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Evaluation of the Interaction between Humanitarian, Development and Peace (HDP) Efforts in Norwegian Aid

Synthesis Report



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1. Introduction

How can we reinforce linkages between humanitarian efforts, development aid and peace interventions without undermining the humanitarian principles? This question has been discussed over several years in the global development policy debates, recently framed as the “nexus” debate.

After the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016, the Humanitarian, Development and Peace (HDP) nexus has been a term high on the agenda in international development cooperation. The term is linked to debates concerning the persistent divide between humanitarian, development and peace programmes. This divide is characterised by operational, organisational, and financial differences between the humanitarian, development and peace sectors. Recent research and policy documents suggest that better collaboration, coherence, and

complementarity between these sectors may enhance the quality of aid to crisis-affected populations and increase their resilience.¹ Studies and evaluations indicate that there has not been a conscious and wide application of an interlinked HDP approach as of yet. Moreover, the same studies and evaluations point to the need for a coherent HDP approach to be adapted to the specific context in which aid is given.

With this evaluation the Department for Evaluation has aimed to understand the Nexus from a bottom-up perspective. Rather than asking how to understand the concept correctly, or how to finance and organise the Nexus from the top, the goal was to understand what was done in practice in specific country contexts:

To what extent is there actually an interaction between humanitarian, development, and peace in the Norwegian engagement? How is this interaction taking place, where and when?

This two-fold question was studied in three countries: DRC, Ethiopia, and Lebanon. In this evaluation, it is emphasised that coherence between humanitarian, development and peace engagement should be analysed within the specific context. Therefore, the three country studies are regarded as separate country studies.

¹ See e.g. UN Secretary-General’s High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement (2021), “Shining a Light on Internal Displacement: A Vision for the Future”; Center on International Cooperation (CIC), “The Triple Nexus in Practice: Toward a New Way of Working in Protracted and Repeated

Crises” (New York: Center on International Cooperation, 2019); OECD (2019) DAC Recommendations on the Humanitarian Development Peace Nexus; OECD (2017). Humanitarian Development Coherence. World Humanitarian Summit. Putting Policy into Practice; Redvers, L. and B. Parker (2020).

‘Searching for the nexus: Give peace a chance’. The New Humanitarian. 13 May 2020; United Nations and World Bank (2018). Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict. Washington, DC: World Bank.

This synthesis report is summarizing findings from four evaluation reports²:

One report is a **quantitative study of the aid statistics** for the three countries, including a subset of the aid that is geocoded: The geospatial country analysis³. Three reports are **country studies** covering Norwegian aid to **DRC, Ethiopia, and Lebanon**. In this synthesis we try to elicit some findings that may be interesting for other contexts, while being aware that the particular country context is important.



Photo: **Per Kr. Lunden** | Sørvis Kommunikasjon AS

² Department for Evaluation reports 6 – 9/2023. Available at <https://www.norad.no/evaluation>

³ The basis for the analysis was Norwegian aid statistical data for active agreements in the target countries in the 2015-2021 period. The dataset did not encompass projects registered as regional (e.g. the Central African Forest Initiative (CAFI) projects marked as regional, in the case of the DRC) nor core contributions to multilateral organisations. Moreover, a geolocated subset of the Norwegian aid statistical data was

prepared by the Department for Evaluation. This dataset was cleaned and harmonized, including 4,258 records with information about 1,045 interventions, 341 of which are 'health' and 'peace' interventions with 175 of them being geolocated. 'Humanitarian', 'development' and 'peace' are defined using OECD DAC purposes codes and sub-codes, following an approach aligned with the OECD's own definitions of these three categories in its States of Fragility flagship report as well as in other reports. When discussing peace in

general, the definition aligns with Code 152, "Conflict, Peace, and Security." The narrower definition of peace employed in geolocated part of the analysis specifically pertains to Code 15220, "Civilian Peace-Building, Conflict Prevention, and Resolution". For more information on methodology, including constraints and limitations, see Geospatial country analysis, Chapter 2.

2. Coherence: Clarifying Concepts and Analytical Framework



Photo: **Espen Røst** | Panorama

Humanitarian assistance, development aid and peace efforts are all needed at the same time to reduce needs, risk, and vulnerability⁴. Coherence between them supports the prevention of and responses to crises. It helps to better meet immediate humanitarian needs of the most vulnerable (the realm of humanitarian aid) while also addressing the longer-term drivers of vulnerability and root causes of crises coming under the development aid and peace umbrellas.

Organisations have committed to aligning short-, medium-, and long-term objectives with their respective contexts, striving for collective outcomes such as addressing humanitarian needs, addressing the drivers of violent conflict, and developing

institutions, resilience, and capacities in a complementary and synergistic manner⁵.

In this evaluation **coherence** is understood as the compatibility of humanitarian, development, and peace projects⁶ with other humanitarian, development and peace efforts in a given country. Coherence is also described as the extent to which other interventions (particularly policies) support or undermine the intervention, and vice versa⁷.

Coherence has two sub-types: implementation coherence and policy coherence. **Implementation coherence** focuses on the relation between projects, while **policy coherence** examines the consistency between projects and the actor's own policies and commitments.

⁴ IASC (Inter-Agency Standing Committee) (2020). Exploring the Peace within the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus (HDPN). Issue paper. IASC Results Group 4 on Humanitarian-Development Collaboration.

⁵ The peace promise (Agenda for Humanity). Commitments to more effective synergies among peace, humanitarian, and development actions in complex humanitarian situations. 23 May 2016.

⁶ 'Project' and 'intervention' are used interchangeably in the evaluation.

⁷ See definition of Coherence in the International Evaluation Criteria of OECD DAC: [Evaluation Criteria - OECD](#)

A coherent HDP response should meet the following criteria⁸:

- It targets the same population with different types of programmes, regardless of geographic or sectoral boundaries.
- It **involves development actors in the crisis early on** and/or throughout, and links humanitarian efforts with longer-term perspectives.
- It reinforces the linkages between humanitarian, development, and peace projects, **without compromising humanitarian principles**.
- It coordinates and complements the efforts and advantages of different actors, **with a view to achieving collective outcomes** over multiple years.

- It respects humanitarian principles and delivers on commitments related to **conflict sensitivity, local engagement** and capacity building, and **accountability, transparency, non-discrimination, and participation**.

Coherence between projects, or between projects and policies, includes notions such as coordination, complementarity, 'collective outcomes' and synergies.

This evaluation's analytical approach to understand coherence of Norwegian development, humanitarian and peace efforts includes and differentiates between these concepts.

Coordination refers to managing the activities of different individuals, organisations, or agencies so that they work together effectively. For example,

coordination might refer to formal and informal structures and venues, both internal to the Norwegian aid administration and external to it, but also includes the ability to produce and use joint analyses. Furthermore, coordination can refer to international, national, and sub-national levels – for example, participation in local coordination mechanisms and following up overall efforts in central multilateral boards.

Coordination is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for coherence.

While coordination can help to ensure that different projects or policies are aligned with each other, it does not guarantee that they will be coherent. Coherence requires a deeper level of understanding and agreement about the outcomes and overall goals, as well as the specific ways in which

⁸ See OECD (2017). Humanitarian Development Coherence. World Humanitarian Summit. Putting Policy into Practice; Center on International Cooperation (CIC), "The Triple Nexus in Practice: Toward a New Way of Working in Protracted and Repeated Crises" (New York: Center on International Cooperation, 2019); Briggs (2021). Why does aid not target the poorest? *International Studies Quarterly*, 65(3), 739–752;

Briggs, R.C. (2018). Poor targeting: A gridded spatial analysis of the degree to which aid reaches the poor in Africa. *World Development*, 103, 133–148; Briggs, R.C. (2017). Does foreign aid target the poorest? *International Organization*, 71(1), 187–206; Desai and Greenhill, 2017; DI (Development Initiatives) (2020). Development actors at the nexus: Lessons from crises in Bangladesh, Cameroon, and Somalia; OECD (2019) DAC

Recommendations on the Humanitarian Development Peace Nexus; United Nations (2016). One humanity: shared responsibility. Report of the Secretary-General for the World Humanitarian Summit. A/70/709. 2 February 2016.

different projects and policies can contribute to achieving those goals.

In this evaluation, the analysis of coherence has looked at the following aspects of implementation and policy coherence: For *implementation coherence* the evaluation has analysed the interaction between humanitarian, development, and peace engagement for 1) **In time and place** (geographic), and 2) **synergy** dependent on: coordination, collaboration, complementarity.

For *policy coherence* the evaluation has analysed the Norwegian engagement's coherence with 1) **Conflict sensitivity**, 2) **Localisation**, and 3) **Rights-based approaches**.



Photo: Marina Mestres | UN Women | Flickr

3. Implementation Coherence

In this section we are looking at implementation coherence through an analysis of the statistics on Norwegian aid data to the three countries, as well as aid data on projects supported by other OECD DAC countries and multilateral organisations, and the qualitative country analysis is exploring implementation coherence through looking at coordination, complementarity, and collaboration.

Analysing the **statistical aid data**, makes it possible to observe variations in the Norwegian engagement within the three

areas of humanitarian, development, and peace⁹.

Higher allocation for humanitarian over development and peace in all three countries

While Norwegian-funded development projects are more frequent in numbers in all three countries, the **financial disbursement is often higher for humanitarian projects**. The combined average disbursement per humanitarian project is NOK 16 mill. Lebanon and DRC both observed a peak in humanitarian

funding in 2018, whereas in Ethiopia, despite the predominance of development projects, humanitarian projects received higher average funding.

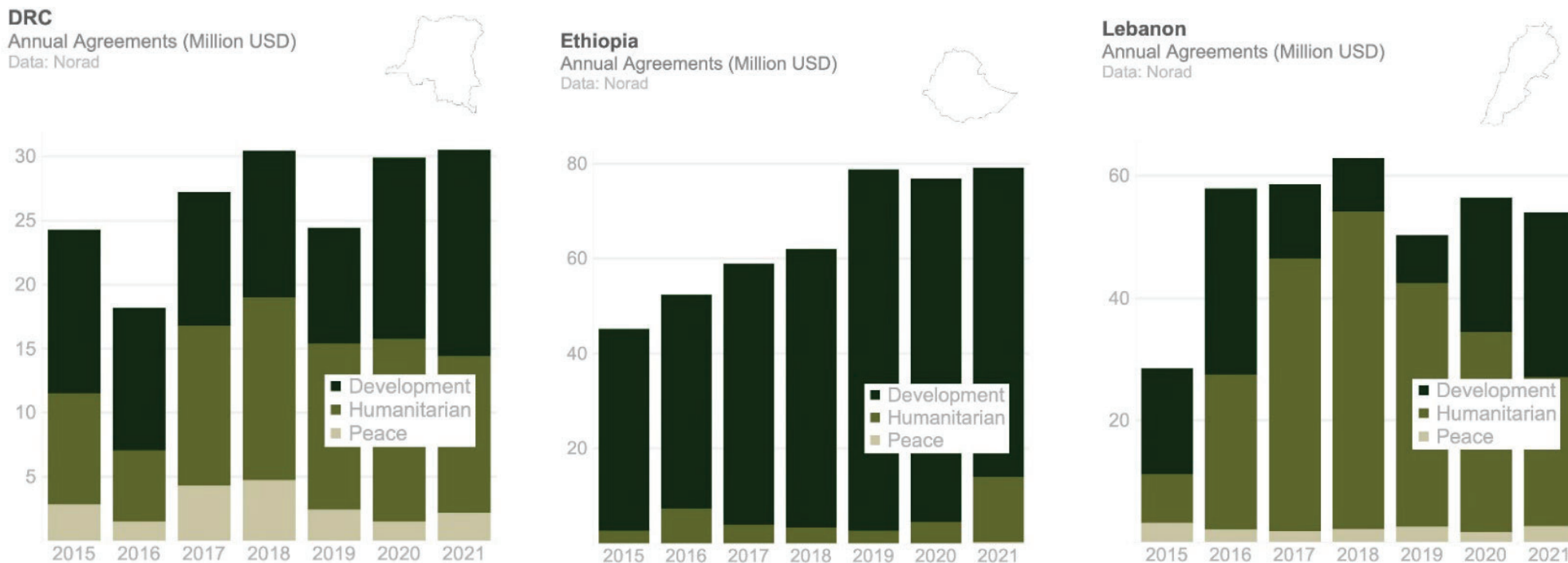
Peace projects are consistently smaller in scale and funding across all three countries.

⁹ ‘Humanitarian’, ‘development’ and ‘peace’ are defined using OECD DAC purposes codes and sub-codes, following an approach aligned with the OECD’s own definitions of these

three categories in its States of Fragility flagship report as well as in other reports.

Figure 1:

Disbursements to projects funded by Norway in the DRC, Ethiopia, and Lebanon, per year and type of project¹⁰



¹⁰ Projects registered as regional (e.g., the Central African Forest Initiative, CAFI, in the case of the DRC), along with core contributions to multilateral organisations, are not represented in the graph.

Dissimilar funding profiles between Norway and other donors

Norway has a distinctive footprint when it comes to funding patterns compared to other donors. In the geospatial report, Norway is compared to all other donors in general (see Figure 2), looking specifically at likeminded donors. In the DRC, Norway's emphasis on humanitarian efforts over development is evident and shares similarities with Sweden, yet diverges significantly from the other Nordic

countries Finland and Denmark. This trend is less pronounced in Ethiopia, where Norway aligns more closely with other countries in prioritizing development interventions. In Lebanon, Norway's approach is markedly different, with a strong preference for humanitarian aid over development, aligning with Sweden but contrasting with the Netherlands, Denmark, and Finland, which favor development.

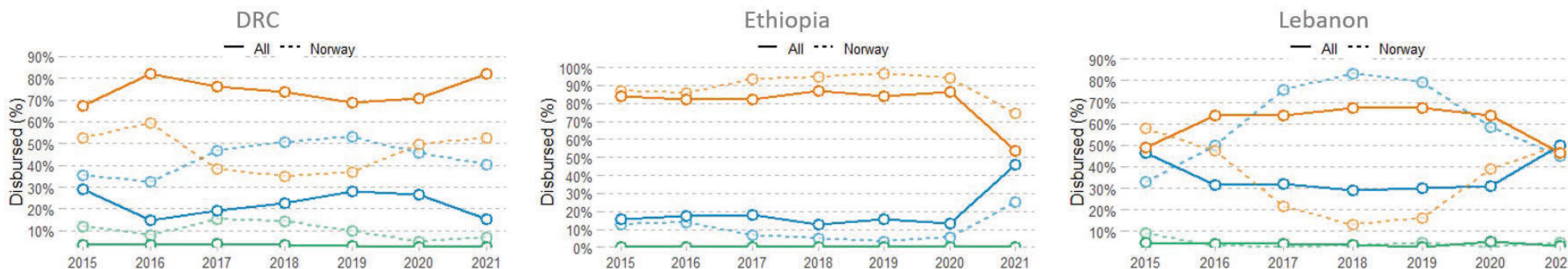
Across these three countries, Norway's patterns of aid disbursement showcase a preference for humanitarian efforts,

though the extent and nature of this focus vary.

The reasons behind these distinct disbursement patterns, however, remain unclear¹¹. The reports do not provide definitive explanations for Norway's strategic choices, leaving open the possibility that these patterns might represent strategic gap-filling, coordinated efforts among donors, deliberate differentiation, or perhaps a lack of concerted planning.

Figure 2:

Funding support to humanitarian (blue line), development (orange) and peace (green) projects by Norway compared to other donors¹²



¹¹ Allocation decisions are made in different administrative units within the Norwegian aid administration.

¹² Aggregation for all donors that have supported at least one HDP project in these countries.

Responses to the contextual needs

In all the countries, a certain degree of implementation coherence can be observed when analysing where and when the various types of Norwegian engagement take place. This geographic analysis is limited to a selection of Norwegian aid focusing on health and peace (restricted definition)¹³. The analysis shows that Norwegian funded projects in Lebanon appear more strategically broad-based in the geographic coverage. Ethiopia's funding patterns were dynamically responsive to crisis severity (see Figure 3 on next page). In Tigray in 2015, Norway funded 'only' development health interventions (100%), with no humanitarian health or peace interventions. In contrast, in 2021, Norway funded both humanitarian health and development health interventions in Tigray (still no peace interventions), with a split of 60%

(humanitarian health) and 40% (development health). This implies a shift that corresponds to the crisis in that context.

The DRC saw a clear alignment of Norwegian funded projects with specific crisis zones, especially in conflict-affected areas in eastern DRC.

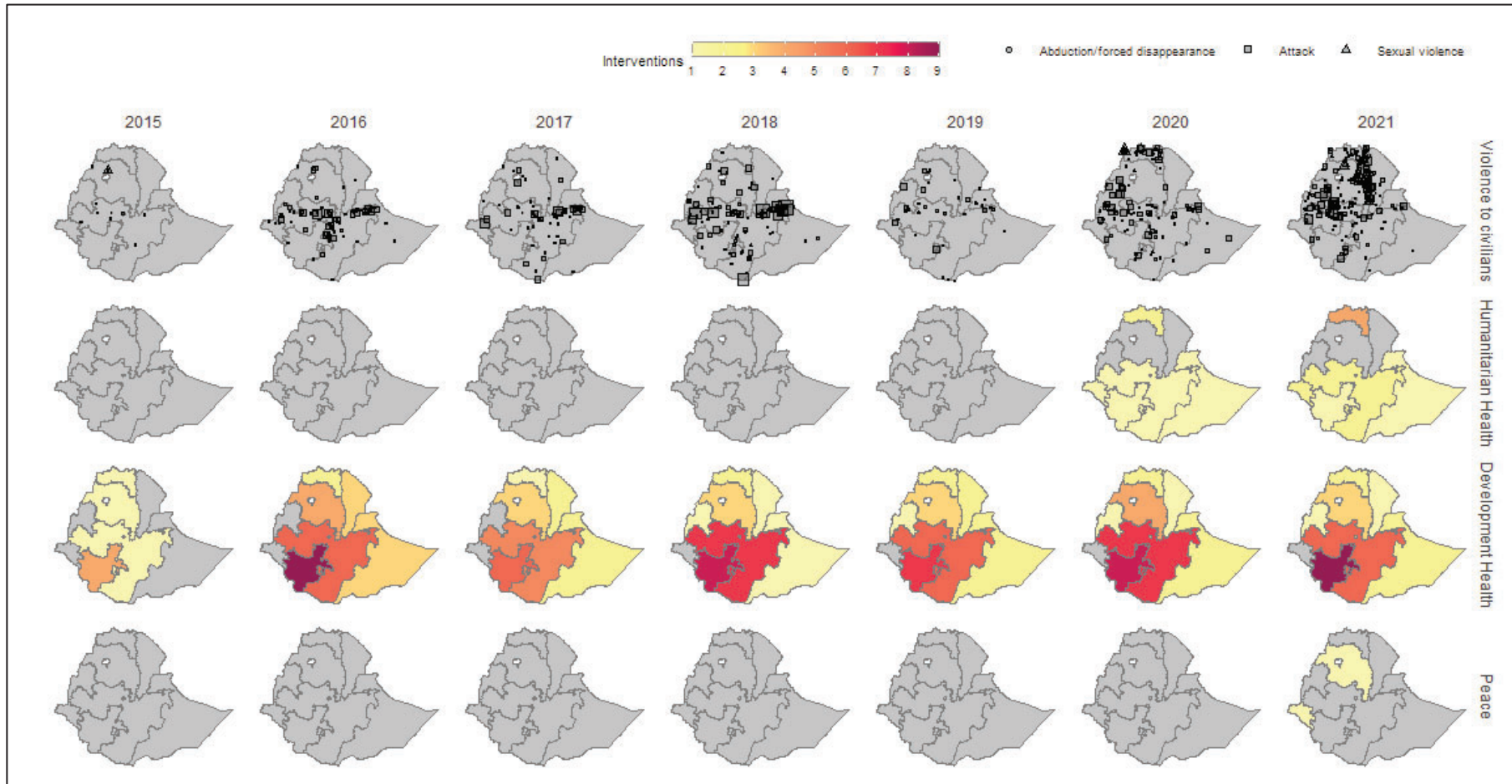
Although the analysis considers shifts across the budget lines or OECD DAC purpose codes, the situation on the ground may be that development interventions shift their efforts into focusing on covering basic needs when there is a crisis, even though it is not a shift in partner and project type and thus not visible in the statistics. For example, the Ethiopia country study shows that some of the development projects in Tigray shifted their

activities to more immediate needs after the outbreak of the conflict. Such shifts indicate coherence between development and humanitarian activities tailored to a specific context, in this example linked to a flexibility in the funding mechanisms allowing for an adaptation of the activities.

The Lebanon study has also pointed to Norway's flexibility in funding allocation as something that allows responses that are tailored to needs in the context. In the Lebanon case, such adaptations have been, for example, that programmes could address both the needs of Lebanese and refugee populations.

¹³ It does not include regional projects marked as such in the statistical system, nor core contributions to multilateral organisations. Moreover, the analysis only incorporates projects that the evaluation team was able to geocode, at a minimum, to the primary administrative division level within the respective countries.

Figure 3: Spatial contextual coherence with violence against civilians by year and type of projects in Ethiopia¹⁴



¹⁴ Data source on violence against civilians: ACLED.

Findings on coordination

The country studies show that there is **limited information sharing within the aid administration**. According to the evaluation team, the embassies do not always know which interventions are funded by the other administrative units within the aid administration, since the funding is siloed. This was for example a finding in the Ethiopia study and a finding we have seen in other evaluations of Norwegian aid engagement. There are several funding streams and several administrative units and several channels for the Norwegian aid, which makes it challenging to have an overview of the total engagement in a country. The Ethiopia country study also revealed that there was little information sharing and **little coordination between the Norwegian funded partners in Ethiopia**. It seems that the embassy earlier had organised quarterly meetings between Norwegian partners to facilitate information sharing.

These meetings did not resume after the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the Lebanon country study, the team finds regular information sharing between the partners and the embassy, and between the embassy and NMFA in Oslo. However, the team points out that despite active information sharing among Norwegian actors, this did not lead to strong collaboration, complementary programming strategies or joint conflict analysis. **The DRC country study also points to limited information sharing and limited collaboration for achieving synergies** between humanitarian, development and peace efforts.

Regarding external coordination with other donors or multilateral organisations¹⁵, the country studies show various practices. In Lebanon, the team finds that Norway as a donor is working to coordinate and harmonize its humanitarian aid with other donors, and that the development aid is

aligned with governments priorities. In Ethiopia, the Norwegian funded partners did participate in coordination in other forums with other partners within Ethiopia, for example in sector defined coordination groups. In the DRC, nexus-related fora were established for the international community, such as the Nexus Task Force and other coordination groups. Some of these received Norwegian funding. The DRC country report states that these coordination efforts have yet to result in synergies, joint programming and planning or collective outcomes.

Minimal investment in and varied interpretations of peace initiatives

In this evaluation, the peace dimension of the HDP nexus refers to local peacebuilding, understood as context-specific efforts at the national or sub-national level or as actions that engage local civil society¹⁶. These efforts might aim to create infrastructures for peace at all

¹⁵ Norway's core support to multilateral organizations, globally, represented NOK 54.5 billion during the 2016-2021 evaluation period (source: Norwegian Development Aid, Norad). Some of this support is likely to have been spent also in DRC, Ethiopia, and Lebanon.

¹⁶ When discussing peace in general, the definition aligns with Code 152, "Conflict, Peace, and Security." The narrower definition of peace employed in geolocated part of the analysis specifically pertains to Code 15220, "Civilian Peace-Building, Conflict Prevention, and Resolution". At its core, this definition is aligned with the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO)'s definition.

PBSO, PeaceNexus Foundation and UN Volunteers (2022). Thematic Review on Local Peacebuilding. May 2022. Local civil society as herein understood includes a broad range of actors, both formal organisations (e.g. NGOs) and informal groups, traditional structures, and religious institutions.

levels (peace committees, national peace platforms and similar) or to improve inter-community relationships and social cohesion. Moreover, peace is also related to understanding and navigating the dynamics of conflict - that is, being conflict sensitive in programming.

All four reports find that there are minimal investments and efforts in the peace dimension of the HDP nexus. The quantitative report finds a limited number of peace projects supported by Norway, and very little disbursement to these peace efforts, as seen in Figure 1 above. While some donor countries, such as the Netherlands, have a more pronounced 'peace-funding' profile than Norway, these differences become less noticeable in the broader context. In other words, donors' investments in peace projects are relatively modest compared to their development and humanitarian initiatives.¹⁷ The three

country reports confirm that the **peace efforts have been minimal.**

In Ethiopia, explicit peace-related programming only became feasible in 2019, following the lifting of a ban on such projects. Subsequently, it took time to develop the necessary capacity and integrate it into relevant programming, according to the Ethiopia country study. Peace promoting elements can also be included in development or humanitarian programmes, especially if the conflict sensitivity is properly integrated. We will come back to this in the next chapter. However, including conflict sensitivity in programmes, is not the same as peace engagements.



Photo: Pasqual Gorriz | UN Photo | Flickr

¹⁷ However, it's important to note that this study excludes high-level peace efforts such as national peace mediation processes. Therefore, the actual size of the total peace efforts in the country may be different.

4. Policy Coherence

In this section, we are synthesising some of the findings concerning the *policy coherence* of the Norwegian humanitarian, development and peace engagements in the three countries.

Conflict sensitivity

Since Mary B Anderson wrote the book *Do No Harm* (1999), a lot of work has been done in understanding and employing measures regarding how conflict is affecting development and humanitarian aid or how development and humanitarian aid is affecting conflict. Several actors working or investing in situations where violent conflict happens have guidelines and practices to not affect the conflict, and to minimize the negative effect the interventions may have on the conflict, and even to contribute to peace.

The Norwegian strategy for engagement in fragile states and regions¹⁸ states that contextual understanding is a prerequisite for results, and that the choices we make should be conflict sensitive. **Conflict sensitivity is defined as understanding the local conditions and how our involvement may affect the surroundings.**

The strategy further says that by better understanding the context we work in, we can avoid unintended negative effects and increase the possibility of positive results. This applies whether the support for an action has the direct goal of creating peace, or if it seeks to alleviate distress and create development in a conflict situation. The NMFAs guidance note on humanitarian principles¹⁹ states that partners “must carry out a context analysis, showing how a proposed action will affect and be affected by the context in which it will take place.”

Hence, conflict sensitivity is strongly linked to understanding the context well, and explicitly addressed in Norwegian policy documents. And it is particularly relevant to contexts where there are conflicts and tensions in some parts or all of the country. In other words, contexts where humanitarian, development and peace efforts should be coherent.

In the Lebanon country study, the team found a strong approach to Do no harm in several layers of the Norwegian engagement. An example of this sensitivity was that several of the interventions studied were contributing to including both groups of displaced persons and local populations. This was important for the projects not to contribute to exacerbate tensions between these groups. The Lebanon country study also highlights that

¹⁸ [Strategisk rammeverk for norsk innsats i sårbare stater og regioner - regjeringen.no](#) The strategy is only available in Norwegian. The quotes in Norwegian are «Kontekstforståelse er en forutsetning for resultater» and «Valgene vi tar skal være konfliktsensitive». Conflict sensitivity is described as «å forstå

de lokale forholdene og hvordan vår virksomhet kan komme til å påvirke omgivelsene. Ved bedre å forstå konteksten vi jobber i, kan vi unngå utilsiktede negative virkninger og øke muligheten for positive resultater. Dette gjelder uansett om støtten til et tiltak har som direkte mål å skape fred, eller om

den søker å lindre nød og skape utvikling i en konfliktsituasjon.»

¹⁹ [ensuring_respect.pdf \(regjeringen.no\)](#)

partners have managed to adapt and develop their interventions to the changing context, where the situation for Syrian and Palestinian refugees has worsened, and where the situation for the local Lebanese population has deteriorated. The evaluation team underlined Norway's flexibility as a donor in making such adaptations and evolvments possible and effective.

In the DRC country study, the team finds that most of the INGO partners were prioritizing conflict analyses and a do no harm approach, in aiming to make sure that interventions were adapted to the context. Survey respondents were more in doubt about whether Norway's conflict analyses inform conflict sensitivity in interventions, since only 6 out of 18 agreed or strongly agreed to this.

The Ethiopia country study indicates that the partners conduct risk analysis rather than conflict sensitivity analysis. The risk analysis focuses on risks for the intervention and misses out a more comprehensive analysis of affected persons and the connectors and dividers. The survey results for Ethiopia strengthen

this impression, since only 4 out of 23 agreed that conflict analysis informs conflict sensitive action. The country study points out that there is little specific guidance on how to do conflict sensitivity.

There are some examples of conflict sensitive measures in all three countries. There seems to be some variations in how to understand conflict sensitivity, and a lack of guidance in how to operationalise it in concrete situations.

Localisation

In development policy the Norwegian aid local partnerships and local ownership have been important for several years. For the humanitarian sector, Norway committed through the Grand Bargain to allocate 25% or more as directly as possible to local organisations. The analysis looked at the extent to which Norwegian support is channeled through local organisations.

According to the quantitative analysis, Norway's approach to selecting partners for humanitarian aid shows a clear

pattern: they rarely choose locally-based organizations, either as agreement partners or as implementing partners.

This trend is particularly stark in two countries covered in the evaluation. For instance, in Ethiopia, locally-based NGOs are completely absent as humanitarian partners for Norway, and in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), they have only a minimal presence, serving just as implementing partners in 2015. However, **this contrasts sharply with Lebanon, where locally-based NGOs have a significant role**, both as humanitarian agreement partners (17%) and as implementing partners (22.7%).

In contrast, when we shift our focus to development activities in these three countries, the visibility of locally-based NGOs increases significantly. They are particularly prominent as implementers, though less so as agreement partners. The Lebanon country study shows that many of the Norwegian interventions are grounded in local partnerships. The study finds that this emphasis on working with local partners has translated into programmes that are well adapted to the

context, and based on profound understanding of needs and priorities in the communities. It was also contended that the organisations that are deeply rooted in the communities understood better the underlying factors for tensions and conflicts. The evaluation team also highlights that Norway's combination of localisation and flexibility allowed effective responses to shifting contexts.

The DRC country study found that Norwegian civil society partners are committed to localisation and that their reasoning for this was linked to sustainability and exit strategies. The evaluation team noticed a difference between humanitarian and development actors' choice of locally based partners, where development actors prioritised state actors or public service providers, while humanitarian actors prioritised local communities.

In Ethiopia, the opportunities for collaboration with local NGOs on certain themes, particularly gender equality and peace efforts, were very limited until 2018, when there was a change in policies,

opening up the civic space. However, this opening post-2018 has not led to any noticeable increase in the number of local organisations engaging in partnership agreements or serving as implementing partners. The very few peace interventions in the country categorised as such in the statistics (four in total, two before 2018) were all implemented by local NGOs. Local NGOs were implementing partners in around half of the development interventions, but their role as agreement partners was limited. Implementing partners for humanitarian interventions in Ethiopia were almost entirely confined to multilateral institutions or Norwegian NGOs.

Often, localisation is perceived as working with local civil society organisations. However, the Lebanon country study emphasizes that involving national and local government institutions is equally crucial for local ownership. The study also highlighted that the role of government in localisation is not clearly understood.

The findings from the three country studies show how **the term "localisation" may hold different meanings**, ranging from locally led development, and local ownership, to an implementing partner simply being locally based. Furthermore, the Lebanon study demonstrates the feasibility of partnering with locally-based NGOs within humanitarian aid, and points out that **localisation seems to carry most impact when partnerships are long-term.**

Rights-based approaches

Promoting and protecting human rights is a central commitment in Norwegian foreign and development policy, and is considered both a means and an objective for all Norwegian aid engagement²⁰. It is a means for improving the effectiveness of the aid, and it is a goal in itself for the aid engagement to promote and protect rights. A human rights-based approach is one of the UN Charter's four pillars, considered important for sustainable development, and for contributing to stable and peaceful societies. In the guidance manual for administration of development funds, it is emphasised that a rights-based approach requires at the minimum, applying the three principles of **non-discrimination, participation, and accountability**.

The Lebanon study showed a variation in how rights-based approaches were applied.

It was emphasized that this was considered in the appraisals of applications, but less followed up. Some partners had transparent accountability mechanisms for the interactions with rights holders/communities affected by the interventions. The DRC country study highlighted that some projects have complaint mechanisms or channels for giving feedback about the interventions.

The Lebanon study also noted that a rights-based approach sometimes involves not only working on the local level, but requires advocating on a national level, having observed that refugee rights were deteriorating.

The Ethiopia country study also observed a varying degree of implementation of rights-based approaches. The report points out that some of the Norwegian partners, for example UN organisations themselves have

elaborate guidelines for human-rights based programming.

The country studies show that **little is known about to what extent the Norwegian-funded projects in the three countries implement rights-based approaches**. There are some examples from each of the countries, but no systematic overview.

²⁰ Meld. St. 10 (2014–2015). Opportunities for all: Human Rights in Norway's Foreign Policy and Development Cooperation. See also UNDP (2006). Applying a human rights-based approach to development cooperation and programming: A UNDP Capacity Development Resource. Capacity Development Group, Bureau for Development Policy, UNDP.

5. Conclusions

This evaluation has explored the so-called “nexus” from a bottom-up perspective. What do we know about the coherence between humanitarian, development and peace in Norwegian aid based on two phases of studies, the Geospatial report, and the country reports?

Firstly, we have seen that **in practice there are interactions between humanitarian, development, and peace in Norwegian engagements in the three countries.** The interactions occur at various levels and in settings, especially between humanitarian and development aid, but less so within peace efforts.

We have also found some coordination, complementarity, and collaboration between the sectors and between various actors. In other words, **there is a degree of implementation coherence** in the Norwegian engagement in these countries. However, **policy coherence seems weak**, particularly in issues of conflict sensitivity, localisation, and right-based approaches.

Although we observe some degree of both implementation and policy coherence in the interaction between Norwegian humanitarian, development and peace engagement, the extent to which these interactions are intentional and planned remains unclear. Consequently, **it is unlikely that synergies, and thus coherence, are realised to its full potential.**

Secondly, in this evaluation, there is an emphasis on a “practice in the context” perspective. This perspective centres on how the **interaction between humanitarian, development and peace is happening in practice in a concrete crisis context, and how the interaction relates to the context.** For example, we see that in Lebanon, how to work integratively with both displaced and local populations, is central in the crisis responses. In DRC, nexus-related engagements are happening to a large extent in cooperation led by multilateral (UN) organisations. In Ethiopia, interactions between development,

humanitarian and peace engagement were altered by the conflict in Tigray.

Such practices, and **this bottom-up perspective, should inform discussions and knowledge about how humanitarian, development and peace may integrate well to deliver better.** Moreover, this underscores how all “nexus” related policies or guidance always need to be contextually rooted.

Our third conclusion relates to the peace component of the “HDP Nexus”. **Norway’s peace efforts are disproportionately low** when we look at the statistics, where very few interventions are categorised as peace. The category includes support for civilian peacebuilding, conflict prevention, and resolution which includes activities like capacity building, monitoring, and dialogue.

Norwegian development aid also includes higher-level peace efforts, and these amounts are parts of the overall statistical analysis (but not the restricted geolocated

analysis). Peace mediation on a government level, stabilisation efforts and support to peacekeeping operations are also efforts that potentially interact with other humanitarian and development aid. However, the evaluation finds limited interaction between these engagements and other engagements.

As we see in the country reports, **a few development projects practice conflict sensitivity, working to minimize harm and to promote social cohesion. This also contributes to peace. However, this differs from more targeted peace-focused projects where activities are specifically intended to address risk factors for violence or conflict.**

Fourth, although **conflict sensitivity, localisation and rights-based approaches** are well established at the policy level, **their operationalisation remains weak despite some good examples.** The country reports suggest a need for more guidance on

operationalizing these approaches. Some guiding documents, such as the GMA guidance and the Guidance note for Norwegian partners to ensure respect for humanitarian principles, exist.²¹ Strengthening these aspects in Norwegian aid to crisis-affected contexts may improve how Norwegian aid affects right holders, and how Norway delivers on Nexus-related

collected outcomes. As we saw in the Lebanon country study, locally-grounded long-term partnerships can implement inclusive, conflict sensitive programmes adapted to the crisis and thereby constituting an example of a coherent approach.



Photo: Gunnar Zachrisen | Panorama

²¹ [Ensuring-respect-for-the-humanitarian-principles---guidance-note-for-sup...pdf \(regjeringen.no\)](#)

Fifth, implementing aid engagement in crisis-affected situations entails real dilemmas and trade-offs. **Little is known about how to best deal with dilemmas and real trade-offs.** Furthermore, there is limited knowledge about how the aid administration could seek to document the handling of dilemmas better. Many of these dilemmas relate to humanitarian principles. For instance, as the Norwegian development administration seeks greater interaction between humanitarian and development fields and strive to empower local organisations and respond to needs, challenges may arise regarding upholding the principles of neutrality and impartiality. Engaging with governmental or local actors who are also part of the conflict or crisis poses dilemmas for the principle of neutrality. Questions arise: Can we have dialogue, or even long-term partnerships, with local actors involved in ongoing local or national crises? Another central dilemma is related to localisation and accountability. The aid

management system has several control mechanisms and bureaucratic demands that, in practice, may favour larger international organisations above local community-based organisations.

In order to reach the objective of promoting local ownership,²² the aid management may need to address this dilemma more explicitly. One discussion is how to ensure accountability in different ways; another one could be how to manage risks. Although difficult dilemmas are handled all the time in practice by the actors implementing Norwegian aid, less is documented and known about how they are managed. This means that there is an untapped potential for better learning across different situations and contexts.

To improve the coherent outcome for the crisis affected persons targeted by the Norwegian aid engagement, the Norwegian development administration could **address handling such dilemmas more systematically.**

²² [The Grand Bargain in 2021: An independent review \(interagencystandingcommittee.org\)](https://interagencystandingcommittee.org)

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