

Country Brief on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus

Afghanistan

Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Results Group 4

CONTEXT



Forty years of war, recurrent natural disasters, increasing poverty and the COVID-19 pandemic have had a devastating impact on the people of Afghanistan, leaving 18.4 million people in humanitarian need and 30.5 million people in need of social assistance in 2021. The pandemic has left some currently within the humanitarian caseload with more complex, deeper needs,

while pushing others into humanitarian need for the first time. Conflict shapes daily decision-making for civilians about movement and access to services, posing protection risks for individuals but also having a devastating impact on the country's development and infrastructure. The humanitarian conditions created by the multi-dimensional crisis touch all parts of the country and affect every aspect of life.

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IASC Inter-Agency Standing Committee

THE NEXUS APPROACH

While attempts to operationalize the nexus have been active for years in Afghanistan, the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic provided a broad impetus for more joined-up collaboration between humanitarian

and development partners. The overarching strategy to operationalizing the nexus is based on the objectives of the multi-year Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) and One UN for Afghanistan Framework. A new UN Sustainable

Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF, 2022-25) is currently being developed. Nexus efforts currently remain focused on aligning and coordinating planning frameworks rather than on joined-up programming.

OPERATIONALIZING THE NEXUS

KEY STEPS



1. Leadership and capacity

Engagement across the nexus will be led by the Office of the DSRSG/RC/HC. OCHA and the Inter Cluster Coordination Team (ICCT) have coordinated engagement around the Humanitarian Programme Cycle (HPC) with development actors, including the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, UNDP, UNICEF, WFP, FAO and ILO.



2. Joint analysis and sharing of analyses

The 2020 mid-year revision to the HRP process included collaboration with development actors to create a common needs analysis. In 2021, the same group used people living in IPC2+ as a proxy to estimate the number of people in need of continued social assistance. The Common Country Analysis (CCA) provides detailed analysis of vulnerabilities, including data and analysis from the entire UN system as well as lessons learned from cumulative donor evaluations of 18 years of development assistance.



3. 'Collective outcomes' or HDP priority areas

While no 'collective outcomes' have been identified, the new UNSDCF will ensure that all actors work towards common priorities in the areas of social protection, social cohesion and equitable and sustainable access to essential services in line with the SDGs.



4. Joined-up planning and programming

While the One UN for Afghanistan Framework includes some humanitarian elements, the UNSDCF will provide a more comprehensive platform to ensure stronger linkages between frameworks such as the HRP, to be reflected and complemented, thus avoiding duplication and gaps and promoting the nexus approach. Under the multi-year HRP (2018-2021), all cluster strategies include recommendations for development activities to complement the humanitarian response in each sector. However, the security environment has not allowed the response to graduate from emergency to development activities at the pace originally planned.



5. Financing

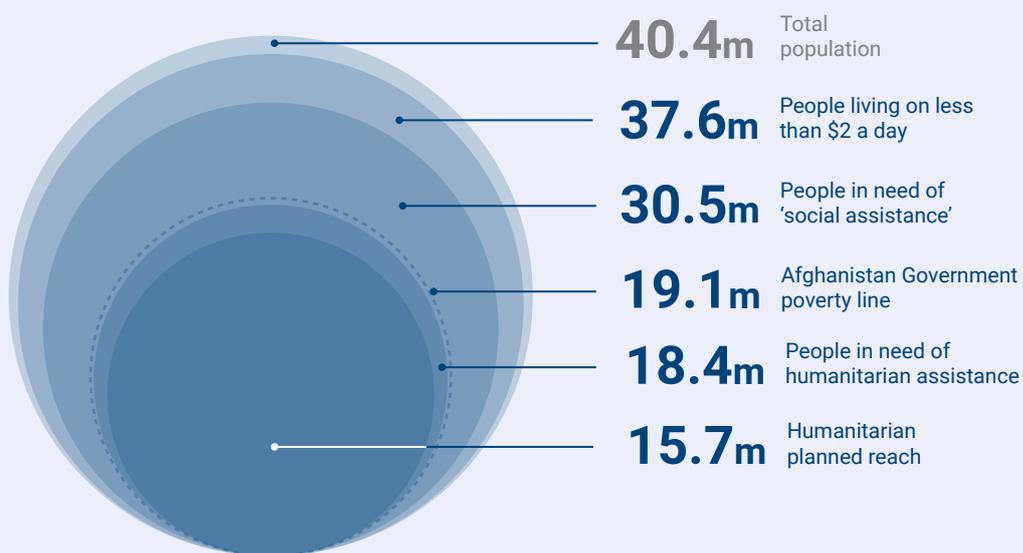
The World Bank used the 2020 common needs analysis to define beneficiary selection for the US\$428m Government-World Bank emergency social protection programme (Dastarkhan-e-Milli = “national food table”), which complements humanitarian assistance to populations facing more acute needs.

Common Needs Analysis

In Afghanistan, common needs analysis by humanitarian and development actors has been central to the nexus engagement, contributing to a common picture of humanitarian needs and underlying vulnerabilities. Continued needs analysis performed through a mechanism hosted by the Government and supported by the UN and multi-

lateral partners is important moving forward. Such a mechanism, linking data from different sources, combined with capacity to analyze local drivers of conflict and provide macro and micro-economic projections, would be a powerful tool to prevent vulnerability and conflict and address need.

HRP Common Needs Analysis 2021



LESSONS LEARNT

GOOD PRACTICES AND LESSONS LEARNT



Importance of social protection: The scale of the crisis brought on by COVID-19 and its economic implications led to a common recognition by humanitarian and development actors of the importance of social protection measures. These measures must be inclusive, robust and guarantee essential social services and income security. Unless social protection needs are met in a timely manner, people risk falling into more severe humanitarian need, threatening development gains and requiring a more expensive humanitarian response.



Planning with consideration for each actor's abilities and limitations: While most humanitarian actors have a higher risk tolerance, this is not the case for development actors and many donors. Particularly in fragile situations, joined-up planning that accommodates short-, medium- and longer-term scenarios is needed by all actors to avoid gaps and misunderstandings.



Moving from analysis to planning and programming: While the 2020 common needs analysis was well coordinated, implementation of the Government-World Bank safety net programme in non-government-controlled areas proved challenging. Lack of acceptance in non-government controlled areas, as well as delivery blockages and challenges in negotiating access with non-state armed groups have delayed or prevented the delivery of assistance to hard-to-reach parts of the country.

CHALLENGES



Competing priorities: Whilst there is an obvious appreciation and understanding of the nexus approach, it is hard to bring it to bear with so many existing priorities.



Lack of dedicated financial tools: There are no mechanisms specifically for nexus approach financing. Pooled funds need to be considered that can be accessed for joint or joined-up programming and anticipatory action to prevent humanitarian need.



SPOTLIGHT ON **PEACE**

Conflict-analyses were completed as part of the CCA. The DSRSG/RC/HC is supporting a specific initiative that includes the creation of a “peace committee.” The committee offers a platform to bring together the UN Country Team (UNCT) and United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) to support the peace process and leverage peace dividends in a coordinated manner. The committee will focus on the development of specific programmes to drive local peace initiatives, based on the analysis of local drivers of conflict and building on expertise of the UNCT in areas of economic development, youth and women-centred programming while also identifying opportunities to apply the HDP approach to more strongly underpin recovery and durable solutions.



SPOTLIGHT ON **GENDER**

Gender-related vulnerabilities were considered within the data collection and analyses used to inform the development of the common needs analysis, and the HNO’s narrative chapter includes specific analysis of gender impacts and needs. A Gender in Conflict Analysis, supported by UN Women and UNAMA, will be completed in 2021. Within the CCA and the Cooperation Framework, gender features strongly in the outcomes and indicators.



SPOTLIGHT ON **LOCAL ACTORS**

As part of the process around the Cooperation Framework, regular stakeholder consultations are taking place to ensure that the needs identified accurately reflect the voices of all stakeholders. There is an on-going evaluation of the One UN. This exercise includes extensive field consultation and feedback collection from the Government and NGOs, including at sub-national level.

