



BACKGROUND NOTE

Evolution of the Conversation and Recent Milestones

The complex, compounding crises facing the world today – especially the exacerbating effects of climate change – require more innovative, integrated, and locally led approaches. Conversations about the HDP Nexus and locally led development have been gaining considerable momentum over the last several years, primarily separately though increasingly in ways that recognize the exciting synergies between the two concepts.

Some key milestones include:

- In 2016, the former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon convened the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) to generate commitments by member states to reduce human suffering from protracted crises. The [UN Secretary-General outlined a vision](#) for a shared responsibility that ensures cooperation, collaboration, and coordination between humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding actors based on collective outcomes through joint, coherent, complementary, risk-informed analysis. This vision ultimately served as a grounding framework for the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus.
 - The WHS set the foundation for the [Grand Bargain](#), which includes a [Localization Workstream](#) that was launched in 2017 (and has now been transformed into a community of practice). The overall objective of the workstream is to promote and facilitate the implementation of the localization commitments made by all Grand Bargain signatories. The Grand Bargain itself included both commitments to increase the proportion of international humanitarian funding channeled “as directly as possible” to local actors, as well as increasing support for strengthening local actors’ capacities.
- In 2019, the OECD-DAC adopted the Recommendation on the Humanitarian- Development-Peace nexus to “provide Adherents with a comprehensive framework that can incentivize and implement more collaborative and complementary humanitarian, development and peace actions, particularly in fragile and conflict-affected situations.”
 - In May 2022, the OECD released [The Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus Interim Progress Review](#) which examines the progress of DAC and the UN towards using a nexus approach while also identifying key gaps that remain in nexus practices such as coordination, programming, and financing.
- In May 2020, the policy document [Light Guidance on Collective Outcomes](#) was developed by the IASC Results Group on Humanitarian-Development Collaboration in consultation with the UN Joint Steering Committee to Advance Humanitarian and Development Cooperation. The guidance provides an 8-step framework for operationalizing “collective outcomes that must be highly context-specific” and calls for “development and peacebuilding actors, local and national actors, affected populations, academia, and the private sector to be meaningfully engaged from the outset.” In September 2021, the IASC released a [report](#) about how HDP nexus approaches are being implemented in 16 countries, including good practices and lessons learned.
- In November 2020, Peace Direct, Adeso, the Alliance for Peacebuilding and Women of Color Advancing Peace and Security held a three-day online consultation with 158 activists, decision-makers, academics, journalists and practitioners across the globe. Participants and guest contributors exchanged insights and local experiences on the current power dynamics and imbalances that exist within the humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding sectors. The comments and findings are summarized in the [Time to Decolonise Aid Report](#).



- At a Climate Adaptation Summit in 2021, a set of [Principles for Locally Led Adaptation](#) were launched. The Principles emphasize the need for “patient and predictable funding that can be accessed more easily” as well as means to ensure local actors’ access to decision-making in climate finance. To date, over 100 organizations and an increasing number of donors have endorsed the Principles.
- In June 2021, the Grand Bargain Localization Workstream held a senior-level meeting to identify potential actions around the Grand Bargain Core Commitment to “increase and support multi-year investments in the institutional capacities of local and national responders.” Participants shared lessons learned and good practices to increase investment and improve the quality of the support for local and national actors. Among these include: (1) demand-driven and context-specific capacity strengthening and sharing approaches that shift the emphasis from projects or programs to a more institutional and systemic framing; (2) more investment in risk management based on the strengths and compliance requirements of local actors; and (3) a common understanding across the nexus on localization and capacity strengthening needs of local actors.
- In November 2021, USAID [renewed the Agency’s commitment to locally led development](#) and also set two Agency-level targets to motivate progress toward that commitment: first, to provide at least 25 percent of funding directly to local partners by the end of FY2025, and, second, to ensure that at least 50 percent of activities are locally led by 2030. In June 2023, USAID published its first [Localization Progress Report](#) with the FY20, FY21, and FY22 data for direct local funding and a definition for a new indicator to track progress towards the local leadership target.
- On the margins of the December 2022 Effective Development Cooperation Summit, USAID, Denmark, and other bilateral donors committed to a [Donor Statement on Supporting Locally Led Development](#). The statement reaffirms the donors’ shared support for shifting and sharing power with local actors, channeling high quality funding as directly as possible to local actors, and publicly advocating for locally led development, humanitarian action, and peacebuilding. In September 2023, members of the philanthropic funding community expressed their support for the pledge, with 15 foundations endorsing the statement.

This conference aims to build on those conversations and policy documents by tapping into the collective experiences of local organizations, INGOs, donors, and other key stakeholders around two topics: implementing more locally led and context-driven HDP nexus coordination, and capacity strengthening and sharing across the nexus through increased access to funding and improved quality of funding, among other approaches. The purpose of the conference is to develop a set of concrete recommendations for each of these topics, and the breakout groups will be structured accordingly.

Advancing locally led, context-driven coordination and collaboration across the nexus

The first set of breakout sessions at the conference will focus on the following questions:

- What are the barriers and enablers for various actors across the nexus in terms of advancing locally led, context-driven coordination and collaboration?
- How might we increase and enhance local actors’ leadership over decision-making across the nexus, within and beyond discrete projects or activities?
- What are the most appropriate roles for different actors (e.g., local actors, intermediary organizations, donors, national authorities) in this?
- Are there any particularly good nexus approaches for this, or practices from one area of the nexus that could be applied in others?



Key pillars of the HDP nexus approach are coordination, cooperation, and collaboration. Leadership is a key enabler of HDP nexus coordination,¹ as is establishing consortia of HDP partners and actors dedicated to coordination and dedicating resources to supporting coordination and jointly funding HDP programs.² Although donors and HDP partners actively network and collaborate with each other, rarely does this networking translate into integrated, coordinated programming that breaks down the siloed approaches across humanitarian, development, and peace divides. Several challenges hamper strengthening coordination efforts:

- Differences in context mean that the actors and stakeholders who need to be involved vary widely by region or country.³
- Incentives to collaborate vary across the nexus (with some cases of greater collaboration between humanitarian actors due to use of pooled funds, but fewer incentives for similar collaboration among development actors),⁴ and, overall, there is a culture of competition among organizations that impacts collaboration.
- Different planning timelines, geographical loci of decision making, and even terminology pose challenges for coordination.
- Political and financial commitments of different donors limit where or how they can work and what they can support.⁵
- There are generally lower levels of awareness among humanitarian and development actors about how the “peace” element of HDP operates and should be integrated.⁶

The challenges and barriers are even higher for locally led coordination and collaboration. Without addressing these barriers, the exclusion of local voices stymies advancements in the HDP nexus approach. Some of these barriers include:

- Local and civil society actors are often not meaningfully included in HDP coordination bodies (including those that inform programming and funding decisions), though that has been improving recently.⁷
- Using English as the default language for coordination meetings can prevent local actors from effectively participating.
- The current emphasis on efficiency of service delivery overshadows the importance of effectiveness and sustainability, which are best achieved when local communities are engaged in planning, designing, coordinating.

Investing in local actors’ capacities and access to funding

The second set of breakout sessions will focus on the following questions:

- How might we improve the access to and quality of funding and donor support across the nexus?
- How might we support capacity strengthening and sharing across the nexus that is based on local actors’ priorities and centers mutual learning to ensure widespread, sustainable impact?

¹ EU (Nov 2022). [HDP Nexus: Challenges and Opportunities for its Implementation](#).

² OECD (2022). [The Way Forward: The Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus Interim Progress Review](#).

³ Oxfam Briefing Paper (July 2021). [Transforming the Systems that Contribute to Fragility and Humanitarian Crises: Programming Across the Triple Nexus](#).

⁴ <https://www.undp.org/publications/financing-nexus-gaps-and-opportunities-field-perspective>

⁵ <https://www.undp.org/publications/financing-nexus-gaps-and-opportunities-field-perspective>

⁶ OECD (2022). [The Way Forward: The Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus Interim Progress Review](#).

⁷ <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/grand-bargain-official-website/grand-bargain-annual-independent-report-2023-0>



- What are the most appropriate roles for different actors (e.g., local actors, intermediary organizations, donors, national authorities) vis-a-vis funding and capacity strengthening?
- Are there any particularly good nexus approaches for capacity strengthening and funding, or practices from one area of the nexus that could be applied in others?

A critical component of locally led development, investing in strengthening the capacities of local organizations and networks to achieve their own locally valued results is an especially important entry point for operationalizing the HDP nexus. Effective local capacity strengthening should start with the local system, build on existing capacities, strengthen diverse capacities through diverse approaches, and be measured and evaluated in collaboration with local actors.⁸ Donors must also be willing to adjust their own practices and capacities in order to be more flexible and responsive to local priorities.

Despite widespread agreement on the important role of national and local civil society organizations in humanitarian, development, peace, and climate programs, the latter have struggled to access both financing across the nexus as well as the decision-making forums related to these funding streams. Despite donor commitments to shifting funding to local actors, many local actors continue to find it especially difficult to access funds to support their long-term institutional and organizational capacities. This is true, in particular, of local organizations playing key roles in “scaling up” to quickly respond to disasters and other crises (including “flare ups” of protracted crises).

The 2023 Grand Bargain Annual Independent Report found that although there was increased political support for local leadership in 2022 (and a “sea-change since 2020 in terms of the influence local and national actors have exerted over the Grand Bargain decision-making processes”),⁹ this support did not translate into an increase in the proportion of international humanitarian assistance allocated directly to local and national actors, which remained stagnant at 1.2% (US\$485 million).¹⁰

Despite the overall stagnation in direct humanitarian funding, there has been an encouraging trend in the allocation of resources to local and national actors through the UN's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) pooled funds. The 2023 Global Humanitarian Assistance Report indicates that a substantial 28% of allocations from country-based pooled funds in 2022 were channeled directly through these local and national actors. However, understanding the exact flow of funds from initial recipients to subsequent implementing partners proved to be a challenge due to incomplete, inconsistent, and opaque reporting practices within the sector.¹¹

In terms of development funding, in 2021, approximately 14% (US\$24 billion) of bilateral aid from DAC member countries went to civil society organizations (CSOs). Of that, only US\$2 billion was allocated to and through developing-country based CSOs, representing 1.2% of total bilateral aid. The remainder was allocated primarily to donor-country based CSOs (US\$15 billion) and international CSOs (US\$7 billion).^{12,13} Climate financing faces similar constraints. IIED estimates that less than 10% of international climate funds (that are transparently reported) were directed at the local levels between 2003-2016.¹⁴

⁸ <https://www.usaid.gov/policy/local-capacity-strengthening>

⁹ https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/2023-08/HPG_report-Grand_Bargain_2023_master_rev.pdf

¹⁰ https://devinit.org/documents/1350/GHA2023_Digital_v9.pdf

¹¹ https://devinit.org/documents/1350/GHA2023_Digital_v9.pdf

¹² https://public.tableau.com/views/CSOs_FP/Dashboard1?:embed=y&:display_count=yes&publish=yes&:origin=viz_share_link;:display_count=no&:showVizHome=no

¹³ <https://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-topics/Aid-for-CSOs-2023.pdf>

¹⁴ <https://www.iied.org/climate-finance-not-reaching-local-level>



ANNEX 1: ADDITIONAL REPORTS AND RESOURCES

- BMZ (n.d): [The humanitarian-development-peace nexus in practice](#)
- Danish Refugee Council (n.d.): [Case study: A localized approach to nexus programming](#)
- CDA Collaborative (2012): [Time to Listen: Hearing People on the Receiving End of International Aid](#)
- ODI (2014). [Politically smart, locally led development](#)
- Joint Learning Initiative on Faith and Local Communities and DanChurchAid (2019): [The Triple Nexus, Localization, and Local Faith Actors: The intersections between faith, humanitarian response, development, and peace](#)
- Danish Red Cross (2020): [The Triple Nexus – Danish Red Cross Position Paper](#)
- IASC (2020): [Exploring peace within the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus](#)
- SIDA (2020): [Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus \(Guidance Note for SIDA\)](#)
- CARE (2021): [Deploying a humanitarian-development-peace nexus approach](#)
- IASC (2021): [IASC Mapping of Good Practice in the Implementation of the Humanitarian-Development Peace Nexus Approaches](#)
- Islamic Relief (2021): [A review of triple nexus approach in discourse and in practice](#)
- ODI (2021): [Interrogating the evidence base on humanitarian localisation: a literature study](#)
- Oxfam (2021): [Transforming the Systems that Contribute to Fragility and Humanitarian Crises: Programming across the triple nexus](#)
- Peace Direct (2021): [Time to Decolonise Aid](#)
- Tufts University and USAID (2021): [Localization: A “Landscape” Report](#)
- UNICEF (2021) [Formative Evaluation of UNICEF Work to Link Humanitarian and Development Programming](#)
- WHO (2021): [A Guide to Implementing the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus for Health](#)
- Denmark (2022): [Evaluation of the Danish Support to Civil Society- Thematic Evaluation 3: Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus](#)
- MSI (2022): [Localization in Conflict Contexts](#)
- USAID (2022): [Localization at USAID: The Vision and Approach](#)
- USAID (2022) [Practitioners Toolkit: Humanitarian-Development Coherence](#)
- USAID (2022): [Programming Considerations for Humanitarian-Development-Peace Coherence](#)
- Trocaire (2023): [Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus Guidelines](#)
- CARE (2023): [Integrating Local Knowledge in Humanitarian and Development Programming: Perspectives of Global Women Leaders](#)
- Peace Direct (2023): [Transforming Partnerships in International Cooperation](#)



ANNEX 2: DEFINITIONS

Capacity sharing: a process of strengthening individual and system effectiveness through investments in knowledge sharing and skill-building which prioritise mutual learning and reciprocity between actors, based on recognition of existing community capacities.

Capacity strengthening: the strategic and intentional investment in the process of partnering with local actors – individuals, organisations, and networks – to jointly improve the performance of a local system to produce locally valued and sustainable humanitarian and development outcomes.

Climate change programming/finance: As used here, this refers to programmes and financing for action to combat the impact of climate change, as well as steps taken to strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards.

Comparative advantage: the demonstrated capacity and expertise (not limited solely to a mandate) of one individual, group, or institution to meet needs as compared to other individuals, groups, or institutions.

Locally led action: refers to humanitarian, development, and peace activities and those which work across the nexus with local and national actors at the lead in planning, decision-making, and resource allocation.

Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) nexus: the interlinkages between humanitarian, development, and peace actions.¹⁵

Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) nexus approach: the aim of strengthening collaboration, coherence and complementarity across local, regional, and national humanitarian, development, and peace actors as well as the full spectrum of donor-funded actors. The approach seeks to capitalise on the comparative advantages of each pillar – to the extent of their relevance in the specific context – in order to reduce overall vulnerability and the number of unmet needs, strengthen risk management capacities, address root causes of conflict, and support a greater context of peace and security. By highlighting opportunities for enhanced communication, coordination and/or cooperation, where appropriate, an HDP nexus approach helps ensure critical problems are addressed, while still protecting humanitarian principles of neutrality, impartiality, and independence.

Peace: “Peace” in an HDP nexus approach means understanding the dynamics of peace and conflict so as to better ensure activities avoid making fragile situations worse; find and utilise every opportunity to reduce conflict; and do so without violating humanitarian principles. This approach to “Peace” in HDP is known as *conflict sensitivity* and can be applied to any type of programming or activity.

¹⁵ The HDP nexus may be seen to incorporate climate action as a critical aspect of safeguarding development gains, but climate is sometimes mentioned separately here to ensure that its inclusion is understood.