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

UNDP and UNHCR Theory of Change

November 2020

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Project Overview

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.[1] The increasingly complex and protracted nature of forced displacement has precipitated a renewed interest in adopting a Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) nexus approach in the UN, the international community and among donors. The project developed a Theory of Change (ToC) for use at the country level to support UNDP-UNHCR collaboration on forced protracted displacement; to understand how UNDP-UNHCR intervention responses support forcibly displaced persons, host populations and host governments; and to inform measures to prevent displacement. Responses should be people centred, needs based and not status based, so UNDP and UNHCR should work with other organizations to support different displaced groups depending on mandate, capacity and the presence of stakeholders. Contexts vary so target populations might, for example, include refugees and asylum seekers, internally displaced persons (IDPs), returnees and stateless persons alongside host populations.

How is the Theory of Change Used?

The ToC is intended to be adapted by UNDP and UNHCR to specific national and situational contexts as they collaborate or explore collaboration. It can be used as a reference document throughout the project management cycle in situations of displacement/protracted displacement in conjunction with other strategy and policy documents. It is recommended that the contextualized ToCs are regularly reviewed to capture changes in the policy, operational and institutional environments relevant to the UNDP-UNHCR collaboration.

The ToC diagram helps to identify opportunities for UNDP-UNHCR collaboration and to understand how interventions contribute to the HDP nexus, and can be revised and adapted to maximize the positive impact on the HDP nexus. UNDP and UNHCR country offices can show other stakeholders how their interventions contribute to the HDP nexus.

Why Use the HDP Nexus in Forced Displacement Contexts?

Record numbers of displaced populations

The growing numbers of displaced and protracted displaced populations, caused by the increasing number of prolonged conflicts and crises, has precipitated a renewed emphasis on comprehensive responses that combine humanitarian, development and peace activities. This 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 social, economic, political and developmental progress.

UN reform

The 2016 New Ways of Working (NWoW) initiative called for greater humanitarian-development collaboration. Later that year, the United Nations Security Council and General Assembly Resolutions on Sustaining Peace stressed the need to prevent and address the root causes of conflict through integrating peace and security interventions with humanitarian and development activities. This approach has become known as the HDP nexus or triple nexus.

GCR

The Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) (2018) includes the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) and builds on commitments made in the 2016 New York Declaration for Refugees

[1] This project has been generously funded by the Government of Japan.

and Migrants.[2] It calls for a combined humanitarian, development and peace approach and cooperation among humanitarian, development and peace actors to adopt a comprehensive response to situations of displacement and for preventing displacement. The GCR emphasizes a multistakeholder and whole-of-government approach. It aims to share responsibilities for displacement among host countries and the international community, enhance refugee self-reliance, prevent and address root cause of displacement, and identify and support expansion of third country solutions and opportunities to return. Protection is central to the GCR and it promotes international refugee law, international humanitarian law (IHL) and human rights law. IHL and human rights law protect everybody including forcibly displaced populations. Refugees are the only forcibly displaced groups provided additional protection under refugee law.

SDGs

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and their 169 targets are mutually reinforcing, "integrated and indivisible", promoting sustainable development through "economic, social and environmental" action. The SDGs are designed to bring transformative change to build inclusive peaceful and just societies, eradicate poverty, protect human rights and tackle global challenges including displacement (UNRISD 2016), recognizing and enhancing the contribution human mobility can make to sustainable development (UNDP 2020c, forthcoming). They aim "to reach the furthest behind first" and to "leave no one behind" which includes displaced and marginalized populations. The overarching SDG framework creates an HDP nexus approach relevant to protracted crises. UNHCR states that the SDGs provide an "entry point" "to advance protection and solutions for persons of concern" and "to work on inclusion of persons of concern into national systems" (UNHCR 2020a:3). However, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) argues that, while designed to tackle root causes to resolve and prevent conflict and crises, ongoing humanitarian need caused by conflict and crises could undermine the achievement of the SDGs (OECD 2020:6).

Donor demand

More people are becoming dependent on humanitarian aid for longer periods of time (Macrae 2019). Donors want transformative development, and greater stability and security, to move away from providing long-term humanitarian funding. Following commitments at the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) 2016 and the Grand Bargain,[3] aid architecture is being revised with the intention of providing more flexible multiyear funding to support interventions with combined humanitarian, development and peace objectives. OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) members have agreed legally binding recommendations for financing the triple nexus (OECD 2020).

Conceptualizing the HDP Nexus and Displacement

Figure 1 illustrates the three nexus elements—humanitarian, development and peace—as separate entities, as double nexus (humanitarian-development; humanitarian-peace; and development-peace), and the triple nexus of HDP.

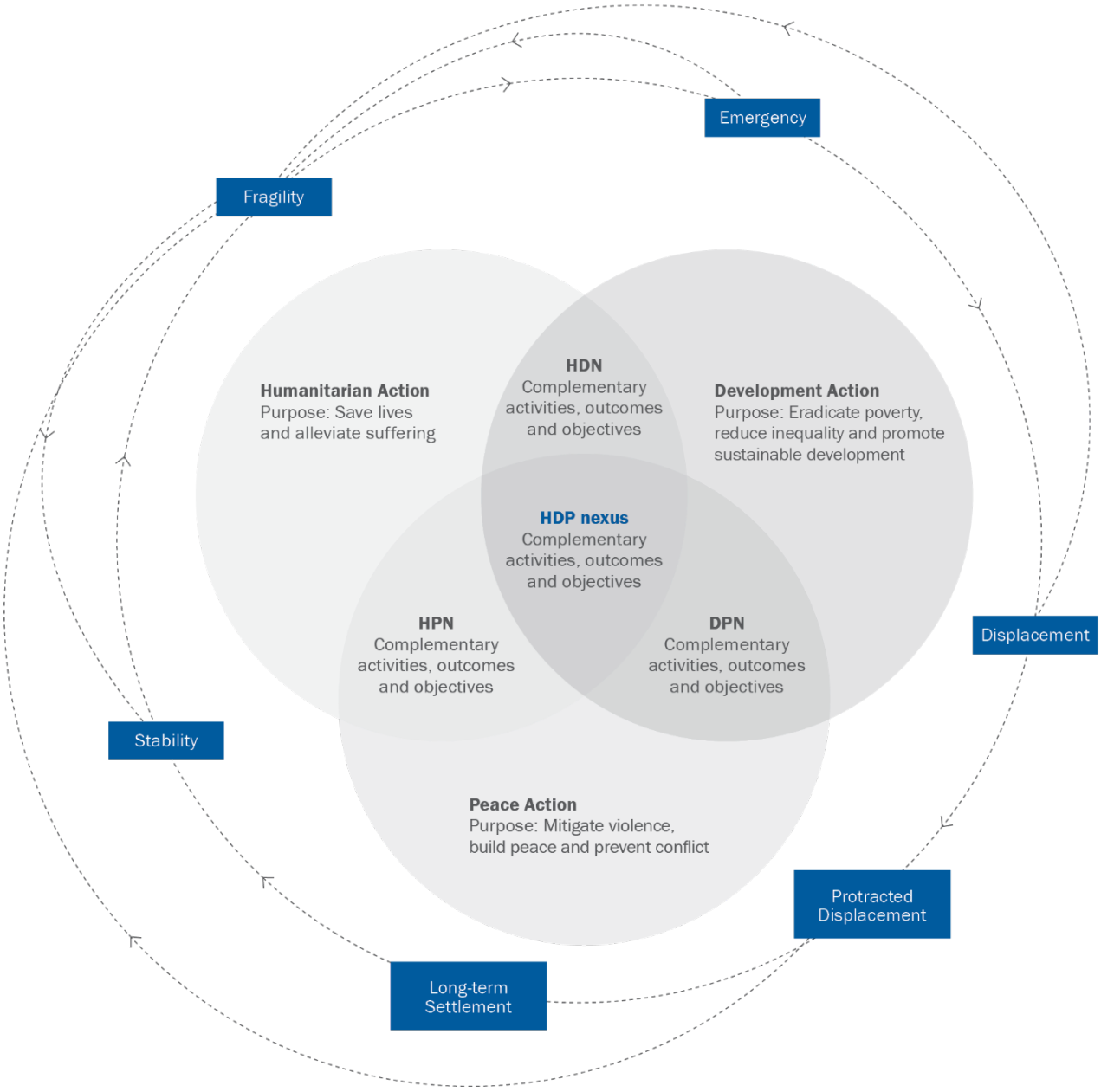
The HDP nexus is operationalized according to the specific context. In some contexts, activities under one element may be more relevant than under the other two, or activities falling under one of the double nexuses may be more important than those under the other two double nexuses. Sometimes the triple nexus will be the more important area of intervention. The relative importance of each element, each double nexus and the triple nexus changes over time in response to cycles of emergency and crises. The cyclical nature of emergencies and of crises (including displacement) and their interaction is shown by the ring of smaller circles and arrows indicating the direction of influence. Arrows go in two directions

[2] The GCR includes the CRRF, adopted as an integral part of annex 1 of the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, and complemented by a Programme of Action. Experiences made during the state-led roll-out of the CRRF in 15 countries in 2016–18 have informed preparations for the GCR alongside broad multistakeholder consultations held in Geneva.

[3] https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/grand-bargain.

because interventions can help to reverse trends by preventing crises (including displacement) from occurring, or may lead to long-term settlement and stability.

Figure 1. Contextualizing the HDP Nexus



Note: DPN–Development-Peace nexus; HDN–Humanitarian-Development nexus; HDP nexus–Humanitarian-Development-Peace nexus.

The Challenges of the HDP Nexus

The concept of linking humanitarian, development and peace interventions is not new and presents a number of challenges in all contexts, including situations of protracted displacement:

- 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 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; and
- lack of appropriate funding/financing to promote longer-term combined humanitarian, development and peace interventions despite efforts to change aid architecture.

It seems logical to focus on complex situations holistically using a multisector approach to address the immediate, medium and long-term needs of the host and displaced populations and the state structures intended to support them. Nevertheless, there has been little analysis of what might be considered successful examples of how to operationalize the HDP nexus (IOM 2019a; OECD 2019). Guidelines for planning, managing and funding the nexus have been developed but resemble widely accepted principles for good programming; they are general and not focused on the substance of nexus programmes.

The Scope of the UNDP-UNHCR Theory of Change

UNDP and UNHCR have committed to the GCR and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (UN 2015), with its principle to leave no one behind, and to specific SDGs that respond to situations of displacement (UNHCR 2019a, 2020a; UNDP 2019; see table A1 in annex). Through "SDG 17: Partnership for the Goals", UNDP and UNHCR have committed to working together and with other stakeholders toward common objectives. The scope of the ToC is determined by these commitments and key thematic interventions to support displaced and host populations and host governments. These are organized according to prevailing views of which interventions fall under which element of the HDP nexus. This organization may not reflect how UNHCR and UNDP categorize their activities. The table in annex 3 shows how the commitments made by UNDP and UNHCR to the GCR and SDGs relate to the HDP nexus.

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