

Country Brief on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus

Ukraine

Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Results Group 4

CONTEXT



The lives and livelihoods of more than 5 million people in the conflict-affected regions of Donetsk and Luhansk in eastern Ukraine continue to be significantly affected, and the situation is indirectly affecting the whole country. Despite a renewed commitment to the ceasefire in 2020, sporadic security incidents continue to negatively affect people's lives and livelihoods, commu-

nity infrastructure and civilian assets, putting millions of people at risk of losing access to water, health, education and heating. This year, 3.4 million people require humanitarian assistance, including 300,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs). Due to the lack of funding in recent years, the humanitarian response has only partially met humanitarian needs and fallen far short of reducing them.

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IASC Inter-Agency Standing Committee

THE NEXUS APPROACH

Considering these challenges, the need to further progress linking humanitarian, development and, where appropriate, peace action in Ukraine is paramount. Efforts to operationalize the humanitarian-development-peace (HDP) nexus in Ukraine started in 2017, but new attempts were launched in 2020 through several UN and Govern-

ment-led initiatives. The 2021 Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) identifies the need for increased humanitarian-development collaboration and a coordinated response in the conflict-affected Government-controlled regions of Donetsk and Luhansk as a main priority. One of the HRP's strategic objectives is a multi-year plan to assist the

Government and local actors in strengthening the delivery of humanitarian aid to the front lines of the crisis in areas under the Government's control, and to strengthen sustainable service provision in eastern Ukraine. Efforts will be made to facilitate a gradual and responsible humanitarian exit from the Government-controlled areas over three years (2021-2023).

OPERATIONALIZING THE NEXUS

KEY STEPS



1. Leadership and capacity

The Ministry for Reintegration of Temporary Occupied Territories (MRTOT) is spearheading all HDP nexus efforts. It chairs the main nexus platform (the Sector Working Group for Recovery and Reintegration) while co-chairs are the Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO) and the UK Embassy. Within the UN, the RCO and OCHA coordinate the HDP nexus approach. The Vilnius Taskforce brings together civil-society organizations (CSOs) and local authorities on the Government-controlled side of eastern Ukraine.



2. Joint analysis and sharing of analyses

The latest iteration of Ukraine's Common Country Analysis is a collective and evidence-based analysis of the country context by the UN agencies. The analysis builds on the results of Ukraine's Voluntary National Review completed in July 2020. It was conducted in close coordination with the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) to ensure complementarity with the Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO), and to identify those drivers of humanitarian needs that can be reduced through strengthened development activities and humanitarian-development collaboration. The MRTOT maintains an online portal containing information on all projects by all actors in Ukraine. Funded by the Humanitarian-Development-Peacebuilding and Partnership Facility (HDPP) as part of the UN-World Bank partnership, the portal serves as a consolidated single source of nexus-related information.



3. 'Collective outcomes' or HDP priority areas

Initial efforts to articulate collective outcomes through discussions of the Humanitarian-Development Nexus Working Group in 2017/18 did not yield tangible results. However, renewed efforts around the HDP nexus in 2020 and the development of the 2023-2027 UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) provide a unique opportunity to define collective outcomes and their operationalization. In the meantime, the three specific objectives under Strategic Objective 3 of the 2021 HRP will guide collaboration.

HRP 2021 Strategic and specific objectives



Strategic Objective 3

Ensure implementation of a humanitarian exit strategy in Government-controlled areas from 2021-2023. This strategic objective is supported by three specific objectives.



Specific Objective 3.1

Increase national and regional Government ownership of and responsibility for the provision of services that deliver humanitarian assistance in Government-controlled areas.



Specific Objective 3.2

Strengthen capacity of local responders (NGOs, CSOs and private sector) to complement the Government-led response.



Specific Objective 3.3

Implement transitional programming, ensuring complementarity between humanitarian and development actions, and build the resilience of the conflict-affected population.



4. Joined-up planning and programming

2021 is the penultimate year of implementation of the Government of Ukraine-UN Partnership Framework, and the year when the UN Country Team, the Government and partners will embark on the process of preparing the new Government of Ukraine-UNSDCF for 2023-2027. The new Cooperation Framework will be the main guiding document for programming and implementation of Government and UN development activities in Ukraine in support of national sustainable development and the 2030 Agenda.



5. Financing

Linking funding mechanisms to strategic priorities has enabled the implementation of a set of interventions across the nexus. The Ukraine Humanitarian Fund (UHF) issued an allocation in the amount of \$2.5 million for humanitarian projects implemented in close collaboration with, and with a planned handover to, local authorities and development actors, following an area-based approach in prioritized Government-controlled areas.

The World Bank has committed to deliver evidence-based analysis and recommendations on the region's economic recovery to help guide Government and international partner strategy, policy and investment in Eastern Ukraine. A World Bank study on economic recovery in Eastern Ukraine is expected to be released this year.

LESSONS LEARNT

GOOD PRACTICES



Multi-sector approach to the nexus: Rather than a top-down strategy through a single platform, HDP nexus initiatives in Ukraine profit from a diverse, multi-stakeholder approach. The nexus is driven at the field level by the UN, NGOs, local authorities and CSOs through project activities. Strategic consultations are led at the national level through the Government, the UN and other coordination structures, such as the Vilnius Taskforce.



Government-led sector working groups help strengthen Government involvement in response and service provision: Although in its early stage, this approach provides international actors and Government entities with a much-needed platform to jointly discuss potential areas for collaboration.



Strategic guidance, combined with financial allocation: For example, the UHF 2020 standard allocation to Government-controlled areas required all project proposals to contain a nexus component. This provided applicants with a concrete incentive to give thought to cooperation with development and Government partners.



Measures to strengthen local authorities' capacity to harmonize coordination and support the development of the unified system for gender-based violence (GBV) services. This encompasses training exercises given to local authorities, including the police, by development actors and based on the information from humanitarian partners.



Photo: OCHA/Maloletka

CHALLENGES



Lack of a shared understanding of the nexus and its operationalization. There is currently no shared definition of the nexus among Government, UN and other partners. In addition, tools aimed at measuring progress and success of nexus efforts are currently missing.



Lack of dedicated financial tools. Flexible and multi-year funding remains limited, and the financial tools available, mostly humanitarian, have not adapted to what is now becoming a protracted crisis.



Lack of prioritization of nexus efforts: While most actors are familiar with the nexus concepts, the resources required for nexus-specific tasks are usually deprioritized vis-à-vis regular, funded programme deliverables. Few agencies recognize any cost-benefit advantage of engaging in the nexus.



SPOTLIGHT ON GENDER

All the activities linked to the nexus strategic objective of the 2021 HRP have a Gender with Age Marker score of at least 4. These activities target the most vulnerable populations near the Line of Contact. They cover

a wide range of services and themes including GBV programmes, health, WASH, nutrition, HIV/AIDS, information and sex- and age-disaggregated data, infrastructure, disabled access, gender mainstreaming, IDPs and psychosocial services. In addition, the UHF has dedicated a 2021 allocation to nexus projects, all of which have a gender component.



SPOTLIGHT ON LOCAL ACTORS

Capacity-building activities for local actors are at the core of the nexus approach implemented in Ukraine. To ensure a gradual transition from humanitarian actors to Government authorities, the Government

has established a central Directorate for International Technical Assistance within the Secretariat of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine. The mechanism's main objective is to establish a sustainable partnership and policy dialogue between the Government and development partners on national reforms and programme implementation in line with international commitments.

This summary is part of the initiative Mapping good practice in the implementation of humanitarian-development-peace nexus approaches carried out by the IASC Results Group 4 in 2021.



Photo: OCHA/Maloletka