



Damian Lilly, Rachel Scott

Executive Summary

The Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus remains just as relevant today as when it became a prominent policy commitment ten years ago. Its basic rationale remains the same but changes in the aid landscape have made Nexus implementation even more challenging than it already was. The aid system is now operating under acute financial pressure, more complex crisis risks, sharper political contestation, a weaker multilateral system and a UN system reform agenda that has not yet delivered results. Despite these added challenges, the central question remains the same: whether the Nexus can become a practical way to make difficult choices about how aid is delivered to address risks and utilise increasingly scarce resources to deliver better outcomes for affected communities in fragile and crisis settings. There is broad consensus that, while important progress has been made in several areas, there remains a huge gap between policy and practice related to the Nexus. The priority remains implementation, the key enablers and barriers for which include:

- Leadership provided by different actors has been instrumental but remains fragmented and not sufficiently robust.
- Nationally owned and locally led Nexus approaches are critical but local actors are still not being empowered to play leadership roles.
- Investments in specialist capacities have helped institutionalize the Nexus but remain uneven from one context to the next.
- Nexus programming has provided evidence of how it can be implemented at scale, but this is held back by the lack of common planning frameworks.
- Different conceptual understandings of the Nexus and its goals are inhibiting greater collaboration between relevant actors.
- The peace dimension remains the least settled part of the Nexus.

- The siloed structure of the aid system remains a serious impediment to greater synergy between Nexus actors.
- Many disincentives to implementing the Nexus approach still exist, especially competition over resources.
- There is currently limited accountability for implementing the commitments made on the Nexus and no established methodology for measuring its success.

Despite the progress made, Nexus implementation over the last ten years has not matched the ambition with which it was launched. Unless action is taken to reinvigorate attention to the issue, progress will be hard to sustain. The overarching Nexus policy framework remains sound. But further advances in the Nexus agenda will not be achieved unless there is a re-doubling of efforts by relevant actors to implement this, and also an agreement on the additional measures required to scale up implementation. Further action is required in four critical areas.

1. The political case for the Nexus needs to be remade for today's changed aid landscape.
2. The ways of working between Nexus actors need to be rethought based on a crisis response model.
3. Nexus implementation will remain limited unless key structural changes are made.
4. Accountability for implementing the Nexus is lacking, and the benefits are unclear without the means to measure success.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	2
Acknowledgements	5
1. Introduction	6
2. Overview of the Nexus: From policy commitment to implementation challenge	8
3. A changed aid landscape: higher needs, fewer resources, harder politics	12
3.1 Massive funding cuts are driving a return to short-termism	12
3.2 Crisis risks have become more layered and recurrent	14
3.3 Foreign aid is becoming more transactional and shaped by national interests	16
3.4 The multilateral system has less authority and leverage	18
3.5 More actors, more agendas complicate coherence	19
3.6 Reform of the aid system has not yet brought about transformational change	20
4. Does the Nexus still matter?	22
5. Nexus progress: Enablers and barriers impacting implementation	24
5.1 Leadership on the Nexus	24
5.2 Nationally owned and locally led Nexus approaches	26
5.3 Investments in Nexus capacities	28
5.4 Nexus programming at the field level	29
5.5 Different interpretations of Nexus goals	31
5.6 Peace pillar under strain	33
5.7 Siloed aid architecture	35
5.8 Skewed incentives	39
5.9 Lack of accountability and results framework	42
6. Conclusions and recommendations	44
References	50

Acknowledgements

This paper has been written by Damian Lilly and Rachel Scott. It was commissioned by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) to inform the work of the OECD-DAC UN Dialogue on the HDP Nexus and the aid system more broadly. The authors would like to thank all those who gave their time to be interviewed and participate in consultations to inform the paper, and provided comments on previous drafts, as well as colleagues from Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) for their stewardship of the process. The views expressed in the paper are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of the BMZ or members of the OECD-DAC UN Dialogue.

1. Introduction

Ten years after the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit (WHS), the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus (Box 1) – referred to in this paper as the Nexus – stands at a critical juncture. The rationale of the Nexus remains the same: people affected by crises need immediate protection and assistance, but repeated and protracted crises cannot be addressed through humanitarian action alone. Development and peace assistance are needed to reduce risk, vulnerability and future needs by building the resilience necessary to make the transition out of protracted crises towards sustainable development and prevent future crises.

Box 1. What is the Humanitarian Development Peace Nexus?

The DAC Recommendation defines the Nexus as “the interlinkages between humanitarian, development and peace actions.” A Nexus approach aims to strengthen collaboration, coherence and complementarity across these areas, while remaining context-specific and based on respective mandates, principles, comparative advantage, shared analysis, shared planning and the pursuit of collective outcomes.

Source: OECD, 2019, OECD DAC Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus

Yet ten years on from the WHS, the global context in which the Nexus is being implemented has changed radically. Humanitarian needs are increasing, crises are becoming more protracted, donor funding is being cut, foreign aid is becoming more closely linked to national interests, and the

legitimacy and authority of the multilateral system are becoming more contested. These pressures are making the Nexus harder to implement but also making it more necessary. They also explain why the Nexus needs to be rethought to demonstrate more clearly its strategic political value in this new aid landscape, by using the experience and challenges of the past ten years to develop a more effective crisis response model that delivers better outcomes for crisis-affected populations.

This paper is part of a wider reflection process led by BMZ and partners in the DAC-UN Dialogue, which includes donors and UN entities that have adhered to the 2019 OECD DAC Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus. It draws on a literature review, 40 interviews and consultations (mainly at headquarters level) with bilateral donors, the World Bank, UN agencies, international NGOs (INGOs), and think tanks. The initial findings of the paper were presented at two workshops in Addis Ababa and Berlin in April and May 2026.¹ Its aim is to provide a strategic reflection on the factors affecting Nexus implementation although it does not include a review of, or examples of, its practical application at the field level, which are beyond its scope and have already been captured by other reports. Rather, it asks: what has changed since 2016, whether the Nexus still matters, why implementation has remained uneven, and what practical changes are needed to advance the Nexus in the years to come.

¹ The Addis Ababa workshop included participants from partner governments, donor representatives, UN agencies, international NGOs, and local actors from the African region while the Berlin workshop was part of the annual DAC-UN Dialogue meeting.

2. Overview of the Nexus: From policy commitment to implementation challenge

The need to link emergency relief to recovery and development is not new and has been a long-standing challenge of the aid system. The current phase of this debate, the Nexus, emerged from the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) and a recognition that the international aid system was not well adapted to address protracted crises, repeated shocks and fragility (United Nations, 2016). Crisis response was under-resourced, too fragmented, too short-term and reliant on humanitarian aid, whereas needs were largely driven by structural problems such as conflict, climate shocks, poverty, socio-economic exclusion and displacement. The Nexus was intended to address this challenge by encouraging humanitarian, development and peace actors to work more collaboratively and coherently based on common shared analysis, collective outcomes, aligned planning, coherent programming and funding strategies, with the specific aim of reducing needs, risks and vulnerability over time by tackling the root causes of fragility.

Since 2016, the Nexus has moved from a reform idea into formal policy commitments, most notably in the 2019 DAC Recommendation, whose core logic is: “prevention always, development wherever possible, humanitarian action when necessary.” The Recommendation does not call for mandates to be merged, but rather for humanitarian, development and peace actors to work in more complementary ways, while protecting humanitarian principles, by setting out commitments on coordination, programming and financing (OECD, 2019).

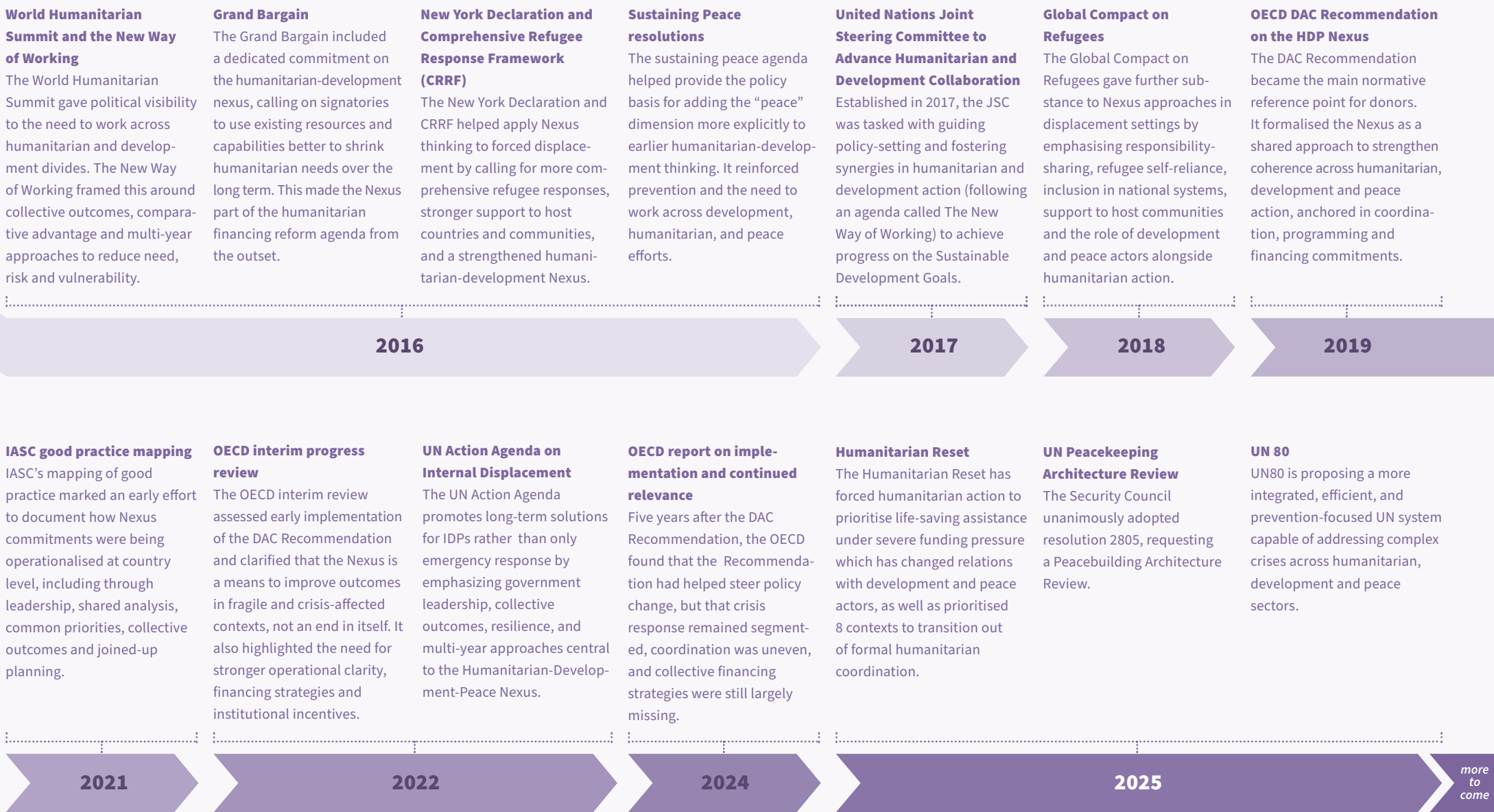
Most donors, UN entities and many INGOs have now adopted policies, strategies and guidance on how the Nexus should be institutionally taken forward.² The Nexus has also been reflected in UN and IASC guidance, as well as in related policy discussions on forced displacement, aid financing, localisation and accountability (See Box 2). For humanitarian actors, IASC guidance has helped translate the Nexus into operational expectations for clusters and Humanitarian Country Teams, including joined-up analysis, engagement with development and peace actors, conflict sensitivity and the development of collective outcomes (IASC, 2023). For development actors, the UN Sustainable Development Group has adopted several guidance documents relevant to the Nexus. Since March 2025, the UN80 initiative has included a workstream on structural changes and programmatic realignments which involves several Nexus-related priorities (United Nations, 2026a). International Financial Institutions (IFIs), especially the World Bank, have become more central to advancing the Nexus through their engagement in fragile and conflict-affected settings, including crisis response, refugee and host-community financing, and support to national systems (World Bank Group, 2020).

Forced displacement is a visible example of the impact of Nexus thinking, with the 2018 Global Compact on Refugees emphasising support to refugees and host communities through national systems and working with development actors alongside the humanitarian response (United Nations, 2018a) while the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration also promotes responses across the Nexus (United Nations, 2018b). The UN Secretary-General's Action Agenda on Internal Displacement similarly leverages development finance and programming to help IDPs achieve durable solutions (United Nations, 2022).

² For example, in 2024, the BMZ adopted a Position Paper on Overcoming Fragility: Goals and approaches for effective development.

Despite these various policy commitments on the Nexus, the central challenge remains implementation. OECD progress reports on the 2019 Recommendation have noted how it has helped steer policy change, but implementation remains uneven, with crisis response still largely fragmented and collective financing strategies underdeveloped (OECD, 2024a). The central issue today is no longer whether the Nexus is recognised in policy. It is whether it can become a practical way to make difficult choices about how aid is delivered, address risks, and utilise increasingly scarce resources to deliver better outcomes for affected communities in fragile and crisis settings.

Box 2. Timeline of key developments on the HDP Nexus since 2016



3. A changed aid landscape: higher needs, fewer resources, harder politics

The Nexus is now being applied in a much more challenging environment than the one in which it first gained political traction ten years ago. Its core rationale has not changed, but the conditions for applying it have become more difficult. The aid system is now operating under acute financial pressure, more complex crisis risks, sharper political contestation, a weaker multilateral system and a UN system reform agenda that has not yet delivered results. These pressures can be interpreted as pushing actors back into their separate mandates. That would be the wrong direction. They are also the opportunity for increased collaboration and joined-up approaches required to advance the Nexus.

3.1 Massive funding cuts are driving a return to short-termism

The most immediate shift is financial. Humanitarian needs are increasing, but humanitarian funding has fallen sharply since its 2022 peak: reported humanitarian assistance contracted by 29.7% in the last two years, from US \$47.4 billion in 2023 to US \$33.3 billion in 2025 (ALNAP, 2026). The wider aid picture is equally stark. Preliminary OECD figures show that Official Development Assistance (ODA) fell by 23.1% in 2025 to \$174.3 billion, the largest annual fall on record (OECD, 2026a). Peace financing is also under pressure: the Peacebuilding Fund remains small relative to need, with \$132m pledged in 2025, down from \$180m in 2020³, while the UN peacekeeping budget has fallen from around \$8.3 billion in 2014–15 to around \$5.4 billion in 2025–26 (United Nations, 2025a). At the same time, rising military expenditures and the securitisation of foreign policy risk crowding out development, conflict prevention and peacebuilding investments (SIPRI, 2025).

³ For more details on Peacebuilding Fund see the PBF Donor Commitments and Pledge Tracker available at <https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/content/contributions>.

Other forms of financing to fragile and crisis settings are important, but they are unlikely to replace foreign aid. Development banks, domestic public finance, remittances, philanthropy and private investment all matter, and the Sevilla Platform of Action rightly emphasises the need to scale up wider Sustainable Development Goal-aligned financing flows (United Nations, 2025c). But these financing flows do different things to aid. Remittances help households cope, but do not fund public systems. Private investment follows return and risk and rarely flows at scale to fragile contexts or to prevention, protection and social services (OECD, 2025). Domestic public finance is essential for sustainability, but many crisis-affected countries lack the fiscal space to take over services as aid funding contracts. IFI financing is significant, but is increasingly concentrated around large national programmes, jobs, infrastructure, private sector development and systems reform, rather than filling gaps left by humanitarian, development or peace actors. ODA, therefore, remains critical in fragile and crisis-affected settings.

The impact of these trends is a return to short-termism across the Nexus. This is a political economy problem: allocation decisions by donor and partner governments shape whether risks are addressed early through development, prevention and peacebuilding investments, or whether they are left to deepen until they require a humanitarian response. As donor budgets contract, those decisions are becoming more consequential. With the funding cuts, humanitarian actors have had to prioritise life-saving assistance, with less space for livelihoods, resilience, anticipatory action, recovery or longer-term work that could reduce future need (UN OCHA, 2025). This ‘hyper-prioritisation’ is understandable in the face of sharp aid cuts, but it exposes a deeper challenge for the Nexus, given that development and peace investments are also financially constrained or are unable to operate at the scale, speed or location required. The implication is that there is an expanding coverage gap rather than a managed shift towards transition. Needs remain, vulnerability deepens, and future humanitarian costs are likely to rise.

Food insecurity illustrates how this is playing out in practice. According to the 2026 Global Report on Food Crises, 266 million people experienced high levels of acute food insecurity in 2025, up from 105 million in 2016 (FAO, WFP & GNAFC, 2026). While this trend reflects multiple drivers, including

conflict, economic shocks, climate-related hazards and displacement, funding cuts are narrowing the response to those in the most severe phases of food insecurity, leaving fewer resources for livelihoods, social protection and other measures that could prevent further deterioration (UN OCHA, 2025). A similar problem is emerging geographically as funding cuts and prioritisation contribute to the ongoing transition away from IASC coordinated humanitarian responses in eight countries⁴, often without sufficient assurances that national, development or peace actors can sustain support at the scale or location required. The challenge is, therefore, not merely to align plans, but to ensure that funding reaches the local, subnational and cross-border systems where risks and needs converge most.

3.2 Crisis risks have become more layered and recurrent

The crisis risk environment has become more complex. Since 2016, crises have become more protracted, complex and multi-dimensional, with needs increasing. In 2016, 125 million people required humanitarian assistance, whereas by 2026 this number had risen to 239 million (UN OCHA, 2026a). Forced displacement has risen sharply, with UNHCR projecting that the number of forcibly displaced and stateless people could reach 136 million by the end of 2026 (UNHCR, 2026), while acute food insecurity affected around 266 million people in 47 countries and territories in 2025 (FAO, WFP & GNAFC, 2026). At the same time, the drivers of humanitarian needs and vulnerability of populations are becoming more interconnected. Climate risks, debt pressure and economic shocks are increasingly interacting with conflict, poverty and displacement. These risks are increasingly regional and cross-border in nature, requiring country-led responses to be complemented by regional strategies to address the spillover effects.

This convergence of risks is particularly evident in low-income and fragile contexts, where limited institutional capacity reduces the ability to absorb and respond to shocks. After years of progress, poverty levels are increasing again in the least developed countries, with many now far off track in

⁴ The eight countries are: Cameroon, Colombia, Eritrea, Iraq, Libya, Nigeria, Pakistan, and Zimbabwe. See IASC Emergency Directors Group (EDG) Prioritisation Plan, Summary and Key Messages, 23 April 2025.

reaching the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).⁵ Crises are more protracted than ever, with more than 95% of humanitarian funding for UN-coordinated appeals going to protracted crisis contexts (ALNAP, 2026). Humanitarian emergencies are no longer short interruptions to a development pathway; in many places they are the operating environment (OECD, 2025). Increasingly, crises are characterised by the erosion of state institutions, disruption of basic services, weakened local governance and declining economic opportunities. These factors not only deepen vulnerability but also undermine prospects for recovery and sustainable development. Supporting systems that can withstand and recover from shocks is, therefore, becoming as important as responding to immediate humanitarian needs. A narrower life-saving response may keep people alive in the short term, but without attention to livelihoods, self-reliance, basic services, systems strengthening and other longer-term measures that address the root causes of conflict and instability, crisis-affected populations will remain exposed to repeated risks and fail to make the transition towards recovery, development and durable peace. Given the hyper-prioritization of humanitarian assistance, the expectation of development action in fragile and crisis-affected settings is now more important than ever.

Climate change has become a central concern in fragile and crisis-affected settings. It is contributing to humanitarian needs, holding back development and can act as a risk multiplier for conflict, particularly where climate shocks interact with weak institutions, competition over natural resources, displacement, food insecurity and poverty (ICRC, 2020). Fragile and conflict-affected settings are often among the most exposed to climate risks, but have fewer domestic resources to invest in prevention, adaptation and mitigation. Yet climate finance remains difficult to access, with only 5% of OECD DAC member climate-related development finance going to fragile contexts in 2020/21 (OECD, 2023). It is now debated whether climate should become a fourth pillar in the Nexus model, although climate is transversal and should be identified through comprehensive context analysis and integrated across the humanitarian, development and peace interventions.

⁵ Only 18 % of SDGs are on track towards implementation and ODA funding for sustainable development is back at levels of 2016 according to the OECD.

3.3 Foreign aid is becoming more transactional and shaped by national interests

As political support for foreign aid has waned, it has also become more transactional and shaped by national interests. Development aid is now less often justified on poverty reduction alone, but increasingly on the need to show a link to donor national interests including security, migration, trade, private sector investment, supply chains, access to critical minerals, health security, geopolitical positioning and keeping conflicts away from donor borders (ECDPM, 2026). While these interests have always shaped donor approaches to some extent, they are now more explicit, more politically central and more influential in decisions about where and how donors engage in fragile and conflict settings. This trend creates a challenge for the Nexus as it takes development assistance away from the contexts where it is needed most to navigate the transition out of crises, while national actors and affected populations risk becoming more sidelined.

When funding becomes scarcer, the aid system does not simply scale back everything; it prioritises what is easiest to fund, deliver and defend politically. Donors are prioritising contexts that matter most to their national interests and sectors such as infrastructure, jobs, economic growth and health security where results are easier to achieve, and risks are lower. Fragile contexts may remain politically salient because of security, migration or geopolitical concerns, but risk becoming further neglected as they do not fit the new models of aid. This often means a tilt towards easier contexts where results are more visible, risks are lower and private investment or loan-based finance is possible, rather than the fragile and conflict-affected settings where Nexus approaches are needed most.

This shift in aid policy is becoming visible in the approach of the IFIs, with the World Bank Group's revised approach to fragility, conflict and violence prioritising jobs as interlinked prerequisites for sustained peace and prosperity, with a stronger emphasis on MSMEs, private capital, infrastructure, institutions and systems (World Bank Group, 2026). Less tangible or more politically contested areas such as protection, gender equality, civic space, participation, accountability and inclusion are becoming harder to defend, not only because they are less visible or measurable, but also because

some are facing explicit political backlash from parts of the donor landscape. Not all donors are acting in the same way, with many continuing to express a commitment to working in fragile and crisis settings. However, a more transactional aid agenda is narrowing the space for Nexus approaches as it prioritises easier operating environments, short-term visibility, donor return, political palatability and risk avoidance over locally grounded and locally legitimate pathways out of crisis.

Politically estranged settings, such as Afghanistan, Myanmar and countries in the Sahel, which have resulted from coups and unconstitutional changes of governments, have become particularly challenging, with development actors withdrawing in some cases or becoming severely constrained in others. The reduced presence of development actors in these contexts places the burden on humanitarian actors to provide more long-term assistance, which they are neither equipped nor resourced to provide (Federpiel, 2025). In the long run, this can increase humanitarian need by removing investments in basic services, livelihoods and stability (NRC, 2024). Where donor governments' and development actors' relations with de facto authorities are constrained by sanctions, lack of recognition, severe human rights abuses or diplomatic breakdown, aid becomes more contested. Shrinking humanitarian and civic space are also making it harder for all aid actors to operate.

Disengagement can worsen crises, whereas a “business as usual” approach can legitimise harmful action and aid can become politicised (Cliffe, Dwan, Wainaina, & Zamore, 2023). The result is a paradox: humanitarian action becomes the default tool precisely when development and peace engagement are most needed to prevent a further deterioration. The practical question is not whether aid actors should engage or not, but how differentiated approaches can be adapted to remain engaged in these contexts. Indeed, while the challenges of working in politically estranged settings are changing the way aid actors operate, they also provide opportunities for humanitarian, development and peace actors to work more closely together, as they are facing many of the same political challenges.

3.4 The multilateral system has less authority and leverage

The Nexus also sits within a weaker and more contested multilateral system. With other actors stepping in, the UN and other multilateral institutions are no longer the default fora for crisis leadership, mediation or collective problem-solving. Disputes are increasingly handled bilaterally, regionally or through smaller coalitions of states rather than through the UN and other multilateral institutions. The UN Security Council is now deadlocked and unable to take action to maintain international peace and security in many contexts. Several UN peace operations have been drawn down, closed or asked to leave by host governments, reflecting weakening consent for UN support in some settings. Recent examples include Mali/MINUSMA, Sudan/UNITAMS, DRC/MONUSCO and Iraq/UNAMI. Traditional Western donors have less influence, with many crisis-affected states able to draw on a wider range of other geopolitical and financial partners.

This matters because the Nexus depends on the convening power, shared analysis, collective action and some confidence in common rules. The wider normative environment has deteriorated, with less respect for international law, leading to increased attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure (United Nations, 2026c) and greater politicisation of aid, which reduces the space for principled and collective action. This goes beyond reduced peace engagement and combines with weaker political capacity and willingness to uphold compliance. When multilateral authority weakens, coordination and cooperation become harder, and fragmented political interests can pull actors away from shared outcomes.

These challenges to the multilateral system make the Nexus harder to implement not only technically, but politically. Calls from the Global South for reform, including more inclusive UN decision-making and Security Council reform, point to the need to strengthen the multilateral system by making it more legitimate, representative and democratic (United Nations, 2024). At the same time, the answer is not simply to defend existing multilateral arrangements as they are. The Nexus agenda has so far been ostensibly driven by a small number of Western donors, UN entities, and NGOs. To survive, it needs to engage more with these non-traditional actors and reach out to them, given their increasingly prominent role in global affairs.

3.5 More actors, more agendas complicate coherence

The aid landscape is not simply more crowded than it was in 2016, but it is also being reshaped as some traditional bilateral and multilateral donors retrench while other actors become more influential. Non-Western donors such as Gulf states, China and Turkey, regional bodies, the private sector, and the diaspora are all shaping engagement in fragile and crisis settings in ways that the traditional aid architecture does not easily capture. Large philanthropic foundations and vertical funds are working at scale but often outside established aid coordination systems. This creates a need to better map which actors outside the traditional aid landscape are most influential for Nexus approaches, including how they shape crisis response, recovery and development. In addition, this brings new opportunities with the private sector around infrastructure, markets, services and development finance. But it also makes coherence harder where these actors' priorities, incentives or accountability structures differ from those of the humanitarian, development and peace actors who initially signed up to Nexus approaches.

Private finance, jobs, markets and investment are increasingly expected to contribute to outcomes for affected communities in crisis contexts. The EU's Global Gateway development strategy, for example, explicitly states that it will mobilise the private sector to leverage investments for a transformational impact, and that it aims to open significant business opportunities for private sector companies. Climate finance has also grown significantly since 2016, with developed countries providing and mobilising USD 136.7 billion in climate finance for developing countries in 2024 (OECD, 2026b), although access remains uneven while crisis and fragile settings continue to face barriers to accessing this funding (OECD, 2023). The DAC Recommendation calls for ODA to be used as a catalyst to mobilise "the full range of financial flows", including public and private, international and domestic flows, while ensuring that these flows do not contribute to conflict, inequality or instability (OECD, 2019). This conflict-sensitivity requirement is central: private sector and development finance should not only avoid exacerbating tensions or inequalities, but, where possible, contribute to positive peace outcomes, including social cohesion, local economic inclusion and stronger social contracts.

However, the private sector cannot replace public finance, humanitarian aid or state responsibility. The question is not whether the private sector should be engaged in Nexus approaches, but how to open the door to private sector contributions in ways that are realistic, conflict-sensitive and relevant to different fragile and crisis-affected contexts. In some settings, this may mean local procurement, market support, financial inclusion, jobs and livelihoods, whereas in others the focus might be different. A key test for development finance is whether it reaches the populations and regions most exposed to crisis and fragility, rather than concentrating only where returns are easiest and risks are lowest. The challenge is, therefore, to connect private sector and development finance more deliberately to vulnerability reduction, local ownership and peace outcomes, while recognising that public finance and grant-based aid remain essential where markets will not reach.

3.6 Reform of the aid system has not yet brought about transformational change

The Nexus is being impacted by several broader reform processes, including UN80, the Humanitarian Reset, the Peacebuilding Architecture Review and the Grand Bargain. While these initiatives create opportunities to address long-standing barriers to the Nexus, they have also not fulfilled their promises. Cross-pillar coherence is included in these reform agendas, but this has not translated into country-level changes in analysis, prioritisation, financing, leadership and accountability. The reform landscape is fragmented, and the Nexus is not being sufficiently prioritised within it. Different processes are moving at different speeds, often without a shared diagnosis or clear connection to country-level realities. There is a risk that the Nexus is treated as one reform concern among many, rather than as a practical way to connect reforms across humanitarian, development and peace action.

Moreover, funding scarcity is increasing competition and making institutions more defensive and less likely to want to reform. As organisations protect mandates, resources and visibility, collaboration and coordination required for the Nexus become harder. At the same time, disruption creates an opening, as it forces more honest conversations about what humanitarian actors

should stop doing, what development and peace actors must take on, what should be led nationally or locally, and what financing and coordination structures are needed to support this. This includes whether development finance is systematically reaching the populations and regions most exposed to crisis and fragility, or whether it remains concentrated where risks are lower and returns are easier to demonstrate. The Nexus cannot remain a technical coordination agenda. It is also political. It requires decisions about interests, incentives, power, risk and trade-offs, including who decides priorities and who carries the consequences. It must become a way to make difficult decisions about priorities, roles, risk, financing and transitions. The real opportunity within current reform processes is to use the Nexus as a connector: identifying geographic overlaps in priority crisis settings, testing more localised crisis response and management models, and developing shared crisis engagement principles for traditional donors, new donors, private sector actors, local actors and national authorities. This could amount to a more explicit crisis model that links reform commitments to how actors work together in the places where humanitarian, development and peace risks converge.

4. Does the Nexus still matter?

Given the increasingly challenging aid landscape described above, there is a risk that attention to the Nexus will recede and progress will reverse. This would be a grave mistake. The Nexus still matters, but not as a slogan, a policy label or a broad appeal for better coordination. It matters because the problem it was designed to address has become more acute: crises are more protracted, risks are more interlinked, and no single part of the aid system can reduce needs and vulnerability alone. Humanitarian action remains essential, but it cannot carry the burden of being the main response in protracted crisis. Development cooperation cannot remain absent or underfunded in the places where vulnerability is deepest; otherwise, poverty levels will rise. Peace efforts cannot be treated as optional or peripheral if conflict drivers and long-standing grievances are to be addressed and if cycles of crisis are to be broken.

In a resource-constrained, high-need and politically complex environment, separate humanitarian, development and peace responses are not only inefficient; they are unsustainable. The issue is now not simply how to coordinate and collaborate better, but how to steer strategically and make hard choices: which needs remain humanitarian priorities, where development and peace actors need to engage from the onset of a crisis, which systems need to be protected from collapse, where geographic convergence or handover arrangements are needed, and how scarce resources can be aligned around the risks most likely to drive future crises. The stakes have risen, making the Nexus more relevant, not less.

This new reality requires more effective implementation of the policy commitments already made, but crucially, it also requires additional measures to advance the Nexus further. It needs to function not just as a lofty concept but as a practical decision-making framework to clarify roles and

address hard trade-offs. The Nexus should help actors decide what must be done now, what must be sustained over time, who is best placed to act, where action should converge geographically, what should be led or co-led nationally and locally, and what risks are created when one part of the system withdraws without another being ready to engage. This requirement is especially important in protracted crises and politically estranged settings where forced displacement, food insecurity and climate-related shocks interlink, and where short-term response and longer-term risk reduction cannot be separated in practice.

While the Nexus is even more relevant than ten years ago, it needs a more credible political narrative that is suited to today's challenging times. It is unlikely to gain further traction as another technocratic reform or as an abstract argument about coherence. It needs to be situated within the concerns now shaping donor governments' development and foreign aid policies described above, showing why continued engagement in fragile and crisis-affected settings is strategically important in a more insecure world. The question is not whether the Nexus matters. It does. The question is whether it can become an operational reality in today's challenging aid landscape that demonstrates the added value for continued engagement in fragile and crisis-affected settings.

5. Nexus progress: Enablers and barriers impacting implementation

There have already been several progress reports on the implementation of the Nexus published by the OECD, IASC and other relevant bodies. There is broad consensus that, while important progress has been made in several areas of the Nexus, there remains a huge gap between policy and practice. The paradigm shift in the way aid is delivered, promised at the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS), has not materialised. The following sections aim not to repeat the many assessments of Nexus implementation already conducted, but rather to focus on the enablers and barriers that have influenced progress and understand what issues need to be addressed if further progress is to be made in the years to come.

5.1 Leadership on the Nexus

Leadership provided by different actors has been instrumental in advancing the Nexus but remains fragmented and not sufficiently robust. Guided by the 2019 DAC Recommendation the OECD DAC-UN Dialogue has provided collective leadership on the Nexus from donors and the UN since 2020, albeit more at a technical level. At the global level, donor coordination on the Nexus also occurs in the International Network on Conflict and Fragility (INCAF), which brings together OECD DAC members working in fragile and conflict-affected contexts. Within the UN, the Joint Steering Committee to Advance Humanitarian and Development Collaboration (JSC) has overseen humanitarian-development collaboration efforts since 2017, albeit less active recently. Within the humanitarian sector, the IASC Principals have promoted the Nexus with the support of a Task Force on Humanitarian Development Collaboration and its Linkages to Peace, although this was phased out in 2022. For development actors, the UN Sustainable Development Group has issued several guidance documents relevant to the Nexus.

While each of these forums provide a degree of leadership on the Nexus, there is no single body at the global level that brings together all these relevant actors at political, strategic and technical levels to drive forward the Nexus agenda.

At the field level, the role of UN RCs/HCs and Deputy Special Representatives of the Secretary-General (DSRSGs), in the case of UN peace operations, are widely seen as the crucial leadership role on the Nexus to facilitate linkages between humanitarian and development programming, and peace where relevant. Strong and inclusive leadership has been one of the clearest enablers of progress, especially where RC/HCs actively use their authority to push collaboration and set priorities, bring actors together and facilitate complementary approaches. The reform of the UN Development System since 2018 has strengthened the responsibilities, accountability and support to RC/HCs. Despite these changes, RC/HCs still lack the capacities to exercise the required leadership on the Nexus (OECD, 2024a). They have limited leverage over directing the programmes and operations of UN entities other than through coordination, planning and financing, which are insufficient levers to bring about change. Furthermore, most development cooperation is provided bilaterally to host governments, which they have no control over.

There have been calls from donors for UN entities to have a direct reporting line to the RC/HC to further empower them to lead the crisis response around common Nexus priorities, but these have not been taken up.⁶ To support and empower RC/HCs to strengthen cross-pillar collaboration is a priority action of UN80, but this focuses more on a common performance-management framework and improved accountability arrangements than on a fundamental change in the relationship with UN entities (United Nations, 2026a). Without a significantly strengthened RC/HC role, Nexus implementation will be held back. This requires RC/HCs to be able to hold UN funds, agencies and programmes accountable to forge more joined-up approaches to humanitarian, development and peace challenges – a capacity that is currently lacking.

⁶ See for example the joint donor letter of 10 June 2025 to Tom Fletcher, Emergency Relief Coordinator, outlining suggestions for bolder action in line with the Humanitarian Reset.

5.2 Nationally owned and locally led Nexus approaches

Nexus approaches have seen the greatest progress when they are nationally owned and locally led, although local actors still are not being empowered to play the leadership role they should. Progress appears stronger where national authorities, local actors and affected communities shape priorities, accountability and implementation (OECD, 2024a). Although the Nexus is an approach that was developed within the international aid system, national and local authorities play a crucial role in its implementation. National development plans and other national policy frameworks set the priorities around which Nexus actors must come together. It is not always possible to engage partner governments on Nexus approaches, especially in politically estranged settings, as noted above. However, there have been several initiatives in which effective political strategies and engagement with host governments have led to Nexus coordination that ensures national ownership and alignment with national priorities. All too often, though, Nexus approaches remain confined within international actors and insufficiently co-owned with partner countries. This weakens legitimacy and limits the chances that coherent efforts will align with local priorities and realities. Where appropriate, and where they are not politically contested, national authorities need to actively lead Nexus coordination, planning and financing approaches.

Nexus approaches are easiest to implement when they are applied locally and adapted to the context. At the local level, closest to communities, the distinction of the needs of aid recipients in conflict- and fragile contexts into labels, such as humanitarian, development and peace, is becoming increasingly irrelevant. In such contexts, the Nexus is a strategic approach that can ensure a more people-centred approach to aid, which addresses crisis-affected populations as part of a holistic response. This can be achieved through area-based approaches, which are growing in importance to define aid strategies by geographical needs rather than sector interventions. To complement this, Area-Based Coordination (ABC) is increasingly seen by humanitarian actors as a promising way to make coordination practical at the subnational level in protracted crises (Jeremy Konyndyk, 2020). Humanitarian actors have recently adopted this as a standardised coordination

model at the local level (IASC, 2026). There is a strong rationale for ensuring that such coordination structures adopt a Nexus approach by having humanitarian, development and peace activities within their remit, notwithstanding the ongoing need to ensure respect for humanitarian principles. However, locally led Nexus approaches require more than just improved coordination. They also depend on strong local institutions that can deliver services, manage risks and sustain outcomes over time. Nexus approaches are, therefore, most effective when they combine coordinated action with investments in national and local capacities.

Despite the benefits of locally led Nexus approaches, research has shown that local perspectives and the experience of local actors have been largely absent from international approaches to the Nexus (Albiento, 2025). Localisation and accountability to affected populations are not side agendas. They are central to whether the Nexus can work. Local and national NGOs are the first responders in emergencies, work closely with communities, know the operating context best and are often multi-mandated, working across the Nexus (IASC, 2024b). However, Nexus policy frameworks and approaches are not familiar to local actors, although they are intuitively implementing them anyway, given their proximity to communities.

More needs to be done to bring local actors into Nexus implementation by combining locally led development and Nexus thinking. Localisation does not mean subcontracting local actors to deliver externally designed programmes. It requires shifting resources, decision-making power and accountability into the hands of local actors and moving closer to affected populations to design interventions around their needs. Despite the commitments made towards the localisation of aid, it remains a credibility issue given the lack of progress in all these areas (Barbelet, 2021). If the Nexus remains mainly a conversation among donors and international agencies, it will remain politically shallow and operationally lack legitimacy. Partner countries, local authorities, civil society and affected communities all need to be part of defining the next phase of the Nexus and of its implementation.

5.3 Investments in Nexus capacities

Investments in Nexus capacities have helped institutionalize Nexus approaches but remain uneven from one context to the next. The Nexus requires new ways of working and, therefore, organisations wishing to implement the approach need to invest not only in adapting their policies but also in equipping their staff to carry these out. In recent years, there have been significant investments in the deployment of specialist staff on the Nexus and training on the subject to advance the agenda. Within donors, Nexus focal points have been appointed while within the UN, Nexus advisors have become more common. Some UN RC/HCs now have Nexus advisors deployed to their offices, mostly through support from donors. Dedicated in-country capacity has made a significant difference by connecting institutions and sustaining follow-through. Nexus actors are often overwhelmed and under-capacitated, and without dedicated support, they revert to siloed behaviour. However, Nexus advisors are not a standardised position within Resident Coordinator Offices (RCO), and they often work alongside peace and development, and durable solutions advisors, who also have Nexus responsibilities, with the risk of duplication, and challenges in financing the deployment of all of them sustainably. Dedicated in-country capacity and the selection of contexts for deployment appear to be driven as much by donor priorities as by assessed operational needs. In general, there is still no agreement about what the best staffing structure should be to advance the Nexus, with inconsistency from one context to the next. It will be important to continue these investments in Nexus specialist staff, although with the recent funding cuts, they will be more challenging to maintain, and therefore a rationalised and streamlined approach to Nexus capacities is required.

In terms of knowledge and capacity development, the establishment of the UNDP-managed Nexus Academy in 2021 has provided a global learning platform where humanitarian, development and peace actors train together to improve common understanding and coordination in crisis settings. It was established as a flagship initiative of the DAC–UN Dialogue and is grounded in the 2019 OECD-DAC Recommendation. So far, the Nexus Academy has delivered 17 multistakeholder cohorts, reaching 740 participants from

93 different organisations across 45 countries.⁷ Many other trainings are conducted on the Nexus by interested actors, and overall, increased understanding of the concept is now reported, which was not always the case and represents progress. However, there remain capacity gaps and challenges in specific areas, such as the contribution of peace actors to forced displacement (OECD, 2024a). A more long-term, systemic and coordinated approach is needed for these knowledge and capacity development initiatives.

5.4 Nexus programming at the field level

There are now many positive experiences of Nexus programming that provide evidence of how it can be implemented more broadly, but this is held back by a lack of common planning frameworks. A joint common analysis of the needs, risks, vulnerabilities and underlying drivers and root causes of humanitarian needs, poverty, conflict and fragility is the basis for applying the Nexus, which now occurs in the majority of field operations (IASC, 2024a). There can be gaps in this analysis, including conflict and political economy analysis, and some actors – especially local actors – are not being systematically included in the processes to produce them. Despite these deficiencies, common analysis is not a significant impediment to Nexus implementation, and it does not prevent the development of joint programmes between humanitarian, development and peace actors.

Many Nexus actors now have joint programme design procedures in place to develop programmes that adopt a Nexus approach. There has been progress in Nexus programming practice through more multi-year thinking, layering and sequencing of interventions, and greater use of resilience, recovery and crisis-modifier approaches. Where fully joint programming is neither feasible nor necessary, greater coherence can nevertheless be achieved through alignment of different complementary interventions. Durable solutions for internally displaced persons is an area where more complementary programming has gained traction, with stronger emphasis on national leadership, financing, data and evidence and system-wide UN engagement (United Nations, 2026b). The limiting factor is that these promising initiatives are often workarounds inside siloed systems rather

⁷ Figures up to April 2026, provided by the Nexus Academy.

than evidence of a fully joined-up model. There is also an overreliance on testing Nexus approaches through pilot projects rather than using them systematically in all relevant instances, which is required to bring implementation to scale.

While the emergence of Nexus programming has represented progress, it continues to be hindered by the continued parallel nature of planning frameworks in crisis and fragile contexts. The development of ‘collective outcomes’ was the centrepiece of Nexus reforms following the WHS in 2016 with guidance developed by the IASC on how to develop these (IASC, 2020a). Although collective outcomes have been developed in many contexts (IASC, 2024a), their relevance and utility for planning across the Nexus have receded, not least because there is no accountability mechanism to ensure their use, or a predictable procedure to include them in relevant humanitarian and development plans.

The Nexus calls for the alignment of Humanitarian Needs and Response Plans (HNRP) and UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks (UNSDCF), although this is occurring to a limited degree and has had limited impact on ensuring coherent planning in protracted crises. UN80 has gone further by calling for simplified planning tools, including HNRPs, UNSDCFs and Peacebuilding Strategies (United Nations, 2026a). The need to ensure more joined-up planning processes has been given additional impetus with the funding cuts and the accelerated transition of eight country humanitarian operations as part of the Humanitarian Reset, which has included the development of joint vision statements in these contexts as part of UN80.⁸ Transitions out of international humanitarian response architecture have become a major test case for Nexus planning, but recent examples suggest these processes are often rushed, unclear and weakly resourced (Pearson & Holloway, 2025). There is still no comprehensive approach to planning humanitarian transitions to recovery and development.

There have been proposals for a single crisis response planning framework that combines humanitarian, development and peace plans (Lilly, 2021). While there has been some interest in developing the idea of integrated and

⁸ The eight countries include: Cameroon, Colombia, Eritrea, Iraq, Libya, Nigeria, Pakistan, and Zimbabwe. See IASC Emergency Directors Group (EDG) Prioritisation Plan, Summary and Key Messages, 23 April 2025.

joined-up plans, there are recognised challenges in bringing this about, given the different operating realities of humanitarian, development and peace actors.⁹ Nexus actors have different interests, structures and business models, which make achieving a more joined-up approach to planning challenging. At the same time, alignment of planning frameworks has been an insufficient approach to bring about transformational changes, with a different and more integrated planning approach for the Nexus still a remaining priority.

It has proved an enduring challenge to achieve the transition out of humanitarian crisis towards recovery and development in the absence of a political solution. This underlines why Nexus approaches need to be applied hand-in-hand with political strategies to crisis. More fundamentally, transitions require a shared vision of how responsibilities, financing and coordination arrangements evolve over time. Experience increasingly suggests that successful transitions are not defined by the withdrawal of humanitarian actors, but by the gradual strengthening of national and local systems, institutions and capacities capable of sustaining recovery and development gains. A key challenge is that there is no system-wide process for assessing the stage of the crises towards potential transition. For example, as part of the follow up to the Secretary-General's Action Agenda on Internal Displacement, a 'pivot review' process has been agreed for UN field presences to assess their posture periodically and necessity to move from short-term humanitarian towards more long-term development approaches (UNSDG and IASC, 2025).

5.5 Different interpretations of Nexus goals

Different conceptual understandings of the Nexus and its goals remain a barrier to greater collaboration between Nexus actors. In theory, the Nexus is a holistic concept that links humanitarian action, development, and peacebuilding efforts so that immediate life-saving needs are met while also tackling the root causes of vulnerability, fragility, and conflict to build long-term resilience, sustainable development and peace. However, in

⁹ While Integrated Strategic Frameworks were tried in UN integrated missions, they did not achieve sufficient buy-in to influence planning processes.

practice, differences remain in how different actors view and conceptualise the Nexus, including how it relates to other frameworks such as resilience and fragility (Morinière & Morrison-Métoi, 2023). Humanitarian actors have felt for a long time that they are overstretched and are being asked to respond to all needs in protracted crises, including providing basic services, because development actors lack the political will and risk appetite to work in fragile and crisis settings. Peace actors have been keen for some time to engage development and humanitarian actors in contributing to the prevention of conflict, but despite clear policy guidance for this to happen, they do not feel these other actors are genuinely interested in the same objectives. Many actors still wrongly interpret the Nexus as a demand for one integrated project or programme or a merger of mandates, which creates resistance and confusion.

Given the protracted duration of most crises, the once rigid line between what might be considered humanitarian or development needs is increasingly blurred, which should lead to more joined-up approaches (OECD, 2024a). However, as noted above, with the mounting financial pressures, humanitarian actors are increasingly viewing their role as limited to providing life-saving assistance and not more long-term interventions, while some development actors are shifting their approaches away from not only the achievement of SDGs towards trade, investment and jobs, which is less conducive to linking with humanitarian action. The peace objective of the Nexus has always been less clear, given humanitarian and development actors' lack of willingness to view their contribution to peacebuilding objectives (OECD, 2024a). These new realities are pushing different actors further apart. There is no dispute that climate change also intersects with the growing challenges in conflict and fragile settings, but as noted earlier, there is a lack of consensus about whether this should form another pillar of the Nexus or merely be viewed as a component of development (IASC, 2024a). Whether the Nexus has the bandwidth to add an additional dimension is questionable.

Without shared goals and common ways of working, achieving the level of coordination and collaboration between the relevant actors required to implement the Nexus has been challenging. Different political realities and

competition over resources risk pushing Nexus actors further apart, rather than closer together. The differences may not, however, be as great as they might initially be presented. At the outset of the Nexus, the fear that the approach would undermine respect for humanitarian principles was often cited as a key challenge, but this concern has been refuted (DuBois, 2020b). Despite long-standing concerns, they are in many ways overstated, as no evaluations have highlighted any specific cases where humanitarian principles were compromised by Nexus approaches (Morinière & Morrison-Métoi, 2023). As noted above, in politically estranged settings, the political realities in which both humanitarian and development actors may find themselves can be more similar than they are different. Nevertheless, greater attention is required to clarify the shared goals of the different Nexus actors involved if further collaboration is to be achieved.

5.6 Peace pillar under strain

The peace dimension remains the least settled part of the Nexus (OECD, 2024a). There is still no shared operational understanding of whether the peace dimension of the Nexus merely means aid agencies adopting conflict sensitivity and engaging in social cohesion and peacebuilding activities (“small p”), or whether it also includes diplomacy, mediation, peace operations, stabilisation and security sector reform activities (“big P”) (Kobler, 2025). In practice, the peace pillar is often implicitly absorbed into development programming rather than treated as a distinct political, institutional and financing commitment of the Nexus. Peace may, therefore, be present in programming, but not clearly articulated or defended as a separate policy commitment within the Nexus.

However, both forms of the peace (“big P” and “small p”) are critical for building and maintaining stability in fragile and crisis contexts – and thus both should be part of the Nexus, although this is not yet the case. The 2025 Peacebuilding Architecture Review ended with twin General Assembly and Security Council resolutions that reaffirm the UN peacebuilding architecture and the role of the Peacebuilding Commission. However, they do not explicitly frame, or even refer to, peace as part of the Nexus, nor do they set out what joined-up approaches with humanitarian and development action

should look like. This leaves a continuing gap between the UN peacebuilding agenda and the operationalisation of the peace dimension of the Nexus (United Nations, 2025b). The OECD's own review of the DAC Nexus Recommendation similarly finds that the peace pillar remains at an early stage, with diverging understandings of what contributes to peace, including the role of security operations (OECD, 2024a). This lack of clarity matters. If peace is defined too narrowly, the Nexus misses the political and conflict dynamics that drive repeated crises and conflict. Conversely, if it is defined too broadly, humanitarian actors may fear association with political, stabilisation or security agendas, which could undermine humanitarian principles and, in turn, access to affected populations (IASC, 2020b).

Peacebuilding and conflict prevention are also more difficult to finance and justify politically where national interests are not affected directly or in less tangible ways. Their results can be less visible than humanitarian or development aid. Prevention may be most successful when violence does not occur, tensions do not escalate or displacement does not increase, but it is hard to measure these changes and attribute them to international support. This weakens incentives for collaboration, even where peace action is essential to reducing future needs. Nevertheless, there are promising examples where prevention has been achieved and documented (UNDP, 2026).

The unsettled nature of peace makes the Nexus increasingly unbalanced: a humanitarian-development agenda with an underdeveloped and politically weakened peace component. The next phase of the Nexus needs a more realistic peace offer: clear enough to guide action, flexible enough for different contexts, and careful enough to protect humanitarian principles while sustaining investments in prevention, mediation, peacebuilding, and civilian crisis management.

5.7 Siloed aid architecture

The siloed structure of the aid system remains a serious impediment to greater synergy between Nexus actors, with limited reforms implemented to address the underlying challenges. The Nexus has been framed as the need to increase coherence, coordination, complementarity and collaboration between humanitarian, development and peace actors, but it has been implemented without changing the parallel structures through which aid is delivered, which is a key reason why it has not led to significant changes. Deep structural silos remain the biggest constraint to implementing the Nexus, both between and within organisations. Separate mandates provided by Member States for UN entities may make sense for their respective roles but also make coordination challenging, while different working cultures, budget lines, legal requirements and reporting structures continue to pull actors back into parallel ways of working. The problem is not the lack of links between the different silos in the aid architecture, but the silos themselves (DuBois, 2020a). The international community's crisis response model remains largely the same as it was in 2016 (OECD, 2024a). Research has shown that unless the underlying architecture of the aid system is changed, reform will not succeed (Saez, Konyndyk, & Worden, 2021). The current aid architecture presents a key barrier to Nexus implementation on several levels.

With partner governments

The Nexus has to date principally dealt with internal changes to the aid system without fundamentally changing the way international actors work with partner governments. The largest silo is often between external aid actors that act in parallel to national systems or substitute them without building local ownership. As noted above, Nexus approaches have had the most success where national leadership has been taken on. It is not always possible to work through partner governments, particularly in the case of politically estranged regimes, but where there is a willingness to make the transition from crisis to recovery and development, Nexus actors need to align their support more closely with national priorities. The OECD Recommendation does not sufficiently address this issue, which remains a policy

gap. Partner governments need to adopt their own commitments related to the Nexus, making clear their lead role in terms of planning, coordination and financing.

Within donor governments

Separate humanitarian, development and peace structures within donor governments, and in turn separate policy-making functions and financing instruments, perpetuate the fragmented aid system and hold back progress on the Nexus. A few donor governments have embarked on restructuring their humanitarian and development teams to bring them together within the same geographical departments supporting field presences. In most others, though, the teams responsible for the different parts of the Nexus remain separate, including sometimes in different ministries. This fragmentation makes the development of common approaches in conflict and crisis settings challenging, especially in the case of Nexus funding strategies. At the same time, there is no agreed model for how aid departments within donor governments should be structured to advance the Nexus, highlighting the need for further research. It will always remain the national prerogative of donor governments to structure their aid departments as they choose, in line with national political interests, but they should consider how they can restructure their institutions to help facilitate the implementation of the Nexus and avoid acting as barrier to it.

In addition to structural changes, donor coordination on the Nexus also needs strengthening. Nexus implementation depends not only on coordination among agencies, but also on whether donors align priorities, funding cycles, risk appetite and reporting requirements. Where donors are incoherent, agencies cannot compensate through coordination alone. As noted above the OECD-DAC Dialogue and INCAF have brought together donors, but at the field level, donor coordination on the Nexus often remains weak, usually with separate donor coordination structures for humanitarian and development activities.

Within the UN

Within the UN system, the development and peace and security pillars remain structurally separate, although the development system reforms since 2018 have brought oversight for this pillar under the Executive Office of the Secretary General, as is already the case for the peace and security pillar. Despite RC/HCs having development and humanitarian (and peace in the case of D/SRSGs) responsibilities, they receive strategic direction and oversight from separate parts of the UN's headquarters, namely, OCHA, the Development Coordination Office (DCO) and Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA) and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. In line with the logic of the Nexus, proposals have been made to structurally integrate the UN's headquarters field coordination structures (Lilly, 2021) (Piper, 2026). Such a move would provide more strategic, joined-up and streamlined support to UN field presences without changing, but rather aligning with the RC/HC function, while maintaining the existing overall governance structures, i.e. the IASC and UNSDG.

The UN is currently experiencing its greatest financial crisis in its history. Workstream three of UN80, entitled 'Changing Structures and Realigning Programmes,' has, since March 2025, been dealing with the restructuring of the organisation. However, the process has reconfirmed the separate silos of the UN's institutional structure and has not put forward any major restructuring proposals to advance the Nexus (Lilly, 2025). There are some cross-pillar elements to UN80, with the Shared Platform Initiative (SPI) designed to accelerate co-location of offices, shift to common performance management, clarify management and accountability frameworks, and join-up strategies for countries in transition (United Nations, 2026a). However, it does not include specific restructuring proposals beyond this. Apart from some restructuring at the regional level and the proposals to merge UN Women and UNFPA, UNOPS and UNDP, and the sunseting of UNAIDs, there are no more ambitious restructuring proposals under UN80 in line with Nexus thinking, such as merging the field coordination entities noted above.

In view of the continued siloed nature of the aid architecture, Nexus implementation has relied upon coordination mechanisms to enhance coherence and joint ways of working. The UN Joint Steering Committee has directed

UN efforts on humanitarian-development collaboration and linkages to peace. An IASC Task Team on the Nexus existed but was phased out, and the Nexus remains low down the list of priorities as part of the Humanitarian Reset. At the field level, there is no agreed blueprint for how best to coordinate the Nexus (Morinière & Morrison-Métoi, 2023). In some contexts, Nexus working groups have been established, either led by the UN, donors, or NGOs, which have helped bring together Nexus actors, but they are not a standardised model. They also rely on specialist Nexus staff to take this work forward, but they are not always present.

Establishing parallel Nexus coordination structures often risks duplicating existing mechanisms or depend on specific individuals for their success. The risk is that they absorb time and energy without changing delivery. While humanitarian coordination (including the cluster system) is normally well developed and, until recently, well resourced, development coordination tends to be far less supported, with peacebuilding often non-existent (OECD, 2024a) (Piper, 2026). Humanitarian coordination mechanisms are visible and structured, while development actors are spread across sectors, institutions and financing instruments, and have less influence on shaping how aid is delivered. This makes transitions difficult: humanitarian actors may narrow or withdraw before development partners are ready to absorb, sequence or align. There are few instances where coordination mechanisms have been streamlined across the Nexus, with significant overlaps between different groups rather than synergies between them. For example, humanitarian cash assistance and social protection coordination mechanisms usually deal with many of the same issues (i.e. how to provide cash to crisis-affected populations) but are rarely combined. Durable solutions and resilience often have their own coordination mechanisms even when they are both closely related to the Nexus. Streamlining and making coordination mechanisms related to the Nexus more predictable would assist its implementation.

With the International Financial Institutions

The role of the World Bank and other IFIs is critical to advancing the Nexus, but there is still no predictable way in which coordination with the UN and other Nexus actors should occur, which is not happening on a consistent basis. A World Bank-UN Partnerships Framework for Crisis Affected Situations has existed since 2017 (World Bank, 2017) but most arrangements remain ad hoc and based on the actions of individuals rather than predictable processes and procedures as part of an overall crisis response model. Strengthening a system-wide strategic partnership between the UN development system and the World Bank could help consolidate clearer coordination structures in relation to the Nexus, which could then be replicated with Regional Development Banks (Piper, 2026).

In sum, until now, there has not been appetite to profoundly change the current fragmented aid architecture, despite its importance to advancing the Nexus, as the obstacles to reengineering the global system have outweighed the perceived gains (Swithern, 2023). The massive funding cuts in the last few years, including the precipitous fall in ODA, have changed the calculus for change, and a more radical reimagining of the aid system is now both up for discussion and needed. Making the fundamental changes to the aid architecture required to advance the Nexus will take serious political engagement by donor governments, UN and other relevant actors, framing the issue as a strategic tool for reforming foreign aid and building back trust and support.

5.8 Skewed incentives

Despite commitments to work in a more collaborative way, there are still many disincentives to implementing the Nexus approach, especially competition over resources. Notwithstanding the structural challenges outlined above, the incentives for humanitarian, development and peace actors to work together more closely are frequently lacking, even if there is the willingness amongst them to do so. The least progress has been made on Nexus funding strategies, and the incoherence of funding going to conflict and fragile contexts is a serious impediment to implementing Nexus approaches

(OECD, 2024a) (IASC, 2024a). Countries, where poverty levels are highest, receive the smallest amounts of development aid per capita and have been most reliant on humanitarian aid to address structural problems. Peace funding is rarely provided at scale to have an impact on conflict drivers, and the countries most affected by climate change receive the lowest level of climate financing (Rieger, 2023).

This incoherent funding reality is completely at odds with what is envisaged by Nexus funding strategies. Recipient countries are stuck in a “Nexus funding trap” in which short-term emergency aid is shrinking but long-term development aid has not stepped up, making a transition towards recovery impossible (Lilly, 2024). Even as hyper-prioritisation has focused humanitarian aid on life-saving assistance, humanitarian aid has in recent years overtaken development cooperation as the largest source of funding in protracted crises (ALNAP, 2025). This makes the transition out of crises impossible. There is widespread agreement that predictable, flexible, multi-year financing is essential for Nexus approaches, and some donors have made partial progress in this direction, but the overall trend of donors providing quality funding is stagnating (Grand Bargain, 2025).

There have been innovations in aid financing in recent years, including attracting private sources, risk-based assurance models and blended finance. However, they have not been sufficiently brought to scale to address the growing funding gap and bring about reform in the way aid is delivered in conflict and fragile contexts (Abdullahi, Lilly, & Poole, 2025). Some donors have experimented with bridging mechanisms or transitional assistance funding, flexible envelopes and integrated institutional arrangements to connect humanitarian and development funding more effectively. The challenge is that small or short-term bridging instruments can easily become a new silo rather than solving the underlying divide. Country-based pooled funds and multi-donor trust funds are ways to use financing more strategically to address common challenges across the Nexus. Humanitarian pooled funds are far better resourced but still only account for a small proportion of humanitarian funding, while UN development pooled funds are on a much smaller scale (Piper, 2026). RC/HCs can leverage three global

pooled funds across the Nexus: the Joint Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Fund, the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) and the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF). However, each of these funds has a distinct focus and is facing challenges in raising funds. Despite a joint funding strategy between them, there is limited coordination on how funding is actually allocated and on how resources could be pooled administratively, which is an issue being looked at within the context of UN80 (United Nations, 2026a).

Financial scarcity is reinforcing organisational survival instincts and competition. As funding tightens, agencies are protecting mandates, funding streams and institutional territory, making collaboration harder just when it is needed most. Less funding is also incentivising donors to maximise visibility from their shrinking aid budget to justify the expenditure to sceptical taxpayers, making earmarking of contributions even more attractive, which works against Nexus funding strategies. Donor behaviour still often reinforces fragmentation through project-based funding, low risk tolerance and weak coordination across humanitarian and development funding streams. The risk for the Nexus is that financing systems continue to reward short-term delivery over more joined-up and longer-term approaches.

Despite current financial incentives in the aid system that work against Nexus implementation, the decrease in funding should also be seen as an opportunity for greater collaboration: to do more with less and demonstrate greater cost efficiency. This would be an outcome in everyone's interest. However, the use of funding to create incentives and encourage collaborative action across the Nexus is not well explored (Poole & Culbert, 2019). Without a significant change in the financial incentives, it will be difficult to advance Nexus funding strategies that help facilitate greater collaboration between humanitarian, development and peace actors, rather than the reverse it, as it is happening at the moment.

5.9 Lack of accountability and results framework

There is currently limited accountability for implementing the commitments made on the Nexus and no established methodology for measuring whether it is successful. As part of the adoption of the 2019 OECD Recommendation adherents agreed to conduct regular progress reports, of which there have been two, in 2022 and 2024. The IASC has also published two monitoring reports on the implementation of the Nexus, based on inputs of Humanitarian Country Teams (HCT), in 2021 and 2024. These and other progress reports on the Nexus provide useful information about the progress being made. However, there is no accountability framework to ensure that the commitments made on the Nexus are being implemented by the relevant actors. Rather, implementation of the Nexus is voluntary and based on the goodwill of the actors involved, which, as discussed above, frequently lack the incentive to act in this way, while the structures of the aid system continue to lead to fragmentation rather than common approaches. There is persistent frustration that the aid system spends too much time on processes while accountability for implementation remains weak. It is little wonder that there is a sense of ‘Nexus fatigue’.

The Nexus is an approach rather than an activity and, therefore, progress is currently perceived as being demonstrated through the establishment of processes such as developing common analysis, identifying collective outcomes, aligning planning processes, setting up working groups and developing joint programmes. It is assumed that these processes lead to better outcomes in terms of aid delivery, but this remains an untested assumption. The risk is that Nexus progress is judged by plans, tools and structures rather than by the reduction of needs, risk or vulnerability. Worse still, incoherent approaches to aid across the Nexus could be causing more harm than good in some instances. No approach has yet been developed for measuring the impact of Nexus implementation (IASC, 2024a).

In a time of resource scarcity and funding cuts, there is increased scrutiny of aid budgets to ensure that they are being used wisely. Framing the Nexus more as a potential way to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of foreign aid is a more politically compelling argument than treating it as a

technical matter, as it has been to date. This will require an agreed framework for assessing what successful Nexus implementation looks like across contexts, not in terms of the processes it generates, but through a clear set of indicators to assess how it delivers better outcomes for crisis-affected populations. It should also be framed more in terms of how it delivers value for money. There is a striking need for multi-stakeholder guidance on how to monitor, measure and evaluate progress towards Nexus approaches, including practical advice on indicators, the collection of relevant data and good practice examples (Morinière & Morrison-Métoi, 2023). At a minimum, there should be a common monitoring framework to track the results of humanitarian, development and peace plans, given that their indicators frequently overlap.

6. Conclusions and recommendations

The implementation of the Nexus over the last ten years has not matched the ambition with which it was launched. The changing aid landscape during this time has made the challenge today even greater, with the Nexus agenda at a defining moment. Unless action is taken to reinvigorate attention to the issue, a reversal of progress is likely. The overarching Nexus policy framework articulated in the 2019 OECD Recommendation remains sound. But further progress will not be achieved unless there is a redoubling of efforts by relevant actors to implement this, alongside agreement on additional measures required to scale up implementation and bring about transformational change in the way aid is delivered in protracted crises. Based on the analysis in this think piece the following actions are required if further progress is to be made in the years to come.

1. The political case for the Nexus needs to be remade for today's changed aid landscape

The Nexus remains as relevant – if not even more urgent – as when it was launched at the WHS in 2016, but the political case for it needs to be reframed to address the new aid reality. A stronger political case needs to be made for the Nexus that speaks to its strategic value for improving aid delivery in today's unstable financial and geopolitical environment. It should be about spending aid better, focusing scarce resources in contexts where joined-up action can have the greatest effect, and reducing the future cost of repeated crises. To date, the Nexus has been overly inward-looking, focusing on international aid actors that are increasingly competing over limited resources. The Nexus cannot remain an agenda owned mainly by a limited set of bilateral and multilateral actors; otherwise, attention will wane. Partner governments, local authorities, civil society, private sector, IFIs, regional actors, foundations and non-DAC donors all need clearer roles in shaping and implementing Nexus priorities in the future.

For this to happen it is recommended that:

- Donors and UN agencies should develop a shared political narrative on the Nexus by adopting a common position that recommits to its importance and outlines the additional measures required to boost implementation. (DAC-UN Dialogue and INCAF)
- Partner countries should adopt a political statement that outlines their leadership role on the Nexus that should facilitate national ownership for planning, coordination and financing. (g7+)
- A joint donor-UN Senior Advisor should be appointed to provide greater leadership and help enhance implementation of the Nexus. (DAC-UN Dialogue and INCAF)
- Investments should be made to bring local and national NGOs more closely and meaningfully into Nexus implementation, supported by structural reforms that advance localization efforts. (Global local actors' networks)

2. The ways of working between Nexus actors need to be rethought, based on a new crisis response model

The approach of the Nexus up until now has relied on voluntariness and has focused on enhancing collaboration, complementarity and coherence, which has been insufficient for fundamentally changing the ways in which humanitarian, development and peace actors work together. The fragmented aid architecture and skewed incentives have acted as a barrier to scaling up joined-up and complementary programming, financing and coordination. While the goals of Nexus actors might not always be the same, far greater cooperation, and even integration in some instances, is possible and necessary to make further progress. This will require focusing on the decision-making processes that address the difficult trade-offs required to implement the Nexus, and the different risks associated with the choices that need to be made. A more operational Nexus requires a different crisis response model.

For this to happen, it is recommended that:

- National and local systems should be the default for Nexus approaches when conditions allow, with host governments leading relevant coordination structures. (g7+)
- The role of RC/HCs should be empowered further than under current arrangements, including by outlining Nexus commitments in RC/HC Compacts, giving them responsibility to sign off on programme budgets of individual UN agencies, and providing them with additional reporting-line responsibilities. (UN80)
- A common set of strategic priorities in all fragile and conflict settings should form the basis of transition planning, which should occur from the onset of crises, with predictable procedures put in place. (DAC-UN Dialogue)
- Area-based approaches, which spell out handovers in transitions from humanitarian to development and peace actors, should be adopted. (DAC-UN Dialogue, IASC)
- A joint planning framework for transitions should be adopted based on the experience being piloted in eight transition contexts. (IASC, UNSDG, UN80)
- A system should be developed that grades crises according to how far they have moved towards transition (based on risks, needs and vulnerabilities) and includes an annual ‘pivot review’ of the posture of UN field presence. (IASC, UNSDG, UN80)
- Guidance should be developed to clarify the required coordination structures in protracted crises from a Nexus perspective, especially for the peace component. (DCO, OCHA and PBSO)
- Nexus funding strategies should be scaled up through incentives that promote greater collaboration between humanitarian, development and peace actors. (Donors and UN)

- Ways should be explored to ensure joint funding strategies among relevant humanitarian, development, and peace pooled funds, including coordinated allocations and shared administration capacities. (Donors and UN)
- Value for Money (VfM) should be made an explicit component of Nexus approaches and planning, with methodologies developed to calculate it. (Donors)
- Common and shared data platforms should be developed to enhance common analysis and to share practical examples and lessons learned.

3. Nexus implementation will remain limited unless key structural changes are made

The aid system is as fragmented and siloed as it has always been. With significantly reduced budgets, the aid system as it is currently designed is unlikely to survive. Reimagining aid should include developing a more holistic and integrated approach to crisis response in line with Nexus thinking. However, current reform processes fall short of bringing about the transformational change required. While it may not be possible to completely restructure the aid system in line with Nexus approaches, some restructuring would help implementation.

For this to happen, it is recommended that:

- Member States should review their internal structures and funding instruments in ways that enable Nexus approaches, supported by research to map out and identify the best approaches for doing so. (Donors)
- The UN should consider additional restructuring to align its humanitarian, development and peace pillars, including merging its field coordination entities, namely OCHA, DCO and PBSO. (UN80, Member States)
- The strategic partnership framework between the UN and the World Bank should be reviewed and strengthened and then expanded to regional development banks. (DAC-UN Dialogue)

- Nexus advisor capacity in RC/HC offices should be standardised and deployed in all fragile and crisis settings, including by streamlining existing related positions and better coordinating roster arrangements. (Member States, OCHA, DCO and PBSO)
- Area-Based Coordination (ABC) should be adopted as the standard coordination model at the local level for the Nexus, combining responsibilities for humanitarian, development and peace activities and financed accordingly. (OCHA, DCO and PBSO)
- More should be done to clarify that the peace dimension of the Nexus includes the full cross-section of such interventions, from conflict prevention, peacekeeping, stabilisation and peacebuilding.

4. Accountability is lacking for implementing the Nexus, and the benefits are unclear without the means to measure success

Implementing the Nexus is overly process-focused, without predictable decision-making and means to manage risk. It is an untested assumption that more Nexus processes are leading to more effective and efficient aid delivery in protracted crises, when the reverse could be equally true. At the same time, the cost of not implementing the approach is huge in terms of wasteful aid. Without a clear accountability framework that outlines the roles and responsibilities of all relevant actors, as well as expected actions, Nexus progress will remain limited. Nexus implementation should be assessed by whether it improves outcomes, not by whether actors have produced more plans, meetings or coordination mechanisms. New methods are needed to measure the results of the Nexus in terms of the outcomes and impact it has on reducing risks, needs and vulnerabilities in conflict and crisis settings.

For this to happen, it is recommended that:

- An accountability framework should be developed to outline the responsibilities and expected actions of all relevant actors for implementing the OECD Recommendation and related Nexus policies. (DAC-UN Dialogue)
- A results-monitoring methodology should be developed to measure Nexus outcomes against strategic priorities in a given context, which relevant aid actors can use to report progress. (DAC-UN Group Dialogue)
- A common monitoring process should be developed that consolidates existing data on the implementation of the collective results of the HNRPs and UNSDCF. (OCHA and DCO)
- Crisis-affected populations and local communities should have the means to provide feedback on Nexus strategic priorities.

References

- Abdelkhaliq Zamora, N., Bishop, I., Bolger, S., Lehmann, J., Padilla Diaz, F., Steets, J., Sternin, S., van Pottelbergh, G., & York, N. (2025).** *Applying the HDP Nexus Approach to Better Respond to Forced Displacement*. Berlin: Global Public Policy Institute.
- Abdullahi, S., Lilly, D., & Poole, L. (2025).** *Independent Think Piece Reckoning and Renewal: A Future Ready Humanitarian System*. Grand Bargain.
- Albiento, D. (2025).** *Breaking boundaries: local and national actors' engagement in the humanitarian–development–peace nexus*. London: ALNAP.
- ALNAP. (2025).** *Global Humanitarian Assistance Report 2025*. London: ALNAP.
- ALNAP. (2026).** *Global Humanitarian Assistance Report 2026*. London: ALNAP.
- Barbelet, V. D. (2021).** *Interrogating the Evidence Base on Humanitarian Localisation: a Literature Study*. London: ODI HPG.
- Cliffe, S., Dwan, R., Wainaina, B., & Zamore, L. (2023).** *Aid strategies in 'politically estranged' settings: How donors can stay and deliver in fragile and conflict-affected states*. London: Chatham House.
- DuBois, M. (2020a).** *Searching for the nexus: Why we're looking in the wrong place*. Geneva: The New Humanitarian.
- DuBois, M. (2020b).** *The Triple Nexus – Threat of Opportunity for the Humanitarian Principles*. Berlin: Centre for Humanitarian Action.
- ECDPM. (2026).** *The Global Gateway and balancing EU interests with genuine partnerships*.
- European Commission, DG INTPA. (nd).** *Global Gateway: Information on the roll out of the Global Gateway strategy, partnerships, projects and funding*. Brussels: European Commission.
- FAO, WFP & GNAFC. (2026a).** *2026 Global Report on Food Crises – Joint analysis for better decisions*. Rome: FAO & WFP.
- FAO, WFP & GNAFC. (2026b).** *Global Report on Food Crises*. Rome: FAO & WFP.
- Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development. (2020).** *Strategy on Transitional Development Assistance*. Berlin: BMZ.
- Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development. (2024).** *Overcoming Fragility: Goals and approaches for effective development policy - BMZ Position Paper*. Berlin: BMZ.

- Federpiel, S. (2025).** *Left to Bridge the Gap Humanitarian Assistance in Politically Estranged Settings*. New York: Center for International Cooperation, New York University.
- Flasbarth, J. (2024).** *The Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus – a Compelling Way Forward for Fragile Contexts*. Bonn: DEval.
- Grand Bargain. (2025).** *Highlights of the 2025 Grand Bargain Self-Reporting Cycle*. Grand Bargain.
- IASC. (2020a).** *Policy Light Guidance on Collective Outcomes - Developed by IASC Results Group 4 on Humanitarian-Development Collaboration in consultation with the UN Joint Steering Committee to Advance Humanitarian and Development Collaboration*. Geneva: IASC.
- IASC. (2020b).** *Exploring Peace Within the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus*. Geneva: IASC.
- IASC. (2021).** *IASC Second Mapping of Good Practice in the Implementation of Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus Approaches, 2024 Synthesis Report*. Geneva: IASC.
- IASC. (2023).** *Inter-Agency Standing Committee Task Force 4: Advancing the Humanitarian-Development Peace Nexus Approach through IASC Global Clusters: Guidance note*. Geneva: IASC.
- IASC. (2024a).** *Mapping Good Practice in the Implementation of the Humanitarian-Development-Peace nexus approaches, Synthesis Report*. Geneva: IASC.
- IASC. (2024b).** *Exploring the linkages between Accountability to Affected People, Localisation and the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus*. Geneva: IASC.
- IASC. (2026).** *Cluster Simplification and Adapting in Country Coordination, IASC Guidance*. Geneva: IASC.
- ICRC. (2020).** *When Rain Turns to Dust: Understanding and Responding to the Combined Impact of Armed Conflicts and the Climate and Environment Crisis on People's Lives*. Geneva: ICRC.
- Kobler, B. (2025).** *Findings Nexus Mapping "Overview of BMZ HDP Nexus Initiatives and Processes"*. Internal GIZ document.
- Lilly, D. (2021).** *Preventing the nexus becoming the next fad requires transformational change in the aid system*. London: Humanitarian Practice Network.
- Lilly, D. (2024).** *Yes, the nexus is real. But it needs a radical overhaul*. The New Humanitarian.
- Lilly, D. (2025).** *One Compact Too Far: UN80 and the Humanitarian Reform Malaise*. New York: International Peace Institute, Global Observatory.

- Marley, J. (2020).** *Peacebuilding in Fragile Contexts*. Paris: OECD.
- Morinière, L., & Morrison-Métoi, S. (2023).** *Working across the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus: What can we learn from evaluations?* London: ALNAP.
- Meininghaus, E., Kemmerling, B., Haidara, B., & Müller-Koné, M. (2025).** *Good Practice Guide for HDP Nexus Operationalisation*. Bonn: Bonn International Centre for Conflict Studies (BICC).
- NRC. (2024).** *Weathering the Storm - Why and how development financing actors should stay engaged during political crises*. Oslo: NRC.
- OECD. (2019).** *DAC Recommendation on the Humanitarian Development Peace Nexus*. Paris: OECD.
- OECD. (2023).** *Development finance for climate and environmental-related fragility: Cooling the Hot Spots*. Paris: OECD.
- OECD. (2024a).** *Report on the implementation, dissemination and continued relevance of the DAC Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus, DCD/DAC/INCAF(2023)1/FINAL*. Paris: OECD.
- OECD. (2024b).** *The Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus and Forced Displacement: Progress, Insights and Recommendations for Operational Practice*. Paris: OECD.
- OECD. (2025).** *States of Fragility 2025*. Paris: OECD.
- OECD. (2026a).** *A Historic Decline in Foreign Aid: Preliminary 2025 ODA Data*. Paris: OECD.
- OECD. (2026b).** *Climate Finance Provided and Mobilised by Developed Countries in 2013-2024*. Paris: OECD.
- Pearson, M., & Holloway, K. (2025).** *Abrupt transitions: The Global Humanitarian Overview pushes a dangerous trend*. Geneva: The New Humanitarian.
- Piper, R. (2026).** *Unfinished Business - Coming to Terms with the New Financial and Political Realities Facing the UN's Development Ecosystem*. New York: Center on International Cooperation, New York University.
- Poole, L., & Culbert, V. (2019).** *Financing the nexus - Gaps and opportunities from a field perspective*. Norwegian Refugee Council, FAO, UNDP.
- Rieger, N. (2023).** *Leaving no crisis behind with assistance for the triple nexus: Humanitarian, development and peace funding in crisis contexts*. Development Initiatives.
- Saez, P., Konyndyk, J., Worden, R. (2020).** *Inclusive Coordination: Building an Area-Based Humanitarian Coordination Model*. Washington, DC: Center for Global Development.
- Saez, P., Konyndyk, J., & Worden, R. (2021).** *Rethinking Humanitarian Reform: What Will it Take to Truly Change the System?* Washington, DC: Centre for Global Development.

SIPRI. (2025). *Trends in World Military Expenditure, 2025, SIPRI Fact Sheet*. Stockholm: SIPRI.

Swithern, S. (2023). *Co-ordination Across the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus*. Paris: OECD.

UN OCHA. (2025). *Global Humanitarian Overview 2025*. New York: UN OCHA.

UN OCHA. (2026a). *Global Humanitarian Overview 2026*. New York: UN OCHA.

UN OCHA. (2026b). *Somalia Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan*. New York: UN OCHA.

UN Peacebuilding. (n.d). *PBF Donor Commitments and Pledge Tracker*. New York: UN Peacebuilding.

UNDP. (2026). *Evidence for Prevention - A Study on National Prevention Strategies and UNDP Contribution to Conflict Prevention*. New York: UNDP.

UNHCR. (2024). *Development Playbook – Mauritania: Accompanying the Implementation of World Bank IDA18 RSW Projects and Inclusion in National Systems in Mauritania, October 2020–January 2024*. Unpublished internal document.

UNHCR. (2026). *UNHCR Global Appeal 2026*. Geneva: UNHCR.

UNHCR. (n.d). *The PROSPECTS Partnership: Helping refugees and host communities thrive*. Geneva: UNHCR.

UNSDG & IASC. (2025). *Guidance on Solutions to Internal Displacement*. New York: United Nations.

United Nations. (2015). *General Assembly Authorizes \$8.3 billion for 15 Peacekeeping Operations in 2015/16 as It Adopts 25 Resolutions, 1 Decision in Reports of Fifth Committee*. New York: United Nations.

United Nations. (2016). *One humanity: shared responsibility - Report of the Secretary General for the World Humanitarian Summit*. New York: United Nations.

United Nations. (2018a). *Global Compact on Refugees A/RES/73/151*. New York: United Nations.

United Nations. (2018b). *Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration*. New York: United Nations.

United Nations. (2022). *The United Nations Secretary-General’s Action Agenda on Internal Displacement*. New York: United Nations.

United Nations. (2024). *Pact for the Future, Global Digital Compact and Declaration on Future Generations: Summit of the Future Outcome Documents*. New York: United Nations.

United Nations. (2025a). *General Assembly approves \$5.4 billion UN peacekeeping budget for 2025-2026*. New York: United Nations.

United Nations. (2025b). *Review of the United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture: General Assembly resolution 80/11.* New York: United Nations.

United Nations. (2025c). *Sevilla Commitment: Outcome document adopted at the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development.* New York: United Nations.

United Nations. (2026a). *UN80 Initiative Progress Report of the Secretary General.* New York: United Nations.

United Nations. (2026b). *Global Stocktake on Implementation of the Secretary General's Action Agenda on Internal Displacement.* New York: United Nations.

United Nations. (2026c). *Secretary General Report on Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict.* New York: United Nations.

World Bank. (2017). *United Nations-World Bank Partnership Framework.* Washington, DC: World Bank.

World Bank Group. (2020). *Refugee Policy Review Framework: Technical Note.* Washington, DC: World Bank Group.

World Bank Group. (2026). *A World Bank Group Strategy for Engaging in Fragility, Conflict and Violence-Affected Settings (2026-2030).* Washington, DC: World Bank Group.

Imprint

Authors

Damian Lilly, Rachel Scott

On behalf of



Federal Ministry
for Economic Cooperation
and Development

The report was commissioned by Division R223 “Peace Policy” of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). The views expressed in this study are those of the independent external experts and do not necessarily reflect the views of the BMZ.

Cover/Graphic Recording

Gabriele Schlipf - momik.de - 2026

Design

Jeanette Geppert – pixelundpunkt Kommunikation

Berlin and Bonn (August 2026)