



# **‘PEACE’ IN THE HUMANITARIAN-DEVELOPMENT-PEACE NEXUS**

Good Practices and Recommendations

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Civil Society Dialogue Network

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## Discussion Paper

### **‘Peace’ in the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus: Good Practices and Recommendations**

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#### **Civil Society Dialogue Network**

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Image taken from the 'Peace in the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus' [animated video](#) produced with this paper. © EPLO

# 1. INTRODUCTION

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In 2016, the European Union (EU) published its Global Strategy, which called for developing further the connections between its development, humanitarian and peacebuilding actions.<sup>1</sup> Since then, the EU has committed repeatedly to strengthening how it approaches these connections.<sup>2</sup> In 2017, the EU and its Member States (MS) selected six pilot countries in which to pursue a humanitarian-development nexus approach: Chad, Iraq, Nigeria, Myanmar, Sudan and Uganda. In 2018, they expanded this double nexus to include the ‘peace’ component, thus pursuing the implementation of the humanitarian-development-peace (HDP) nexus – first in the pilot countries, then elsewhere as well. In 2022, the Council of the EU endorsed the objective of moving beyond the pilot phase in these six countries, and to “generalise the nexus approach to all partner countries where it can bring benefits.”<sup>3</sup>

Since 2018, the EU has both made progress in operationalising the HDP nexus and encountered a number of challenges hampering its efforts. In 2020, the European External Action Service (EEAS) and the European Commission (EC) circulated to EU delegations an internal non-paper on the peace component of the HDP nexus and a practical guidance note on the nexus.<sup>4</sup> Despite this, there remain across EU services ‘divergent views on what the peace element is, who it involves and how it interacts with other nexus elements.’<sup>5</sup> This lack of clarity has constituted an obstacle in pursuing effectively some of the opportunities that the integration of the peace component in the HDP nexus presents – both as part of the EU’s own actions and in its support to the work of its partners, particularly civil society organisations (CSOs).

This discussion paper aims at illustrating through ten case studies how to pursue the integration of the peace component as part of efforts to implement the HDP nexus. In this, it makes the case for understanding ‘peace’ in the nexus as centred on peacebuilding, conflict prevention and human security – not on militarised interventions. Preventing violent conflict and building peace between and within societies is essential to reducing humanitarian needs and to advancing development outcomes in a sustainable manner. Peacebuilding actors have specific expertise and experience with this, however actors across the other components of the nexus may also contribute to peace as part of their activities – and they may avoid contributing to violent conflict and exclusion if conflict sensitivity is integrated as a core facet of programme quality.

The case studies included in this paper cover a wide range of activities pursued by CSOs in different countries. Some of the CSOs who contributed case studies are multi-mandate organisations implementing projects across HDP nexus components, whilst others are peacebuilding organisations who partner with other CSOs to pursue the HDP nexus through collective efforts. Most the activities presented here are carried out at the community level, however some also involve engagements at other levels, and/or are pursued in parallel with EU efforts for peace in the EU’s political dialogue with partner governments.

Each case study includes an overview of the activities carried out, as well as three good practices and three recommendations for the EU identified by the organisation. The ‘general recommendations’ in the section that follows were drafted by the authors and were informed by, but not submitted with, these case studies.<sup>6</sup> The examples featured in this paper capture only a sliver of the ways in which peace may be integrated as part of the HDP nexus. Still, they show that the EU can play an essential role in strengthening the connections between humanitarian, development and peacebuilding efforts by partnering with, and supporting, civil society actors.

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<sup>1</sup> EU, [Global Strategy for the European Union’s Foreign and Security Policy](#), p. 31 (2016).

<sup>2</sup> Including the following year, when the Council of the EU expressly recognised “the linkages between sustainable development, humanitarian action and conflict prevention and peacebuilding”: Council of the EU, [Conclusions on Operationalising the Humanitarian-Development Nexus](#) (2017).

<sup>3</sup> Council of the EU, [Foreign Affairs Council \(Development\)](#), 28 November 2022.

<sup>4</sup> EEAS and EC, “Note on the peace element of the HDP nexus” (2020) and “Practical guidance note on the triple nexus” (2020).

<sup>5</sup> ECDPM and Particip GmbH, [HDP Nexus: Challenges and Opportunities for its Implementation](#), p. 72 (2022)

<sup>6</sup> There was no attempt to generate a consensus between contributing organisations through this discussion paper.

## 2. GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

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These general recommendations were developed on the basis of the good practices and recommendations listed in the ten case studies that follow. The case studies include additional information, context, and more detail on how to approach and implement some of the points raised.

### **The EU should:**

#### **1. Be intentional and strategic in implementing the HDP nexus in relevant contexts.**

- Adopting a strategic-level approach to the HDP nexus supports the ability to pursue holistic interventions involving co-ordination, co-operation and complementarity beyond the level of individual projects. This requires senior-level direction, support and commitment, as well as building the capacity of relevant EU services and delegations to work across components at different levels.
- As a global actor, the EU can play an important role in using its political dialogue with partner governments to defend an open and inclusive civic space, to protect the ability of civil society actors to carry out activities across the HDP nexus, and to foster co-operation between governments to facilitate the implementation of cross-border HDP nexus initiatives.

#### **2. Recognise and pursue peacebuilding as a full component of the HDP nexus.**

- The peace component of the HDP nexus should be centred on peacebuilding and conflict prevention.
- Peacebuilding should not be seen as an add-on to development and humanitarian interventions but as a full component of the HDP nexus, with its own range of activities at the local, national and international levels that should receive greater focus and investment. It should be pursued at all phases of the conflict cycle.
- Peacebuilding actors, like humanitarian and development actors, have specific expertise and skills that should be recognised as such. Pursuing an HDP nexus approach provides opportunities for other actors to benefit from the expertise of peacebuilders in preventing conflict and contributing to peace, and in carrying out conflict analysis to strengthen the conflict sensitivity of interventions.

#### **3. Ensure that engagements across the HDP nexus are conflict-sensitive and informed by gender-responsive conflict analysis.**

- All interventions and programming should be conflict-sensitive; conflict sensitivity should be seen as a core facet of programme quality to ensure that interventions do no harm and that they actively contribute to peace whenever possible. The EU should support the development of the capacities for conflict sensitivity and conflict prevention of its international, national and local partners across the HDP nexus, in particular of CSOs.
- Conflict analysis processes serve to understand the root causes and drivers of conflict and exclusion, people's needs, formal and informal institutions, key stakeholders, the distribution of power, and the existing initiatives for peace and development within a given context. They are essential to identifying entry points for interventions across the HDP nexus, to monitoring the evolution of the context, and to determining how to adapt interventions based on this evolution. Joint conflict analysis processes serve to develop shared understandings between HDP nexus actors, and to ensure coherence and complementarity.
- Participatory conflict analysis processes are especially helpful in understanding complex realities and designing holistic interventions that combine a range of HDP nexus activities to achieve collective outcomes. They can also help identify which local actors may be supported in providing humanitarian relief, pursuing development activities, and carrying out peacebuilding efforts. They can help build trust with the civil society actors and community members involved in the process.

#### **4. Pursue a people-centred approach based on the needs, initiatives and leadership of local civil society actors and communities.**

- Civil society actors and communities living in the contexts where the EU is engaging should have leading roles in the design and implementation of interventions. They are uniquely positioned to identify and to respond to the connections between needs and opportunities for action across the HDP nexus, to prevent duplication, and to determine which roles are the most suitable for their international partners (including in consortia).
- The EU should help local and national actors to access international mechanisms and decision-making processes, while also drawing international actors into the spaces where communities operate. Closing the gap between international and local action helps to close gaps between humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding efforts.

#### **5. Provide flexible and long-term support to civil society organisations.**

- Peacebuilding efforts are extremely underfunded in light of the scale of the challenges to address worldwide and should receive significantly more support and attention.
- Funding should be flexible enough to allow for the focus of project activities to be adapted across the three components of the HDP nexus on the basis of the evolution of the context and of the needs of communities (e.g. shifting to an increased focus on peacebuilding if tensions arise, on humanitarian relief if a flood hits, etc.). The EU should strengthen the integration between its services and funding instruments to facilitate this.
- Funding for HDP nexus actions should be provided and secured for longer time frames than is still often the case (e.g. for at least 5 years), in order to prevent gaps in support, reduce uncertainty, lower administrative burdens, increase accountability and achieve more sustainable outcomes. This would also help ensure that CSOs have adequate time to carry out conflict analysis, to build trust with partners from the other HDP nexus components at the start of projects, and to make sure that local partners are able to fully take over and continue initiatives as projects come to an end.
- Funding the implementation of all HDP nexus components under a single project can facilitate integration, however when this is not possible the EU should look to coordinate geographic preferences in bid and selection processes so that there is geographic overlap in project implementation. When providing support through consortia, the EU should seek to limit administrative burdens, promote the meaningful involvement of local CSOs, and provide time to partners to learn to work together across the HDP nexus.

#### **6. Promote and support integration, coordination and complementarity at different levels of implementation.**

- The EU should strengthen its internal expertise, capacities, and knowledge management systems on conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding across its institutions and delegations working on the different HDP nexus components (including for its staff working in geographic units and divisions). Peacebuilding objectives and indicators should feature more prominently in institutional mandates and reporting processes.
- The EU should support information sharing and learning mechanisms in the contexts where it is supporting HDP nexus actions, including with other international actors, donors, and implementing CSOs.
- The EU should ensure that its implementing partners report on how HDP nexus components and activities are connected as part of their work, particularly to ensure that peacebuilding activities are integrated with development and humanitarian activities. However, it should provide time and resources for such 'light touch' reporting and avoid increasing the administrative burden on local partners.
- The success of humanitarian and development interventions relies heavily on mainstreaming conflict sensitivity thoroughly and on connected peacebuilding efforts. The reverse is also the case for peacebuilding efforts, which benefit from intentionally incorporating packages that, in addition to strengthening trust and social cohesion, can improve the overall economic, social, psychological wellbeing of individuals and community groups.

## 3. CASE STUDIES

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### 3.1. Christian Aid in Burundi

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#### Overview

In Burundi, an estimated 70 percent of the population live in poverty and face daily food insecurity. Burundi hosts more than 50,000 refugees from across the region, while there are a reportedly 300,000 Burundian refugees outside of the country.<sup>7</sup> Since 2017, more than 120,000 Burundians have returned with more than half of them being women,<sup>8</sup> and more than 100,000 people have been internally displaced with an estimated 55 percent being women.<sup>9</sup> In March 2023, it was reported that the primary reason for displacement (89 percent) was due to natural disasters that have negatively affected the majority of the populations' ability to farm the land,<sup>10</sup> which is the primary source of food and livelihoods. Furthermore, Burundi and its people are still recovering from a period of widespread violence and insecurity that occurred during the former President Pierre Nkurunziza's tenure, especially between 2015-2020. Presently, there remain serious human rights violations and insecurity.<sup>11</sup>

In 2018, Christian Aid Burundi (CAB), with Irish Aid support, recognised the interconnectivity of the challenges facing communities and thus began to identify ways to link humanitarian and peacebuilding interventions. CAB also understood that to progress both short- and long-term goals, they needed to further integrate development into their work with communities, to holistically address needs. At the time, they did not explicitly label this work as the HDP nexus approach. It was simply based on the needs expressed by communities.

Throughout Christian Aid's (CA) Programme Grant II (PGII) (2017-2022) and Humanitarian Programme Plan (HPP) (2019-2022), funded through Irish Aid, CAB developed an intentional integrated HDP nexus approach with an overarching goal of building resilience and agency in communities. To achieve this, the project aimed to move participants from poverty and immediate humanitarian need to more reliable livelihoods to stabilise the family and community and build resilience. A graduation model was used where communities transition in a systematic way from humanitarian assistance into resilience programming, with the possibility to adapt activities as the needs and context evolve. In the first phase, families receive lifesaving interventions, primarily emergency food and non-food items. In the second phase, the project introduced village savings and loan associations (VSLAs) and agricultural production interventions. Throughout the programme, there was a focus on addressing gender and inequality and reducing violence and building peace in communities.

CAB worked through new and traditional peace infrastructures to gain trust in communities, with the government to advocate for communities' priority issues, and with CSOs and community-based organisations (CBOs) to strengthen their capacity and agency. The primary beneficiaries were marginalised and vulnerable individuals and communities with the aim to transform the root causes of poverty and support feminist and sustainable peace. Based on learning and impact achieved through this programme, CA's Irish Aid funded portfolio of work for 2023-2028 across 10 countries has adopted a more intentional HDP nexus approach.

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<sup>7</sup> See <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2021/country-chapters/burundi>, accessed 25 May 2023.

<sup>8</sup> UNDP & UNHCR, [2021 Burundi Refugee Returnee and Reintegration Plan](#) (2021).

<sup>9</sup> IOM, [IOM Burundi 2022: Year in Review](#) (2022).

<sup>10</sup> See <https://dtm.iom.int/reports/burundi-internal-displacement-trends-march-2023>, accessed 28 June 2023.

<sup>11</sup> See <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2021/country-chapters/burundi>, accessed 25 May 2023.



## Good practices and lessons learned

- The HDP nexus provides the opportunity for humanitarians to consider longer term strategies to end needs and for development actors to consider prevention and focus on building resilience to external shocks, crises and conflict to complement humanitarian efforts. It also offers peacebuilders the chance to promote social cohesion which bolsters sustainable peace and reinforces gains made through humanitarian and development responses. Each component in the HDP nexus leverages and mutually reinforces dividends in all three areas which leads to deeper impact in support of communities fighting to overcome fragility and chronic poverty.
- The HDP nexus requires teams to consider the holistic needs of an individual, a community, as well as macro level changes. It provides the opportunity to widen one's scope to ensure different efforts complement and learn from each other. It places a premium on programme quality, local leadership and partnership, adaptation (and smart failure), conflict sensitivity and contextual knowledge informed by analysis and evidence. This approach helped leverage CA's history of programming and advocacy experiences across all three components.
- An HDP nexus approach requires close engagement with partners, including community members, to feed into the decisions on the activities that would best address specific needs. For this reason, the HDP nexus supports localisation in the sense that partners and community members should have a strong sense of ownership, given that they have been part of the decision-making process. CA's vast number of links with national and local partners who are deeply embedded in communities has contributed to its ability to work in partnership with communities and strengthen its understanding of the multi-layered contextual dynamics specific to a community.

## Key recommendations for the EU

- Commitment to the HDP nexus requires a doctrinal and knowledge evolution for donors and implementing agencies to better understand change pathways. The HDP nexus is not a new concept, but it requires renewed commitment to improving coordination, collaboration and coherence between humanitarian, development and peacebuilding interventions. Peace is the newest component of the HDP nexus and thus requires specific consideration and conscious resourcing to ensure effective implementation of the HDP nexus. Given that peace is both an outcome and a multiplier of sustainable development, it contributes both to Sustainable Development Goal 16 (SDG16) and reinforces progress on the other goals.
- The HDP nexus should be implemented in line with humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence. Peacebuilding and conflict prevention strategies are consistent with these. They offer evidence-based, contextually-relevant and tested strategies, with significant catalytic potential to contribute towards sustainable peace and development. Conflict prevention addresses the structural sources of conflict in order to build a solid foundation for peace and peacebuilding strategies to achieve more than just the absence of war or crises. Thus, peacebuilding and conflict prevention are aligned with humanitarian principles, and should not be perceived as security-focused, which differs from the way peacekeeping actions could be defined.
- Conflict sensitivity is distinct from peacebuilding. Conflict sensitivity is a crucial component of programming and implementation in any context. It contributes to an understanding of how the context and the programme interact, and supports design, targeting and adaptation to maximise the positive impact of humanitarian, development or peacebuilding action while minimizing the potential for negative consequences. For this reason, conflict sensitivity should not be viewed through the same lens as peacebuilding or the peace offer of the HDP nexus, but rather as a core facet of programme quality to ensure interventions do no harm.



## 3.2. Cordaid in Liberia and Somalia

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### Overview

The Civil Society Platform for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (CSPPS) is a global network of approximately 800 CSOs supporting peacebuilding efforts in fragile and conflict-affected settings. The Platform's members work together and discuss current trends, practices and policies primarily focused on conflict and crisis prevention, peacebuilding and statebuilding in over 27 fragile and conflict-affected countries (FCAC). CSPPS began in 2011 and was initially hosted and coordinated by Interpeace; in 2012, Cordaid took over this role. The Platform supports civil society participation in the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (IDPS). Through CSPPS, strategic and capacity assistance are provided to support in-country interventions which focus on amplifying the voices of civil society in relevant policy processes. At the global level, CSPPS coordinates lobbying and advocacy efforts around conflict prevention, peacebuilding, and Sustainable Development Goal 16 (SDG16) along with its important role in enabling other SDGs. The Platform's mission is "to strengthen the voice and capacity of society to effectively engage in, and influence, peacebuilding and statebuilding as a critical contribution to crisis prevention and sustainable peace and development for all."<sup>12</sup>

Over the past three years, CSPPS and its members have observed the multifaceted and intersectional impacts of climate change. This has been the case on the macro level as well as on how organisations see its effects on the different components of the HDP nexus. Increasing attention has been placed on the interconnected relationships between climate change and the HDP nexus by academics, policymakers, and practitioners alike, exploring these interlinkages and aiming to formulate comprehensive solutions to the challenges they pose.

For these reasons, CSPPS has been exploring with its members how programming can address climate change issues as well as be adapted to take climate change effects into account. The Platform has been collecting and sharing concrete and innovative activities that are already being implemented by CSOs to ameliorate the negative impacts of climate change both on communities as well as on specific programming initiatives, particularly with regard to how this is playing out within the HDP nexus. Furthermore, the Platform is documenting the important roles of local civil society actors in contributing to building peace and to reducing climate-related risks to improve peace and security. It has also prioritised understanding and documenting the challenges that local CSOs face including mobilising resources and mitigating climate-related security risks to deliver actions across the HDP nexus.

Specifically, for this case study, the good practices and lessons learned are from CSPPS members in Liberia and Somalia, drawing on projects implemented by the Platform for Dialogue and Peace (P4DP) in Liberia and Women's Development Organization (IIDA)<sup>13</sup> in Somalia.<sup>14</sup> The project with P4DP involved facilitating dialogue between rural communities to exchange knowledge and good practices about how to strengthen their resilience to the effects of climate change, particularly for rural women farmers, with whom the project works by setting up Peace Mother Clubs and providing grant facilities to scale-up women agricultural and livelihood activities. The project with IIDA included the creation of peace committees to prevent conflict between clans, which allowed the local communities to reap the benefits of peace dividends, and facilitated the implementation of other project activities that contributed to food security and access to water.

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<sup>12</sup> See <https://www.cspps.org/who-we-are>, accessed 1 June 2023.

<sup>13</sup> IIDA means "woman born on a feast day" in Somali.

<sup>14</sup> See also Peter van Sluijs & Caitlin Masoliver (2022), '[The Triple-Nexus and Climate Change in Conflict-Affected Settings: Experiences, Lessons Learned, and Best Practices](#)', *Journal of Peacebuilding & Development*, 17(3), 364-370.

## Good practices and lessons learned

- For national policies to effectively address and respond to climate change, they need to be developed and implemented through meaningful and inclusive collaboration and consultation with civil society. CSOs can help to pinpoint the interlinkages between climate change and fragility, conflict, and violence. Civil society has invaluable experience and insights into the realities “on the ground” of the climate-HDP nexus connections, and how to act on them to address humanitarian, development and peace issues either directly linked to, or impacted by, climate change.
- When implementing solutions to the challenges posed by climate change across the HDP nexus, relevant stakeholders should consider designing programmes to be implemented in multi-actor consortia that breakaway from traditionally siloed approaches. CSPPS has seen positive examples whereby all four technical expertise come together from different organisations in consortia. When done well, this has led to effective integration through the identification of synergies and complementarity of each workstream. This has led to impacts that go beyond what can be achieved through any single-component project. Furthermore, working toward a common strategy across actors avoids the implementation of parallel or duplicate initiatives.
- Context analyses should adopt a broader conceptualisation of peace and security. Specifically, they should go beyond understanding peace as “negative” peace, which is to say the absence of physical violence, and rather encompass the alleviation of systemic forms of violence in environmental, economic, political, and social inequalities and vulnerabilities. This approach is critical to contributing to peace and human security and to addressing the climate-HDP nexus connections.

## Key recommendations for the EU

- The EU should continue to support the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee's (OECD DAC) 2019 Recommendation on the HDP nexus as a segue to strengthen policy and operational coherence between humanitarian, development and peace actors. The EU should push for a prioritisation of understanding how climate change impacts actions that use HDP nexus approaches, as well as how HDP nexus approaches can address climate issues. The interim progress report on the implementation of the OECD DAC Recommendation should be expanded to not only look at initial results and learnings of implementing the framework and whether it has resulted in enhancing the effectiveness of collective action; it should also look at the interlinkages with climate change.
- In fragile and conflict-affected contexts, there is a need for strengthening collaboration, coherence and complementarity to better address the manifestations of fragility, conflict and violence. Embarking upon an integrated and coherent approach is expected to yield best results in addressing grievances, vulnerabilities and eventually the root causes of conflict. In these contexts, there is an urgent need to provide funding to local CSOs working across the climate-HDP nexus connections. This funding is needed to support initiatives that integrate climate analysis and considerations into existing programming, while optimising and sequencing interventions between humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding work.
- The EU should work with funding partners to develop common goals across projects and programmes in the same contexts to formalise multidisciplinary approaches, and to forge stronger relationships between CSOs who work across the HDP nexus as well as on climate programmes. Increased alignment, integration and adaptation requires dedicated funding and, in many cases, an adjustment of financing models.

### 3.3. International Alert in Lebanon

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#### Overview

Lebanon continues to experience intersecting economic, political and security crises, as well as tensions between Lebanese and refugees primarily from Syria: “concurrent political, economic, security and health crises have had devastating impacts on people’s safety, livelihoods and dignity.”<sup>15</sup> This is especially the case for the most vulnerable Lebanese and refugee families. Taken together, these dynamics are threatening Lebanon’s overall stability. However, despite these challenges, there are opportunities for peacebuilding and supporting systems that contribute to social cohesion and increased trust among those living side by side as neighbours.

International Alert (Alert) in Lebanon works to identify the drivers of conflict in order to design projects and initiatives that are holistic in addressing social tensions. Key to this work is facilitating dialogues between different groups to build trust and find peaceful solutions to issues, providing training, documenting lessons learned to improve initiatives and developing policy recommendations that promote more peaceful and equitable societies.<sup>16</sup>

From 2014-2015, the EU funded through the ‘Instrument for Stability’ (IfS) a project that was implemented by the United Nations High Commissioner For Refugees (UNHCR), the Ministry of Public Health (MOPH), the World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), International Relief and Development (IRD), and Alert. The project focused on providing both immediate care to refugees as well as longer term care to Lebanese. It also provided medical supplies and equipment, and improved health clinics’ systems.<sup>17</sup> The activities were both humanitarian and development focused.

Alert’s initial role was to support the partners in implementing a conflict-sensitive intervention. However, the conflict analysis revealed tensions between healthcare workers and the users of their services. These tensions were due to the levels of stress that healthcare staff were experiencing and the lack of opportunities that they had to discuss the day-to-day pressures that they were facing. Furthermore, Alert found that those seeking treatment or support had misconceptions about the support and care being provided to the other group – this being between Lebanese community members and refugee populations. Lebanese often felt that Syrians were receiving better care or priority in the same medical clinics. These conflict dynamics were fuelling rumours and had a high potential to ignite violence in the waiting rooms.

For these reasons, Alert took a peacebuilding approach to improve relationships between groups by training frontline healthcare staff in communication, dealing with conflict and coping with stress. Through these activities, Alert’s partners were better able to support the overall ability of the health project to deliver its aim “to reduce rising tensions between refugee and host communities by providing strategic support to the public health sector.”<sup>18</sup>

The learning from this project was taken forward into a partnership with Amel Association from 2016-2020. This project aimed to improve access to healthcare and protection services and support social stability. Over a period of four years, Alert provided training, accompaniment, guidance and other support to Amel staff to integrate ways of working and activities to address tensions and support social stability in their work. This included both immediate and long-term efforts to improve health and health systems in the region.

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<sup>15</sup> From <https://www.international-alert.org/locations/lebanon/>, accessed 19 May 2023.

<sup>16</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>17</sup> UNHCR (2015), ‘[Reducing conflict by improving healthcare services to vulnerable Lebanese and Syrian refugees](#)’.

<sup>18</sup> Ibidem.

## Good practices and lessons learned

- These projects highlighted the importance of understanding the internal systems where a project is being implemented, in this case the healthcare system, and the professionals working in those systems. If Alert had not have uncovered the tensions and high levels of stress that the Lebanese healthcare workers were facing, they would have missed an important peacebuilding opportunity to support the healthcare professionals in creating a better space for them to work. This involved training and facilitating dialogues between healthcare professionals to discuss the tensions and issues they were dealing with and how to resolve them. Given that healthcare workers are part of the social fabric and play a role in bridging the gap between the service providers and the community, supporting their needs, in this case, was the most effective way to improve social cohesion on multiple levels.
- The terminology of peace and peacebuilding in Lebanon is problematic. This means whenever Alert staff are taking on a new project in Lebanon, they must consider what they will call their work. In some cases, they call it “conflict sensitivity plus”, where they emphasise the third element of conflict sensitivity which is to promote positive peace outcomes. However, because peacebuilding goes beyond conflict sensitivity, Alert often uses the terms “social cohesion” and “social stability” in its work in Lebanon.
- Effective partnerships between humanitarian, development and peacebuilding organisations, which include capacity development, skills exchange, information sharing and joint analysis, facilitate both rapid emergency response and the application of a nexus approach. Such partnerships help to identify the different levels of support that might be needed in different contexts. In this case, clinics required support ranging from facilitating dialogues to creating communication strategies for health care users.

## Key recommendations for the EU

- When supporting HDP nexus projects, the EU should also look to support foundations and systems that build peace or social cohesion, as well as seek to support partnerships that bring service providers together with peacebuilding experts. In this case, the health sector was under extreme pressure and at the beginning the structure did not allow for staff to discuss challenges arising from the increase in refugees needing care and communities’ perceptions of aid.
- The EU should strive to be aware of the language that a project is using in a specific context, especially around peace, peacebuilding and conflict. Using the wrong language in calls for proposals, policies and discussions with government officials can be offensive, and set the EU and those whom it supports back to a place where the trust is weak.
- The peacebuilding component of the HDP nexus requires a tailored approach in each community or group being supported. Thus, if peacebuilding efforts are to be effective in complementing humanitarian and development efforts, time needs to be given to ensure that the context analysis is done thoroughly and includes speaking to each group about their needs and their concerns. The EU should ensure that new HDP nexus projects have context analysis which are both national as well as very localised, so that activities can clearly outline how the different needs of groups will be addressed in order to strengthen project outcomes.

### 3.4. Interpeace in East Africa

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#### Overview

The Karamoja Cluster is an area in East Africa that includes border regions of South-western Ethiopia, North-western Kenya, South-eastern South Sudan and North-eastern Uganda. Its inhabitants are primarily pastoralists and agro-pastoralists from at least 13 different ethnic groups.<sup>19</sup> According to the Global Report on Food Crises 2021-2022, the Cluster has an estimated 20 percent of the 135 million people globally who face acute food insecurity.<sup>20</sup> The area faces multiple threats which are accelerated by violent conflicts, including severe drought followed by widespread floods that have affected more than three million people; “persistent conflict and insecurity in the region force millions of people to abandon their homes and livelihoods and migrate within their countries and across borders in search of better opportunities.”<sup>21</sup>

Interpeace is a peacebuilding and conflict management CSO which has worked in Kenya since 2016, where it focuses on addressing “intercommunal conflicts in Northern Kenya and the North Rift region, achieving significant successes in Mandera, Wajir and Kerio Valley.”<sup>22</sup> It is with this expertise that it joined a consortium to identify and understand the drivers of conflict in the Karamoja Cluster.

At the peak of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, the region suffered from a desert locust invasion, persistent drought and flooding. Given the number and complexities of issues facing the Karamoja Cluster, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism (CEWARN) under the Peace and Security Division, IGAD Cross-Border Development Facilitation Unit (CBDFU) and Interpeace, in collaboration with IGAD member countries of Ethiopia, Kenya, South Sudan and Uganda, came together to conduct a study aimed at generating evidence on the linkages between conflicts, climate change, food insecurity, migration and displacement in the Karamoja Cluster.

This multi-sectoral collaboration focused on understanding the individual issues as well as how they link, impact and compound one another across the HDP nexus components. It sought to generate evidence on causes and drivers of resource-based conflict, major parties to and lines of conflict, and conflict impacts and trends. The evidence has been used to update analysis of conflict in the Cluster, with a view to recommending appropriate strategies for conflict-sensitive and peace-responsive programming that will address the root causes and drivers of conflict, to strengthen food and nutrition security, address the drivers of displacement and enhance the capacity of communities to adapt to climate change.

#### Good practices and lessons learned

- The study found “strong correlations between conflict on the one hand and food security, climate change, displacement and migration on the other hand. Conflict shapes the opportunities and challenges of food security, climate change, displacement and migration. At the same time, food security, climate change, displacement and migration drive conflict.”<sup>23</sup> These findings highlight the need for multi-sectoral approaches in programme implementation in order to bolster and scale up support across the Karamoja Cluster.
- The findings emphasised that to address the drivers of conflict, food insecurity and malnutrition in the region, the knowledge, skills and capabilities of more than one single institution or organisation are needed. Pursuing multisectoral and integrated approaches often requires strong partnerships. For example, as a

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<sup>19</sup> See <https://resilience.igad.int/clusters/igad-cluster-1-karamoja-cluster/>, accessed 23 May 2023.

<sup>20</sup> FAO, IGAD CEWARN, IGAD-CBDFU, Interpeace (2023), ‘[Conflict, Climate Change, Food Security and Mobility in the Karamoja Cluster](#)’.

<sup>21</sup> Id., Foreword.

<sup>22</sup> Id., p. 10.

<sup>23</sup> Id., p. 40.



result of the Karamoja Cluster study findings, the organisations aim to bring their respective mandates and experiences, competencies and comparative advantages to bear on programming of interventions to address the underlying causes of conflict across the region.

- Using the starting point of a study as an opportunity to build networks between organisations and across borders helps to establish partnerships and trust between groups. Furthermore, when governments are brought into the process for interviews, focus group discussions, validation or presentations of the findings, it can create the sense of ownership of the issues, trust across borders and shared understandings of often similar issues faced by different parties. Following on from the study, the envisaged programme involves working with all four governments in the region as well as relevant UN agencies, CSOs and non-state actors across the three components of the HDP nexus.

### Key recommendations for the EU

- The EU should require projects that work on cross-border issues in areas prone to violence to first conduct in-depth studies to understand the myriad of issues before agreeing on funding. The starting point for these studies should be understanding conflict drivers and peace opportunities. These studies should ensure that there is a multisectoral approach being led by organisations with the appropriate mandates and expertise across the HDP nexus components.
- The EU can play a key role in bringing together governments from countries that share borders to promote trust, shared understandings of the issues, and to shape the regional coordination of policies, actors and interventions. This would help to ensure that cross-border programmes go beyond the project implementation level to something larger that can have a positive impact on peace and stability in the long-term beyond a project's duration.
- The EU should ensure that all cross-border projects have peace as a central and dedicated component which will help to establish, reestablish or reinforce the relationships that many who live along borders have with one another. Conflict issues such as pastoralist grazing issues should be looked at as regional issues, as opposed to country-specific issues, as the latter can otherwise limit the possibilities for finding solutions to widespread problems.



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### 3.5. Mercy Corps in Nigeria

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#### Overview

Nigeria has a population of over 200 million people made up of over 250 ethnic groups and two predominant religions – Christianity and Islam. Over the past decade, the Boko Haram insurgency has dominated discussions on Nigeria’s security architecture. Since 2017, a conflict over access to natural resources between farmers and pastoralists has claimed lives and properties predominantly in the northern parts of the country. In early 2023, general elections were held at the national level, and the gubernatorial and state parliamentary levels in 28 of its 36 states. In some locations, electoral processes were reportedly fraught with irregularities, which led to some instances of violence. These dynamics have left a good part of the country and many communities with increased tensions, divisions across ethno-religious lines and a breakdown of trust. Furthermore, violent conflicts, flooding and, in some cases, drought, have led to the internal displacement of an estimated 3 million people.<sup>24</sup> This, alongside with high levels of inflation<sup>25</sup> and limited access to essential livelihood opportunities, has created and exacerbated needs requiring humanitarian, development and peacebuilding support.

Mercy Corps Nigeria has been working in the country since 2012 to implement programmes on peacebuilding, protection and safeguarding, education, health, market systems development, and a multi-sector humanitarian response across five of the country’s six regions. The organisation works with diverse stakeholders to help develop and strengthen the skills and relationships needed to identify and address underlying drivers of conflict, and to manage conflicting interests or emerging tensions peacefully. Specifically linked to the HDP nexus, Mercy Corps Nigeria works to build trust among and between communities to foster environments of peace, promote good governance and inclusive economic growth, while also meeting urgent humanitarian needs.<sup>25</sup>

Community Initiatives to Promote Peace (CIPP) is a five-year United States Agency for International Development (USAID) funded Program (2019-2024) with the overall objectives of (1) empowering communities to prevent and respond to violence and violent extremism by strengthening key skills and relationships, and (2) fostering enabling environments for peace through policy advocacy, media outreach, and linkages to development programs. The CIPP Program is implemented in six states<sup>26</sup> and activities are delivered in partnership with five national non-governmental organisations (NGOs).<sup>27</sup>

The Program works in transitional conflict contexts and intentionally engages with different structures comprised of community leaders and members, women and youth groups, persons with disabilities (PwD), faith-based groups and leaders, CSOs, international NGOs, the media, government officials at the federal, state and local government levels, and academia. The peacebuilding component focuses on conflict management trainings, extensive dialogue engagements, early warning and early response platforms, customized radio broadcasts and social media platforms. The aim of these activities is to strengthen the skills of the program participants to identify conflict issues and mutually resolve them, and to improve relationships and social cohesion at the family and group levels.

While the focus of the project is peacebuilding, residents were experiencing a decline in their purchasing power and financial security due to displacement, insecurity and increasing economic hardship, which limited their ability to commit and participate in peacebuilding activities. Acknowledging this difficulty, the CIPP team identified opportunities for livelihood support. For example, support was leveraged through another USAID-

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<sup>24</sup> See UNHCR (May 2022), <https://reliefweb.int/map/nigeria/nigeria-all-population-snapshot-30-april-2022>, accessed 10 May 2023.

<sup>25</sup> See [www.nigeria.mercycorps.org](http://www.nigeria.mercycorps.org)

<sup>26</sup> Specifically, the states are Benue, Kogi, Plateau, Kaduna, Kano and Katsina.

<sup>27</sup> National partners include African Radio Development Association (ARDA), Interfaith Mediation Centre (IMC), Pastoral Resolve (PARE) Savannah Centre for Diplomacy Democracy and Development (SCDDD) and Social Justice and Human Development for Peace Initiative (JDPC).



funded Mercy Corps project called “Feed the Future Nigeria Rural Resilience Activity (RRA)” under the COVID-19 mitigation response program to prevent further decline and economic devastation of participants due to the secondary impacts of COVID-19 shocks and stresses.<sup>28</sup> This project provided small grants to some of the same beneficiaries of the CIPP program which gave community members the opportunity to improve their economic situation and participate in peacebuilding activities.

Furthermore, HDP links were made between CIPP and another Mercy Corps program called “Girls Improving Resilience through Livelihoods and Health” (GIRL-H) which builds the resilience of adolescents and young people, improves their capacity and linkages to economic opportunities, health and education resources. Some of the CIPP participants received peacebuilding trainings and then served as enumerators and facilitators in the GIRL-H community level activities, for which they were remunerated. This approach to support the same beneficiaries with more than one activity was reported to improve self-confidence and social wellbeing; the remuneration and small grants also significantly improved the economic situation of those involved and was reported to stabilize families.

Because of the opportunities for economic empowerment, CIPP has been able to achieve more peace impacts in communities through cultural festivals where people come together and celebrate as well as share information around security. Some community members have reported an increase in motivation because they are in a more stable economic position to self-lead peace initiatives and more fully engaged in peacebuilding activities.

### **Good practices and lessons learned**

- Development interventions strongly contribute to peacebuilding efforts and vice versa. Additionally, peacebuilding efforts provide the appropriate balance that strengthens the impacts of humanitarian and development interventions, repairs and strengthens relationships among conflicting groups who are recipients of humanitarian and development interventions, connects and/or reconnects the people to governance for accountability, and provides a conflict-sensitive lens throughout the HDP nexus’ cycle of intervention.
- The success of humanitarian and development interventions relies heavily on thoroughly mainstreamed conflict-sensitive peacebuilding efforts. The reverse is also the case for peacebuilding program portfolios, which must intentionally incorporate packages that, in addition to strengthening human relationships and social cohesion, can improve the overall economic, social, psychological wellbeing of individuals and communal groups.
- For dedicated peacebuilding programs, it is important to consider the prospect of ‘rewarding’ program participants with *peace dividends* for their acceptance, for investing commitments and efforts to improve their capacity and engagements to manage and/or resolve prevalent and emerging conflict issues, serve as peace ‘ambassadors’ at family, communal and governance levels. These *peace dividends* are components within peacebuilding programs that serve as quick impact projects (QIPs) and can be jointly enjoyed by conflicting groups, communities and institutions. Importantly, QIPs that yield or grant access to economic impacts can provide the balance needed for stable inter-personal relationships that enriched the social, economic, and psychological wellbeing of individuals and communities by addressing short-term needs and long-term peace and development.

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<sup>28</sup> See Mercy Corps, [Feed the Future Nigeria Rural Resilience Activity](#) and [Mercy Corps’ peacebuilding work](#), accessed 21 August 2023.

## Key recommendations for the EU

- When the EU is funding only one or two component nexus projects in a context where all three needs exist, it should require that those implementing projects in the same geographic locations attend learning and sharing events that the EU and other donors convene on how the different components of the HDP nexus are complementing one another, even if funded by different donors, to meet the needs of the communities. It should require 'light' touch reporting on this to ensure that it happens. This could mean identifying ways, as CIPP did, to make connections with other projects of the same organisation, or working with others (government and non-government institutions) to ensure a holistic approach at the community level. This would emphasise the focus of better coordination and cohesion that the HDP nexus is pushing for.
- At the start of an HDP nexus project, the EU should require a strong integration of peace into the humanitarian and development components. For instance, if there is a small grant initiative, how can these recipients be brought together to learn and share about their issues and concerns, and work together to solve them. Thus, building trust, supporting social cohesion and community networks.
- HDP nexus programming should have a strong whole of community approach. When the EU can fund all three components under one project, this can make a significant difference in terms of impact. However, if it cannot, it should look to coordinate geographic preferences in bid and selection processes so that there is geographic overlap in project implementation.



Women supported through CIPP on their cassava farm. © Mercy Corps



### 3.6. Nonviolent Peaceforce in South Sudan

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#### Overview

Violent conflicts, protection risks and the needs of civilian populations emerge and exist within complex, interlinked systems. This is the case in Upper Nile State, South Sudan – a region that faces poverty, state fragility, forced displacement and climate change, and where responses to these challenges must recognise the ways these forces shape and are deeply interlinked with violent conflict and humanitarian needs. This case study explores one programme Nonviolent Peaceforce (NP) is currently implementing in collaboration with communities and Solidarities International (SI) in Upper Nile State. The programme aims to work across siloes and integrate humanitarian action with longer term development and peacebuilding work to meet civilian needs in dignified and sustainable ways.

In Upper Nile State, communities face systemic challenges across several fronts. Despite national efforts to address conflict dynamics, such as the Revitalised Agreement on the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS), communities in Upper Nile continue to face violence at the sub-national and intercommunal levels, climate shocks related to flooding, mass displacement, and conflict over access to resources. In 2021, extreme flooding in the region led to mass displacement of households, loss of livelihoods, rises in extreme food insecurity and malnutrition rates, and the destruction of critical infrastructure – including for water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH). Communities in Upper Nile are living in remote locations, with very limited access to services and markets, particularly for those who reside outside of the Malakal Protection of Civilians (POC) site. This includes limited access to clean drinking water, in conjunction with open defecation due to lack of latrines.

The extreme food insecurity the region faces has contributed to major protection concerns and risks, including tensions and violent conflict over resources, child labour, and sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). Crucially, systemic shocks have exacerbated conflicts between different communities, often along clan and sub-clan lines. Communal tensions have been ongoing between Shilluk, Dinka Padang, and Nuer communities. These tensions have often escalated into open violence, including SGBV, injuries, and civilians deaths.

In response to ongoing needs in Upper Nile State, NP and SI joined forces to partner on a project funded by the European Union (EU) that aims to strengthen community resilience to external shocks and access to resources over the long term, as well as to prevent potential conflict arising related to resource scarcity, whilst simultaneously providing support to address immediate civilian protection and humanitarian needs.

The project animates the HDP nexus in two primary ways. The first is as an overarching ethos of project design, where the project outcomes and theory of change themselves integrate different areas of need and expertise: bringing a conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding lens to WASH implementation; addressing access to material resources as a way of strengthening the protective environment and preventing violence.

A primary example of realising these goals to date is how the partners and communities themselves have collaborated across WASH, food security and livelihoods (FSL), and protection. SI plan to rehabilitate 9 water sources across 3 counties as part of the project, as well as to distribute livelihood kits (such as those that support main cereal crops, vegetables farming and fishing activities). Unlike conventional programming, where sites or distributions might be selected based more on most acute needs, access, and/or cost considerations, the project integrates this decision-making with protection concerns, prioritising areas more prone to conflict over access to water and resources.

To understand protection risks and needs of communities and how they are shaped by access to resources, teams held joint meetings with community members and leaders, working with them to identify priorities and

ensuring they have opportunities to shape the project from the outset. Communities have now formed inclusive Advisory Boards that meet monthly. Each payam's advisory board is made up of a chief, local religious leaders, youth leaders, women leaders, and prominent community representatives, including people with disabilities, from a range of different community groups.

The purpose of these boards is not only to shape project implementation and provide frequent feedback on programme effectiveness but also to provide spaces for communities to plan and work together over the longer term toward sustainable peace and development. Martha, a member of an advisory board, shared that “we used to simply let our leaders handle conflict resolution on their own, but after training, my fellow women and I realised that we can make significant contributions to conflict resolution and violence prevention in our communities.”<sup>29</sup>

In addition, the project supports Women's Civic Action Groups who work directly in their communities across protection, WASH and FSL interventions. The goal of these groups is not only to strengthen intracommunity capacity and knowledge across these areas, but also that the groups become self-sustaining over time, ensuring an effective transfer of skills and contributing to the localisation of support. In addition, the groups act to support social cohesion over the longer term by inviting women from different clans and sub-clans to work together. In Baliet and Melut, Nuer, Dinka and Shilluk women work alongside each other to identify and respond to key tension points.

Importantly, in addition to the external project goals and ethos itself, the secondary way that this project animates the HDP nexus is through practices of operation internally, where NP and SI work with intentional collaboration at all levels – from teams on the ground in Upper Nile State, through to management levels in Juba. The intent of this project is to interweave the organisations' respective areas of expertise – NP from peacebuilding and civilian protection perspectives, and SI from humanitarian and development angles – to work together to implement a much more integrated and effective intervention.

### **Good practices and lessons learned**

- Start with communities: The HDP nexus can't just be about humanitarian, development and peacebuilding organisations. By recognising and situating local communities themselves as primary leaders and stakeholders in interventions, particularly those most marginalised from decision-making such as women and youth, integration of HDP nexus thinking is much more likely across sectors. At the same time, the project shows how organisations can assist communities to access international coordination mechanisms, and simultaneously draw international actors into spaces where communities are already making essential contributions to relief, peace, and development. Closing the gap between international and local action is a parallel process that helps to close gaps between humanitarian, development, and peace work.
- Programming needs to be mutually reinforcing and integrated: This programming works because of the way it is integrated. It is designed to reinforce the strengths of each actor – NP, SI, as well as communities themselves. By layering different forms of expertise and knowledge and working together, we co-create a much stronger project. This is not just a matter of project design or by virtue of a consortia, but integration as a daily task: sharing updates, planning and reporting together, coordinating logistics. This integration needs to occur on every level, from those on the ground to senior management.
- One project is not enough: HDP nexus principles have to be integrated across the humanitarian and peacebuilding sectors more broadly. When projects that don't follow these principles occur in the same context (for example, when food distribution boats stop in a community they are not actually providing food aid to, or if there are not partners to refer to present in an area) this can have ripple effects and compromise community trust of service providers more generally. The more HDP programming is common across sectors, the more this can be avoided.

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<sup>29</sup> The name was changed.

## Key recommendations for the EU

- Institutional integration within the EU: The security situation in Greater Upper Nile is constantly changing, requiring nimble responses from partners. Unlike the support provided through DG ECHO, other EU instruments are not emergency funding mechanisms, and there are often barriers to programming with the level of flexibility required in this context. More integration between different EU services (and donor agencies in general) and instruments is required.
- Policy integration within the EU: Though the EU funds unarmed civilian protection work like that integrated into this project, and programme managers know that this approach is effective, this has not yet translated at the policy level. Greater emphasis on the capacity and importance of civilian-led interventions is critical to implementing HDP nexus principles in ways that are sustainable and effective.
- Risk and creativity: In this case, the willingness of the EU to back a pilot project, to work out iteratively together what is working and what is not, and to follow the lead of communities is proving an essential ingredient in the project's success. More appetite for risk, creativity, and commitment to programming that is context-specific and community-based is an important pathway forward.



Conflict management and violence prevention training at Warjwok Boma, Malakal Upper Nile, January 2023. © Nonviolent Peaceforce

## 3.7. Oxfam in Myanmar

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### Overview

Myanmar's Kachin and Northern Shan states are resource-rich areas that have faced decades of conflict. Since the military coup in 2021, these conflict dynamics have become more complex given the struggles for control over territory and resources. Ethnic Armed Organisations (EAOs) continue to fight “against the lack of development support and economic growth, minimal political inclusion and routine human rights abuses.”<sup>30</sup> There is growing frustration and anger from those living in Kachin and Northern Shan toward those living outside of the area who are gaining from resource exploitation. In 2011, the conflict between the Kachin Independence Army and the Myanmar Military (Tatmadaw) was reignited, which “resulted in the long-term displacement of over 100,000 people in Kachin and Northern Shan. Furthermore, the military coup has added an extra dimension of uncertainty to the existing conflict drivers and has also meant that large-scale return and resettlement programmes have been halted.”<sup>31</sup>

From February 2015 to August 2022, Oxfam Myanmar implemented the Durable Peace Programme (DPP),<sup>32</sup> which was funded by the EU. Now in its third phase, the DPP aims to facilitate durable peace and equitable development in Kachin and Northern Shan through an integrated and holistic locally-led approach that recognises the diverse needs of conflict-affected communities, especially internally displaced persons (IDPs), and seeks to support these communities as change agents, especially women and youth.<sup>33</sup>

Specifically in Phase 2, the priorities were linked to relief with rehabilitation and development by focusing on supporting (1) durable solutions and community resilience; (2) livelihoods and income generation; (3) peacebuilding and social cohesion; (4) gender equality and prevention of SGBV; and (5) deepening expertise of civil society. Activities entailed income and livelihood generation projects and training, including small start-up business grants, working with IDPs in camps as well as community members, raising awareness of and addressing land rights issues to resolve disputes and ensure peaceful resolution of issues.<sup>34</sup>

The DPP is an initiative that was started by and is made up of local organisations – the Joint Strategy Team (JST). Prior to the third phase in November 2021, the JST outlined their priorities in a paper titled “JST positioning on DPP 3.” In this document, Oxfam was recommended to lead DPP because of its strong existing working relationship with local organisations and the trust that is held between the JST and Oxfam. As the lead organisation, Oxfam oversees this multi-sectoral programme and provides cross-cutting technical expertise with two other consortium partners: Trocaire and Swissaid.

### Good practices and lessons learned

- In contexts that have prolonged displacement and ongoing conflict where the government is contested and peace processes have broken down, working with local partners and leaders who understand the context and have strong links with the community is essential. The strength of the local leadership in DPP has been a decisive element in its overall success, accountability and trust with communities. This leadership has allowed the programme to navigate these complexities and balance ambitions with pragmatism.
- The ability to implement a project over the long-term, in this case eight years, has allowed the project to be known, gain a strong level of trust and commitment from partners, beneficiaries and political parties. Multi-year funding has proven to be beneficial for all consortium partners to learn from previous phases and

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<sup>30</sup> Oxfam (2022), “Nexus Learnings from Myanmar: The Durable Peace Programme”.

<sup>31</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>32</sup> In December 2022, a third phase was launched for a 24-month period. However, this case study is focused on phase two of the project.

<sup>33</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>34</sup> Oxfam Myanmar (2022), “Results Area Two: Livelihood and Income Generation”.



improve succeeding ones, increase the space and time for longer-term collaboration between different components, and enhance trust-building between partners. Building trust, consensus and mutual accountability have been important to effective implementation and to help to navigate the political sensitivities and risks involved in working across the HDP nexus in a contested context.

- Through learning in DPP, Oxfam Myanmar has recognised that HDP nexus initiatives should use peacebuilding as the starting point in order to first understand the root causes of conflict and triggers for instability. Then, it can design projects that integrate humanitarian and development activities that specifically support intercommunal bonds and resilience. In a context such as Myanmar, without addressing the root causes of conflict and instability, humanitarian and development initiatives will continue in an unending cycle. Whilst humanitarian initiatives may provide for immediate needs, humanitarian or development actions alone are not addressing the factors that led to the man-made humanitarian crisis in the first place. Simply adding an intercommunal dialogue to a humanitarian or development program is not truly achieving the HDP nexus goal; it can instead be achieved by empowering local populations to attain a politically and socio-economically just society.

### Key recommendations for the EU

- The EU should consider the entry point for all HDP nexus programmes as peacebuilding, which allows for the drivers of instability and conflict to be identified first, and then the project's thematic areas can be pursued. This is opposed to starting with a thematic area and then integrating peace into it. Starting with peacebuilding works better in contexts that are fragile and conflict-affected, because if peace is not a starting point, there can be assumptions made about what are the technical needs of a community, which may miss some of the nuances that help tailor a project to a specific context.
- The EU should ensure that in locations that have host communities and displaced persons living side by side, HDP nexus approaches identify opportunities to integrate both groups into projects. This includes bringing them together for the same activities in each of the components. In this way, projects organically can foster opportunities for increasing understanding and trust between groups. This is especially the case if they have joint goals such as resolving a specific issue – from livelihoods to natural resource management to education.
- Requiring national or local organisations to play leadership roles in integrated programming can strengthen HDP nexus approaches. Partners should share leadership in driving projects, including making recommendations on which international organisations should be brought into support or lead delivery. Rebalancing the power dynamics from international to national and local can be a positive shift towards more localised approaches.



Durable Peace Programme © Oxfam



### 3.8. Search for Common Ground in the Sahel

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#### Overview

Since 2012, the Central Sahel countries of Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger have been plagued by severe insecurity, leading to loss of lives, widespread instability, and massive displacement. This dire situation has resulted in an unprecedented humanitarian crisis, negatively impacting social cohesion, peace, and local development. The volatile security context in the region has incurred significant costs for the humanitarian and governmental sectors. For example, across the Sahel, it is estimated that “internal displacement has increased tenfold since 2013, from 217,000 to a staggering 2.1 million by late 2021. The number of refugees in the Central Sahel now stands at 410,000 [in 2021].”<sup>35</sup> In addition, there has been an increase in local violence and conflict between social groups (farmers and herders, for example) and among ethnic groups.

In response to this multidimensional crisis, a four-year humanitarian, development and peace programme known as Resilience and Social Cohesion in the Sahel (PROGRESS) began in 2020. It was developed by eight partners and funded by the EU through the EU Trust Fund (EUTF). Action Contre la Faim (ACF) Spain is the lead agency with ACF of France, Terre des Hommes (TDH), the Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development (ACTED) and Search for Common Ground (Search), and national NGOs Wu-Pakwe (Burkina Faso), TINTUA (Burkina Faso), Adkoul (Niger) and Tassaght (Mali) as co-beneficiaries. The project runs until May 2024.

The overarching aim of the project is to improve the living conditions, resilience to food and nutritional insecurity and conflict, and social cohesion, of vulnerable populations in the most fragile regions of the borders between Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger. It has two specific objectives: to “strengthen the livelihoods of agricultural and pastoral populations by sustainably and structurally strengthening resilience to food and nutritional insecurity [...]” and to “support local communities and institutions in conflict prevention and to strengthen social cohesion.”

Given the complex and interlinked challenges faced in the region, this programme offers a unique opportunity for peacebuilding. This includes improving “relations between residents and representatives of state authorities in the project municipalities” to foster “social cohesion, conflict prevention and management for the inhabitants of the project municipalities.” The programme is designed to allow peacebuilding organisations to support consortium partners to integrate conflict sensitivity (CS) into their programming to avoid exacerbating conflict while maximising positive impacts. The peacebuilding component is seen as a way to improve the effectiveness across the humanitarian and development components which goes beyond ‘Do No Harm’ approaches. The peacebuilding component enables consortium partners to identify entry points for contributing to sustainable peace in their humanitarian and development focused activities.

#### Good practices and lessons learned

- In the context of the multidimensional crisis in the Central Sahel, the implementation of HDP programmes by consortium partners can foster cooperation, coherence, and complementarity among the actors involved. This goes beyond the mere utilisation of individual expertise, by actively utilising the strengths of each partner to address the diverse aspects of the crisis simultaneously. By doing so, it enables the reduction of overall vulnerability, the strengthening of risk management capacities, and the ability to address root causes of conflict across all project components. The PROGRESS consortium is a good example of this multi-actor collaboration.

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<sup>35</sup> From <https://www.unhcr.org/news/briefing-notes/decade-sahel-conflict-leaves-25-million-people-displaced>, accessed 5 May 2023.

- In a volatile context, regular and jointly-planned conflict analysis can identify emerging risks or opportunities that may influence programmatic approaches. It allows for real-time adjustments to activities and target groups, and the ability to integrate recommendations immediately to ensure that programmes remain relevant and sensitive to the evolving context. In the case of PROGRESS, for example, herder-farmer conflicts in the Liptako-Gourma area have a long history and are more pronounced in some areas than others, but across the region conflict analysis showed that insecurity due to non-state armed groups was increasing and undermining social cohesion. By understanding this, the programme was able to make clear plans for adaptation by increasing social cohesion and solidarity efforts.
- The integration of peacebuilding into humanitarian and development projects made possible the identification of peacebuilding opportunities in project activities. Conflict analysis and joint analysis carried out by the consortium partners identified that water points, which were part of the project, could be an area of tension between community members and herders, as well as an opportunity for social cohesion activities to improve the governance, access and management of water points in many communities. Community members can become leaders of and actors for peace across the components of the HDP nexus.

### Key recommendations for the EU

- HDP nexus approaches require regular context and conflict analyses at key phases in the project or at key moments of change in the context. This is an important element that requires in-depth expertise, as well as the technical skills and the local confidence that peacebuilding organisations have developed. The EU should require that all projects have analysis integrated into the project cycle and required as a deliverable for projects. Findings from conflict analysis should then be explicitly articulated and tied back into project adaptations as appropriate.
- For projects using HDP nexus approaches, the EU should ensure clear parameters and more adaptation and flexibility for what types of adaptations are allowable, and to what extent, as the context changes and the needs of the beneficiaries shift during the project timeframe. This is crucial given that a core aim of the HDP nexus is for actions to be able to evolve as the needs of the community and beneficiaries change. For example, if there is increased insecurity in an area there will need to be a greater focus on peacebuilding; or if a flood hits, there will need to be more of a focus on emergency relief.
- The EU should ensure that projects report on how HDP components and activities are interlinked to ensure that peacebuilding activities are integrated with development and humanitarian activities. For example, the management of water points needs to integrate more community dialogue and peaceful resolution of issues around the resource, going beyond simply providing water points to communities. By requiring this more mainstream approach from its project partners, the EU will go a long way towards ensuring that peacebuilding and social cohesion are integrated into development and humanitarian activities.



Activity with young leaders in the PROGRESS programme in Diapaga, Burkina Faso. © Search for Common Ground/Emmanuel Kabore

### 3.9. Un Ponte Per in Iraq

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#### Overview

Iraq has been beset by conflict and its consequences since the 1980s. The latest iteration was the Daesh conflict which displaced six million people and left approximately 1.2 million displaced, including 30,000 Iraqis in North-east Syria, mostly women and children. In 2022, there were reportedly 4,976,286 returnees, and for 52 percent of them the severity of the conditions in their locations of return was categorised as medium or high.<sup>36</sup> Society is regularly confronted by conflicts, traumas and sectarian divisions. “[W]eak state institutions are challenged daily by the many militias, affiliated to the regional powers, which control infrastructures, checkpoints, as well as portions of the territory.”<sup>37</sup>

Un Ponte Per (UPP) is an international solidarity association and NGO which was founded in 1991 immediately after the Iraq war to support the local population affected by armed conflict, prevent armed conflict and protect civilians affected by violence. Since 2016, UPP has been working on peacebuilding in Daesh-affected areas and has adopted an HDP nexus approach as a strategy to work across Iraq to deliver emergency relief, support improved healthcare and education, and promote social cohesion between and within communities.

UPP has several projects which collectively create an integrated approach to building durable solutions to community issues and needs in the same geographic areas. This includes projects focused on social cohesion, reconstruction, health and interreligious dialogue. For instance, in the Ninewa Governorate the ‘bridging communities’ project fosters dialogue and collaboration among diverse community groups, promotes social cohesion and addresses underlying tensions in conflict-affected areas. Meanwhile, another project focuses on reconstruction and infrastructure development which aims to restore critical infrastructure such as schools, hospitals, and public facilities, thereby also contributing to the stability and well-being of the communities in Ninewa.

In the Nineveh Governorate, The Salamtak projects (I to IV) were designed to strengthen the healthcare system by providing essential medical services, training healthcare professionals, and improving access to quality healthcare for all residents. For the peacebuilding component, two projects are focused on interreligious dialogue and social cohesion with religious leaders, organisations, community members from different ethnic backgrounds.

Through working in partnership with community members and local organisations, UPP has been able to identify specific needs and develop projects connected to each component of the HDP nexus. Intentionally linking the components of the HDP nexus through different projects together ensures that they complement and reinforce one another. By implementing these diverse projects in a coordinated manner, the organisation effectively employs the HDP nexus approach to address community needs and contribute to sustainable solutions in a more comprehensive manner.

#### Good practices and lessons learned

- Partnerships in communities, with CSOs, local and traditional authorities are key to successful HDP nexus approaches and ways of working, given the coordination that is needed to successfully integrate the different components of the HDP nexus in often volatile and complex contexts. This is because not only are different types of expertise required, but a larger network also allows for increased coordination as well as investment

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<sup>36</sup> “Subdistricts are classified as ‘hotspots’ if they score highly in terms of severity on at least one of the two scales (either livelihoods and basic services, or safety and social cohesion) or if they score medium in terms of severity but also host relatively large numbers of returnees, at least 60,000 returnees in a subdistrict”; IOM, Return Index, Findings round Sixteen – Iraq (2022).

<sup>37</sup> <https://www.unponteper.it/it/projects/assistenza-scolastica-sanitaria-ritorno-ninive/>, accessed 27 June 2023.

in the wider community towards the same goals. It also helps to avoid duplication or replication of similar activities in the same contexts given the collective knowledge of existing formal and informal partnerships.

- A focus on peacebuilding can strengthen the ability to deliver humanitarian and development activities in a more effective way and support long-term change. Furthermore, peacebuilding needs to focus on preventing rising conflicts that may be developing from social, economic and cultural tensions and crises that have been reinforced by political changes, health crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic and economic insecurity.
- It is important for the HDP nexus to be seen as an overarching approach beyond the project level. For UPP in Iraq, the HDP nexus is a strategic way of working which encourages different types of activities to come together and complement one another for a more sustainable impact. For example, as part of rehabilitation projects in the Nineveh after Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS), UPP found it essential to focus on immediate humanitarian needs, long-term development goals such as education and livelihood programmes, and peacebuilding to support healing in the communities.

### Key recommendations for the EU

- As part of HDP nexus approaches, it is essential for the EU to recognise that peacebuilding activities need to be implemented by organisations that have experience in peacebuilding. Peacebuilding can often be seen as a “softer” type of activity that might require less skills than a humanitarian or development project. However, there needs to be an investment made in ensuring that local peace workers know how to consider security and safety issues related to the implementation of peacebuilding and conflict prevention initiatives, as well as of development and humanitarian activities. This is an important element in preventing or at least mitigating risks that are derived from a worsening of political, social, economic and health situations in contexts such as Iraq.
- The EU should ensure that in projects that have human rights components, there are activities focused on raising awareness with activists of the roles they can play in ensuring social cohesion while at the same time advocating for change. This can be done through dedicated funding for the provision of tools and skills (e.g. trainings on digital security) on the importance of the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, and trainings on conflict prevention.
- Funding for peacebuilding programmes needs to be sustained for at least five years to ensure durable solutions across the HDP components, and the peacebuilding component of the HDP nexus in particular needs to include adequate time for phasing out and handing over the process when a project is ending. This helps the community and local organisations to organise themselves to take over initiatives specifically focused on social cohesion, peacebuilding and conflict prevention. This also helps prepare them for being able to apply for funds, and to integrate peacebuilding into humanitarian and development initiatives. It is not sustainable to expect peacebuilding work to be done on a voluntary basis.



Bridging Communities Program in Ninewa, Iraq © Un Ponte Per

### 3.10. World Vision globally

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#### Overview

Conflict, lingering socioeconomic impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, and rising costs exacerbated by the war in Ukraine have resulted in global inflation, price spikes, and shortages in food, fuel, and fertiliser around the world. These have culminated in alarming levels of food insecurity and people living in or precariously near famine conditions. Because of the rising need for both short- and long-term support, World Vision has escalated organisation-wide efforts to scale up operations, increase funding, influence decision makers, and inform and mobilise the public<sup>38</sup> in relation to combatting global hunger.

World Vision has developed an organisational strategic approach to combat global hunger which includes a HDP nexus approach. The Global Hunger Response (GHR), launched in May 2022, aims to reduce acute food insecurity and improve the resilience of 30 million of the most vulnerable people in countries experiencing growing hunger and the threat of famine. The strategic objectives of GHR include (1) improving access to food for affected households; (2) increasing access to curative and preventive quality health and nutrition services; (3) improving access to clean water and sanitation and hygiene (WASH) promotion services to mitigate waterborne diseases; (4) ensuring protection for children, women, and vulnerable groups, including psychosocial support; and (5) enhancing household resilience to food insecurity.<sup>39</sup>

In 2019, World Vision developed a 'fragile context programme approach' that explicitly acknowledged the importance of incorporating peacebuilding and using an integrated approach between development and relief programmes to be able to achieve its mission. It states: "World Vision is committed to the sustained well-being of children, especially the most vulnerable, and we believe that working across the HDP [nexus] [...] unleashes the potential for deeper, transformational change to happen, even in the most challenging contexts."<sup>40</sup>

GHR is working to respond to the Category III humanitarian crisis,<sup>41</sup> and while designed to address the growing food crisis, the GHR acknowledges the importance of working across the HDP nexus for sustainable results.<sup>42</sup> As such the response adopts an HDP nexus approach to contribute "to good governance, sustainable and equitable economic development, peace and reconciliation, and civic empowerment"<sup>43</sup> through specific activities, such as mobilising communities and revitalising economies to encourage social and economic participation and achieve positive peace. World Vision also mobilises and empowers communities to advocate for their rights including to manage natural resources and mitigate resource-based conflicts.

#### Good practices and lessons learned

- World Vision has always engaged with disparate stakeholders, such as faith leaders, health committees and community health workers, local government structures, children and young people, and local leaders, to further its disaster/humanitarian response objectives. This includes, as outlined in the GHR, ensuring longer-term change can be achieved by incorporating both humanitarian and development components of the HDP nexus, while building trust and supporting social cohesion in communities where there are weak or broken social contracts.

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<sup>38</sup> World Vision, Global Hunger Response, [Capacity Statement](#), November 2022.

<sup>39</sup> World Vision, Global Hunger Response, [Response Plan](#), September 2022.

<sup>40</sup> World Vision, ['Peacebuilding'](#), p4, accessed 22 May 2023.

<sup>41</sup> World Vision determines the category of a response based on an agreed set of globally-recognised external indicators of the scale and severity of humanitarian need and the complexity of the response context. Category III is the highest category.

<sup>42</sup> World Vision, [One year on: Global Hunger Response](#), May 2023..

<sup>43</sup> World Vision, ['Peacebuilding'](#), p. 4, accessed 22 May 2023.



- To be effective, a balance needs to be found between flexibility and consistency. Flexibility to adapt interventions is necessary when the context changes and needs shift, such as in the case of an outbreak of violence or a drought. This is especially the case when working across the three components of the HDP nexus. World Vision has found that coming to a shared understanding with communities of the root causes and drivers of fragility, as well as programming risks for integrated multi-sector programmes, can ensure projects have a clear goal and aim and approach on how to reach nexus goals, which can be adapted as dynamics change. Being consistent in and having organisational wide clarity on ways of working, such as through partnership models and strong clear communications, can support adaptive programming.
- Taking a strategic-level approach to the HDP nexus in the GHR, demonstrates senior-level support for, investment in, and commitment to working across nexus components. Drawing humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding together within GHR programmes has shown that a more holistic approach is possible when responding programmatically to acute hunger issues within emergency, conflict, and fragile contexts. It also helps to promote and create spaces for learning across World Vision because there is a shared and accepted framework for integrated approaches. Furthermore, having an overarching strategy, which uses a HDP nexus approach, makes it easier to draw together lessons at the organisational level, facilitating advocacy for policy and practice change at the global level.

### Key recommendations for the EU

- The EU should consider a strategic approach to using the HDP nexus. It should review its thematic focus areas in fragile and conflict-affected contexts and develop integrated strategic approaches that address short- and long-term issues. There should be an emphasis on ensuring that the focus on peacebuilding cuts across thematic focus areas and differing timeframes.
- The EU should review processes, policies and funding mechanisms to ensure that it understands where consistency is essential and flexibility necessary for delivering on strategic goals, and funding mechanisms are fit for purpose in contexts that have a need for humanitarian, development and peacebuilding activities.
- The EU should institutionalise a system for EU delegations to speak directly with diverse community members in countries with humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding needs within the EU's geographical priority areas to better understand issues and how to integrate solutions that directly address them. While most aid implementers have moved towards a stronger engagement with communities, such as the focus on accountability to affected populations, donors need to do the same to ensure that they also understand where people are and how their needs can be better met in the short- and long-term. This will increase momentum from maintaining aid dependency to ending need.



A space designed to provide psychosocial support to children affected by the 2022 earthquake in Haiti. © World Vision