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NUTRITION QUICK TIPS SERIES



THE LINK BETWEEN NUTRITION AND THE HUMANITARIAN-DEVELOPMENT-PEACE (HDP) NEXUS

Good nutrition is essential to ensure the resilience of individuals and communities during a humanitarian crisis. An approach that integrates nutrition at the point where humanitarian, development and peace efforts connect involves the scaling up of both nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive actions and systems, while at the same time strengthening the enabling environment (political, legal, economic, and human resource) through multi-stakeholder collaboration. Applying this HDP 'lens' can contribute to increased resilience and nutrition security, ensuring adequate nutrition for all during protracted crises and in the face of recurrent shocks. It requires the strengthening of systems to address immediate nutrition needs, alongside those to address underlying vulnerabilities to prevent malnutrition.

A total of 73% of the 686 million people who live in extreme poverty today live in fragile contexts and this figure is anticipated to rise to 86% by 2030¹. In most protracted crisis situations, people experience both chronic and immediate life-saving needs, which often include persistently high levels of undernutrition, due to pre-existing causes and recurrent crisis-related shocks. Addressing this undernutrition requires a response that connects humanitarian, development, and peace efforts to meet short-term needs while providing long-term solutions, to reduce risk and vulnerability and

in situations of conflict, contribute to lasting peace. This is referred to as the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus (HDP) or Triple Nexus approach.

HDP is about building greater policy coherence among humanitarian, development, and peace² actors, so that their respective interventions address underlying vulnerability, help build resilience to future shocks and minimise the impact of current crises³.

1 [OECD: States of Fragility 2022](#)

2 Including political and security actors

3 [MQSUN+. Strengthening the Humanitarian Development Nexus for Nutrition in Protracted Crises, a Synthesis Report, June 2020.](#)

What does an HDP Nexus approach for nutrition look like?

Applied to nutrition, an HDP nexus approach seeks to align actions to reduce overall vulnerability and unmet needs, strengthen risk management capacities and address root and immediate causes of malnutrition.

An HDP nexus approach for nutrition requires multi-year commitment and a comprehensive set of actions to:

- a) prevent malnutrition, and
- b) prepare for and scale up treatment of acute malnutrition and micronutrient deficiencies in times of crisis.

These actions are integrated into sectoral programmes and implemented, as far as possible, through local systems, targeting the same at-risk populations. This approach should be framed within a multi-dimensional crisis response, addressing immediate needs while building long-term resilience and peace.

A nutrition relevant HDP nexus approach may include:

- building and strengthening resilient livelihoods,
- improving delivery capacities of health systems (strengthening Primary Health Care systems),

- ensuring safety nets, social protection and sustainable food systems for healthy diets, in combination with action to address immediate nutrition needs through treatment of wasting, nutritional oedema and micronutrient deficiencies.

Actions that promote an enabling environment for nutrition are also critical to support countries and communities to deal with shocks. These may include actions to improve inclusive nutrition governance and coordination, and to mitigate the effects of climate change on the determinants of good nutrition.

Nutrition resilience or nutrition security⁴ exists when all people have adequate nutritional status, even in the face of hazards, such as conflict, political instability, displacement, disease outbreaks, floods, or droughts, including those resulting from climate change⁵. This implies strengthening systems (including health, food, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), education, and social protection), and addressing the root causes of nutritional vulnerability (such as by implementing risk-informed programmes using multi-sectoral information systems, strengthening community participation and gender transformative action, planning and preparing for emergencies, fostering partnerships, promoting multi-sectoral programming approaches and mobilising vital resources).

Features of an HDP nexus approach for nutrition

- Greater complementarity between humanitarian, development, and peace programmes to reduce silos between emergency and longer-term funding for nutrition (in health, food, social protection, or other systems).
- Involving local actors.
- Humanitarian response plans for nutrition include development actors and consider how interventions may affect longer-term development plans.
- Humanitarian actors are included in development planning to ensure a humanitarian perspective, such as adaptation of interventions when necessary to prioritise essential services. For example, inclusion of emergency nutrition response plans and capacities in national nutrition plans and strategies or sectoral plans.
- Short-, medium-, and long-term considerations in the design and development of nutrition interventions: addressing immediate needs while simultaneously laying the groundwork for addressing underlying causes of malnutrition.
- Health systems are supported to provide sustainable nutrition services and strengthened to be able to absorb ongoing shocks and stresses for example, to integrate wasting treatment programmes into the health system, including surge response capacity and advocacy for universal health coverage.
- Capacity strengthening at national, sub-national and local levels, to ensure the sustainable delivery of essential nutrition actions. At the same time, development actors are aware of how responses are scaled up in times of stress or crisis.
- Ensuring that actions do no harm and are conflict sensitive.
- Coordination and coherence with peace actors in policy dialogues in which nutrition matters are discussed and in actions specific and relevant to peacebuilding (such as conflict prevention, stabilisation, social cohesion, community building and participation), particularly those that focus on children, youth and women.

4 Nutrition security is defined by the World Bank as: "The ongoing access to the basic elements of good nutrition, i.e. a balanced diet, safe environment, clean water, and adequate health care (preventive and curative) for all people, and the knowledge needed to care for and ensure a healthy and active life for all household members". The term "security" refers to a dynamic situation, not only looking at the current situation, but to the long term, in which the population is "protected" or resilient from undernutrition (World Bank 2013).

5 MQSUN+. [Strengthening the Humanitarian Development Nexus for Nutrition in Protracted Crises, a Synthesis Report, June 2020](#)

Related EU commitments

The EU/DG ECHO and a number of EU member states⁶ are signatories to the [Grand Bargain](#), an agreement that aims to improve the way humanitarian aid is delivered by making it more effective and more efficient. Among the 10 commitments set out in the Grand Bargain⁷ is ‘the need to strengthen linkages between humanitarian and development programming’.

EU Council Conclusions endorsed the HDP nexus approach in 2017⁸. The 2021 [Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on the EU’s humanitarian action: new challenges, same principles](#) reaffirmed the clear commitments to the HDP nexus approach.

Strategies or ‘tips’ to improve nutrition outcomes through HDP policy and programming



Bring HDP stakeholders together for nutrition in different fora

- HDP stakeholders working in nutrition-relevant service delivery/ programme areas should collaborate within a common forum at both national and sub-national levels, ideally led by the government, to enable joint analysis, planning and integrated programming⁹.
- Where there is a Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) (or similar) multi-stakeholder platform, ensure inclusion of humanitarian actors and/or engagement of the Nutrition Cluster and relevant working groups, if present. Where there are only humanitarian clusters, the Nutrition Cluster should bring together other relevant clusters and development-focused nutrition stakeholders.
- Liaise with peace actors, such as political and security actors when relevant for nutrition-related matters¹⁰ (such as policy dialogues or political exchanges).



Engage in joined-up multi-stakeholder analysis of the nutrition situation

- Analyse trends in prevalence of all forms of malnutrition; immediate, underlying and basic causes; the contextual risks, needs, vulnerabilities, opportunities and local capacities. Connect nutrition surveillance systems to existing information platforms to provide regular and long-term trend data, supplementing with focused surveys or assessments in periods of crisis or rapid change. When relevant, ensure links between data initiatives supporting emergencies (e.g. Integrated food security Phase Classification (IPC), Nutrition Vulnerabilities Assessment in Crisis (NuVAC)) and those supporting national data systems (e.g. European Commission Nutrition Information Systems (EC-NIS)¹¹.
- Identify needs and the relevant impact pathways for nutrition in the specific context¹², differentiating short-term humanitarian needs from chronic vulnerability. Identify gaps in existing approaches to address the underlying causes of nutrition insecurity facing women and children, particularly at the sub-national level, by comparing current needs with existing commitments, plans, programmes, and funding flows – both development and humanitarian. Assess the support required from different sectors (WASH, health, food security, social protection).
- Assess whether existing arrangements between international actors and the government and other authorities are adequate to respond to humanitarian needs and support long-term nutrition resilience. Ensure nutrition is adequately located in any existing HDP Nexus architecture and processes (national development plans, Humanitarian Response Plans, political and security relations, HDP nexus architecture, stakeholder analysis and financing) and, where appropriate, consider how nutrition stakeholders can advocate for strengthening nutrition within the HDP nexus approach.

6 including France, Luxembourg, Ireland, Italy and Spain.

7 articulated during the World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul in 2016.

8 [Council conclusions on operationalising the humanitarian-development nexus - Consilium \(europa.eu\)](#). The relevance of the integration of the peace element was later recognised in an informal Foreign Affairs Council-Development discussion in 2018.

9 [Quick Tips: Multisectoral Nutrition Governance](#)

10 <https://www.g7plus.org> the g7+ is an intergovernmental organisation made up of conflict affected countries providing a platform to collectively voice the need for national dialogue and reconciliation, and advocate for effective development cooperation.

11 EC-NIS: [Improving national nutrition information systems \(EC-NIS project\) in five countries - UNICEF DATA](#)

IPC: [IPC - Integrated Food Security Phase Classification \(ipcinfo.org\)](#)

NIPN [NIPN - National Information Platforms for Nutrition \(nipn-nutrition-platforms.org\)](#)

DataDENT [About us \(datadent.org\)](#)

12 The [UNICEF conceptual framework](#) is a useful tool to support this process.



Plan together with HDP stakeholders to develop a comprehensive, integrated approach to nutrition

- Develop humanitarian and development outcomes to treat, prevent and reduce malnutrition in all its forms and link nutrition objectives to development targets (national, regional, or global).
- Identify a comprehensive approach to achieve outcomes in which different types of multi-year programmes and peace actions converge on the same populations, building on existing context-specific programme design and practice, whilst simultaneously facilitating a flexible and rapid humanitarian response. Use a holistic package of multisectoral nutrition-sensitive approaches which address the determinants of undernutrition while also managing spikes in demand for treatment services. Build multi-hazard risk assessments into programmes and design longer-term programming that can adapt to future risks and seeks to address root causes of nutrition crises. For example, strengthen health and social protection systems to be rapidly scalable to respond to acute needs, such as seasonal peaks in stunting/wasting.
- Develop an integrated Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system to collect indicators relating to outputs and agreed outcomes and measure the extent of systems strengthening.
- Where relevant and feasible, strengthen social cohesion and service integrity/reliability for the population. For example, where conflict occurs in agricultural populations, there may be options to support dialogue and engagement with pastoralist populations to contribute to nutrition-focused interventions; bolster government services, such as nutrition-sensitive agricultural or WASH services or treatment of wasting to support populations.
- Strengthen capacities of national and local partners to integrate nutrition in the HDP nexus.
- Prioritise funding to local organisations and local service-delivery systems where feasible.
- Ensure that humanitarian assistance is adaptive and contributes, where appropriate, to conditions for initiating or revitalising development efforts, including by supporting community resilience-building activities, gender equality and putting in place mechanisms to ensure accountability to the people being supported and strengthening transparency and participation, in particular for excluded or marginalised members of communities¹³.
- Engage with the private sector at local level, using the appropriate funding streams (including blending), to support local production of ready-to-use therapeutic foods and its availability for the treatment of malnutrition at local and regional level.



Develop HDP financing strategies for nutrition at global, regional, national and sub-national levels

- Employ effective 'layering' and 'sequencing'¹⁴ of the most appropriate financing flows, which may include: support to prevention, preparedness and early action; use of short-term humanitarian funding to respond to immediate needs for the most vulnerable. (e.g. could include supporting the linkage of Community-based Management of Acute Malnutrition to safety nets, funding vitamin A campaigns, deworming and growth monitoring and promotion). Use predictable, flexible, multi-year financing where possible. This may involve: ensuring that financing is informed by joint analysis and supports greater coherence, cooperation and coordination between humanitarian, development and peace actions; aligning financing with agreed collective outcomes, while recognising that humanitarian and development actions may have priorities that fall outside of these.
- Attach 'crisis modifiers' to longer-term development programmes: adequate funds to address acute humanitarian needs if a shock occurs, to ensure that the longer-term programme can progress, e.g. the [Productive Safety Net Programme in Ethiopia](#) and the [Hunger Safety Net Programme in Kenya](#) allow a scale-up to emergency-affected communities and inclusion of additional households when a malnourished child is identified and referred to the programme.

¹³ See: [Quick Tips: Nutrition, gender equality and women's empowerment](#)

¹⁴ Sequencing—using a logical, sequenced phasing of humanitarian relief and development programming; layering—programming of multiple humanitarian and development assistance interventions in the same targeted geographic areas, i.e. in layers; (USAID 2014).



Further information and support

DAC Recommendation on the [Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus](#). OECD/LEGAL/5019. Adopted on: 22/02/2019.

[Council conclusions on operationalising the humanitarian-development nexus](#). Adopted on 19/05/2017.

[MQSUN+ Strengthening the Humanitarian Development Nexus for Nutrition in Protracted Crises](#). A Synthesis Report. June 2020.

[Momentum Integrated Health Resilience](#). Research Brief. The Humanitarian-Development Nexus. February 2022.

[Nutrition and Resilience: A scoping study](#). ENN 2016.

Relevant EU-funded actions that represent case studies for HDP Nexus for nutrition

[Improving nutrition and reducing stunting in Eastern Sudan: EU Action Document](#).

[Strengthening nutrition response capacity in Haiti \(COVID-19 response\)](#)

Guinea-Bissau Integrated programme for the reduction of maternal and child mortality (PIMI) (See [7th PR on the APN](#), p.40)

Programme de Renforcement de la Résilience des Systèmes Alimentaires «le goût de la vie» (P2RSA) 2022, triple nexus approach in Chad and Chad's [Programme for Inclusive Development in Reception Areas \(DIZA\)](#), are leading examples of an integrated programme with humanitarian and development partners working to achieve a smooth transition through nexus modalities.

The new OECD-DAC policy marker on nutrition was approved by the OECD-DAC for official development assistance reporting in 2019 with the support of the Commission and Member States. According to this marker, 'a project should be identified as nutrition related when it is intended to address the immediate or underlying determinants of malnutrition'. An [OECD-DAC Nutrition Policy Marker Handbook](#) is available.

The EU is a global leader in promoting gender equality as a key political objective of its external action and common foreign policy, aimed at accelerating progress towards the SDGs. By 2025, 85% of new EU actions should contribute to achieving the objective of gender equality and women's empowerment, with more actions including it as a main objective. Please refer to [QuickTips: Nutrition, gender equality and women's empowerment](#).

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