

Executive summary

The Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus is a unique, common standard aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of collective action in fragile and conflict-affected settings. In advance of the five-year review due by early 2024, this preliminary stocktaking exercise will facilitate joint learning, and feed the high-level Partnership for Peace roundtable in mid-2022.

Overall, one central message emerges: the strategic momentum around the DAC Recommendation must be seized to achieve its full potential.

Adherents to the DAC Recommendation have made visible efforts to implement it

- The DAC Recommendation is becoming a widely accepted common standard beyond its original signatories. With the adherence of UN entities, the policy dialogue about implementation is expanding to the multilateral system, allowing for a more consistent and meaningful execution of the nexus approach.
- Disseminating the DAC Recommendation's principles widely remains an important priority: they must translate into practical and concrete actions that inform organisational processes, partnerships and programming. Messages should be jargon-free and practice-oriented.
- The nexus approach has helped adherents to manage change within their organisations, each following different strategies, depending on timing, capacities, political will and individual trajectory.
- Adherents define success in implementing the nexus in various ways. From an operational standpoint, success may be defined both in terms of change in ways of working, and the achievement of sustainable outcomes improving lives in fragile contexts.

Progress has been made across the three areas of the DAC Recommendation

- Stakeholders have made significant progress in developing a shared understanding of how to reduce risks and improve resilience at country level, notably through the design of collective outcomes. However, co-ordination challenges remain, and joint analysis and joined-up planning must more meaningfully translate into programming.
- New operational practices reflecting the programming principles of the Recommendation are emerging. Identifying and scaling up good practices requires sustained collective investment in joint learning and evidence. There is little visible progress, however, in strengthening the voice and participation of people affected by crises and fragility.
- Similarly, the use of nexus-friendly financing models has increased somewhat over the past five years. It is important to learn from these initiatives and integrate them into the humanitarian and development financing architecture in a sustainable manner.

Table 1 summarises the status of implementation.

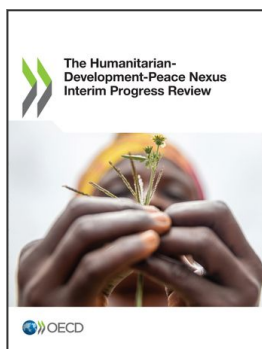
Important areas still need attention

- Short-term interventions for peace must, and can, be better connected to development objectives by enhancing mutual understanding and information sharing among HDP actors. Improving the “nexus literacy” of all these actors is fundamental in this regard.
- Achieving truly collective outcomes, with joined-up approaches to planning and programming agreed by all key stakeholders in a given context, would meaningfully advance coherence and complementarity.
- Inclusive financing strategies at country level could significantly accelerate nexus implementation, if designed to support major national processes, while fitting donor funding cycles as far as possible. Financing strategies are not the same as fundraising: they should include bilateral, multilateral and international financial institutions in a process that links financing and programming.
- Ensuring appropriate resourcing for cost-effective co-ordination remains a challenge. DAC adherents can do more to jointly support the existing co-ordination architecture and identify the best-fit leadership in every context.
- Political engagement and other tools, instruments and approaches remain underutilised in joined-up efforts across the nexus to prevent crises, resolve conflicts and build peace.
- The stakeholders closest to the affected communities should be included in a more meaningful way in joint planning processes, in particular local actors, civil society organisations, and national and international non-governmental organisations involved in implementing programmes.
- Investing in national and local capacities and systems cannot be an afterthought. Collective support and optimal use of public delivery systems for basic social services at national and local levels must remain a priority, even in times of crisis.
- The HDP nexus should integrate gender equality, climate change and other relevant considerations. It should not become a new, siloed policy area.

Table 1. A snapshot of the implementation of the DAC Recommendation

	PRINCIPLES OF THE DAC RECOMMENDATION	STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION (See Chapter 2 for more details)
	CO-ORDINATION	
1.	Undertake joint risk-informed, gender-sensitive analysis of root causes and structural drivers of conflict , as well as positive factors of resilience and the identification of collective outcomes incorporating humanitarian, development and peace actions.	Meaningful progress, with widespread piloting of new approaches: adoption of collective outcomes in 24 out of 25 nexus pilot countries and contexts; experimentation with new tools and platforms for joint country analysis; and knowledge sharing and joint learning through the DAC-UN Dialogue. Bottlenecks: patchy evidence of meaningful commitment to deliver under one strategy; limited knowledge and application of guidance around the collective outcomes concept; actors’ methodologies not always conducive to joined-up approaches. Further policy work is also needed on meaningful inclusion of local actors.
2.	Provide appropriate resourcing to empower leadership for cost-effective co-ordination across the humanitarian, development and peace architecture.	Leadership and co-ordination models vary greatly across contexts, with contrasting levels of perceived success. Overall, UN Resident Coordinators (RCs) and Humanitarian Coordinators (HCs) are seen as key providers of nexus leadership and co-ordination, ahead of national governments and key donors. Bottlenecks: ability, attention and capacity of national leadership; gap between expectations and resources for RC/HCs to support co-ordination across the nexus; and often limited donor co-ordination.
3.	Utilise political engagement and other tools, instruments and approaches at all levels to prevent crises, resolve conflicts and build peace.	Integration of the peace pillar remains at very early stage. A few initiatives have emerged to enhance how diplomatic, stabilisation and civilian security interventions join up and are coherent with humanitarian and development outcomes, but evidence is still anecdotal.
	PROGRAMMING	
4.	Prioritise prevention, mediation and peacebuilding, investing in development whenever possible , while ensuring immediate humanitarian needs continue to be met.	Preliminary evidence: while trends vary according to year and recipient country, overall there has been a gradual increase in the proportion of all donors’ ODA to humanitarian needs and a gradual reduction in the share going towards development and peace, especially in extremely fragile contexts. Peace programming focuses more on basic

	PRINCIPLES OF THE DAC RECOMMENDATION	STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION (See Chapter 2 for more details)
		safety and security in extremely fragile contexts than it does in other fragile contexts, where more ODA goes to core government functions. Inclusive political processes are a priority for donors across levels of fragility. In terms of policy, a few joint initiatives have emerged among DAC and IASC members and between UN adherents.
5.	Put people at the centre , tackling exclusion and promoting gender equality.	Both the humanitarian and development sectors have been striving to adopt more people-centred approaches for over a decade. No evidence was reviewed for this report of the extent to which the peace sector is implementing this principle. While it clearly links to the international women, peace and security agenda, there is scope to strengthen policy synergies and messaging about the contribution of gender sensitivity to the HDP nexus.
6.	Ensure that activities do no harm , are conflict sensitive to avoid unintended negative consequences and maximise positive effects across humanitarian, development and peace actions.	Use of conflict analysis to becoming more systematic among some of largest adherents. However, conflict and political economy analysis remain the least-used type of input for country analysis among survey respondents. More work is required to design suitable gender analysis methodologies that can be effectively integrated into programming. Policy research could help identify the determinants of successful collective outcomes in terms of social cohesion and conflict prevention.
7.	Align joined-up programming with the risk environment .	Evidence found in the humanitarian and development sectors of DAC and UN adherents of risk-informed programming that translates into change. COVID-19 and recent violent political transitions have put risk responsiveness to the test and led many adherents to start internal discussions on enhancing flexibility and anticipatory capacity.
8.	Strengthen national and local capacities .	Overall, national and subnational delivery is rarely the default option, despite positive examples. This principle is especially important for long-term development outcomes. Recent studies take stock of challenges in shifting a larger share of ODA to local organisations as well as advice on how to tackle these challenges. Linked to this principle, in 2021, the DAC adopted the Recommendation on Enabling Civil Society in Development Co-operation and Humanitarian Assistance.
9.	Invest in learning and evidence across humanitarian, development and peace actions.	An increasing number of actors engage in evaluating their performance in implementing the nexus approach, often focusing on either measures of impact or the degree to which their processes are fit for purpose. Questions remain on how to assess progress and ultimately ensure that the people affected by crises or fragility co-own such success . Further investment is also needed in developing evaluation approaches that span the nexus.
	FINANCING	
10.	Develop evidence-based humanitarian, development and peace financing strategies at global, regional, national and local levels, with effective layering and sequencing of the most appropriate financing flows.	Steps have been taken to develop financing strategy processes that bring together analysis and decisions on collective priorities, sources and funds, and strategic programming — for example in Democratic Republic of the Congo, Libya and Yemen. However, these remain standalone, unsystematised processes. The role of financing strategy processes in coalescing financing and prioritisation decisions has yet to be realised, and collective outcomes are still driven by multilateral actors rather than being truly inclusive. The majority of survey respondents reported that their team or organisation had never been involved in developing or aligning to financing strategies across the nexus.
11.	Use predictable, flexible, multi-year financing wherever possible.	The survey data, interviews and peer reviews make it clear that both the UN system and bilateral donors have made significant efforts to adjust their financing practices to support nexus approaches. In a growing number of examples, nexus-ready financing is enabling greater flexibility in response to contextual changes. In particular, progress has been made on financing instruments, approaches and individual projects, although these sometimes remain relatively siloed and nexus approaches have not yet been fully mainstreamed. But while some adherents have made organisational changes to provide more nexus-friendly financing, others face difficulties at organisational and/or parliamentary levels.



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