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UNHCR The UN Refugee Agency

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Responding to Protracted Displacement Using the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus Approach

UNDP AND UNHCR THEORY OF CHANGE

Forced displacement is now affecting more than 80 million people in the world and many are in protracted situations. This long-lasting displacement blurs the lines between humanitarian crisis and longer-term development, and creates additional challenges for conflict resolution or prevention. In response we need stronger collaboration between the many actors involved based on an approach which has come to be known as the humanitarian-development-peace (HDP) nexus, or triple nexus. In line with the holistic vision of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR), such an integrated approach aims to lead to a better understanding of, and more effective responses to, the complexity of protracted displacement, while fostering coherent and complementary collaborations between different partners. The final objective is to create a safe and secure environment for both the forcibly displaced and host populations, where everyone can realize their rights and access services, while contributing to and benefitting from society and the economy in ways that promote resilience and longer-term solutions.

The Issue

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), by the end of 2020, almost 80 million people were recorded as forcibly displaced and 4.2 million as stateless (UNHCR 2020).

The causes of displacement are multiple and can be the result of various factors which include violent conflict, political unrest, economic crisis, environmental change and natural disaster. Displaced populations are not only demographically diverse, depending on the causes of the displacement and whether displaced groups move within their own country or to another; displaced persons are subject to different legal frameworks and levels of protection.

Most displaced populations are hosted by poor or middle-income countries often experiencing their own challenges. Consequently, the act of hosting displaced people can exacerbate existing economic and political problems, lead to social tensions between host and refugee populations, and increase pressure on public services. As a result of complex and chronic crises preventing people from returning to their homes, and the lack of suitable and durable alternatives to integrate displaced populations into the host country or resettle them elsewhere, the number of displaced groups that find themselves in protracted situations, commonly understood as five years or more in duration, is increasing.

Box 1. What is the aim of this project?

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) want to identify areas of strategic collaboration in situations of forced displacement through the development of a Theory of Change (ToC). A ToC can be used to understand how change happens and what contribution interventions can make to that change, or to understand how they bring about change (James 2013:3). A ToC can help to identify common goals, complementarities among different stakeholders, and potential obstacles to implementation.

The ToC presented in this brief was developed by Rebecca Roberts (UNRISD 2020a), based on an extensive scoping study (UNRISD 2020b) and stakeholder consultations. It is intended to be adapted by UNDP and UNHCR to specific national and situational contexts. The ToC diagram (figure 1) helps to identify opportunities for UNDP-UNHCR collaboration and to understand how interventions contribute to the HDP nexus. It can be revised and adapted to maximize the positive impact on the HDP nexus. It can also be used by UNDP and UNHCR country offices to show other stakeholders how their interventions contribute to the HDP nexus. The ToC covers interventions from the initial emergency phase of displacement to the achievement of longer-term solutions in situations of protracted displacement. The ToC can also inform interventions to prevent and address the root causes of forced displacement.

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Transition in Responses to Displacement

Parallel
Internationally supported humanitarian care and maintenance operations completely parallel to the national system with no transitioning elements

Alignment
Features compatible with national systems are built into humanitarian activities such as service/transfer delivery parameters and monetization of assistance, although displaced populations are not linked to the national system

Harmonization
Common features and procedures cover both displaced and host families (assessment, targeting, services, delivery systems, monitoring systems) leading to common programmes supported by common donor funds. However, displaced populations are not covered directly by national systems, and resourcing is covered by international actors

Inclusion
Displaced populations are covered by the national system as part of a time-bound or permanent solution to displacement, partially or completely financed by the government

Why the HDP Nexus Approach Is Important to Address Protracted Displacement

The HDP nexus approach responds to immediate needs while initiating longer-term solutions and addressing the root causes of conflict and crises that cause displacement, violence and instability, and impede developmental progress. It responds to calls for greater humanitarian-development collaboration as expressed in the UN's 2016 New Way of Working (NWoW) initiative, or to requests to integrate peace and security interventions with humanitarian and development activities such as the UN's twin **resolutions on sustaining peace** (United Nations Security Council and General Assembly). In the same vein, the GCR (2018) calls for a combined humanitarian, development and peace approach: it foresees cooperation among humanitarian, development and peace actors to adopt a comprehensive response to situations of displacement and to prevent displacement. This holistic and integrated approach is also a guiding principle of the SDGs, which are designed to bring about transformative change by building inclusive, peaceful and just societies, eradicating poverty, protecting human rights and tackling global challenges including displacement (UNRISD 2016). They recognize and plan to enhance the contribution human mobility can make to sustainable development (UNDP 2020). Their aim "to reach the furthest behind first" and to "leave no one behind" includes displaced and marginalized populations. The overarching SDG framework resonates with the HDP nexus approach to protracted crises. The HDP nexus approach further supports implementation of **donor commitments** made at the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) in 2016 and the Grand Bargain, with the intention of providing more flexible multiyear funding to support interventions with combined humanitarian, development and peace objectives.

UNDP-UNHCR Theory of Change for Adopting an HDP Nexus Approach to Situations of Displacement/ Protracted Displacement

The UNDP-UNHCR ToC is illustrated in figure 1 and comprises five pillars and four cross-cutting issues which form a triple nexus approach and capture the commitments of UNDP and UNHCR to the GCR and SDGs. The five pillars for different thematic interventions—**basic needs** (humanitarian), **services, livelihoods, employment and social protection** (development), **soft peace and hard peace** (peace)—are categorized into the three elements of the HDP nexus as illustrated in the ToC diagram.

The cross-cutting issues of **legal identity and protection, social cohesion and peaceful co-existence, gender and diversity**, and **environment** are mainstreamed through each pillar but can also form distinct programme interventions. The pillars and cross-cutting issues are of equal importance and the organization of activities between them is context specific.

The pillars should be seen from a dynamic and not necessarily linear perspective, illustrating the **transition** or sequence of events from the emergency phase—when support for affected populations is facilitated by the international community and provided in **parallel** to national **systems**—to subsequent processes of **alignment** and **harmonization** toward the **inclusion** of affected populations into **national systems**. *Multiple actors can contribute to each pillar*, with ultimate responsibility to ensure rights for displaced and host populations lying with national governments.

While there is no consensus among donors, practitioners, policy makers and academics about the scope of the peace element of the nexus, the approach taken in the ToC is based on practices and interventions of UNDP and UNHCR. The peace pillar is divided into soft peace (for example governance and rule of law) and hard peace (for example security and defence) interventions and informed by all cross-cutting themes, but in particular legal identity and protection, social cohesion and peaceful coexistence.

Operationalizing the Theory of Change for Protracted Displacement

To operationalize the ToC for protracted displacement and inform the design, funding, management and review of nexus interventions, the following set of principles should be applied:

- **shared vision** among all stakeholders about the composition and objectives of HDP nexus interventions, the potential for transition and the timing for initiating longer-term responses;
- **exit strategy**, to build stability and to work toward longer-term solutions;
- ongoing **context analysis** to inform vision and relevant interventions, to monitor progress and adapt responses to changing environments;
- **strong leadership and effective coordination** to create a positive working environment and effective communication; and
- **flexible multiyear funding** to facilitate long-term planning.

Practical considerations for operationalizing an HDP nexus approach

The following best practices should be considered when implementing projects or programmes designed according to the triple nexus approach to address situations of protracted forced displacement (OECD 2020; for full list of references, see UNRISD 2020a).

Figure 1. UNDP-UNHCR Theory of Change Diagram

Vision	Forcibly displaced and host populations live in a safe and secure environment, realize their rights and access services, and are able to contribute to and benefit from the economy and society in ways that promote resilience and longer-term solutions. The government has the capacity, resources and legal/policy frameworks to ensure the provision of rights and services for displaced and host populations, harnessing their positive contributions toward sustainable development and leveraging a whole-of-government, multistakeholder approach. Evidence-based measures to address root causes of displacement are implemented and effective.				
HDP Nexus	**Humanitarian**	**Development**		**Peace**	
Protection and Solutions Outcomes	**1** Only the most vulnerable dependent on humanitarian assistance	**2** Host and displaced populations have equal access to services of an appropriate standard	**3** Host and displaced populations have equal access to sustainable livelihoods and formal employment opportunities	**4** Government has capacity and the legal/policy framework to protect host and displaced populations and include displaced populations in national systems	**5** Context stable, civilian population secure. Relevant stakeholders can plan for future and work toward preventing future displacement
Transition from parallel humanitarian systems to national solutions	**Basic needs** Food, water, shelter, NFI, sanitation	**Services** Health care/public health Education/higher education infrastructure	**Livelihoods/Employment/Social Protection** Access to natural resources, small businesses, training and formal employment opportunities, social protection	**Soft Peace** • Governance and RoL • Access to justice • Capacity strengthening • DRR	**Hard Peace** • Diplomacy, Security, Defence • Intelligence, SSR • Capacity strengthening
• **Inclusion** • **Harmonization** • **Alignment** • **Parallel**	○ ↑ ●	○ National system ↑ ● International support	○ ↑ ●	◎ National system with international support appropriate to context	
Cross-cutting Issues					
Legal identity and protection	Ensure displaced populations can access their basic needs	Ensure displaced populations can access services	Ensure displaced populations have access to legal livelihoods, employment opportunities and social protection	Ensure displaced populations' rights are protected through provision of legal documentation and inclusion in national systems	Support advocacy for respect of international humanitarian law, human rights law and SSR
Social cohesion and peaceful coexistence	Analyse immediate impact of displacement on displaced and host populations to develop measures to mitigate against tensions	Ensure that displaced and host populations have access to services and conduct analysis that informs service provision	Facilitate livelihoods and employment opportunities to host and displaced populations based on analysis	Analyse legal framework for protection of rights to identify gaps to be addressed through governance and RoL reforms	Protect vulnerable groups, prevent violent extremism and provide DDR
Gender and diversity	Ensure vulnerable groups receive humanitarian assistance	Ensure services can be accessed equally by all demographic and social groups	Ensure appropriate livelihoods, employment opportunities and social protection are available to all	Ensure all have their rights protected in law and are included in national systems	Protect vulnerable groups, prevent violent extremism and provide DDR
Environment	Protect environment from immediate impact of displacement or initiate plans to repair damage	Ensure interventions are environmentally sustainable	Ensure livelihoods and employment opportunities are environmentally sustainable	Support capacity building of governments to implement environmentally sustainable development policies and develop DRR strategies	Conduct analysis to ensure environmental protection and to mitigate conflict over access to natural resources

Note: DDR–disarmament, demobilization and reintegration; DRR–disaster risk reduction; HDP–Humanitarian-Development-Peace; NFI–non-food items; PVE–preventing violent extremism; RoL–rule of law; SSR–security sector reform.

"We spend far more time and resources responding to crises rather than preventing them. People are paying too high a price

... We need a whole new approach".

António Guterres, UN Secretary-General (10 January 2017, remarks to the Security Council)

Shared analysis and context-specific responses

- Conduct research and analysis to develop in-depth **understanding of the context** to inform programming and policy; monitor and evaluate the positive and negative impacts of interventions; identify lessons learned and adapt interventions to changing situations. Analysis should inform conflict-sensitive programming and facilitate planning to prioritize humanitarian principles and protect humanitarian space.
- Conduct joint research (including the participation of impacted communities) with multiple stakeholders including UNDP, UNHCR and other humanitarian, development and peace actors to **identify root causes** of displacement, **understand needs and vulnerabilities and existing capacities** such as national and local governance and rule of law (RoL); to assess legal identity and protection needs and design appropriate interventions; to identify and facilitate livelihoods and employment interventions based on private sector, market and labour force analysis; and to maximize impact by aligning interventions with nexus pillars and cross-cutting issues.
- Ensure that analysis is **sensitive to gender and diversity** as well as to evolving situations to understand the needs and capacities of different demographic and social groups.
- Share context-specific analyses to foster a **shared vision** based on a common understanding of terminology and concepts.
- Develop methods for effective **monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning** (MEAL), standardized data collection, qualitative research methods and share findings.

Long-term strategies and sustainable capacity

- Engage in long-term planning and develop sustainable **national capacity** that includes agreeing and working toward **longer-term solutions** and an **exit strategy**.
- Actively **include all relevant stakeholders** in planning and implementation processes. Invest in and **use national capacities** at all levels to enhance and maintain indigenous skills, expertise and resources.
- Prioritize working with and funding **local partners** including civil society, remove bureaucratic barriers to effective working partnerships and promote best practices.
- Promote respect for **humanitarian principles**, international humanitarian law and human rights law.

Prevention, mediation and peacebuilding

- Conduct ongoing **conflict analysis** to ensure that humanitarian, development and peace interventions are conflict sensitive and do no harm.
- **Engage politically** at all levels—international, regional and national—and at all administrative levels in a country to prevent displacement and resolve situations of protracted displacement.
- Develop and support **indigenous capacities** and mechanisms to prevent crises, resolve conflict and build peace.
- Actively include and address the **needs of marginalized groups** and mitigate

Box 2. Challenges in implementing the HPD nexus

- Fears of compromising humanitarian principles and space by working with or aligning with interventions that have political and security objectives.
- Difficulties in coordinating and working across sectors and groups because of different mandates, working practices, expertise, planning horizons and access to funding.
- Challenging and time-consuming processes for planning, sequencing and coordinating complex interventions in dynamic situations involving multiple actors with different agendas, time lines and objectives.
- Problems in maintaining agility and flexibility in response to changing circumstances when implementing large-scale, multisectoral interventions.
- Restrictive operating contexts in which host governments and populations reject the pursuit of longer-term responses to protracted displacement, or displaced populations themselves oppose interventions that seem to hinder return or resettlement in a third country.
- Lack of appropriate funding/financing to promote longer-term combined humanitarian, development and peace interventions despite efforts to change aid architecture.

tensions between host and displaced populations.
- Undertake **advocacy with host governments** and populations and the displaced populations to explain the benefits of adopting longer-term policies toward displacement.
- Incentivize development and peace actors to **address structural causes** of displacement/protracted displacement so that humanitarian aid can be reduced.

Coordination and leadership

- Use existing or establish effective and appropriate **coordination mechanisms** at all levels and across the nexus to facilitate joined-up programming among UNDP, UNHCR and other stakeholders. Avoid creating multiple and duplicate systems, although—to protect humanitarian space—a separate coordination mechanism may be necessary.
- Plan **joined-up interventions** and identify **collective outcomes** and the organizations that have the mandate, expertise, comparative advantage and access to funding to contribute to those collective outcomes. Actively **involve national and local actors** in analysis and planning.
- Recognize and support the leadership of legitimate formal and informal **national authorities** at all levels. Identify and **liaise with legitimate leadership** and **governance structures** and RoL institutions for the displaced populations.
- Adopt a **regional approach** where appropriate to address regional issues including triggers for and drivers of conflict, displacement and vulnerabilities, and capacities for humanitarian, development and peace

Key Areas for UNDP-UNHCR Collaboration in Situations of Protracted Displacement

The following programmatic areas present opportunities for UNDP and UNHCR collaborations in situations of protracted displacement guided by the HDP nexus approach. These collaborations can be informed by the key documents and ongoing initiatives of the two agencies listed in box 3.

Legal identity and protection

The legal framework is the foundation for all interventions to support displaced and host populations. It determines access to rights in all aspects of life and is essential to achieving the objectives of the humanitarian, development and peace pillars. Displaced populations often lack proof of legal identity as documents are lost or destroyed out of fear of discrimination or may never have existed. To receive basic services and cash support (both public and private) displaced populations should be registered on a civil (or at least functional) registry of the host country and receive an identity card or other credentials.

Governance and rule of law

National capacity in governance and RoL, which is not limited to state entities, is needed to ensure that the development and implementation of the legal framework is sustainable and that authorities in hosting areas have the capacity to manage and deliver public resources and to ensure basic public service delivery.

National capacity is needed for inclusive and accountable approaches to generating resources, and to budgeting, planning, managing, coordinating and adapting public services which are essential for local socioeconomic development.

Effective governance and RoL are essential to achieving stability, security and access to justice; and a fair and equitable system that recognizes all populations by registering them in one that meets the needs of all demographic/social groups and

Box 3. Useful resources: Existing and emerging initiatives, policies and guidelines

1. UNDP. 2020. Strengthening social cohesion: Conceptual framing and programming implications.
2. IASC. 2020. Light Guidance on Collective Outcomes: Planning and implementing the HDP nexus in contexts of protracted crises. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), February 2020 (fourth draft).
3. UN Strategy for Legal Identity for All. Concept Note Developed by the UN Legal Identity Expert Group. June 2019.
4. ILO. 2016. Guiding Principles: Access of Refugees and Other Forcibly Displaced Persons to the Labour Market.
5. UNHCR. 2019. UNHCR Engagement with the Sustainable Development Goals. Updated Guidance Note 2019.
6. UNDP. 2020. Human Mobility, Shared Opportunities: A Review of the 2009 Human Development Report and the Way Ahead.
7. UNDP. 2019. Global Refugee Forum 2019: Defining UNDP's Development Commitments and Contributions

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