

# Humanitarian-Development Nexus: What do evaluations say about it?

Emerging findings from a mapping and synthesis of  
evaluative evidence

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**Humanitarian Evaluation Interest Group**

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# World Humanitarian Summit and SDGs links

- Managing crisis risks and reducing vulnerability is as much as a “humanitarian imperative” to save lives as a “development necessity” to ensure progress towards SDGs.
- One of the 24 policy shifts in the Agenda for Humanity
- Humanitarian –Development -> Interface / Nexus/ Gap/ Divide?
- Actually more than two dimensions?

# Background and overview

- Multi-disciplinary team
- Desk-based analysis of 109 evaluations + KIIs
- 9 study countries: Ethiopia; South Sudan; Malawi; Sierra Leone; oPt; Afghanistan; Philippines; Haiti; Colombia
  
- Study co-funded: FAO; UNHCR; UNDP
- Managed: FAO; UNHCR; WHO
- Contribution and inputs from all HEIG member agencies.

# Definitional and conceptual issues

- Conceptual boundaries / lack of coherent conceptual frameworks
- Nexus as a way of bringing together a range of related concerns
  - Response to acute and chronic crisis; LRRD; transitions; DRR; recovery; human security; stabilization; peacebuilding efforts
- Country and sample selection: where do we *expect to see* some discussions that touch on different pivotal aspects of the ‘nexus’?

# [Humanitarian]

# Nexus

# [Development + Peace Build]



# Cluster (& Cluster) Specific Input

# [Climate Change + Disaster Preparedness]



# Where and about what is there evaluative evidence on the nexus?

- Nexus approached from different entry points in the evaluation cohorts (humanitarian / development / 'grey area')
- Key evaluation questions asked around
  - *Doing the right thing* (changes in the nature of conflict, risk and vulnerability changes)
  - *Doing things right* (operational concerns; aid architecture)
  - *Positioning* (in relation to 'common outcomes')

# About what is there evaluative evidence on the nexus?

- Differing entry points provide different ambitions
  - Small humanitarian project evaluations pay limited attention to development
  - Larger overarching humanitarian evaluations pay more attention to development
  - Development evaluations pay significant attention to risk and vulnerability and links to DRR, peacebuilding, etc., but frequently overlook humanitarian programming per se
- The quality of the evaluation team's contextual knowledge determines the extent to which they integrate nexus perspectives

## How do evaluations analyse the nexus?

- *Relevance* relates to ‘doing the right thing’ in relation to conflict and vulnerability, which may be beyond the temporal scope of the evaluation
- *Effectiveness* mostly still framed in ‘linear’ terms, and often leads back to aid architecture (i.e., ‘old LRRD’)
- *Coordination* and *coherence* increasingly relating to the space for and quality of relations with the state (i.e., NWoW)
- *Positioning* links relevance and effectiveness, but the balance relates to the scope of the evaluation



# What do evaluations cover in relation to the nexus?

- Major differences in the ways the nexus is framed across countries
- Emerging differences across sector-specific evaluations:
  - Strong focus where livelihoods and food security merge
  - Health and nutrition focus on preparedness but some striking exclusion of the ‘big picture’ of health systems
  - Shelter, WATSAN evaluations sometimes critical of project tunnel vision
  - Infrastructure-related evaluations highlight risk landscape

# Where are the emerging gaps?

- Various pivotal nexus that are frequently overlooked (between hum/dev and climate, peacebuilding, ...)
- The ‘household nexus’ is largely forgotten
- ‘Reverse resilience’ (from development to relief)
- Identification of collective outcomes
- Beyond ‘good things’ to provide evidence on outcomes of DRR, capacity, gender programming, etc.
- Assessing whether we are ‘leaving no one behind’
- Opening the black box of the ‘political economy’

# Towards a taxonomy of different nexus?

- From humanitarian response to recovery
- From receiving aid to reducing risk
- Towards increased human security
- Using the 'peace-dividend' for stabilisation
- From aid-led to government-led social protection
- Linking and overlapping of aid modalities
- Becoming more savvy about contextual factors
- From development to relief

# Emerging insights across the sample

- Reference to ‘common outcomes’ remains implicit
- Evaluations call for:
  - greater attention to contextual analysis
  - look deeper into the nature of crisis qualifiers and modifiers (how risks converge)
- Importance of recognising the different ‘nexuses’ and ‘lexicons’ in different countries
- Still unclear what ‘resilience’ means in practice
- Using the nexus as a tool to determine the scope of evaluations (and avoiding ‘paradigm fatigue’)

# Outstanding questions

- How will different readership and community of practitioners (not limited to evaluators) ‘read’ this mapping and synthesis?
- Is the nexus ‘a bridge too far’ for most evaluation users?
- Is this an a topical issue on which UNEG wishes to focus – also beyond HEIG?