



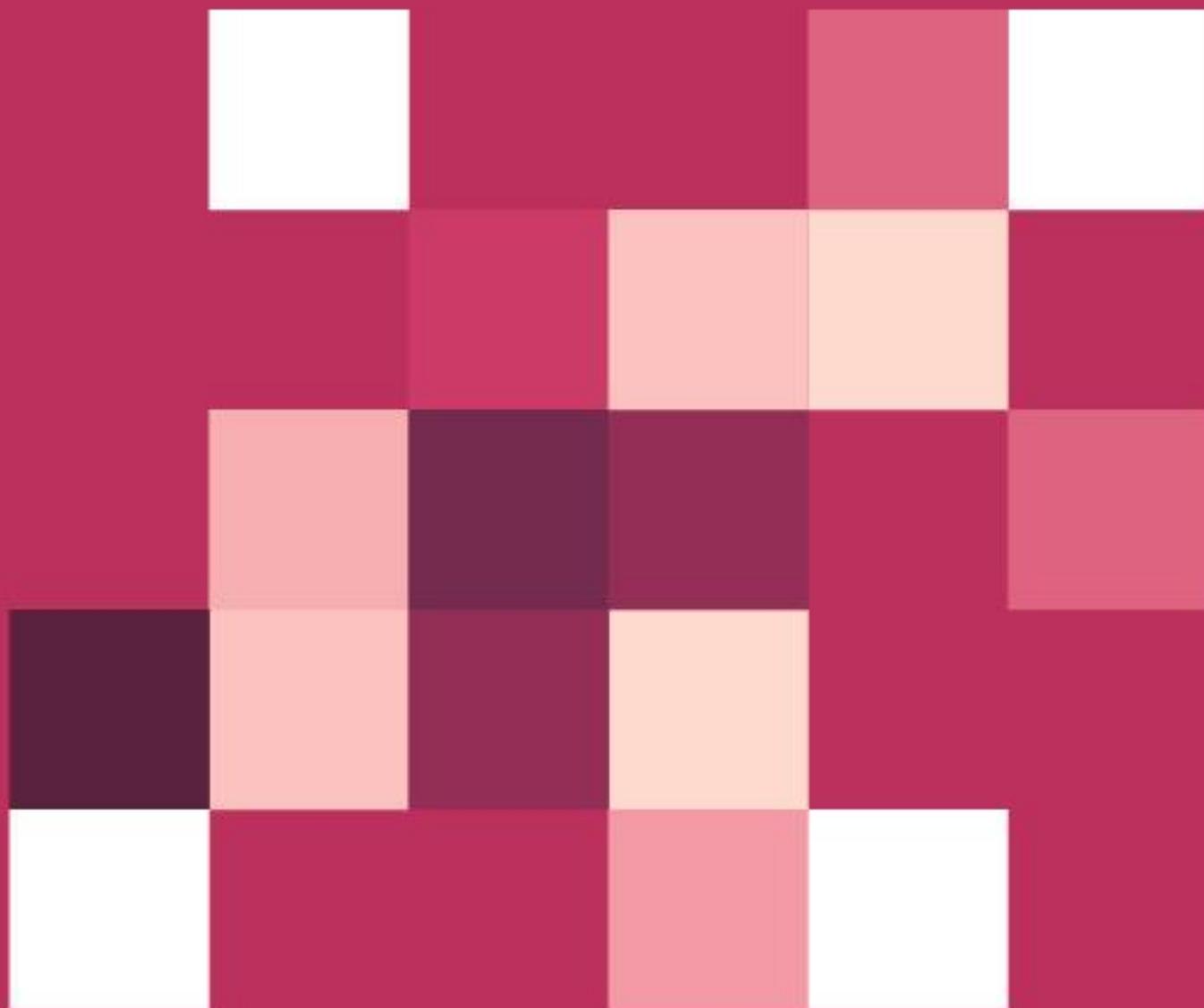
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Development actors at the nexus

**Lessons from crises
in Bangladesh, Cameroon and Somalia**

synthesis report

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Executive summary

The promise of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is to “leave no one behind”, yet people caught up in protracted **crises** are often those furthest left behind. The impact of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is reversing development gains across the globe, with an estimated 86 million people already pushed into extreme poverty since the start of the pandemic (DI, 2020a). Given the risk that crisis-affected populations will be left even further behind, effective action is needed to address the root causes of crises, combining immediate emergency assistance with longer term investments to reduce risks and vulnerabilities and sustain peace. **Development cooperation** could play a more effective and complementary role building on initial progress in finding lasting solutions to protracted humanitarian crises, as part of a coherent approach linked with **humanitarian** and **peace** actions.

Building on previous work by Development Initiatives (DI) analysing **donor approaches** to the nexus, this report explores, from the vantage point of development cooperation, how to operationalize the “**triple nexus**” of humanitarian–development–peace (HDP) action across five **key areas**: 1) partnerships and strategy, 2) coordination and joined-up planning, 3) programming, 4) financing and 5) organizational issues. This synthesis report brings together findings from three country studies carried out in 2020 on **Bangladesh**, **Cameroon** and **Somalia** and draws out common themes, lessons and considerations from the country studies. These can provide useful insights into how to operationalize new and better ways of working across the humanitarian, development and peace communities. More joined-up, coherent programming among humanitarian, development and peace actors requires these actors to understand each other’s language, systems, ways of operating, and the challenges they face when working in crisis contexts. This research was led by DI’s Crisis and Humanitarian team, in partnership with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC). It represents an initial effort to scope out, from a humanitarian’s perspective, how development actors – such as multilateral development banks (MDBs), bilateral donors and United Nations agencies – approach and operate in protracted humanitarian crises as a way to identify both the differences and areas of synergy, and to foster mutual understanding among HDP actors.

We recognize that **development cooperation** covers a broad group of actors that operate in different ways and have different roles, and that development approaches will differ depending on the context (see Appendix 1). This synthesis report focuses on specific lessons for different actors and some themes generally common to all, while recognizing that some development actors are more advanced than others in their ways of working in protracted crisis contexts and often what is required is a greater “collective” effort.

Partnerships

Most development partners – donor governments, multilateral organizations and funds, and MDBs – commit to work in partnership with national governments, including in crisis, conflict and fragile settings. As observed in **Bangladesh**, **Cameroon** and **Somalia**, their ability to leverage strong relationships with governments and deliver at scale can be game-changing. But development partners face the dilemma of how to balance an approach based on partnership, cooperation, capacity development and mutual accountability with governments with responsiveness to crisis-affected populations in contexts where political commitment is wavering (as in Cameroon) or the legitimacy of certain political actors is challenged (as in Somalia). Where the government is an active party to conflict, partnership with it is challenging or impossible. Although the largest share of development finance in protracted crises is channelled to recipient governments, development partners also work with other partners, such as local governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), to both promote bottom-up, participatory development in crisis-affected regions and build capacities and accountability, particularly where government structures are weak or unresponsive to local populations. In particular, partnerships with local governments through local governance programmes have been an important entry point for development actors in crisis-affected regions in the three country studies. Nevertheless, non-governmental service delivery remains dominated by international actors, and local NGOs, local businesses and other community representatives are often not adequately engaged, funded or supported to play a lead role.

What does effective partnership at the nexus mean at the country level?

- Build effective partnerships in crisis settings that are dynamic, flexible, risk informed and context specific to enable not only longer-term partnership but also short-term mechanisms for flexibility and responsiveness to immediate needs.
- Partner with local governments as a critical player, particularly in conflict-affected regions and where the central government may be weak, supporting decentralization where it will enable better inclusion and long-term peace.
- Invest in partnerships beyond the government – local civil society and the private sector are vital and too often lack investment in protracted crises. Pooled funds and NGO consortia are a useful way to do this at scale.

Coordination, prioritization and planning

Learning from **Bangladesh**, **Cameroon** and **Somalia** shows that there is an elaborate coordination architecture at the country level but joining up humanitarian with development action and humanitarian with peace action remains weak. Efforts to improve the coherence of development and peace and security actions are more advanced, but humanitarian actors have been concerned that working directly with peace and security actors could undermine humanitarian principles. A consensus is now being built at global level around a broader notion of peace and how it can be integrated into humanitarian action. Efforts at the country level in **Cameroon** and **Somalia** to bring actors together across the HDP nexus are also hampered by insufficient buy-in and senior leadership from development partners outside the UN system, as well as across government.

While progress has been made in identifying **collective outcomes** in **Somalia** and **Cameroon**, there is a risk that these create a new, parallel layer of planning and are not sufficiently embedded in existing national development plans and accountability frameworks, and the coordination structures that support them. Scope for joining up HDP action is context dependent, and there is a clear need to protect independent humanitarian coordination in certain political contexts, such as some areas within Somalia, to safeguard principled humanitarian action.

What does effective coordination, prioritization and planning at the nexus mean at the country level?

- Key development actors, such as MDBs, national governments and leading bilateral donors, play a prominent role in leading the nexus – practically, politically and in policy – alongside humanitarian and peace actors.
- HDP actors work together to embed collective outcomes in existing development planning frameworks and increase the coherence of existing coordination structures. Development planning processes at the country level include humanitarian and peace actors, drawing on their expertise to jointly analyse risks, conflict dynamics, needs and capacities.
- The UN and World Bank collectively ensure a process is in place to monitor and review how nexus coordination structures are working at the country level and evaluate the implementation of collective outcomes, including a process to share and systematise this learning.
- Donors consider how funding can incentivise nexus planning by establishing pooled funds or dedicated budget lines to support joint programmes that focus on collective outcomes, or other collaborative actions across the nexus.

Programming approaches

Experience from **Cameroon** and other conflict contexts shows that development actors often decrease their engagement or pull out when conflict risks escalate. Sequencing gaps can also occur if development actors are not present on the ground and ready to scale-up when humanitarian assistance declines. Therefore, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) recommends a shift away from sequential towards simultaneous humanitarian, development and peace programming, however this is not fully engrained. In the three country case studies, multiple areas of synergy between humanitarian, development and peace programmes were identified that are suitable for greater nexus collaboration. Effective development in crisis contexts requires both the development focus on long-term, strategic structural and institutional issues that contribute to **resilience** and sustained **recovery** and the ability to flexibly respond to short-term pressures, shocks and needs, for example as the World Bank is doing in **Somalia**. Regular and ongoing context analysis, integration of risk management and resilience across programming, and more adaptive management – more advanced in some development actors than others – enable better anticipation and response to escalation in conflicts or crises. Recent evidence from the COVID-19 pandemic in **Bangladesh**, **Cameroon** and **Somalia** has shown that development donors are able to respond effectively and flexibly to such shocks through either reprogramming or rapidly approving and disbursing new funding at scale.

What does effective programming at the nexus mean at the country level?

- Exploit existing synergies between HDP programming, such as in **disaster risk reduction** or **durable solutions** to protracted displacement, to strengthen coherence, clarify division of labour and develop a shared language and common approach.
- Strengthen internal capacity and systems to carry out ongoing context analysis that covers the full spectrum of risks (e.g. economic, environmental, political, conflict, security and societal), drawing on expertise of humanitarian and peace actors at the country level, and establish systems to regularly review and adapt implementation strategies to changes in the context, including identifying preventative actions.
- Scale up adaptive programming drawing on learning, best practice and existing initiatives, and, in particular, take effective programming approaches for building resilience to scale through national frameworks (e.g. on safety nets, local governance, **shock-responsive** social protection) for greater reach and impact.

Financing tools

Globally, development partners have scaled up finance targeting fragile and conflict settings over the last decade and have established a range of financing instruments. However, more could be done to create new, more effective financial instruments for protracted crises and to improve targeting of crisis-affected regions, including at subnational levels. It is apparent from the country studies that improved tracking and targeting of official development assistance (ODA) to ensure it responds to needs and does not leave countries and people behind would (alongside improvements in quality) help to ensure it benefits crisis-affected populations. Alongside the volume of finance, a core challenge is whether the types and quality of finance and the modes of delivery are well suited to financing needs in these challenging environments. Development partners have established a number of financing vehicles tailored to crisis, fragile and conflict contexts that are helping to fill important gaps in the three country contexts, though these remain niche overall, poorly understood by humanitarian and peace actors, and could be better integrated, as in **Cameroon**. The new UN-led Integrated National Financial Framework (INFF) processes are a potential opportunity to bring HDP actors together around shared financing priorities and build capacities on broader financing approaches and instruments. Greater donor flexibility and quicker approval as was seen in the COVID-19 response in **Bangladesh**, **Cameroon** and, **Somalia** supported by strong management and analytical capacity, is also critical. The potential for in-country pooled funds as flexible instruments to incentivise greater collaboration across the HDP nexus was highlighted in all three countries. In Somalia and **Bangladesh**, anticipatory action pilots have shown promise but need investments by development donors to mitigate the risk of diverting limited humanitarian funds from existing needs.

What does effective financing at the nexus mean at the country level?

- Build a common understanding among HDP actors of the needs of crisis-affected populations, including what constitutes a crisis and who is “left behind”, to improve targeting and tracking of ODA, especially at the subnational level.

- Ensure crisis financing is coherent with broader development financing strategies, and that overall funding modalities and volumes respond to the needs of particular contexts – including improving the quality, type and mode of funding delivery.
- Expand the use of anticipatory, flexible and risk-informed financing tools in development cooperation, and support actors across the HDP nexus to better understand the full range of financial instruments, including innovations in financing, so they are better used in protracted crises, and generate an understanding of how instruments align, their complementarity and where the gaps are.

Organizational issues

Siloed working – the opposite of a joined-up, coherent, nexus approach to development – remains a fundamental challenge in **Bangladesh**, **Cameroon** and **Somalia**, and one that must be addressed by organizational change. Practically speaking, for many development actors this means re-orienting or adapting management structures to be more context responsive and driven. Re-organizing management structures, strategic planning and high-level allocation decisions around geographic priorities (rather than sectors or funding flows), as at least one bilateral donor does, is a promising approach. Decentralized management and country focus, particularly at subnational levels, supported by stronger partnerships with local actors would help deepen engagement in crisis contexts and ensure the right capacity is in the right places. It was apparent from the research that humanitarian, development and peace disciplines each have their own language and conflicting interpretations of the term “nexus”, and to operate effectively in protracted crisis contexts more staff need to become “tri-lingual”, with greater investment in multidisciplinary skillsets and longer-term contracts.

What does effective internal organization at the nexus mean at the country level?

- Accelerate adaptation of organizational processes to fragile and crisis contexts, building local engagement and, where possible, presence and embedding risk and crisis-sensitive/responsive approaches.
- Support decentralized management and decision-making, where possible (from centre to periphery, capital to country, and national to subnational) and build on learning from the COVID-19 pandemic to address obstacles to quick and context-specific decision-making in protracted crisis contexts.
- Make decision-making context-driven and for multi-mandate organizations strengthen the overall coherence of support across development and humanitarian programming. Considering how management structures, strategic planning and high-level financial allocation decisions can clearly respond to, and potentially be organised around, country or geographic priorities, is important for this coherence.
- Break down barriers between HDP disciplines by investing in building skills and knowledge of staff across HDP specialisms and disciplines and bringing actors together across disciplines to develop a common language.

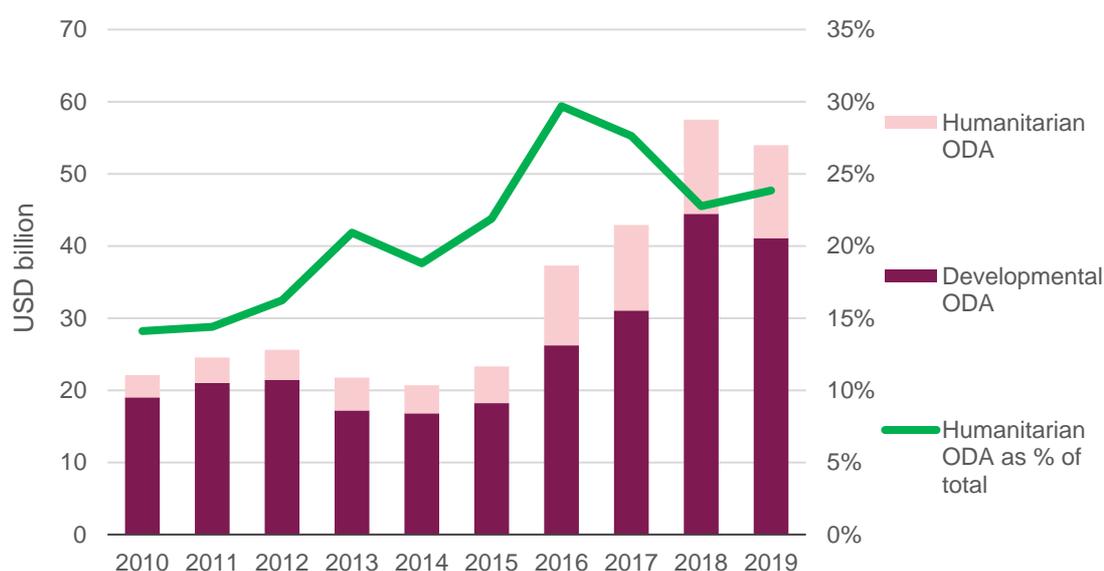
Introduction

The promise of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is to “leave no one behind”, yet people caught up in protracted **crises** are often those furthest left behind. With less than a decade left to achieve the ambitions of Agenda 2030 on eradicating poverty, addressing inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, peace and justice, insufficient progress has been made, particularly in fragile and conflict-affected states. Poverty, vulnerability and conflict are increasingly concentrated in the same settings. When the systemic drivers of crisis are left unaddressed, humanitarian needs become more severe and protracted, with a growing number of countries receiving humanitarian assistance year on year. Over half of the world’s extreme poor live in countries experiencing protracted crisis and, even before the global pandemic, up to two-thirds were projected to reside in fragile and conflict-affected contexts by 2030. Now, the impact of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is reversing development gains and hitting the poorest and most marginalised hardest – pushing millions of people even further behind.

Now more than ever, effective action is needed to address the root causes of crises. A coherent response requires a multifaceted approach, which combines immediate emergency assistance to those most in need with investment in developing local capacities to prevent, cope with and recover from crises, and to sustain peace over the medium to long term. There is growing policy consensus among multilateral players including the United Nations (UN), World Bank and European Union on the need to strengthen synergies between their **humanitarian, development and peace** actions in order to move towards lasting solutions to protracted crises and to support the achievement of the SDGs in fragile and conflict-affected contexts (see Appendix 2 for an analysis of policy commitments). In addition, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development’s Development Assistance Committee (OECD DAC), whose members include the largest and most influential donors in fragile contexts, promotes a shift towards “development where possible and humanitarian only when necessary” in its recommendation on the humanitarian–development–peace (HDP) **nexus** (Box 1).

This report focuses on the role of **development cooperation** in addressing protracted humanitarian crises, defined as situations characterised by prolonged or recurring threats to the fundamental wellbeing, health and safety of the population, and where there is an ongoing humanitarian response. Over the last decade, key development partners, including the World Bank and regional multilateral development banks (MDBs), the European Union, and a number of donor governments, have scaled up development finance and technical cooperation in fragile and conflict-affected contexts. Official development assistance (ODA) provided to protracted crisis countries¹ more than doubled from USD 19 billion in 2010 to USD 41 billion in 2019 (Figure 1). Even though humanitarian ODA increased more than fourfold from USD 3 billion to USD 13 billion over the same time period, developmental ODA is still much greater than humanitarian ODA in protracted crisis countries, making up 78 percent of total ODA in that period.

Figure 1: ODA to protracted crisis countries, 2010–2019



Source: DI, 2021; OECD DAC Creditor Reporting System (CRS).

Notes: Data is in constant 2018 prices. ODA is from DAC and multilateral donors only. Developmental ODA excludes ODA reported under humanitarian purpose codes 720 (emergency response), 730 (reconstruction relief and rehabilitation) and 740 (disaster prevention and preparedness). Protracted crisis countries are those with humanitarian response plans and other appeals for five consecutive years or more in the year of the disbursement.

This points to the significant and growing importance of development finance in countries experiencing protracted humanitarian crises. However, previous research by Development Initiatives on [donor approaches](#) (DI, 2019a) to the nexus and by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Results Group 5 on Financing (FAO, NRC and UNDP, 2019) identified gaps in the evidence base relating to how development actors operate in or address crisis-affected regions and populations alongside or in collaboration with humanitarian actors. Furthermore, discussions on the “[triple nexus](#)” have primarily been grounded in humanitarian policy circles, while the implications for development cooperation have been underexplored.

This study aims to address this gap by analysing current development practice in three countries with protracted humanitarian crises: [Bangladesh](#), [Cameroon](#) and [Somalia](#). This synthesis report brings together findings from the country studies, which were selected to represent diverse crisis contexts (e.g. type, duration, level of government capacity and donor engagement) and for their potential to generate lessons on the nexus (involvement in global policy or pilot processes on the nexus). Bangladesh has longstanding cooperation with development partners, strong nationally led [disaster risk reduction](#) and management efforts, and a largely separate humanitarian response to the Rohingya refugee situation in Cox’s Bazar. Cameroon, in contrast, is not a priority of most donors and has moved from a position of stability to three concurrent crises in the last five years, offering an opportunity to explore how development actors have adapted to this shifting

context. Somalia is a conflict-affected country with nascent and fragile government institutions. It has faced protracted and recurring humanitarian crises for decades and has also been a high priority for development, peace and security actors.

This synthesis report identifies common themes, lessons and considerations around how development cooperation could play a more effective role in lasting solutions to protracted crises, as part of a coherent approach linked with humanitarian and peace actions. In doing so, it explores what the “triple nexus” means for development actors, attempting to broaden the discussion beyond its traditional “home” in humanitarian policy circles. It is primarily directed towards decision-makers with a global perspective at the global/headquarters level, while the country reports contain specific findings and recommendations relevant at the field level within each context. The study has been led by DI in partnership with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) and carried out in collaboration with the IASC Results Group 5.

This research was led by DI’s Crisis and Humanitarian team, building on previous research by DI on responses to crisis and the HDP nexus, and represents our “humanitarian” perspective of current development practice in protracted humanitarian crises.

The research explores opportunities and constraints across five key areas:

- 1) partnerships and strategy,
- 2) coordination and joined-up planning,
- 3) programming,
- 4) financing and
- 5) organizational issues.

The development actors that are the main focus of this study are MDBs, OECD DAC member government entities responsible for development cooperation, and UN entities with a development (or dual humanitarian–development) mandate. We recognize that this is a broad group of actors that operate in different ways, each with distinct roles. In this research, we focus on specific lessons for different actors while drawing out themes generally common to all. Given the breadth of actors included, the extent of progress necessarily varies between them; where we make recommendations to development actors, this is not to imply that some actors are not already doing this but that as a community or collective such action is needed. In exploring how to operationalize the “triple nexus”, the main focus is on the relationship between development and humanitarian actors, finance, and actions in contexts where both are active. This study primarily treats “**peace**” in the nexus as an approach that should be integrated across humanitarian and development action, and defines peace as “positive peace” or the attitudes, institutions and structures that create and sustain peaceful societies, rather than the absence of violence.² Furthermore, the study recognizes that there is no one template or model for a “nexus approach” that suits all contexts. The extent to which collaboration between HDP actors is possible, and the form this takes, depends on the political and security context, the capacities of government and non-governmental actors, and the engagement and resources of actors, among other factors.

Research methodology and limitations

These research findings are based on a desk review of relevant documentation, analysis of financing data from the OECD DAC Creditor Reporting System (CRS), and key informant interviews with development and humanitarian actors, including government representatives, bilateral and multilateral donors, national and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs), UN agencies and resident coordinators, MDBs, and other relevant stakeholders based at local, national and international (headquarter) levels. It is not intended to be a comprehensive or exhaustive review, and various observations that would benefit from further research are highlighted in the report. One of the limitations of the research in covering a range of issues across three country contexts is the trade-off with the degree of depth we were able to look into specific areas. By its nature nexus collaboration is broad and touches on many themes that were beyond the scope of this study, including: the role of the private sector in protracted crisis contexts, South–South Cooperation, climate finance, **stabilization** financing and programming, and resources beyond ODA. Furthermore, the research took place during the global COVID-19 pandemic, with all interviews conducted remotely at a time when actors in-country were under significant added strain, which consequently impacted on who we were able to reach. Some actors we would have liked to interview – some regional MDBs, donors, national NGOs, government representatives – were not reached. Nonetheless, this report draws out common themes, lessons and considerations from the country studies that can provide useful insights into how to operationalize new and better ways of working across the humanitarian, development and peace communities.

Box 1: The emergence of the “triple nexus” concept

A series of multilateral summits between 2015 and 2018 (KUNO, 2019)³ built a policy consensus around the need to strengthen synergies between humanitarian, development and peace actions in order to move towards lasting solutions to protracted crises and achieve the SDGs in fragile and conflict-affected contexts. While strengthening linkages at the “double nexuses” of humanitarian–development action or development–peace/security action has been the subject of attention over several decades (KUNO, 2019) the so-called “triple nexus” of humanitarian–development–peace (HDP) action was brought into focus by UN Secretary-General António Guterres. On taking office in December 2016, he called for “sustaining peace” to be considered “the third side of the triangle” (UNSG, 2016) and subsequently made prevention a key cross-cutting theme of UN reform efforts.

The Secretary-General's “sustaining peace” agenda, centred around twin resolutions on peacebuilding (UNGA, 2016.) and sustaining peace (UNSC, 2016), affirmed the importance of the UN development system and development practitioners in general to conflict prevention and sustaining peace. It made organizational changes to deliver a coherent, comprehensive and holistic approach to peacebuilding across the UN system. Part of this is putting into practice

proposals set out in the comprehensive UN–World Bank conflict-prevention study, *Pathways for Peace* (UN and World Bank. 2018). To deepen reflections on the humanitarian–peace “double nexus”, the IASC recently published an issue paper on peace in the HDP nexus (IASC, 2020a), with an emphasis on the possible engagement pathways along a “peace spectrum”, within humanitarian action.

In preparation for the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016, the High-Level Panel on Humanitarian Financing put forward three proposals to address the humanitarian financing gap: 1) shrink humanitarian need, 2) broaden the resource base for humanitarian action, and 3) improve delivery through a “Grand Bargain” on efficiency. The first proposal highlighted the need to address the root causes of crisis by increasing investment in conflict prevention and resolution and disaster risk reduction, increasing ODA in fragile states, building resilience and providing multi-year funding for joint humanitarian–development programming. The third proposal – the Grand Bargain – was adopted by some of the largest donors and humanitarian organizations, who undertook a series of commitments to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of humanitarian action.

Spurred by the World Humanitarian Summit, the UN spearheaded a commitment to implement a “new way of working” in which humanitarian and development actors work collaboratively together, based on their comparative advantages, towards collective outcomes that reduce need, risk and vulnerability over multiple years. One of the concrete manifestations of this was the United Nations–World Bank Partnership in Fragile and Conflict Affected Situations signed in April 2017. This aimed to strengthen coherence, engagement and coordination among security, political, development and humanitarian operations in crisis-affected situations to better serve the 2030 development agenda and meet the SDGs. The UN and World Bank have developed joint guidance and tools to operationalize the partnership in countries where both are present.

Most recently, the OECD DAC, whose members include the largest and most influential donors in fragile contexts, adopted a recommendation on the HDP nexus, promoting a shift towards “development where possible and humanitarian only when necessary” (OECD, 2019). Since adoption of the recommendation, a number of UN agencies have also adhered in an effort to strengthen normative and operational coherence between bilateral and multilateral HDP actors (OECD, 2021)

Partnerships

A key part of how development actors strategically engage in a **crisis** context is determined by who they partner with and whether (and the ways in which) they prioritise the livelihood and **recovery** needs of crisis-affected populations. The case studies explored how development actors work with governments in crisis-affected countries, especially regarding support at the policy level, in resource allocation and service delivery in targeting crisis-affected populations. They also investigated how bilateral and multilateral development donors partner with NGOs and UN agencies at the country level and the impact this has on their ability to support crisis-affected populations. This section summarizes key findings and considerations that emerged from the case studies on effective partnerships in crises.

Key findings

How do development actors work with governments, and how does this impact their ability to support livelihoods, recovery, development and peace in crises?

The different approaches to partnership that humanitarian, development and peace actors adopt can support but also potentially limit their ability to work collaboratively at the nexus. The case studies highlighted the importance of engagement with government institutions – central to good development practice – and how this can enable an effective presence in crisis settings and therefore lay the foundation for collaboration with humanitarian and peace actors. But partnerships with government may also pose challenges, where government institutions may be weak or party to conflict, and where nexus partners, particularly humanitarian actors, feel that such a partnership undermines humanitarian principles of neutrality and impartiality.

Most development partners – donor governments, multilateral organizations and funds, and MDBs – **commit to work in partnership with national governments**, including in crisis, conflict and fragile settings. Aid effectiveness principles for engagement in fragile states stress the importance of national ownership, aligning support with nationally led development strategies, moving towards the use of country systems for delivery, and investing in institutional capacity building (Busan Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation [BPEDC], 2011). In practice, development partners have found it challenging to scale up delivery through country systems and achieve policy alignment in fragile states, due to weaknesses in the policy and institutional environment, national capacities and levels of trust (Hearn, 2016). This was the case in **Somalia** where the nascentcy of the federal government and the weakness of public financial management systems has meant that many donors are still hesitant to provide direct budget support or financing through government systems. In some cases, globally set preferences for the

choice of aid modality override country-level considerations (Schreiber, D. and Loudon, S., 2020).⁴ In addition, there is a perception among some actors that development cooperation does not prioritise crisis-affected regions at the subnational level, target the most vulnerable or marginalised populations, or focus on the sectors/sub-sectors that would most likely benefit from them. This appears to be the case in **Cameroon**, where longstanding socioeconomic marginalization and underinvestment in crisis-affected regions are recognized as drivers of structural vulnerability (World Bank, 2018a) and where ODA is concentrated in non-crisis regions. But, overall, substantiating these complaints is difficult due to data challenges, including limited spatially disaggregated data (ODI, 2019).

MDBs’ ability to leverage their strong relationships with the government and deliver at scale has been described as game-changing. The World Bank has recently scaled up its engagement in fragile and conflict-affected contexts, refugee settings, disasters and in building **resilience** to other shocks, in many ways creating a paradigm shift in the scope, scale and nature of development cooperation in crises. This is evident across all three case study countries, with large-scale World Bank projects focused on medium- to long-term risk reduction, recovery and resilience in disaster or conflict-affected regions, refugees and host communities, national safety nets, and other areas. These are financed through specific windows tailored to crisis (discussed in the financing section, later) and also prioritised within the World Bank’s country partnership frameworks and performance-based allocation mechanisms. While there is some debate about whether MDBs’ orientation towards productive investment, private-sector-led growth and debt financing is appropriate in fragile and conflict-affected contexts, overall interviewees saw their role in protracted crises as overwhelmingly positive in driving change. In the three case study countries in particular, in addition to bringing large-scale finance to address structural challenges, the World Bank and, in the case of **Bangladesh** also the Asian Development Bank (AsDB), have played an important part in strengthening the role of the government in addressing crises through providing technical support and longstanding partnerships with the government.

Given their leverage, the support of large development actors, particularly MDBs and the European Union, has led to shifts in government policy and practice towards taking a more comprehensive approach to protracted displacement in some contexts. In **Cameroon**, the World Bank in partnership with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), through dialogue with the government, played a key role in promoting the shift from humanitarian programmes that provide direct assistance to refugees to an **area-based approach** that covers both displaced and host populations. This partnership also led to the inclusion of refugees in the national safety net system. In **Somalia**, durable solutions for internally displaced people and returnees are identified as a national development priority, and the European Union, bilateral partners (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Denmark) and UN agencies (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], International Organization for Migration and UNHCR) with support from the Regional Durable Solutions Secretariat, have played a key role in progressing this agenda at the policy and operational levels, although funding remains primarily humanitarian not developmental.

Development partners face the dilemma of how to balance an approach based on partnership, cooperation and mutual accountability with the government with responsiveness to crisis-affected populations in contexts where political

commitment is wavering. In **Bangladesh**, the World Bank and AsDB have helped to broaden the response to the Rohingya refugee crisis to address the development needs of Cox's Bazar district as a whole, which has been important in the context of mounting resentment by host communities. While the government has been firmly opposed to policy reforms that would signal support for long-term integration of refugees and has resisted advocacy from a humanitarian protection perspective, it has been much more open to dialogue with development partners focusing on the socioeconomic and developmental needs of the district. This has resulted in a shift in stance on certain issues – for example, the construction of infrastructure in the camps – that affect the district's ability to sustainably manage the crisis as well as the wellbeing of refugees. In **Cameroon**, the World Bank, European Union and UN are also working collectively, in dialogue with the government, to develop a comprehensive approach to internal displacement in the north and northeast, including through the development of the Recovery and Peace Consolidation Strategy for Northern and East Cameroon 2018–2022; however, this has yet to be endorsed by the government.

Partnerships with local governments through local governance programmes have been an important entry point to engage in crisis regions across the three countries. While the main focus is often on strengthening local government institutions and their capacity for service delivery, **area-based approaches that engage multiple stakeholders in inclusive local development planning** have been a promising approach to supporting municipalities while also enhancing coordination among local actors (Center for Global Development [CGD], 2020a). When carried out in a conflict-sensitive manner, participatory development planning can create space for dialogue, build trust and enable local actors to identify interventions that will support peace. In **Cameroon**, the National Community Driven Development Programme (PNDP), set up in 2004 and funded by the Agence Française de Développement, European Union and World Bank, has facilitated participatory local development plans at the municipality level. Challenges remain with central government budget allocations to these plans and with their adaptability to changes in local needs. Nonetheless, the PNDP has provided an anchor for development actors to engage with local actors in the north and east, to develop (and in some cases finance) livelihoods and infrastructure solutions that benefit crisis-affected populations (e.g. the local employment programme in the north, water-piping). Similar area-based approaches with a strong peacebuilding focus have been used in **Somalia** where local government capacity and legitimacy is absent or weak. Despite efforts such as these to work with local authorities, there is a perception that development actors **over-emphasise top-down policy and institutional reforms and partnerships with central government**, with crisis-affected regions neglected or overlooked because power is highly centralized (e.g. in Cameroon and Bangladesh) or authority and reach is weak (in Somalia).

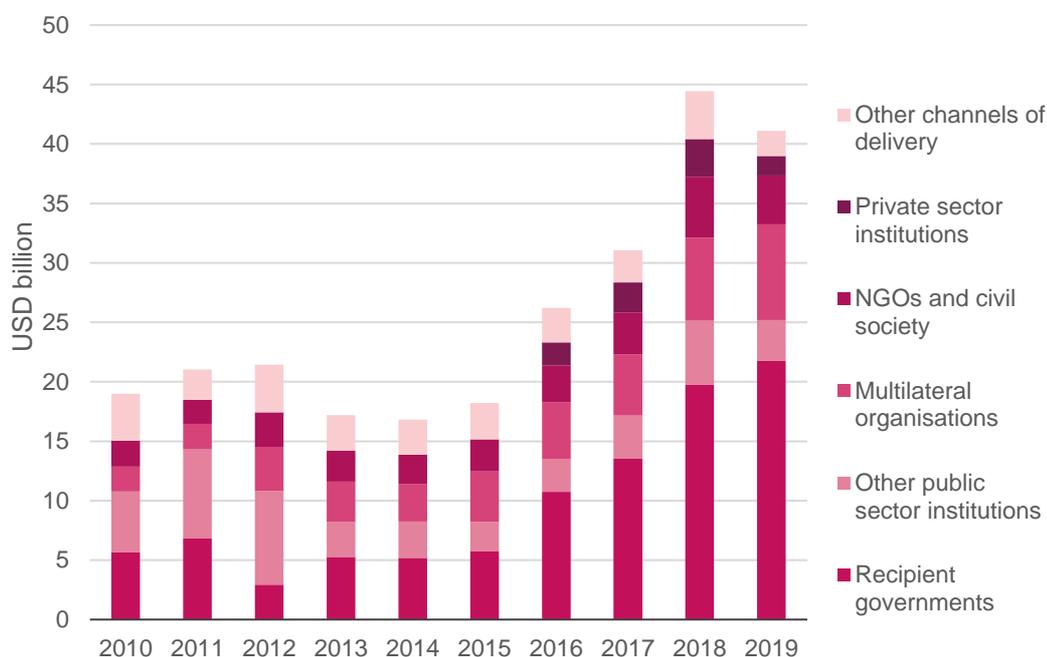
Partnership with the government is challenging or impossible in some contexts, particularly where it is an active party to conflict. These challenges can apply to central or local governments. In conflict-affected areas, where insurgents may target aid organizations seen to be in partnership with the government, humanitarian actors in particular emphasise the need to maintain neutrality and independence and not be linked to central or local governments. Development partners have struggled with how to engage with the government in **Cameroon** as the conflict with separatists in the

English-speaking regions has escalated, and many have withdrawn from the region. They were slow to recognize the risk of conflict and to take action to prevent an escalation and, while their leverage may have been limited, the difficulty adapting or exploring alternative partnership approaches has been a challenge. Development actors also face partnership dilemmas where the state lacks authority and control, and “illegitimate” militia have significant local influence, for example in al-Shabaab-controlled areas of Somalia. Focusing development cooperation only in areas of the country controlled by the government risks increasing inequality and marginalization of conflict-affected areas, potentially fuelling drivers of conflict. In such contexts, development actors must look for alternative ways to reach vulnerable populations, such as working with local actors, multi-mandated UN agencies and NGOs that engage at both local and national policy levels, or through humanitarian actors that have access in the interim, in a way that lays the foundations for peacebuilding and a transfer to legitimate and responsive national systems in the longer term. Although there are examples of good practice, such as in [Somalia](#), this is not yet an evidence-based approach, and there is a need to learn from and scale up these programming models and create instruments to systematically support non-governmental partners.

How do development actors work with non-governmental partners, and how does this impact their ability to support livelihoods, recovery and development in crises?

Although the largest share of development finance in protracted crises is channelled to recipient governments, development partners also work with a range of other partners. This can be a means to promote bottom-up, participatory development and to engage in crisis-affected regions, particularly where government structures are weak or unresponsive to local populations. The largest share of development finance in [Cameroon](#) and [Bangladesh](#) is channelled to recipient governments, which mirrors the wider trend in protracted crisis countries (Figure 2). In the decade to 2019, 38 percent of total developmental ODA was channelled to recipient governments in protracted crisis countries, followed by multilateral organizations (17 percent), NGOs and civil society (12 percent), donor governments (11 percent), unspecified public sector institutions⁵ (5 percent), and private sector institutions⁶ (2 percent). Nonetheless, funding channelled to recipient governments varied across the three case study countries, reflecting their different levels of fragility, from only 6 percent in Somalia, to 49 percent in Cameroon and 62 percent in Bangladesh. Likewise, 75 percent of developmental ODA was channelled to multilateral organizations, NGOs, civil society and the private sector⁷ in Somalia, compared with 22 percent in Bangladesh and 11 percent in Cameroon.

Figure 2: Channel of delivery of developmental ODA to protracted crises countries, 2010–2019



Source: DI, 2021; OECD DAC Creditor Reporting System (CRS).

Notes: Data is in constant 2018 prices. ODA is from DAC and multilateral donors only. Developmental ODA excludes ODA reported under humanitarian purpose codes 720 (emergency response), 730 (reconstruction relief and rehabilitation) and 740 (disaster prevention and preparedness). Protracted crisis countries are those with humanitarian response plans and other appeals for five consecutive years or more in the year of the disbursement.

While subnational data is often poor, evidence from the country studies suggests that government-led delivery and budget allocations to crisis-affected regions are often limited, as in **Cameroon**. Furthermore, research indicates that development strategies often lack an explicit focus on targeting the populations that are most left behind (ODI, 2018a).⁸ Political obstacles play a role, for example in Bangladesh where the government has been reluctant to allocate its own budget to services that primarily benefit refugees, or in Cameroon where there is political resistance to decentralization. The weakness of local government structures and capacity for delivery is also a major obstacle, as in Somalia and Cameroon. Therefore, providing funding through other channels, while working in parallel to strengthen local government and the national administration, is key (Schreiber, D. and Loudon, S., 2020).⁹ A multi-pronged approach is needed. Maintaining parallel service delivery might meet the needs of vulnerable populations in the short term, but it is ultimately unsustainable and may not aid a transition out of protracted crisis. There are examples where development partners jointly develop programmes with governments to encourage ownership and alignment of priorities, but where UN agencies, international NGOs, private contractors or bilateral partners directly execute the projects, for example the World Bank social safety net programme in **Somalia** (see Box 2). Where there is genuine work in parallel to strengthen government capacity to deliver, this approach can support a transition towards

government-led service delivery while also responding to immediate needs. Cooperation between development and humanitarian actors to work jointly towards a transition to government-led service delivery in the case study countries is not yet systematic – and this remains a core challenge for operationalizing the nexus felt globally.

Box 2: World Bank–government service delivery through humanitarian agencies

Building government capacity is a long-term process. This is particularly true in fragile or conflict-affected contexts where it may not be appropriate for development actors to implement programming or deliver services through government systems. A challenge for donors is how to address the immediate needs of vulnerable people in parallel with capacity-building efforts.

One example of how this is approached in Somalia is the World Bank’s Shock Responsive Safety Net for Human Capital Project, known in Somali as the “Baxnaano” programme. In collaboration with the Ministry of Labour, the World Bank established the programme to lay foundations for longer term social protection systems. The programme supports vulnerable households to increase their income and improve their resilience to shocks through predictable access to cash transfers. The Shock Responsive Safety Net for Locust Response Project builds on this existing programme, with an additional focus on food security and livelihoods.

The safety net programme is delivered through UN agencies and international NGOs with pre-existing programmes, in partnership with the UN World Food Programme (WFP) and United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF). The programme is intended as a transitional measure until government structures are established and have the capacity to lead in government-held areas, and where it is appropriate in terms of safeguarding humanitarian principles. Its branding as a nationally led initiative has been key for building state legitimacy. Decentralizing management to member state and local government levels will be crucial to develop the social contract between government and society for greater sustainability and impact (ECDPM, 2019).

It was in Yemen that the World Bank pioneered the approach of maintaining the national social protection programme during active conflict by using UN agencies as delivery partners rather than the government (World Bank, 2018b). Taking a flexible interpretation of its own policies, the World Bank was able to provide “unprecedented and innovative” International Development Association grant financing to UNICEF and UNDP to provide emergency cash transfers to millions of Yemenis at risk of famine (World Bank, 2019), building on the national safety net programme formerly implemented by the Social Welfare Fund but suspended following the outbreak of conflict (WFP and World Bank, 2018). Maintaining national systems during crises by channelling World Bank funds to humanitarian agencies in this way offers several benefits: it may help to relaunch social protection systems once the conflict is over;

it gives development partners the opportunity to learn from humanitarian partners on integrating “do no harm” principles in their approaches; and it helps foster partnerships between development and humanitarian actors that will be beneficial in a post-crisis context when it comes to rebuilding the social protection system (WFP and World Bank, 2018).

Non-governmental service delivery remains dominated by international actors

(UN agencies and international NGOs); local NGOs, local businesses¹⁰ and other community representatives are not adequately engaged, funded or supported to play a leading role in the protracted crises contexts investigated in this study. Of the almost USD 31 billion of developmental ODA that was channelled to NGOs and civil society in protracted crisis countries between 2010 and 2019, only 11 percent went to developing country-based NGOs; however, this data should be interpreted with caution as some funding to national NGOs that operate internationally might be excluded. There are some notable exceptions, for example the Bangladeshi-founded organization BRAC, which has grown into a global player and has a major role in running the refugee camps in Cox’s Bazar, and extensive rural development programmes that incorporate disaster management. However, overall on the humanitarian side progress with the localization agenda has been limited, and although there have been important pilot efforts, such as Start Fund **Bangladesh**, these remain small-scale pilots. Analysis of humanitarian funding in 2019 indicated that only 2.1 percent (USD 444 million) was directed to local and national actors, decreasing from 3.5 percent (USD 782 million) in 2018 (DI, 2020b). Most humanitarian funding to local NGOs is channelled through UN agencies, pooled funds and international NGOs. On the development side, some development partners have instruments that can directly support local civil society actors, particularly in the context of efforts to promote governance and accountability, such as the global European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (European Commission, 2020),¹¹ which was used in **Cameroon**. Local NGOs identified multiple barriers in accessing greater funding, including difficulties in meeting onerous due diligence, monitoring and reporting requirements, inability to retain skilled staff by paying salaries at a similar level to international NGOs, and lack of support for overhead costs holding back organizational development. As a result of information asymmetries, a culture of risk aversion and limited administrative capacity to manage broad grant portfolios or fund local NGOs directly, there is often a reluctance on the part of donors to channel large amounts of money via “unknown” entities and a preference for working with well-established partners.¹² Some donors also cited concerns that local NGO actors may have weaker governance and financial controls and can lack political neutrality or be vulnerable to corruption or other abuses. Overall, the case studies reinforce the findings of numerous other reviews that existing financing channels tend to maintain a power imbalance between international and local partners and do not provide the necessary quality technical, capacity-building and financial support to further the localization of humanitarian and development efforts, with some exceptions such as pooled funds.¹³

Key questions and considerations for development actors

- Partnership strategies in protracted crisis contexts need to be informed by regular context analysis to be able to identify potential risks and respond to changes in the context. How can donors ensure their multi-year partnership strategies are reviewed regularly and supported by mechanisms that provide more flexible, multi-year support to non-governmental partners including UN agencies and international NGOs, as well as instruments with a specific focus on local civil society (discussed further below)?
- How can development partners better utilise the capacities of their diplomatic and political representations to redouble efforts to reach a political settlement to conflict where the government is a party to conflict or where there are political obstacles to achieving sustainable solutions to crises? In such contexts, dialogue and information sharing across the HDP nexus must be strengthened to ensure that the actions of one set of actors do not undermine those of another – even if collaboration may not be possible at the operational level due to the need to safeguard humanitarian space.
- How can work to strengthen local governments in crisis-affected regions be deepened, while also engaging a broad range of community stakeholders in planning? This could offer development actors a way to address the “missing middle” between top-level policy and institutional support and community-based approaches in order to scale-up delivery at the subnational level in contexts where government structures are weak and promote inclusiveness to foster long-term peace. Support to decentralization can be an important aspect of such an approach, as can long-term investments in local government capacity through local governance programmes and inclusive area-based approaches that engage local authorities and a broader range of local actors in planning.
- Centrally driven policy and institutional reform and partnership with the government needs to be balanced with efforts to work with and strengthen the capacity of local civil society and private sector actors in crisis-affected regions. In considering how to strengthen local partnerships beyond the government, scaling up long-term investment in local civil society and the private sector is critical. How can HDP actors work together to bring about a change in the way local actors are financed and supported? This could include collaborating to develop plans and intermediary funding mechanisms (The New Humanitarian, 2020) – such as pooled funds or NGO consortia – to accelerate financial and technical support directly to local civil society actors in ways that mitigate donors’ concerns.

Coordination, prioritization and planning

Building synergies between in-country HDP actors through coordination mechanisms is crucial for effective responses in crisis-affected regions, identifying a division of responsibilities between key actors at different stages of crisis and providing the foundation for joined-up and complementary planning and programming. The country case studies explored existing coordination mechanisms for bringing HDP actors together and how their effectiveness could be improved. Our previous research on the nexus highlighted that joined-up assessments and planning by HDP actors, within and between agencies, is a prerequisite for working effectively in crisis-affected communities and identifying the comparative advantage of development actors (DI, 2019a). The country case studies looked at the extent to which development actors work collaboratively with humanitarian and peace actors to undertake shared analysis and planning. This section summarizes the key findings and considerations to emerge from the case studies on effective coordination, prioritization and planning across the HDP nexus.

Key findings

What role do coordination mechanisms in-country play in supporting joined-up HDP assessments, planning and delivery in crisis-affected areas?

In the case study countries, there is an elaborate coordination architecture in place at the country level, but join-up between humanitarian and development action and between humanitarian and peace action remains weak. Efforts to improve the coherence of development and peace and security actions are more advanced, but there has been a lack of consensus on how to integrate “peace” within the “triple nexus” in a way that preserves humanitarian principles. UN resident coordinators have led the establishment of a nexus task force in **Cameroon** and nexus coordination structures (under development) in **Somalia** as strategic forums to bring together HDP actors and work towards “collective outcomes”. The process has been slow, and it may be too early to assess the extent to which these will fill the “structural coordination gap” that exists between humanitarian and development activities, or the extent to which they will be able to develop joined-up plans that bridge the distinct planning cycles, finance streams and policy and strategic priorities of each sector. Additionally, in the case study countries, **buy-in and senior participation from development partners outside the UN system and across governments remains a challenge** and, given the considerable leverage of development partners such as the World Bank in mobilising government ownership, their joint leadership in coordination mechanisms will be a prerequisite to success. A further challenge has been a lack of clarity on the meaning of “peace” in the triple nexus. There are many examples across the three contexts of development cooperation directly

contributing to political and security responses to conflict, and of efforts to strengthen coherence of development and peace/security actions. These include **stabilization** (northern Cameroon and Somalia), state-building (Somalia) and counter-terrorism/preventing violent extremism interventions (Somalia and Bangladesh), and security and justice sector reform, among other areas. But there are concerns within the humanitarian community – such as in the context of stabilization and counter-insurgency efforts in northern **Cameroon** – that direct collaboration with peace and security actors, or work towards peace objectives, would politicise humanitarian aid. However, there is now an emerging consensus at global level on the need to distinguish between “Big P” political and security approaches and “little p” approaches that aim to build “positive peace”. There is also progress in identifying activities on a peace “spectrum” that are relevant to humanitarian action, which at a minimum means integrating conflict sensitivity (IASC, 2020a).

Scope for joined-up HDP action is context dependent, and there is a clear need to protect independent humanitarian coordination in certain political contexts to safeguard principled humanitarian action. This is especially important in active conflicts (as in the English-speaking regions of **Cameroon**), areas controlled by non-state groups (as in the al-Shabaab-controlled areas of **Somalia**), or other contexts where government political actions threaten the rights and protection of certain populations. However, in crisis situations where there is strong government leadership and political will (as in the response to natural disasters in **Bangladesh**) or where the main issue is the weakness or fragmentation of local governance structures rather than political commitment (as in some areas of Somalia), siloed coordination and planning can be a product of the aid system, rather than an imperative to ensure access to populations in need. Parallel humanitarian and development assessment, planning and coordination mechanisms can place an unnecessary burden on host governments, undermine ownership, fragment the support that is provided, and generate inefficiencies. It is clear that there is no single coordination model that fits all contexts; nevertheless, an honest mapping and evaluation of the effectiveness of existing coordination mechanisms could be a starting point towards establishing a more coherent approach that creates space for joined-up analysis and planning across HDP actors. At the local level, an **area-based** model for operational coordination may offer a platform to better align development, humanitarian and peace interventions and strengthen engagement with local actors (CGD, 2020b).

The case studies highlighted that it will be important to **review, learn from and build on previous efforts to harmonise aid and strengthen coordination** of development assistance in fragile contexts when considering how to strengthen coherence of HDP actions. For example, in **Somalia** the Somalia Development and Reconstruction Facility represents a clear effort to establish a coherent aid architecture bringing together several multi-partner funds. Efforts to strengthen the **partnership between the UN and World Bank** were evident across the three countries. Within the UN system there has been progress towards common analysis and planning (e.g. through common country assessment frameworks) and some positive examples of joint programming (e.g. in **Bangladesh**). However, there were also cases where international agencies compete for influence over particular agendas and where access to funding was the main driver behind coordination arrangements, rather than what would be most coherent or appropriate to the context. Strengthening collaboration requires recognizing and working

to overcome **significant disincentives to collaborate** between actors in the aid system, including competition over funding, territory, visibility and influence (IPI, 2020).¹⁴

How are development actors working within and between agencies on joined-up assessments and planning and to identify shared outcomes?

Progress has been made in identifying collective outcomes in both Somalia and Cameroon, although the extent of buy-in for their implementation remains unclear, particularly in Somalia, and the “peace” elements are weak. Furthermore, there is a risk that these create a new, parallel layer of planning and are not sufficiently embedded in existing national development plans and accountability frameworks and the coordination structures that support them. For example, in **Cameroon**, cross-government buy-in remains a challenge, and it is not yet clear how monitoring of collective outcomes will link with existing development frameworks. In **Somalia**, buy-in from key development partners has been a challenge. The existing national development plan, which includes **resilience** as a central, cross-cutting issue, and existing development coordination forums offer a potential starting point. It is clear that planning towards collective outcomes requires buy-in from the government and joint leadership from key humanitarian and development actors (i.e. UN, European Union and the World Bank) to succeed. But in contexts in which government political will is lacking, it will be important that HDP actors find alternative ways to coordinate and share information at a strategic level. Development partners have a role to play here in working to build national ownership over time and supporting the government to stay engaged in donor coordination processes with a view to avoiding or phasing out parallel coordination structures in the longer term.

The World Bank–European Union–UN partnership on Recovery and Peacebuilding Assessments (RPBAs) and Post Disaster Needs Assessments (PDNAs) provides a strong basis for common analysis and joined-up planning that brings together HDP actors (Box 3). In **Cameroon**, the RPBA played an important role in bringing together humanitarian and development actors, leading to the Recovery and Peace Consolidation Strategy for Northern and East Cameroon 2018–2022 and informing the priorities of the nexus task force. This represents important progress, although some actors point to the need to strengthen peace actions and further engage “peace actors” in the RPBA. The PDNA provided the basis for the **Somalia** Drought Impact and Needs Assessment and the Recovery and Resilience Framework in 2018, which was designed to complement the humanitarian response plan. There are also examples of development support to establish nationally led data systems related to disaster/vulnerability, however humanitarian actors maintain the need for independent data due to the need to safeguard humanitarian principles.

Box 3: Tools to support joined-up assessments and planning

Joint analysis is a fundamental enabler of a nexus approach. The Recovery and Peacebuilding Assessments (RPBAs) and its sister process the Post Disaster Needs Assessments (PDNAs) provide a methodology and/or platform for joint analysis and planning supported through a partnership between the UN, World Bank and European Union (EU, UN and World Bank, 2017). RPBAs bring together national and international HDP actors to develop a shared analysis of the root causes of crisis and conflict and prioritise immediate and medium-term recovery and peacebuilding actions in support of the government in countries experiencing conflict or in transition from a conflict-related crisis. The approach has evolved from when it was first introduced in 2003 as the Post-Conflict Needs Assessments (PCNAs). The methodology has been reviewed and adapted on several occasions based on learning from experience to improve its relevance and flexibility and make it fit for a diverse range of dynamic and insecure contexts. Financing has taken on greater prominence, and the development of a financing strategy is now an important aspect of the process (OECD, 2018). While RPBAs aim to promote greater coherence across humanitarian, peace and security, political, and development efforts, they are designed to complement but not replace humanitarian assessment and planning processes due to the need to safeguard humanitarian principles.

The RPBA played an important role in bringing together humanitarian and development actors in Cameroon, leading to the Recovery and Peace Consolidation Strategy for Northern and East Cameroon 2018–2022 and informing the priorities of the nexus task force. Indeed, the RPBA served as the main analytical foundation for the three collective outcomes developed by the nexus task force to be implemented in “areas of convergence” in the Far North and west of the country. PDNAs provide a similar framework for joined-up planning for recovery from disasters and served the basis for the Somalia Drought Impact and Needs Assessment and the Recovery and Resilience Framework in 2018. Led by the Federal Government of Somalia, the needs assessment process brought together a large number of actors to assess the impact of ongoing drought on lives, livelihoods and sectors of the economy and identify preventative and sustainable development solutions to promote resilience to disaster risks and climate change trends. It was explicitly designed to complement the humanitarian response plan and create a framework for humanitarian and development cooperation. In an effort to reinforce synergies between the RPBA and PDNA, guidance was issued in 2019 on how to conduct a PDNA in conflict situations (EU, UN and World Bank, 2019).

Key questions and considerations for development actors

- How can key development actors such as MDBs, national governments and leading bilateral donors play a prominent role in leading the nexus – practically, politically and in policy – alongside humanitarian and peace actors? Leadership requires senior buy-in from development institutions and the government in nexus coordination mechanisms and planning processes at the country level. For example, this could be demonstrated through co-chairing by the government, World Bank and UN resident coordinator to build effective collaboration across HDP responses and implement collective outcomes. The World Bank and other MDBs could use country partnership framework negotiations as an opportunity to bring the government on board and create a bridge with other development partners.
- How can HDP actors ensure that collective outcomes are embedded in existing development planning frameworks and the coherence of existing coordination structures is increased? Where possible, collective outcomes should build on and link with existing planning frameworks and be coordinated through existing forums rather than creating new, parallel processes. At local level, area-based coordination models (CGD, 2020b) could improve HDP collaboration and should be field tested to build evidence on this.
- Development planning processes at the country level, whether UN led (e.g. common country assessments and UN SDG cooperation frameworks) or nationally led (e.g. integrated national financing framework [INFF] processes), present an opportunity to strengthen collaboration with humanitarian and peace actors (both local and national, UN and NGO), drawing on their expertise to jointly analyse risks, conflict dynamics, needs and capacities. How can the new INFF processes be designed and implemented to support HDP collaboration in crisis contexts?¹⁵
- The UN and World Bank have made progress in formalising a nexus approach in their partnership. How can they now ensure a process is in place to monitor and review how nexus coordination structures are working at the country level and evaluate the implementation of collective outcomes, including a process to share and systematise this learning?
- It was widely recognized in the research that funding can be a barrier or an incentive to joined-up planning and programming. How can donors better use their leverage to incentivise nexus planning? This could include making greater use of pooled funds or dedicated budget lines to support joint programmes that focus on collective outcomes, or other collaborative actions across the nexus. Donor coordination is key both within the development sector and across the HDP nexus. Developing donor platforms comprised of development, humanitarian and peacebuilding staff at country or global levels to share experiences on existing nexus approaches could help in sharing good practices on overcoming common obstacles and build greater coherence within the donor community.

Programming approaches

Development Initiatives' earlier research on the nexus found that programming with an explicit focus on building collaboration, coherence and complementarity between HDP actors is implemented in places at the country level but is not generally systematised or taking place at scale (DI, 2019a). Effective development programming targeting crisis-affected populations was found to include efforts to support livelihoods and lay the foundation for long-term development and recovery during a crisis, support **shock-responsive**, early action and preventative responses to crisis, and systematically embed risk, resilience and peacebuilding. The country case studies explored the programming approaches of development actors targeting crisis-affected populations and the systems in place to allow them to adapt and flex priorities during the programme cycle as a prerequisite to working effectively in fast-changing crisis contexts. This section summarizes the key findings and considerations to emerge from the case studies on effective programming in crises.

Key findings

What programming approaches are used by development actors in crisis-affected areas?

Humanitarian and development programming have often been conceptualised as being delivered in succession, with development relevant in prevention and recovery phases but limited in active crises or conflict. Experience from Cameroon and other conflict contexts shows that development actors often decrease engagement or pull out when risks escalate, while political actors often fail to take early action, getting involved only after a situation becomes violent (UN and World Bank, 2018). Development actors have sometimes been slow or late to engage in “sudden-onset” situations, where humanitarian actors are typically first on the scene. In **Bangladesh**, the World Bank became involved in Cox's Bazar at an early stage compared with its responses in other refugee situations, but nonetheless even earlier engagement might have helped host communities to cope better with the refugee crisis and reduced tensions. **Sequencing gaps** can also occur as humanitarian assistance declines and if development actors are not sufficiently present to scale up support, as has been seen in northern and eastern **Cameroon** and in recently stabilised areas of **Somalia**. Thus, the recent IASC guidance on the nexus points to the need for **a shift from sequential towards simultaneous programming**, where diverse actors engage in a complementary fashion over multiple years according to their comparative advantages (IASC, 2020b), (see Box 4 for examples). For development actors this means **staying engaged during crises** or **engaging earlier**. Development actors increasingly recognize that conflict and other crises are often protracted and recurring and do not follow a linear trajectory, but the shift away from sequential thinking and programming is not fully engrained. Some development actors, such as the World

Bank and other MDBs, have evolved from a focus on post-conflict reconstruction to engaging across the full spectrum of fragility, and with this they have also strengthened approaches to assessing and engaging directly to address conflict and fragility.

Box 4: HDP programming synergies

Synergies between humanitarian, development and peace programmes occur in many areas.¹⁶ The following are examples of **areas of synergy between HDP actions** that came out most strongly in the research in the three focus countries.

- **Disaster risk reduction and climate change adaption.** Development partners are playing a prominent role in disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation and natural resource management programmes that aim to reduce long-term disaster-related risks and strengthen resilience to climatic hazards. In contexts such as northern Cameroon and Somalia, these issues are also directly linked to local conflicts over natural resources, and conflict and insecurity is linked with climate-related migration. The World Bank, UN agencies and other partners have invested heavily in disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation in the three countries. Humanitarian actors typically lead disaster management and response, even where there is a growing focus on preparedness and anticipatory action and on supporting nationally led response and recovery efforts, as in Bangladesh. While the approaches are largely complementary, there is considerable scope to review the existing division of labour, formalise partnerships and develop common approaches that bring together the full spectrum of activities, while also strengthening their peacebuilding focus.
- **Durable solutions to forced displacement.** There has been significant progress in formulating a common approach to forced displacement, with increased engagement by development partners including the European Union and World Bank. There is evidence of progress on the ground in **Bangladesh**, **Cameroon**, and **Somalia**, shifting the targeting of assistance from status-based criteria to vulnerability-based, and increasing investment in host communities and specific actions and approaches designed to promote social cohesion and acceptance by host communities. There is now an opportunity to capture learning from these and other initiatives. For example, World Bank support through its window for refugees and host communities has been instrumental in Cameroon and Bangladesh, but it is limited to refugee situations. Learning from this might inform a similar approach to address internal displacement or mixed migration situations. The Regional Durable Solutions Secretariat in East Africa, a consortium of international NGOs, is promoting collaborative approaches to internal displacement in Somalia, offering a model that could be replicated elsewhere.¹⁷

- **National social protection and safety net systems.** Development actors, including the European Union, UN agencies and World Bank, are supporting the development of government-led social protection and safety net programmes in **Bangladesh**, **Cameroon** and **Somalia**. There are obvious synergies with humanitarian action (cash-based assistance in particular) and scope for joined-up delivery especially where government capacity is weak but collaboration is not systematic (WFP and World Bank, 2018).¹⁸ In addition, these systems have the potential to play a role in sustaining peace, for example by building trust and addressing marginalization, however these linkages are not well developed. In Somalia, where government capacity for delivery is weak, World-Bank-funded, nationally led programmes are being delivered by the UN and international NGOs with the aim of facilitating a transition towards government-led programming as this capacity is developed. Designing these systems to be shock responsive will be critical to reducing dependence on humanitarian aid in the long term (see below).
 - **Livelihoods and economic recovery.** Development actors are involved with a range of programmes that support socioeconomic recovery of conflict-affected areas with a strong focus on livelihoods, markets and employment, as in northern **Cameroon**, and climate and disaster resilient livelihoods, as in **Bangladesh**. In some cases these are directly linked with peace and security objectives, for example livelihoods and employment are seen as integral to **stabilization** in northern Cameroon and to countering violent extremism in Bangladesh. While a significant focus for livelihood support in crisis contexts is on cash transfer programming, to build community self-reliance it is necessary to go beyond cash transfers to crisis-affected individuals and to build local market systems by strengthening conflict-sensitive development investments. This emerged as an issue in areas in eastern Cameroon hosting refugees from Central African Republic, where there was a need to better connect to and strengthen local markets and move away from dependency on humanitarian programming.
 - **Local governance.** Local governance programmes, which develop local government structures and capacity for service delivery and facilitate longer term local development plans, are an important entry point in crisis-affected regions. There are clear efforts to address displacement through local planning in Cameroon (described above) and Somalia, while in **Bangladesh** a core challenge has been to embed long-term planning for Cox's Bazar district (i.e. the District Development Plan) in appropriate governance structures. There is scope to link local governance programming with community-focused resilience and peacebuilding approaches, taking a participatory approach and aiming to build relationships and accountability between local authorities and communities.
-

How are development actors embedding risk and flexibility into the programme cycle?

Development cooperation has a long-term, strategic focus, typically with three- to six-year strategy and planning cycles. Most development actors see their primary role in a crisis to address longer term, structural issues that will, over time, reduce risks of fragility, conflict or disaster, strengthen institutional **resilience**, and foster lasting peace and recovery. Development partners have a range of tools to assess risks and opportunities and to inform their prioritization and strategic approach in country, such as the World Bank Risk and Resilience Assessment. While this study does not comprehensively review current practice, the extent to which donor and national development strategies addressed risk and resilience across the three countries appears uneven. For example, in **Somalia**, resilience to climatic shocks, conflict and political fragility is a major priority and theme in the national development plan and is reflected in donor strategies, while in **Bangladesh** disaster risk and resilience is an important priority, but other risks are not fully considered. A further issue is that context/risk analyses are usually undertaken upstream, at the start of the planning cycle, and tend to focus on the higher strategic level. When it comes to having capacities and systems to carry out ongoing context analysis, to translate high-level, long-term strategy into programming jointly developed with partners to address risks, and to regularly monitor, review and adapt strategies and plans, some development actors are much more advanced than others (DI, 2019a).¹⁹ The ability to do so also depends on the government and other implementing partners, and the process to renegotiate plans with partners can be lengthy.

This can lead to **the failure to anticipate or adequately respond to an escalation of conflict or crisis**. In **Cameroon**, many development partners did not recognize the extent of the country's fragility or prioritise support to mitigate conflict risks in their country strategies, and they were slow to react to the escalation of conflict in the English-speaking regions. Due to a range of factors, Cameroon went from being seen as a relatively stable country to being affected by several concurrent crises within the space of five years. In particular, stalled decentralization and uneven economic growth, which has benefited the centre but left behind crisis-affected regions, has been an important long-term risk; however, this does not appear to have been a sufficient priority in donor strategies and aid allocations (and in some cases development support may have reinforced unequal development).

Risk management and **resilience** are integral to **disaster risk reduction** and **climate change adaption programmes** across the three countries, and are also sometimes reflected in approaches to **fragility and conflict**. In **Bangladesh**, where there are recurring disasters related to seasonal monsoon floods and cyclones, development partners have invested heavily in disaster risk reduction programmes. Resilience to disasters is a secondary, cross-cutting objective in infrastructure, urban planning, education, agriculture and food security programmes, and many other areas. There are some examples of innovative programmes that aim to strengthen resilience at the community level and address the full risk landscape, such as the programmes implemented by the Somalia Resilience Programme and Building Resilient Communities

in Somalia (BRCiS) NGO consortia in [Somalia](#), and the Inclusive Economic and Social Recovery Project for Lake Chad (RESILAC) programme in northern [Cameroon](#).

Some development partners, notably the World Bank, increasingly recognize the need to **balance a long-term strategy with the ability to flexibly respond to shorter term pressures**, shocks and needs in fragile situations. For the World Bank, greater flexibility has been enabled by special allocation mechanisms that supplement its longer-term country partnership frameworks (see the “Financing” section below), as well as programmatic models and operational policies and procedures that are tailored to fragile, conflict and crisis settings. For example, the World Bank played a key role in [Somalia](#), with a project funded by the Crisis Response Window to respond to the 2017 drought. It supported both the immediate needs of drought-affected people and medium-term recovery through the restoration of agricultural and pastoral production, and has been credited with helping to avert a famine. In 2019, the World Bank also played a part in the response to the locust and flooding crisis. Regional development banks (e.g. the African Development Bank [AfDB] and AsDB) also operate in fragile settings, and more recently have scaled up their involvement in disaster risk reduction and disaster response. This has included developing contingent financing facilities to address these risks and further developing tailored approaches to fragility, such as the AfDB’s Transition Support Facility. Regional development banks were working in all three countries but were not focusing directly in (or were relatively new to operating in) protection environments alongside humanitarian actors. The only country where this occurred was [Bangladesh](#), where AsDB engaged for the first time in a forced displacement context, approving grant funding within eight weeks of receiving a request for support from the government. This was used to improve severely strained infrastructure and construct facilities to make refugee camps and host communities safer.

The COVID-19 pandemic brought home the need for **shock-responsive** programming for many development partners. There is a growing recognition of the need for national safety net and social protection systems that can cope with spikes in need. For example, in [Bangladesh](#) national safety net programmes were set up to target only the poorest and most vulnerable populations, and development partners worked to adapt them to handle a rapid increase in case load as huge numbers of informal workers lost their livelihoods.

There have also been advances in **adaptive programming and management models**, which stress ongoing analysis, learning and feedback loops, rather than a typical linear programme cycle. In particular, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland’s former Department for International Development (now the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office) and the United States Agency for International Development have been prominent adopters of adaptive management ideas and approaches. There are many examples of adaptive approaches in smaller scale projects, especially community-based programmes implemented by NGOs such as the RESILAC programme in northern [Cameroon](#) and the BRCiS programme in [Somalia](#) (see Box 5). But adaptive approaches are much more challenging to scale: most large development institutions have stringent governance, management and accountability requirements, and programmes with larger budgets, larger teams and complex partnership arrangements and contractual agreements are more challenging to change.

Box 5: Adaptive management and programming in BRCiS and RESILAC NGO consortia

The complex and interrelated challenges facing development actors operating in protracted crisis contexts require programming approaches that are agile, responsive to a fast-changing environment, innovative and tailored to the specific context rather than the more traditional static and linear model of intervention. Adaptive management approaches respond to this need by providing a framework for better, evidence-based decision-making during the lifecycle of a project or programme, allowing implementers to adapt as needed, try new methods and approaches, and foster continuous learning (ODI, 2018b). Two examples of NGO consortia applying adaptive management approaches are Building Resilient Communities in Somalia (BRCiS) and the Inclusive Economic and Social Recovery Project for Lake Chad (RESILAC), covering Niger, Cameroon, Chad and Nigeria.

RESILAC, led by Action Against Hunger (Action contre la Faim) and implemented with CARE and Groupe URD (the knowledge manager), is an innovative project combining emergency response, rehabilitation and recovery in the Lake Chad region – an area affected by recurrent climatic shocks and a regional security crisis linked to the Boko Haram insurgency. The project aims to build the resilience of local communities, in particular young people, in three ways: by strengthening social cohesion, supporting economic recovery, and improving local governance and the management of natural resources. With ongoing monitoring of the context and activities, and an iterative evaluation and learning support system, Groupe URD supports the consortium partners to draw lessons as the project is implemented and adapt approaches as necessary, with a focus on conflict and gender dynamics. The project relies on strong community feedback mechanisms to assess the quality of the response, document expected and unexpected outcomes, and manage stakeholder expectations.

Learning generated thus far has confirmed the relevance of the strategy for reducing vulnerabilities over the medium term, which is appreciated by stakeholders in a region where short-term humanitarian programming is the norm. However, it also identified operational and organizational challenges in collectively implementing a multi-country, multi-sectoral, multi-stakeholder project in such a complex and volatile context. A mid-point evaluation workshop highlighted the risk that falling into pragmatic “business as usual” humanitarian modes of implementation could reduce the impact of the project, and it recommended ensuring staff have the right skill sets and continue to pursue an integrated approach to implementation, respecting the principle to “do no harm” (Groupe URD, 2019).

Adaptive management is also a key strategy for the BRCiS consortium supporting communities in the southern and central regions of Somalia exposed to recurrent climatic, conflict-induced and economic shocks and stresses. BRCiS membership

includes six international NGOs and three local NGOs. The consortium supports people to develop their capacity to resist and recover from minor shocks through community-led processes. It incorporates local partners and capacity-building activities to facilitate a localised response. The consortium's programmes include crisis modifiers, enabling members to scale up community safety nets in response to spikes in needs identified through the FAO Early Warning Dashboard. The consortium supports its members to ensure ongoing adaptation that is grounded in evidence and cross-agency learning and to foster innovation. In 2020 an internal funding facility within the consortium was designed to encourage members to further use adaptation and try new approaches in their existing community-led interventions. This established the foundations for locally led innovations and their potential scaling up in future BRCiS programming.

Key questions and considerations for development actors

- How can HDP actors strengthen synergies in specific areas of programming such as those described above? Jointly developing policy and programmatic guidance that provides a common language and toolbox could be a first step. Multi-mandated organizations, which have been grappling with these questions for some time, could play a key role. To take this forward, it will be important to review the existing division of labour, formalise partnerships and develop a common approach that brings together the full spectrum of activities, bridging both immediate assistance and long-term approaches.
- Working effectively in protracted crisis contexts requires ongoing context analysis that covers the full spectrum of risks (e.g. economic, environmental, political, conflict, security and societal) (Desai and Forsberg, 2020).²⁰. How can development actors ensure the right internal capacity and systems to carry out regular analysis and review and adapt their strategies to changes in the context, including identifying preventative actions? While systems for identifying and responding to disaster risks have developed over the years, there is a need to invest further in mechanisms to anticipate and respond to conflict risks. Drawing on the expertise of humanitarian and peace actors at the country level could help in this regard.
- Protracted crisis contexts call for flexible and responsive programming, yet in the case study countries adaptive programming and management approaches remain small-scale. How can development actors scale these up drawing on learning, best practice and existing initiatives including the Global Learning and Adaptive Management initiative (ODI, 2021)? In particular, scaling up effective project-based pilot approaches for building resilience by embedding them into national frameworks (e.g. on safety nets, local governance and shock-responsive social protection) could enable greater reach and impact.

Financing tools

Financing can play a strategic role, not only as a source of funding for projects and programmes but also as tool to enable and incentivise behaviour and outcomes across the HDP nexus (FAO, NRC and UNDP, 2019). The country case studies explored the role of bilateral aid programmes, technical assistance frameworks and national or global financing mechanisms to reach vulnerable crisis-affected populations. They looked at how effective these are at enabling development actors to address longer term livelihood needs during a crisis and support resilience, recovery and peace. Our previous research demonstrated that a high degree of flexibility enabling development actors to adapt existing priorities (by reallocating budgets) or scale up to support new partners and crisis-affected populations (by accessing unearmarked, contingency/pooled or in-built programmatic risk funding) is crucial for working effectively in fast-changing contexts. The country case studies looked at the level of budgetary flexibility development actors and partners have at the country level, and their access to contingency financing mechanisms. This section summarizes the key findings and considerations to emerge from the case studies on effective financing in crises.

Key findings

What development funding mechanisms are used, and how do they impact the ability of development actors to support crisis-affected populations?

Globally, development partners have **scaled up finance targeting fragile and conflict settings** over the last decade and have established a range of crisis-focused financing instruments. These largely relate to sudden-onset crises such as extreme weather events and, more recently, instruments have also been established related to migration and displacement. However, these are niche and, overall, financial instruments for protracted crises are scarce. While developmental ODA to countries with protracted humanitarian crises²¹ more than doubled from USD 19 billion in 2010 to USD 41 billion in 2019, the extent to which this is allocated to programmes that benefit crisis-affected regions at the subnational level is unclear and difficult to track. Across the three contexts, interviewees expressed the view that most development finance is allocated to the central government, and that centrally driven national and sectoral development programmes are not reaching crisis-affected communities at the subnational level at sufficient scale. Nonetheless, there are examples of development finance, through both nationwide programmes and crisis-focused financial instruments, deliberately targeting protracted crisis contexts. It is **vital to improve the tracking and mapping of development assistance in crisis contexts**, especially at subnational levels, not only to monitor HDP collaboration but also to address perceptions that have the potential to generate mistrust or fuel resentment. For example, in **Bangladesh**, the UN has made a concerted effort to map out development programming targeting Cox's Bazar district, in part to respond to host community

perceptions that their needs are not being addressed, which is a source of tension between refugees and host communities.

The volume of finance is a core challenge in many protracted crisis contexts (DI, 2020c) and set to worsen as the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic are felt even further (DI, 2021). But, alongside this, equally important is **whether the types of finance and the modes of delivery are well suited to the financing needs in these challenging environments**, and specifically to addressing long-term challenges in protracted crisis areas at the subnational level. For example, in **Bangladesh** the AsDB and World Bank adapted their approach in light of the protracted refugee crisis and provided the government with grants rather than loans to address this, even though Bangladesh is normally ineligible for grants from AsDB (AsDB, 2021). However, in **Cameroon** in 2018 just over half of total ODA was provided in the form of loans,²² despite the International Monetary Fund finding the country to be at high risk of a debt crisis (IMF, 2021). The Jubilee Debt Campaign now considers Cameroon to be in debt distress (Jubilee Debt Campaign, 2021).

Development partners have committed to **move towards the “use of country systems”** for delivery in fragile settings, however this has been **slow** in practice (BPEDC, 2011). “Use of country systems” includes, but is not limited to, budget support (OECD, 2010).²³ For the 31 protracted crisis countries analysed, between 2010 and 2019 general budget support represented between 3 percent and 8 percent of total ODA. The use of country systems in fragile contexts is often challenging due to weaknesses in public financial management systems and the policy and institutional environment. For example, the World Bank has historically had difficulty disbursing increased allocations to fragile states due to countries’ limited “absorptive capacity” and the time it takes for donor-supported efforts to strengthen public financial management systems has often been longer than anticipated. This has led them to approach other development partners such as UN agencies to disburse funds on their behalf. In **Somalia**, the World Bank’s Multi-Partner Fund was established as a vehicle to prepare the government to manage external finance, and has incrementally channelled finance to the federal government. With the clearing of its arrears and resumption of relations with international financial institutions in 2020, development partners are increasingly working with and through government systems.

Development partners have established a number of financing vehicles tailored to crisis, fragile and conflict contexts that are playing an important role and helping to fill gaps in the three country contexts, although they could be better integrated in a broader strategic approach. Examples include the World Bank window for host communities and refugees in Bangladesh and Cameroon (mentioned above) and the Crisis Response Window (in Somalia), and the European Union Emergency Trust Fund for Africa in Somalia. In **Cameroon**, the European Union Emergency Trust Fund for Africa and France’s Minka fund are funding resilience and recovery activities in northern Cameroon, which had not been prioritised within bilateral partnership frameworks. However, these headquarter-managed instruments support largely isolated projects that do not in the long run facilitate strategic and collaborative approaches in country.²⁴ These crisis-specific financing modalities have often proved better at targeting crisis-affected populations than assistance provided through multi-year partnership frameworks with governments. However, many new financial instruments are poorly understood by the humanitarian and peace communities, which is also a challenge to better coherence and joint working. Some

donors, such as the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, are increasingly thinking about “blended funding” rather than the dichotomy of humanitarian and development finance, through a single mechanism that focuses on stability, flexibility and humanitarian aims.

The new UN-led INFFs present an opportunity to bring HDP actors together around shared financing priorities and outcomes. INFF processes are being trialled in over 60 countries with participation and support from the European Union and MDBs, and initial phases were completed in Bangladesh and Cameroon after this research took place. These processes could foster greater collaboration across the HDP nexus by drawing on the expertise of humanitarian and peace actors in the financing needs phase and the financing landscape assessment phase, and build in risk assessment. INFF processes could also help to build humanitarian and peace actors’ capacities on broader financing approaches and instruments, which could also support longer term collaborations with the development community where new financial instruments are increasingly being used. The oversight and coordination mechanisms established to guide and monitor the INFF process could also encourage a more coherent government approach, helping to address weak cross-government coordination that has been a challenge in contexts such as Cameroon, although these have yet to be tested at the country level.

In recent years, some governments have established “stability’-focused units and facilities at a global level, such as the European Union Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace, the European Union Trust Funds and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland’s Conflict, Stability and Security Fund, to increase cross-government coherence at the security–development nexus in fragile settings. While these are not a major focus of this study, they offer learnings for strengthening the joining up within governments across the HDP nexus. However, they also highlight a point of contention and the concerns of humanitarian actors about the politicization of aid and the need to preserve humanitarian space. Critiques have also been raised on the development side about such stability-related funds being overly focused on national security interests at the expense of good development practice (CONCORD, 2018).

How are development actors using flexible financing approaches, and how have these enabled development actors to support crisis-affected populations?

The need for **donor flexibility and quicker approval processes** in fragile or crisis settings is well recognized (DI. 2019b).²⁵ Across all three countries, donors have shown a **high-level of flexibility** to re-programme funds or adapt existing programmes where initial plans could not be implemented due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Donors have also rapidly approved, disbursed and programmed billions in additional finance to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. International financial institutions are estimated to have approved USD 29.9 billion, mostly in loans, to protracted crisis countries to support the COVID-19 response and have already disbursed about 59 percent of this (Centre for Disaster Protection, 2021). The three case study countries have so far received a combined total of USD 3.6 billion from select international financial institutions, once again mostly in loans, of which almost 80 percent has been disbursed.

In the three country studies, **the potential for in-country pooled funds as flexible instruments to incentivise greater collaboration across the HDP nexus was highlighted**, but to be effective these need to come with **strong and dedicated management, analytical capacity, strategic focus and learning systems**. The **Somalia** Stability Fund, while small, is an example of a flexible, multi-donor fund, supported by strong in-country analysis, management and decision-making, which has enabled it to engage flexibly with Somali political and state-building processes. Financing through siloed channels or mechanisms for development and humanitarian programming is a recurring issue, leaving funding gaps for programmes that straddle the HDP nexus and hindering a rapid shift in gears when the situation changes from a relatively stable one to crisis, or vice-versa. In **Somalia**, the UN Multi-Partner Trust Fund has funded joint programmes encouraging the UN system to “deliver as one”. However, until recently it has lacked dedicated capacity to play a strategic role and faced waning donor confidence due to perceived inflexibility and high overhead costs. Despite these challenges, in both Cameroon and Bangladesh interviewees recommended the establishment of pooled funds that explicitly link humanitarian and development approaches as a way to strengthen coordination among donors and implementing agencies, with Cameroon developing a model that would enable ringfencing humanitarian funding within a UN Multi-Partner Trust Fund with an HDP nexus focus.

Dedicated contingency financing tools to scale up support in response to shocks are increasingly mainstream and have recently been scaled up in connection with the COVID-19 response. Central donor and reserve pooled funds are widely used within humanitarian finance to respond rapidly to unforeseen crises, and risk financing tools such as contingency budgets are often embedded in humanitarian planning. Similar mechanisms exist on the development side, such as the World Bank’s Crisis Response Window, which can be used to respond to disasters, economic or health crises.²⁶ World Bank projects also incorporate contingency crisis response components, which can be activated at the request of governments to modify existing projects to respond to unforeseen crises. These are intended to enable a rapid response to economic shocks, disasters or health crises, and are limited as tools in conflict, displacement or political crises where government may be reluctant to request them for political reasons. The MDBs have recently scaled up these contingent financing facilities to ensure they are able to disburse funds at scale in sudden-onset crisis situations. In some cases, these have been disbursed through UN humanitarian and development actors with a presence on the ground, indicating a greater role for MDBs in crisis response alongside and in direct partnership with humanitarian actors. Some resilience programmes in contexts with recurring climate-related vulnerability have incorporated “crisis modifiers”, which allow development agencies with a presence on the ground to respond to spikes in need, such as the BRCiS programme in **Somalia**, which can draw on the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland’s former Department for International Development’s (now the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office) Internal Risk Facility to scale up community safety nets in response to spikes in need. However, beyond financing instruments with a sudden-onset disaster focus, development actors have found it challenging to develop a wider range of financing instruments for protracted crisis contexts.

In Somalia and **Bangladesh**, **anticipatory action pilots** have shown the value in convening development and humanitarian partners around specific crisis risks and to put in place pre-approved funding and plans triggered once thresholds are reached. However, **investment by development donors is crucial given the risk of diverting limited humanitarian funds from existing needs**. Building on years of testing and developing forecast-based financing in Bangladesh, the anticipatory action pilot funded by the UN's Central Emergency Response Fund in response to the 2020 monsoon floods is credited with enabling a humanitarian response that reached people earlier and faster and at less cost than previous responses (CERF, 2020). Bringing development donors on board is necessary for the longer term engagement with governments required to support co-ownership, sustained technical support and investment in preparedness and readiness actions before disaster hits that humanitarian funds cannot provide. For scaling and sustainability, anticipatory action frameworks could be embedded within national safety net systems, as is being trialled in Somalia.

Key questions and considerations for development actors

- How can development actors ensure that sufficient resources reach crisis-affected regions and that their SDG commitments to “leave no one behind” are fulfilled? This can be a challenge where support is channelled through national budgets and systems but central government-led programmes do not provide resources equitably to marginalised regions. In order to track this commitment, greater investment and transparency is needed in subnational data, alongside greater investment in planning and mutual accountability processes with governments, to map out the needs of crisis-affected populations and how they can be supported through national budgets complemented by donor resources.
- How can development actors build on new UN-led efforts to develop INFFs at the country level to ensure crisis financing is coherent with broader development financing strategies? Engaging humanitarian and peace actors and integrating finance provided through global and regionally managed crisis financing instruments (such as the European Union Trust Funds) could ensure complementarity and coherence amongst different funding sources.
- How can development donors and implementers standardise the use of crisis reserves and risk financing tools, such as crisis modifiers²⁷ and internal contingency budgets or funds, to enable flexible programming and early action in response to recurring crises? As is already increasingly common practice in humanitarian funding, the design phase of all development programmes in fragile and recurring crisis contexts could include a greater focus on risk planning.
- For greater sustainability and impact in the longer term, national government systems need to be able to absorb and respond to shocks. How can development partners strengthen national government’s capacity for anticipatory or risk financing in preparation for natural disasters, health or economic crises, and to address recovery needs? A key aspect of this is designing national social protection and safety net programmes to be shock responsive and embedding contingency financing within them.

Organizational issues

Our previous research demonstrated that decentralized organizational and decision-making structures can enable donors to respond flexibly to changing crisis contexts; that in-country staffing models with overlapping priorities of HDP staff help to strengthen collaboration and breakdown silos; and that the strategy underpinning development actors' engagement in crises should be driven primarily by the context, with support and guidance from the centre (DI, 2019a). The country case studies explored the extent to which organizational decision-making structures, staffing models and operational guidance support development actors to work effectively in fast-changing crisis contexts and address the longer-term recovery of crisis-affected people. This section summarizes the key findings and considerations to emerge from the case studies on effective organizational support in crises.

Key findings

What operational structures and guidance is in place, and how does this support the engagement of development actors in crises?

Systems and protocols to enhance joining up across donor governments or within agencies need to be developed, but addressing siloes **also requires organizational change**. The responsibility for humanitarian and development actions usually rests with different ministries or teams within donor governments and implementing agencies, and humanitarian and development budgets are often separate. At a minimum, systems, protocols and tools to enhance joined-up assessment, planning, information sharing and coordinated delivery need to be developed and communicated to staff. But a fundamental shift towards coherent, context-driven responses may require **organizational restructuring and new approaches to planning and budgeting that take the context, rather than the lenses of particular sectors or channels of assistance, as the starting point**. For example, the government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland organises its management, strategic planning and budgeting around country or geographic areas, rather than having separate humanitarian and development teams in a country (DI, 2019a.) Re-organizing or establishing **management structures, strategic planning and high-level allocation decisions around geographic priorities** has great potential to strengthen the overall coherence of donor support, and a **humanitarian budget can be ring-fenced** within this where necessary to safeguard humanitarian principles.

There is a similar need for **policy and programmatic guidance and formal partnership frameworks to strengthen join-up between agencies**, as the UN and World Bank have done with their partnership framework for crisis-affected situations. The case studies point to a lot of willingness at the country and field level to adopt a nexus approach,

however lack of clarity on what this means at a practical level. The “nexus” is being communicated as a high-level political and policy agenda, and now needs to be translated into practical, technical policy and guidance for field actors. For example, there has already been considerable progress in establishing a collective agenda and common policy framework on **durable solutions** to forced displacement crises, especially with respect to refugee situations.²⁸ Key actors, such as the World Bank, European Union and UNHCR, have clearly defined their comparative advantage and approach and have established partnerships on the ground. The same is now needed in other programmatic areas.

For development actors, delivering on the nexus also implies **deepening engagement in crisis contexts**. However, for many, and as the OECD DAC notes in relation to its members, their **management structures, operational policies and systems, and approaches to risk** are not always well suited to fragile and insecure contexts.²⁹ For example, analysis of the European Commission’s approach to aid found that delivering on the triple nexus requires adapting institutional cultures, ways of working and financing systems, and implementing more localised approaches (ETTg, 2020). The case studies highlighted positive examples of development actors adapting their operational systems, such as the World Bank, which has made great progress in this area. To support its increasing focus in fragile settings it has developed safeguarding policies, operational risk management tools, remote monitoring tools and other operational approaches to working in insecure environments, among many other areas. The regional development banks have also committed to scale up work in fragile contexts and have begun developing systems and policies to support this. Documenting and sharing learnings from these experiences will be important to systematise approaches.

What decision-making structures are in place, and how do they affect the ability of development actors to respond to the needs of crisis-affected populations?

The case studies illustrated that **the decision-making structures for development agencies and donors are often centralized with key decisions on programming priorities and funding made at HQ-level**. This is especially the case in contexts where international presence in-country is limited either because the country is not a priority for ODA, such as with **Cameroon**, or there are high levels of insecurity, such as in Somalia. In contrast, **Bangladesh** is a recipient of large quantities of ODA, and most donors have a well-established in-country presence and longstanding cooperation with the government. However, strengthening presence and engagement at the subnational level is more of an issue as development partners are primarily based in Dhaka, while coordination of the refugee response is led at the district level in Cox’s Bazar. Having a physical presence at the district level and coordinating between Dhaka and the district is important to engage effectively in policy dialogue and oversee programming that is adapted to the context. Multilateral partners, particularly the UN Secretariat, UNHCR and World Bank, are moving in the direction of **decentralized decision-making and management** from global to the regional or country levels. New delegations of authority created in the UN Secretariat management reform have reportedly enabled faster decision-making in response to changing operational requirements (UNGA, 2020). The United Kingdom of

Great Britain and Northern Ireland is a bilateral donor that has gone far in implementing a decentralized model, with full financial delegation accorded to country directors and no budget separation between development and humanitarian spend; this is decided at the country level (DI, 2019c). This is seen as a core strength, and in **Somalia** was an important factor in enabling implementing partners to quickly adapt existing development programming in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

However, for many OECD DAC donor governments decision-making (notably on partnerships, assessments, and budget (re)allocation above agreed thresholds) is centralized at headquarter level. In **Somalia** and **Cameroon**, lack of decision-making authority in country was felt to have held back timely responses, particularly when it came to adapting existing programming to changes in context. Nevertheless, the COVID-19 pandemic in all three countries demonstrated that decisions on reallocating budgets were able to be taken centrally significantly faster than usual, offering learnings to inform standard decision-making models in all types of crisis. Even where greater decentralization is not possible, there is ample scope to improve the timeliness, responsiveness and relevance of decision-making within current institutional arrangements (Schreiber, D. and Loudon, S., 2020).

What staffing models and skills are in place, and how do they affect the ability of development actors to respond to needs in crisis-affected populations?

Humanitarian, development and peace disciplines each have their own language, and actors within each sector sometimes fail to understand how other entities operate. There is a need to break down knowledge barriers between HDP actors and invest in multi-disciplinary expertise. Sharing knowledge, information and expertise across HDP actors – both between and within agencies – with a focus on particular contexts, sectors and financing modalities, was identified as an important starting point. For example, this could be encouraged with the secondment of experts across UN humanitarian and development agencies or by appointing staff with multi-disciplinary expertise and specific responsibilities (e.g. as UNHCR has done, or the European Union in **Cameroon**). Bringing together actors from different disciplines to develop common assessment tools and models for joint programming will also help address knowledge gaps.

Furthermore, **the right capacity is not always present in the right place**. Most expertise on crisis, humanitarian action, preparedness, resilience, risk, recovery and peace within development agencies is held in the centre, with technical support provided to county staff where capacity allows. Furthermore, in northern Cameroon, as in other challenging contexts, high staff turnover can seriously hinder programme effectiveness (Groupe URD, 2019). To see progress from crisis through stabilization to recovery, six-month or one-year contracts drawn from the limited pool of highly skilled individuals are insufficient. Where possible, development actors should invest in in-house expertise at the country level, offering longer term contracts for highly skilled staff in protracted crises. But where resource constraints make this challenging, shared analysis (as in the World Bank–UN partnership) and data systems, and knowledge sharing between entities

is especially important, and greater use could be made of rosters of external expertise to be called on and deployed on an ad-hoc basis to reduce the overheads of full-time staffing.

Key questions and considerations for development actors

- Development actors have adapted their organizational processes to fragile and crisis contexts over the years, yet too often quick, locally-led decision-making is hampered by bureaucratic, centralized processes. How can development actors accelerate and deepen their efforts to build local presence and engagement and embed risk and crisis-sensitive/responsive approaches into processes and procedures?
- Decision-making and management need to be informed by up-to-date, detailed information on the local context, and ideally be located as close to operations as possible for greater flexibility and effectiveness. Where full decentralization to staff based in country or in subnational coordination hubs is not possible, how can existing systems be streamlined to ensure timely and efficient decision-making and communication between the field, country and global levels? Learning from the COVID-19 pandemic may help to address obstacles to quick and context-specific decision-making, as would additional investment in local staff and partners to strengthen context-specific knowledge and understanding of crisis dynamics.
- Evidence shows that organizing management structures, strategic planning, and high-level financial allocation decisions around country or geographic priorities can strengthen the overall coherence of donor support (rather than the current humanitarian–development segmentation). Where a total reorganization is not possible, how can development donors put processes and systems in place to ensure that as a minimum, the coherence of country and geographic decision-making between development and humanitarian departments is enhanced? A “one budget” approach may not be possible for all donors, but where this is adopted ringfencing a humanitarian budget where necessary would help to safeguard humanitarian principles.
- How can development, humanitarian and peace actors break down knowledge barriers between their respective sectors and invest in multi-disciplinary expertise at the country level? Changing ways of working requires investments to ensure organizations have the necessary in-house expertise, including on resilience, peacebuilding, capacity building, political and risk analysis, financing instruments and other expertise relevant to the nexus. More could be done to pool talent and skills across the development system; for example, within the UN system much greater use could be made of staff secondments or sharing of expertise between agencies. In the context of institutional resource constraints, shared analysis and data systems and knowledge sharing platforms between entities becomes especially important.

Conclusion

More joined-up, coherent programming among humanitarian, development and peace actors requires understanding of how experts in different specialisms operate, the language and systems they use, and the challenges they face when working in crisis contexts. This report represents an initial effort to scope out how development actors approach and operate in protracted humanitarian crises as a way to identify both the differences and the areas of synergy, and increase understanding among HDP actors. To take the agenda forward, there is a clear need to build a common conceptual understanding among all actors and to develop specific guidance at the operational and programmatic levels. The findings from the three case studies highlight three core areas where further research and discussion among HDP actors could help to translate the “triple nexus” into guidance that can be put into practice at the country level.

1. **HDP actors need to jointly develop programming models that bring together the perspectives of each discipline into a coherent approach.** There are certain natural areas of synergy or convergence between HDP programmes (some of which are outlined in this report). There is a need to unpack the linkages between related areas of programming (e.g. between disaster risk reduction, disaster management and response, natural resource management, climate change adaptation and peace) or between different approaches within the same sector, such as health and social protection programmes, and to develop programming models that bring together an HDP approach. To support this, further research focusing on particular sectors and programme areas would be useful.
2. **HDP actors need to undertake an honest review of existing coordination mechanisms and ongoing initiatives to enhance HDP collaboration.** The case studies identify many challenges associated with the existing aid architecture and a number of promising initiatives to strengthen joining up. These need more systematic review and evaluation to identify good practices and develop guidance for all actors on how to strengthen a nexus approach. Additionally, it could be useful to review the UN and World Bank nexus coordination and planning initiatives and pilots at the country level and draw out lessons learnt. South–South Cooperation and the role of non-traditional donors in nexus collaboration is another area that merits further exploration. Work is also needed to field test area-based coordination as a way to enhance HDP collaboration and to evaluate and learn from existing frameworks for joint assessment and planning, such as RPBA and PDNA processes, and joint programming.

3. HDP actors need to investigate how existing financial allocation mechanisms and modalities can better incentivise collaborative action across the nexus and improve targeting of protracted crisis regions at the subnational level.

This study points to the need to examine existing allocation mechanisms and modalities to enable development finance to better target crisis-affected regions at the subnational level to provide the necessary flexibility to enable adaptive and shock-responsive programming, and to incentivise HDP actors to work together. This might include further investigation of the potential role of pooled funding mechanisms in promoting collaboration, the use of risk and contingency financing mechanisms, and the establishment of intermediate funding mechanisms to support local actors. In addition, further research is needed to understand existing mechanisms to support the local private sector and examine how they could be used more effectively in protracted crisis contexts to promote livelihoods, generate employment and support peace. Finally, there is a clear need for spatially disaggregated data in order to track aid flows to crisis-affected regions.

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Glossary

Area-based approaches: Area-based approaches take the geographic area as the organizing principle for programming or coordination, rather than a sector or target group. Area-based programming takes an integrated, inclusive and participatory approach to address the specific needs and challenges of a particular area and has been a feature of development practice for over a decade (Harfst, 2012). However, the idea of area-based coordination is relatively new and has begun to gain traction in the humanitarian sector as a complement to the current cluster coordination system (CGD, 2020b; 2020c).

Collective outcomes: The concept of collective outcomes was conceived by the UN in preparation for and follow-up to the World Humanitarian Summit, and it was recently adopted in the UN–IASC Light Guidance on Collective Outcomes (IASC, 2020b). The IASC defines a collective outcome as:

“A jointly envisioned result with the aim of addressing and reducing needs, risks and vulnerabilities, requiring the combined effort of humanitarian, development and peace communities and other actors as appropriate.”

Contingency financing facilities: These are tools or mechanisms to provide additional funding in order to be able to respond appropriately in advance of, or as quickly as necessary after, a shock such as a sudden-onset natural disaster, public health emergency or economic crisis, or a slower-onset disease or conflict outbreak or food security crisis.

Crisis: The absence of a common language across humanitarian, development and peace actors is evident from this research, and there is no common understanding of what is meant by “crisis”. From the vantage point of development policy, the focus is on fragile and conflict-affected contexts, which can be likened to protracted governance crises where the state does not (or cannot) provide for the wellbeing of the population. Crises are generally understood as unforeseen events that disrupt progressive development, such as natural disasters, health crises, and economic shocks/financial crises. The latter are commonly called “sudden-onset” crises and can of course occur in otherwise “stable” and peaceful countries. From a humanitarian perspective, crises are events that threaten the fundamental wellbeing of the population and, at a practical level, they are contexts requiring an ongoing humanitarian response irrespective of the source(s) or cause(s) of the crisis. For peace actors, the term “crisis” tends to be used interchangeably with “conflict” and broadly encompasses different forms of political violence and instability, which may be single events or protracted situations (war, insurrection, terrorism, civil unrest, etc). These situations overlap but they are not the same. This research focuses specifically on contexts of protracted humanitarian crises in which development, humanitarian and peace actors work alongside each other.

Development: This report focuses explicitly on the role of development actors and actions in protracted humanitarian crisis contexts. Here, we understand “development” as long-term support to developing countries to deliver sustainable solutions for addressing the root causes of poverty, supporting livelihoods and providing basic services, with a particular focus on those in greatest need and furthest behind. The development actors we have specifically focused on in this report are: MDBs, OECD DAC member government entities responsible for development cooperation, and UN entities with a development (or dual humanitarian–development) mandate.

Disaster risk reduction: With the aim of reducing the impact of natural hazards such as floods, earthquakes, cyclones and drought, disaster risk reduction is the practice of anticipating and reducing risk. It implies a systematic approach to analyse and reduce the factors contributing to natural disasters. The UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction gives the following examples of disaster risk reduction: “reducing exposure to hazards, lessening vulnerability of people and property, wise management of land and the environment, and improving preparedness for adverse events (ISDR, 2021).”

Durable solutions: The IASC framework on durable solutions for internally displaced persons provides that:

“A durable solution is achieved 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.

It can be achieved through:

- Sustainable reintegration at the place of origin.
- Sustainable local integration in areas where internally displaced persons take refuge.
- Sustainable integration in another part of the country (IASC, 2010).”

Early recovery: An approach that addresses recovery needs arising during the humanitarian phase of an emergency, implementing humanitarian programmes in a way that aligns with development principles with the aim of catalysing sustainable development opportunities. The multidimensional process of recovery begins in the early days of a humanitarian response. The IASC Cluster Working Group on Early Recovery notes that: “it aims to generate self-sustaining, nationally owned, resilient processes for post crisis recovery. It encompasses the restoration of basic services, livelihoods, shelter, governance, security and rule of law, environment and social dimensions, including the reintegration of displaced populations (UNDP, 2015).”

Humanitarian action: Humanitarian action is intended to:

“...save lives, alleviate suffering and maintain human dignity during and after man-made crises and disasters caused by natural hazards, as well as to prevent and strengthen preparedness for when such situations occur (ALNAP, 2018).”

Humanitarian action should be governed by the four humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence and the guiding principles for humanitarian assistance set out in UN General Assembly resolution 46/182.

Nexus or triple nexus: This paper uses “nexus” or “triple nexus” as shorthand terms for the connections between humanitarian, development and peacebuilding approaches. We align with the OECD DAC definition:

“Nexus approach” refers to the aim of strengthening collaboration, coherence and complementarity. The approach seeks to capitalise on the comparative advantages of each pillar – to the extent of their relevance in the specific context – in order to reduce overall vulnerability and the number of unmet needs, strengthen risk management capacities and address root causes of conflict (UNDP, 2017).”

Achieving collaboration, coherence and complementarity means quite different things to different actors. Three ambitions sit on a spectrum from complementarity to coherence, with complementarity being the minimum requirement for achieving success. At the maximalist end, the nexus can fundamentally challenge existing divisions of labour between humanitarian, development and peace systems, with all actors working together towards shared goals or “collective outcomes”. As a minimum approach, all actors continue to deliver alongside one another through their separate systems and in line with their own objectives, but they do so in a way that is mutually reinforcing and avoids undermining each other’s goals. This can include integrating peace and/or resilience approaches into their work in a way that is aligned with their mandates and goals, without necessarily working together more closely.

Peace: There are many ways to understand conflict and peace, and clear overlaps with development and resilience. In this report, where there is not yet consensus on what is covered in the “peace” aspect of the triple nexus, we understand it to include conflict prevention, conflict sensitivity (to ensure programming avoids harm and where possible builds peace), peacebuilding and mediation efforts at local, national and regional levels. Stabilization and efforts to tackle violent extremism came up in the course of the research as “peace-related” activities, however we recognize the contentions between political priorities on security and stability and safeguarding humanitarian principles.

Recovery: The restoration, and improvement where appropriate, of facilities, livelihoods and living conditions of disaster-affected communities, including efforts to reduce disaster risk factors, largely through development assistance (OECD, 2019).

Resilience: Resilience is another term that has different interpretations across the HDP nexus. For peace actors, the focus is on managing conflict risks and building the capacities of communities to prevent, cope with and recover from violent shocks and sustain peace. For development actors, the focus is more on livelihoods, climate change, environmental interventions and disaster risk reduction.

We align with the OECD DAC definition:

“The ability of households, communities, and nations to absorb and recover from shocks, whilst positively adapting and transforming their structures and means for living in the face of long-term stresses, change and uncertainty. Resilience is about addressing the root causes of crises whilst strengthening the capacities and resources of a system in order to cope with risks, stresses and shocks (Swithern, 2020).”

Resilience is understood as cross-cutting to humanitarian, development and peacebuilding activities.

Risk financing: Risk financing is a broad term that includes financial arrangements agreed upfront to address specific types of risk (e.g. flooding) before a shock or crisis occurs. It can include investments to prevent and reduce risks, as well as pre-arranged mechanisms to prepare for and respond to shocks – or, ideally, a layered strategy combining all these. Risk financing had previously focused on funding disaster risk reduction work but is now understood more widely – on the grounds that upfront investments to manage and mitigate risks can save lives and money (Oxford Policy Management, 2021).

Shock-responsive programming: Shock-responsive programming can respond flexibly in the event of an emergency. Often referred to in the context of social protection, shock-responsive social protection programmes are able to be scaled up in response to shocks in fragile or protracted crisis countries to reduce the need for a separate humanitarian response (GOV.UK, 2019).

Stabilization: Stabilization is understood to be an approach combining civilian and military efforts in a conflict context to achieve a political objective, for example to “reduce violence, ensure basic security and facilitate peaceful political deal-making” in order to lay foundations for longer term recovery. Humanitarian aid might be given to a local population in the context of a stabilization programme in order to “win hearts and minds” or create the conditions necessary to come to a negotiated settlement, but this would not be considered a “humanitarian” programme as humanitarian aid must be delivered on the basis of need alone and respect the principles of neutrality and impartiality.

Appendix 1: Development cooperation partnerships and ways of working

We recognize that development cooperation takes different forms and includes a broad range of actors that work in different ways and have different roles. This appendix explores some key elements of development cooperation partnerships and ways of working.

Development actors are generally bound by a common commitment to work primarily with and – ideally – through national governments, in line with aid effectiveness principles that emphasise the importance of national ownership. In fragile contexts where either government capacity or political will to address the needs of vulnerable people is weak, development actors must balance supporting central governments in policy and institutional reforms and strengthening their service delivery capacity with addressing immediate needs and engaging marginalised and vulnerable populations. In protracted crisis contexts, service delivery to crisis-affected populations often becomes the sole responsibility of humanitarian actors. This can create parallel, internationally led delivery systems that operate outside of central and local government institutions and that can be complex, inefficient and expensive to run. For a durable and sustainable approach, development and humanitarian actors need to work in ways that support and strengthen government capacity and responsibility for service delivery. While working to build government capacity, development actors may focus on community-based initiatives implemented by non-governmental or multilateral partners. Development actors have a key role to play in maximising the potential of existing partnerships with government and leveraging larger scale finance to strengthen government service delivery in crisis regions.

Development actors are working towards this through both direct (bottom-up) and indirect (top-down) approaches, both of which are necessary and potentially complementary.

1. **Direct or bottom-up** programming targets crisis-affected regions and populations. It may be carried out in direct partnership with central and/or local governments, but often engages a broader range of government, non-governmental and private sector stakeholders. This may include local governance programming (e.g. local government-led development planning), community-based approaches (e.g. facilitating multi-stakeholder processes to develop and implement community action plans focusing on peace, recovery or other goals), or area-based development

approaches (e.g. strategic plans to address medium to long-term systemic issues in crisis-affected regions).

2. **Indirect or top-down** approaches support government policy and institutional reforms, usually working primarily at the central government level. This may include technical assistance and policy dialogue to ensure social inclusion; better targeting and the equitable and transparent use of public resources in national development planning and budgeting and sectoral policy and planning (e.g. education, health, etc); and more fundamental governance reforms, such as decentralization processes. It may also include support to develop national policies, systems and institutional capacities to manage shocks, such as national social safety net and social protection systems and national disaster management and risk reduction capabilities.

Appendix 2: Shifts in development policy in fragile and conflict-affected settings

Over the last decade, development actors have scaled-up their engagement significantly, both financial and non-financial, in fragile and crisis-affected contexts. Building on commitments to improve aid effectiveness initiated in 2005 at the OECD DAC³⁰ and those incorporating peacebuilding and state-building goals in development,³¹ the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States in 2011 (BPEDC 2011) was a milestone agreement between development partners, developing country governments and civil society on the principles and goals for effective development cooperation in fragile states.³² The New Deal endorses the central aid effectiveness principle of aligning development support with nationally owned and led development strategies, including a commitment to move towards “the use of country systems” for delivery (i.e. budget support through public financial management systems), to invest in institutional capacity building, and to harmonise and reduce the fragmentation of aid through multiple channels.

In subsequent years, many development partners increased their spending commitments in fragile states³³ and reviewed the implications of deeper engagement in fragile and conflict-affected contexts for their policies, programmes and operations. Nonetheless, the process to translate the New Deal’s high-level principles into practice has been slow, reflecting the disconnect with both political realities and the existing set-up of the aid architecture. Multiple reviews between 2015 and 2017 highlighted a lack of progress in increasing the volume of aid channelled through public institutions in fragile states and differing expectations between donors and recipient governments on the timeframe and process for this (ICAI, 2015 and IDPS, 2017). In addition, reviews highlighted the challenges of adapting standard development finance instruments, operational models and risk management approaches to fragile contexts.³⁴ Donors also invested in conflict, political economy and risk analysis capacity and tools;³⁵ however, internalising context analysis and using it to develop responses that are genuinely tailored to the context has remained a challenge (OECD, 2016).

Alongside this, donor governments also made new commitments to improve the overall coherence of their political, security and development cooperation in fragile states. For example, the European Union committed to ensure its development, peace and security objectives were mutually reinforcing and argued for a comprehensive approach to conflict that coherently uses various European Union instruments in the Agenda for Change (2012) and the European Union’s Comprehensive Approach to Conflicts and

Crises (2013). Similarly, in 2015, the government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland published development and security strategies asserting the need for stronger cross-government coherence to address global security challenges and creating or expanding the focus of several cross-government funds to support its global security, crisis response and resilience objectives (OECD, 2016).³⁶

In recent years, the World Bank has also dramatically scaled up its engagement in fragile states. Its approach has evolved from an initial focus on post-conflict reconstruction to addressing “the full spectrum of fragility”, and in 2018 it allocated USD 14 billion to fragile states, double its previous allocation (World Bank, 2020). In 2020, the World Bank launched a strategy for fragility, conflict and violence, which commits to a greater focus on prevention and to remaining engaged during crises. Reflecting this commitment, it has set up allocation mechanisms tailored to addressing specific financing needs of countries facing acute risks of fragility, conflict and violence, creating a new envelope for this purpose in 2019. It has also established a crisis response window to assist poor countries to respond to natural disasters, public health crises and severe economic crises and a window that supports countries that host large refugee populations to support development that benefits both refugees and host communities. However, depending on the country, much of the financing is provided as loans rather than grants, representing an important shift in the types of financing now being supplied to fragile countries. Furthermore, challenges in absorption capacities for the types of financing being supplied have seen the World Bank experiencing problems in actually disbursing this financing proportionate to the increase.

Other MDBs have also evolved from a focus on post-conflict reconstruction to engaging across the full spectrum of fragility. With this, they have also strengthened approaches to assessing and engaging directly to address conflict and fragility and dramatically scaled-up contingent financing facilities to ensure they are able to disburse funds quickly in sudden crisis situations, such as AfDB’s Transition Support Facility (AfDB, 2021).

There has also been growing international consensus on the need for sustainable solutions to forced displacement and refugee situations, as reflected in the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework and the adoption of the Global Compact for Refugees in 2018 (UNHCR, 2018). Key donors have further reinforced this with policy and funding commitments to prevent forced displacement from becoming protracted and to work in a coherent way to increase support for host countries/communities, promote the self-reliance of displaced people and address the root causes of displacement. For example, in 2016 the European Commission adopted the Lives in Dignity policy framework (European Commission, 2016), which articulates a clear agenda for cooperation between political, development and humanitarian actors to address protracted displacement, including coordinated, predictable and flexible funding and stronger links at the programmatic level. In 2018, seven MDBs launched a platform to enhance their collaboration on economic migration and forced displacement (EBRD, 2018).

Within the UN system, the UN Secretary-General António Guterres introduced a series of reforms aimed at strengthening coherence across the UN system to have a greater impact on the ground. These are implemented across three areas: 1) repositioning the UN Development System to deliver on Agenda 2030, 2) restructuring the peace and

security pillar, and 3) shifting the management paradigm (UN, 2021). To enhance the UN's contribution to sustainable development, the reforms have sought to better coordinate action across the UN system at country, regional and global levels; to introduce UN systemwide instruments for measuring, monitoring and reporting on collective results; and to develop effective funding mechanisms to underpin these efforts. To increase the effectiveness and coherence of UN action under the peace and security pillar, measures taken have focused on building capacities to prevent conflict and sustain peace and aligning the peace and security pillar more closely with the UN's development and human rights pillars.

At the country level, one of the most significant changes is to the resident coordinator system, ensuring that resident coordinators are empowered, independent and impartial. By delinking resident coordinators from UNDP administration and giving them a direct reporting line to the Secretary-General, resident coordinators are expected to play a stronger, more strategic coordination role across the HDP nexus. Members of the UN country team now have a reporting line to the resident coordinators, as well as their own agency hierarchy. The resident coordinator's office has been given greater capacity and responsibility for coordinating country-level sustainable development cooperation frameworks. These changes are supported by the wider reforms to the management system, which include decentralizing decision-making to bring it closer to the point of delivery.

Notes

¹ Protracted crisis countries are defined as having five years of consecutive UN coordinated humanitarian appeals.

² This aligns with the Sustaining Peace Agenda, the definition of “positive peace”, and “little p” actions, see [IASC, 2020a](#). While recognizing that “Big P” approaches that focus on political solutions and securitised responses to conflict are important, this was not the main focus of the study.

³ Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (Sendai, March 2015); Financing for Development (Addis Ababa, April 2015); Sustainable Development Goals (New York, September 2015); Conference of the Parties UNFCCC (Paris, December 2015); World Humanitarian Summit (Istanbul, May 2016); Intergovernmental Conference on the Global Compact for Migration (Marrakech, December 2018).

⁴ OECD research has found that global-level preferences are more important for many donors than country-level considerations such as “analysis of the political economy, absorption capacity and development trajectories” in determining whether ODA is provided through budget support, sectoral aid, projects under direct management or another modality.

⁵ This could include the recipient government, donor government or third country governments.

⁶ Data on ODA channelled through private sector institutions is only available from 2016 onwards.

⁷ The remainder was channelled through public sector institutions (donor governments, recipient governments and third country governments) and other channels.

⁸ Research by ODI found that few countries reporting on their progress to achieve the SDGs reference explicit strategies or targeted actions to reach those “most left behind” and that people caught in crisis as a specific group are often excluded from national development plans.

⁹ Focusing only on local governments risks undermining the central government and driving fragmentation of national institutions rather than supporting them. The OECD recommends finding “allies” in the national administration with whom to work and invest in their capacity.

¹⁰ In the interests of maintaining a manageable scope of research, support to the private sector in crisis settings was not interrogated as part of this study.

¹¹ The European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights has been integrated into the new broad Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument in the 2021–2027 budget.

¹² For a more extensive discussion on how donor preferences and practices on partnership shape the humanitarian aid sector, see [CGD, 2018](#).

¹³ For example, the review of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland’s Department for International Development’s support to civil society organizations by the Independent Commission for Aid Impact (ICAI). See [ICAI, 2019](#).

¹⁴ The reform of the UN resident coordinator system was designed to address these issues by making resident coordinators more independent, impartial and empowered. The impact of UN reforms was not a focus of this research; however, some consider that it is too early to assess whether the changes will have the desired impact in the longer term. See [IPI, 2020](#).

¹⁵ Further information on the INFF processes, including operational guidance, is available at Integrated National Financing Frameworks: <https://inff.org/>.

¹⁶ Such as food security, basic social services (health, wash, education), protection and human rights, and gender equality and gender-based violence. The report focuses on the synergies that came out most clearly in the research from the three focus countries.

¹⁷ A similar platform exists to support durable solutions for displaced Syrians.

¹⁸ The Cash Transfer Programme in the occupied Palestinian territories offers one example of mutually beneficial synergies between development interventions and those for crisis response.

¹⁹ For example, recent research by DI highlights this as a challenge faced by two major bilateral donors, Sweden and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (DI, 2019a).

²⁰ OECD's multidimensional fragility framework analyses risks and coping strategies across these five dimensions: economic; environmental; political; security; and societal dimensions (Desai, H. and Forsberg E., 2020).

²¹ Defined as having five or more years of consecutive humanitarian appeals.

²² At the time of publication of the Cameroon nexus study, the latest data available was for 2018.

Looking at 2019 data however, indicates that the percentage of funding provided in the form of loans has not changed (51 percent).

²³ OECD defines "country systems" as including "national arrangements and procedures for public financial management, procurement, audit, monitoring and evaluation, and social and environmental procedures (OECD, 2010).

²⁴ Previous research on humanitarian pooled funds highlighted the need to better coordinate between different pooled funds at country level (NRC, 2017).

²⁵ From a humanitarian perspective, multi-year funding instruments that enable predictable humanitarian assistance allow for better targeting, more timely delivery of services and stronger partnerships with local actors (DI, 2019b).

²⁶ For a more extensive analysis of lessons, good practices and challenges related to the World Bank's Crisis Response Window and role in crisis settings more generally, see [CGD, 2019](#).

²⁷ For a more extensive discussion of budgetary instruments in the context of disaster risk financing, see [ODI, 2020](#).

²⁸ This is reflected in the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework and the adoption of the Global Compact for Refugees in 2018.

²⁹ Building on efforts by many OECD DAC donors to review their approaches to engaging and programming in fragile, at-risk and crisis-affected settings, the OECD has identified a number of institutional changes required to bring about more effective donorship in these contexts and make organizational processes better able to support field operations. See [OECD, 2016](#) and [Schreiber, D. and Loudon, S. 2020](#).

³⁰ The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005) and the Accra Agenda for Action (2008).

<http://www.oecd.org/dac/effectiveness/34428351.pdf>

³¹ This includes the 2010 Dili Declaration on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding.

³² OECD DAC (2007) defines fragile states as "those failing to provide basic services to poor people because they are unwilling or unable to do so".

³³ For example in 2015 the government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland committed to allocating 50 percent of ODA in fragile states.

³⁴ See [OECD, 2016](#) and [World Bank, 2016](#). For example, this highlighted that "while the World Bank Group was generally fast to respond and adjust its strategies and analytical support to emergency situations, its operational response was often constrained by the limited choice of instruments at its disposal..." and that "institutional and staff incentives to engage in conflict and take risks lagged behind the spirit of its strategic approach."

³⁵ For example, in 2013 the European Union Institutions adopted policy guidance on the use of conflict analysis to inform the European Union's external action.

³⁶ The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland published a new development strategy and a Strategic Defence and Security Review in 2015. These expanded the focus of the Conflict and Security Fund to support the country's security objectives and created an ODA crisis reserve to support resilience and crisis response. See [OECD, 2016](#).

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