer have any specific assistance and protection needs that are linked to their displacement and can enjoy their human rights without discrimination on account of their displacement.” IASC Durable Solutions Framework (Brookings; 2010) <https://www.brookings.edu/research/iasc-framework-on-durable-solutions-for-internally-displaced-persons-2/>

space created for civic dialogue and the resulting projects that were collectively implemented improved the living conditions for the benefit of all, IDPs, host communities, men, women and youth. An early alert network was further established to share security related information between the communities.

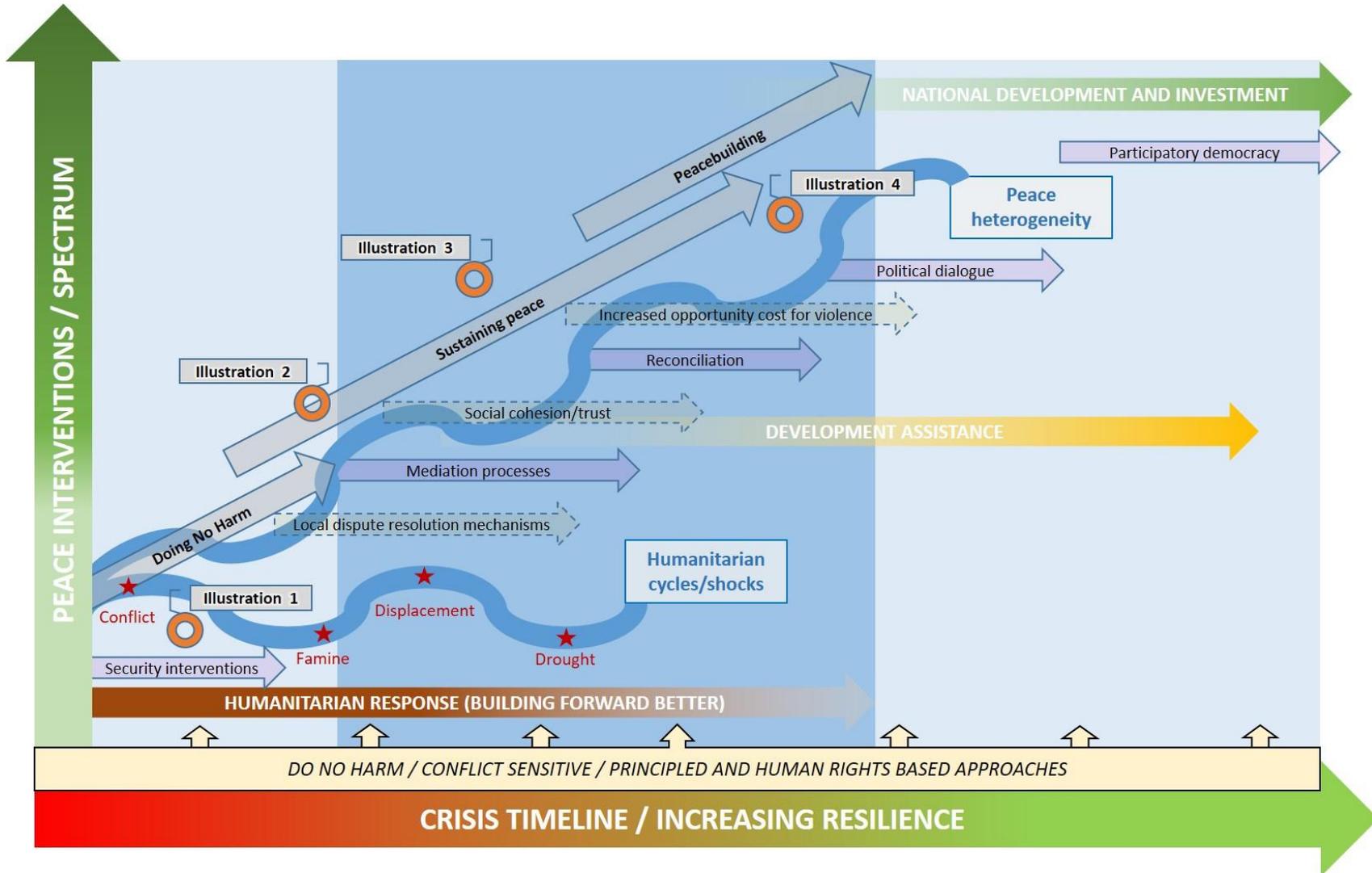
Illustration 4: Humanitarian action and indirect support to consolidating peace (Sudan)

Following the signing of Sudan's Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in 2005, ex-combatants not integrated into Sudan Armed Forces, Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) and other armed groups were rapidly disarmed, demobilized and reintegrated into their communities. Women who had played supporting roles within armed forces and groups – either voluntarily or through coercion – also needed to be reintegrated. The South Sudan Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Commission (SSDDRC), in partnership and coordination with the SPLA and the Integrated United Nations Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Unit, implemented the South Sudan DDR Programme, prioritizing the elderly, people with disabilities and women. It worked closely with UN agencies, international and local NGOs, and the United Nations peacekeeping mission. One UN agency supported the SSDDRC by providing rations to cover the food needs of 8,400 demobilized ex-combatants, women and their families for a period of three months in Juba, Bentiu, Malakal and Torit, and to support 500 ex-combatants in Greater Bahr-al-Ghazal while they received skills training as part of their reintegration packages. Meeting the immediate basic needs of these groups helped prevent them from resorting to negative ways of providing for their dependents.

Illustration 5: Post-conflict recovery linking development action and the private sector (Sri Lanka)

In Sri Lanka, a UN project supporting local empowerment through economic development and reconciliation creates financially sustainable livelihood opportunities in post-conflict areas by working with cooperatives and partnering with private sector companies to attract investments and economic engagement. Following the end of the civil war, the North largely missed out on the economic boom, which the rest of Sri Lanka experienced. The lack of economic growth and employment opportunities left communities in the North feeling discriminated against and forgotten by the South. The project provides economic opportunities to marginalized people in the North, giving them access to livelihoods and employment. The project achieves this by facilitating partnerships between North and South. It promotes a feeling of inclusion and belonging to a united Sri Lanka amongst the communities in the North and facilitates a greater involvement by these groups in the national reconciliation process, in addition to reducing poverty and promoting decent work. For example, farmers from this disadvantaged region are supported to access new economic opportunities, which enables them to build new ties with buyers including across ethnic, religious, and linguistic boundaries, and obtain a sense of fair treatment, leading to the enhancement of social cohesion. The project has also managed to increase significantly the income of female farmers, many of them widows, by linking them to cooperatives and facilitating access to markets for their produce. The project exemplifies how employment and decent work can produce positive peace- and social cohesion dividends thanks to improved economic opportunities for disadvantaged populations, enhanced contact and interactions between different groups who come together in these joint economic ventures, and through the reduction of grievances linked to perceptions of economic inequality and injustice.

Figure 3: Illustrations of peace-related entry points for humanitarian action



Annex 1 – Related documentation

- Council of the EU. 2017. *Operationalising the Humanitarian-Development Nexus - Council conclusions*. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/24010/nexus-st09383en17.pdf>
- Development Initiatives. 2020. *Key questions and considerations for donors at the triple nexus: lessons from UK and Sweden*. https://devinit.org/documents/677/key_questions_and_considerations_for_donors_at_the_triple_nexus_lessons_from_UK_and_Sweden.pdf
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- United Nations. 2020. *Humanitarian-Development- Peace (HDP) Collaboration: Cooperation Framework Companion Piece*. [Companion-Piece-humanitarian-development-and-peace](https://www.un.org/development/dp/2020/09/companion-piece-humanitarian-development-and-peace)