THE NEXUS IN PRACTICE

**A Spotlight Report by the
Peace & Security Thematic Working Group
DAC-CSO Reference Group**

- April 2024 -

ABOUT THE SPOTLIGHT REPORT

The [Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) - Development Assistance Committee (DAC)](#) is the group of the world's biggest foreign aid providers. The OECD/DAC monitors Official Development Assistance (ODA), sets standards and rules on development cooperation, and conducts peer reviews of the donors. The DAC also produces and adopts recommendations, which are non-binding, legal instruments by which donors are expected to adhere.

Among its recommendations is the [DAC Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus](#), which guides donors in addressing conflict and fragility through funding and implementing triple nexus or Humanitarian-Development- Peace (HDP) programs and through ensuring collaboration, coherence, and complementarity across involved actors. The DAC Nexus Recommendation is being monitored by the International Network on Conflict and Fragility (INCAF), a subsidiary body of the DAC.

The Peace & Security Thematic Working Group of the [DAC-CSO Reference Group](#) (RG) engages the INCAF. Four years after the legal instrument was adopted by DAC members, INCAF is evaluating its progress. Civil society's contribution to this process is this spotlight report, "**The Nexus in Practice**", which looks into the uptake and implementation of the DAC Nexus Recommendation while also zooming in on the Humanitarian, Development, and Peace Nexus areas that are insufficiently taken up and those that need accelerated action from relevant HDP actors. This report is based on a global survey and inputs harvested through an online consultation. The information brought together in this report is presented here to demonstrate good practices, inspirational lessons, and stories of change and success.

The process by which this spotlight report was organized was undertaken by the [Reality of Aid - Asia Pacific](#) (RoA-AP), [Civil Society Platform for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding](#) (CSPPS), and [International Council for Voluntary Agencies](#) (ICVA). For correspondence, email roaap_secretariat@realityofaid.org.

1 - EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Every year since the adoption of the **DAC Recommendation on the Humanitarian - Development - Peace Nexus**, there seemed to be global, cross-border humanitarian, development, and peace drawbacks that challenged the world. We confronted a pandemic and its reverberating socio-economic impacts. We witnessed severe military aggressions in, among others, Myanmar, Ukraine, Afghanistan, and most recently, Palestine. We saw how authoritarian governments across the world curtail democratic rights, drain countries' resources, dismantle or disable civic environments, and control narratives to their favor. On top of these, we continue to endure the consequences of our deteriorating climate and environment.

INCAF's report on the implementation of the Nexus Recommendation (2022/2023) comes at a time when there needs to be an urgent reminder to DAC members that the DAC Recommendation was developed in response to the call for strengthened policy and operational coherence by humanitarian, development and peace actors, reflecting commitments across key global frameworks including Agenda 2030, the Sustaining Peace Resolutions, and Agenda for Humanity, among others. While the HDP nexus approach has provided momentum for enhanced coordination and coherence of the global international engagement in fragile and conflict-affected contexts, the report rightfully concludes that progress on the implementation of the Nexus Recommendation remains uneven, both between the various elements and provision of it, as well as across adherents to the Recommendation.

Particular attention was given to the peace pillar. Despite acknowledging how crucial conflict prevention and peacebuilding should be in HDP programs, integration of it across the other pillars and funding support are gradually shrinking. Additionally, the full potential of the Nexus Recommendation will indeed not be achieved without a fundamental change in the financing architecture, increased funding to peace, and integrating the nexus approach within the current response models.

Civil society acknowledges the positive step reached earlier this year by Member States in the 5th Committee of the UN General Assembly, approving USD 50 million worth of assessed contributions to be allocated per year to the UN Peacebuilding Fund (UNPBF). This, however, needs to be contrasted with the drop in voluntary contributions from several top donors, including the

United Kingdom and Sweden. Only a slim proportion of the UNPBF funding is accessible directly to NGOs, and often only by the larger ones. Nonetheless, the UNPBF represents for the UN a means to incentivize UN Agencies Funds and Programmes to work closer on the peace element in HDP nexus countries. Better coordination and alignment of available funding would be beneficial and can be made more tangible via joint, integrated context monitoring and coordination of the funding mechanisms at country level through closer collaboration among actors involved. CSOs and NGOs should be brought into coordination forums that bridge the HDP nexus. These should also be decentralized to enable coherent area-based responses.

INCAF's report is comprehensive, balanced, and well-structured. Differentiating and nuancing the survey responses of the DAC and non-DAC actors, and providing explanations for these, are very helpful to flesh out additional insights. However, everyday practical work and its constraints, as well as lessons learned and good or best practices, seem to be missing from the report. The report would have benefitted from a more integral inclusion of the viewpoints of local stakeholder groups and practitioners (demonstrating a bottom-up approach) and relate directly to how they have adopted the triple nexus approach in their programming. Also, while the report recognizes the importance of localization, it does not seem to apply a local-level lens and/or focus on the approach and analysis of the findings.

The humanitarian, development, and peace actors must work in a complementarity manner to achieve collective outcomes. Although the report does not allow for a comprehensive assessment of the adoption of collective outcomes, the report does highlight some of the gaps. It would be important to ensure that the accountability mechanisms for the collective outcomes are established. The manner in which it is currently set up is almost like a "check the box exercise." Progress should be monitored thoroughly, and implementation plans should be put in place at the country level. Most importantly, many actors are still not yet aware of the collective outcomes - how they are formulated, how to implement them, and what accountability revolves around them. Therefore, initiatives for actors to increase knowledge on this process is a must, and actors must ensure that it is an inclusive and realistic process with short-term to long-term goals.

1 - EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This CSO-led spotlight report is structured similar to The Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus Interim Progress Review (2022), with the following sections:

- **Executive Summary**
- **Survey Results**
- **Progress and Bottlenecks**
- **The Way Forward**

This CSO-led spotlight report highlights the following main assessment points:

> → Donors' lack of political will

Political will is supposed to propel donors to act as the driving force of the triple nexus, but experiences show otherwise. One major observation is that donors are actually adverse to change. Despite committing to the Nexus Recommendation and other HDP-related frameworks, current administrative and financial policies and practices limit HDP actors, especially local actors on the ground, from carrying out the urgent work they have to do.

Respondents noted that donors ask partners to do more than their regulations allow for, and this creates a heavier workload that paralyzes any possible action. Local organizations have a heavy load to juggle between authorities and donor requests as well as immediate and long-term needs of beneficiaries. Moreover, donors tend to transfer responsibilities to partner NGOs in figuring out how to make the Triple Nexus happen without reducing red tape, adapting funding mechanisms, or updating policies to ensure the implementation is feasible. Funding structures and donor-driven silos remain the main barrier to the nexus implementation.

Some have also observed how OECD/DAC donors seem to compete with the UN system, heavily impacting programming and implementation. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) and INCAF need to increase coordination efforts too, ensuring that initiatives are aligned and complementary. However, there are also silos among civil society, and this adds pressure to the sector in making a case for a people-centered, rights-based triple nexus programming. Such silos, along with administrative burdens, cause the lack of flexibility and adaptation in the daily work of CSOs, especially those in the frontlines. Lastly, localization still seems to be a standalone segment while it should be optimally integrated in the HDP nexus approach.

1 - EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

→ Deprioritization of peace

While the report recognizes that conflict prevention and peacebuilding should be at the core of HDP programs, there is limited or marginal progress to this, and the funding support for peacebuilding and conflict prevention are gradually shrinking while the demands for these are all apparent and more needed now than ever.

As mentioned, HDP nexus is not a ladderized approach; the peace component has to be urgently integrated systematically and strategically with humanitarian and development components. This is linked to the changing international context since the launch of the Recommendation, e.g. increased polarization, polycrisis, dysfunctional multilateral system, securitized response to crises, and compounding effects of various conflict stressors, among others. Moreover, these issues may also result in the gradual erosion of institutions and security, which may then lead to conflict relapse or eruption of new ones. Generally, response to sudden political disruptions and conflict is still the priority. Thus, donors really need to ramp up efforts and sufficiently increase funding for conflict prevention and peacebuilding, as well as promote a more integrated and comprehensive approach in tackling these issues via aligned and coordinated interventions across the HDP nexus.

→ Insufficient funding

Among the three pillars, financing has the least progress. The report acknowledges that "the way funds are currently allocated, and programmes funded do not always support conflict prevention and peace", and funding remains "standalone" and "unsystematised". The report also emphasizes, "The full potential of the HDP DAC Recommendation will not be achieved without a fundamental change in the financing architecture and current crisis response models." In short, calls to reform the international aid architecture are now more important and urgent than ever. Attached to this is the conversation around resolving the crisis of multilateralism.

More broadly, donors always argue that ODA is scarce. However, this narrative needs to be further examined given how governments have responded to other financial needs. For example, it is difficult to imagine and believe that money is scarce given the aid readily provided to Ukraine, Israel or COVID-19. Governments are also known for readily providing major tax breaks to their national companies and the top 1% of their populations, as well as for being lax on fighting fiscal evasion.

Another narrative is how ODA is needed to leverage and catalyze private sector investment. Incentives can only go so far; it is regulation that is needed. The private sector cannot be allowed to resort to philanthropic window dressing. Moreover, when donors say they need or want to incentivize the private sector, they need to be clear with their expectations from them given the private sector's track record of violations and non-transparency and accountability.

It is thus imperative that DAC members should overturn the current scenario and allot sufficient funding - one that is adequate, reliable, flexible and sustained, especially for local CSOs, including sectoral organizations such as women, youth and Indigenous Peoples, etc. However, what is most urgently needed is to reform the way that ODA funding is disbursed and accounted for. The reality is that donors do not measure success based on improvements of the affected populations' human security needs. Rather, there is a disconnect between the higher-level policy objectives stated in donor strategies and how success of the funding is measured.

CSOs then harvested recommendations along the lines of the following points:

→ Transform the humanitarian-development-peace system

Donors play a significant role in driving the implementation of the HDP nexus. Their behavior, including their funding decisions, policy priorities, and engagement with implementing agencies have a profound impact on the adoption and progress of the nexus approach. In transforming a donor-driven system to a people-centered system, citizens are able to reclaim what is rightfully just for them. This is the kind of system that a people-centered triple nexus approach aspires to forward.

→ Intensify efforts toward localization

Another potential of the triple nexus lies in how it can help to advance the localization agenda. Civil society believes that locally-led development should be entrenched in any HDP framework, policy or approach. One concrete way to make this happen is to look at both the DAC Nexus Recommendation and the DAC Enabling Civil Society Recommendation, and see how they could complement each other. With a more integrated approach, this could reverse the transactional relationship between donors and CSOs. Power, agency, and funding, especially those going directly through local partners, is still

marginal. Moreover, the role of INGOs as partner and collaborator of local actors should be strengthened and maximized.

→Strengthen capacities of civil society

While civil society understands the relevance of the nexus approach in their programming, it is another thing to understand how it could or should work in practice. Therefore, awareness-raising, peer-learning, and knowledge-generation initiatives should be broadened, systematized, and sustained. Contributing to these efforts will help to strengthen civil society (including grassroots organizations) capacities in relation to organization, leadership, alliance-building, policy and advocacy, research, and fundraising.

2 - SURVEY RESULTS

BASIC DATA

From April to November 2023, the Peace & Security Thematic Working Group of the DAC-CSO Reference Group circulated a survey among civil society organizations working on the humanitarian-development-peace nexus or triple nexus. **A total of 64 respondents/organizations from 37 countries globally answered the survey.** Meanwhile, see Graph 1 for the breakdown of respondents/organizations per region.
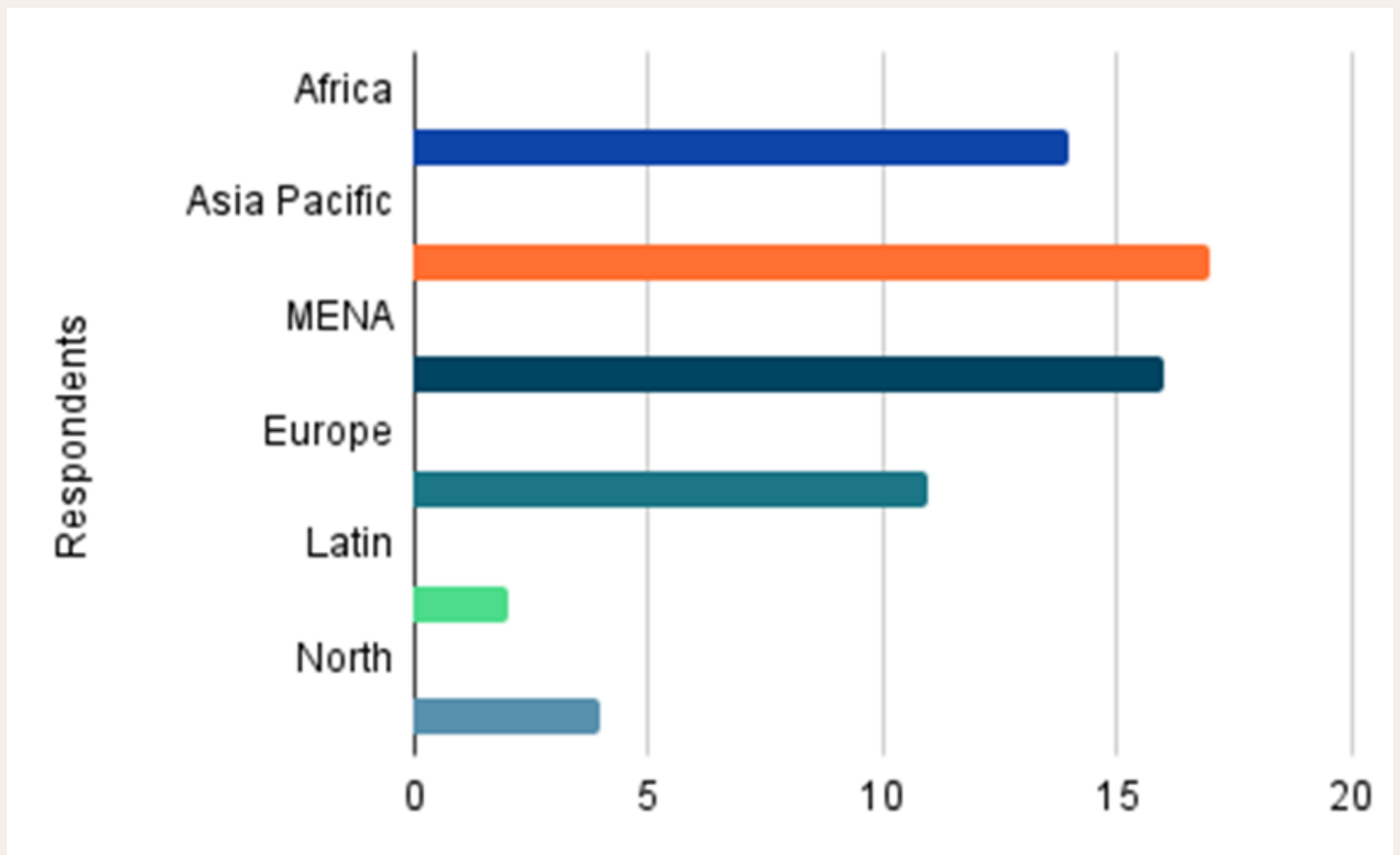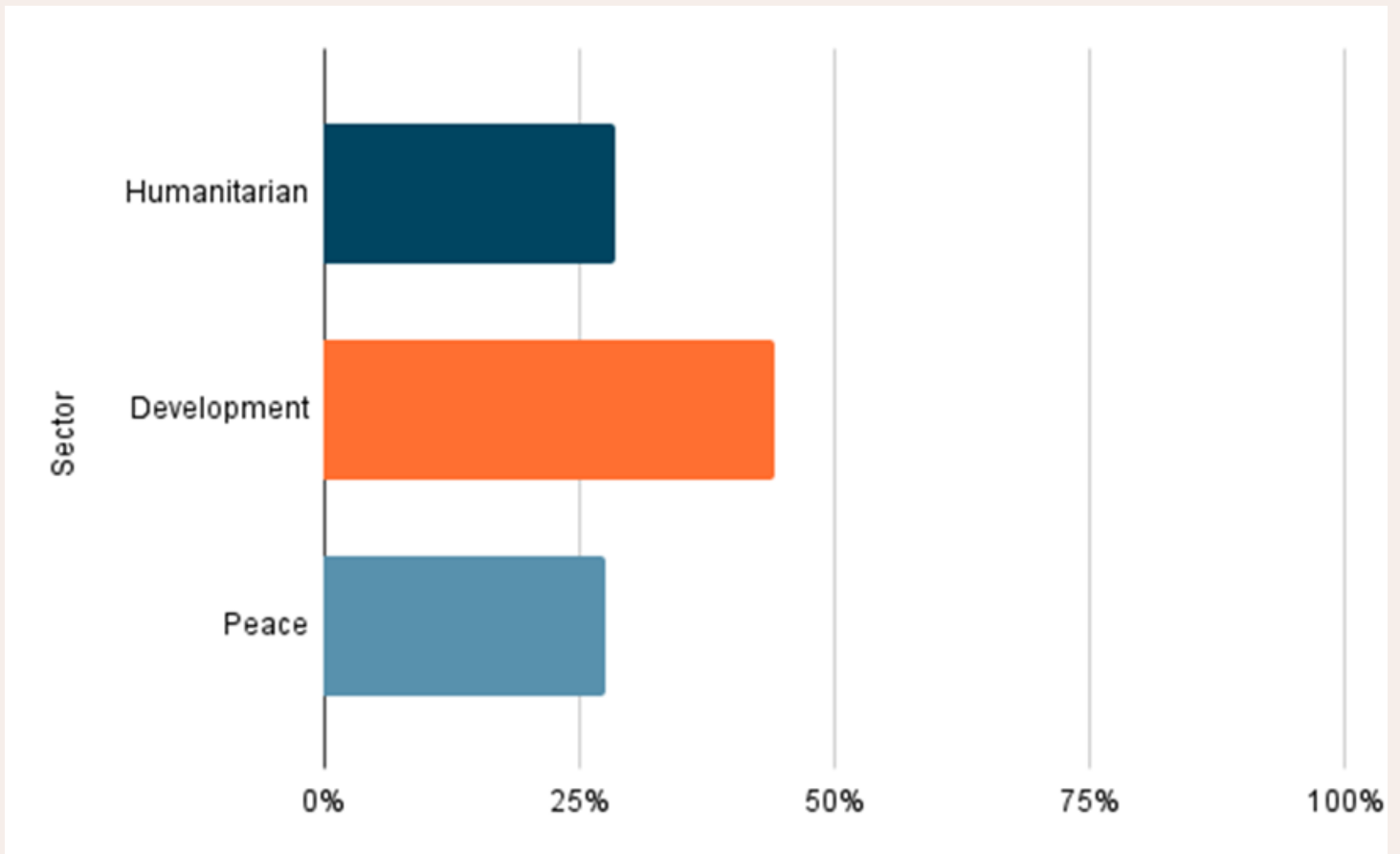

Graph 1. Respondents

The majority of respondents to the survey were national and local NGOs. The overall respondents represented all three actors (Humanitarian, Development, and Peace), keeping in mind that many participants were dual actors. See Graphs 2 and 3 for the distribution.
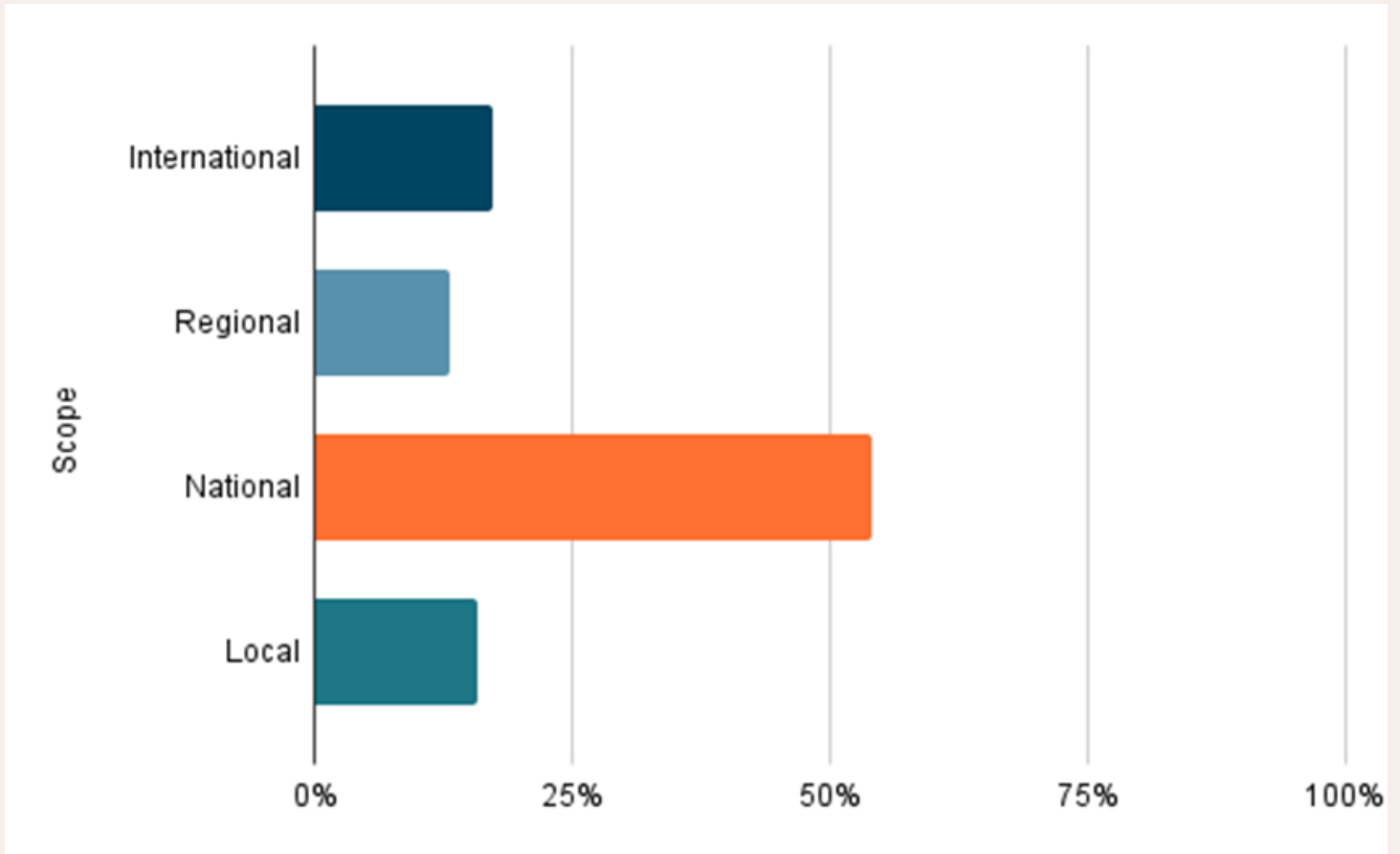
Graph 2. Scope

Graph 3. Sector

SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

The survey shows that around all of the respondents see it important to align their programming with the HDP or Triple Nexus approach, regardless if there is sufficient funding or none (70% reported not receiving any funding to do so). One youth organization from Yemen said that in the absence of funding, they have learned to integrate nexus-related projects with their other funded projects.
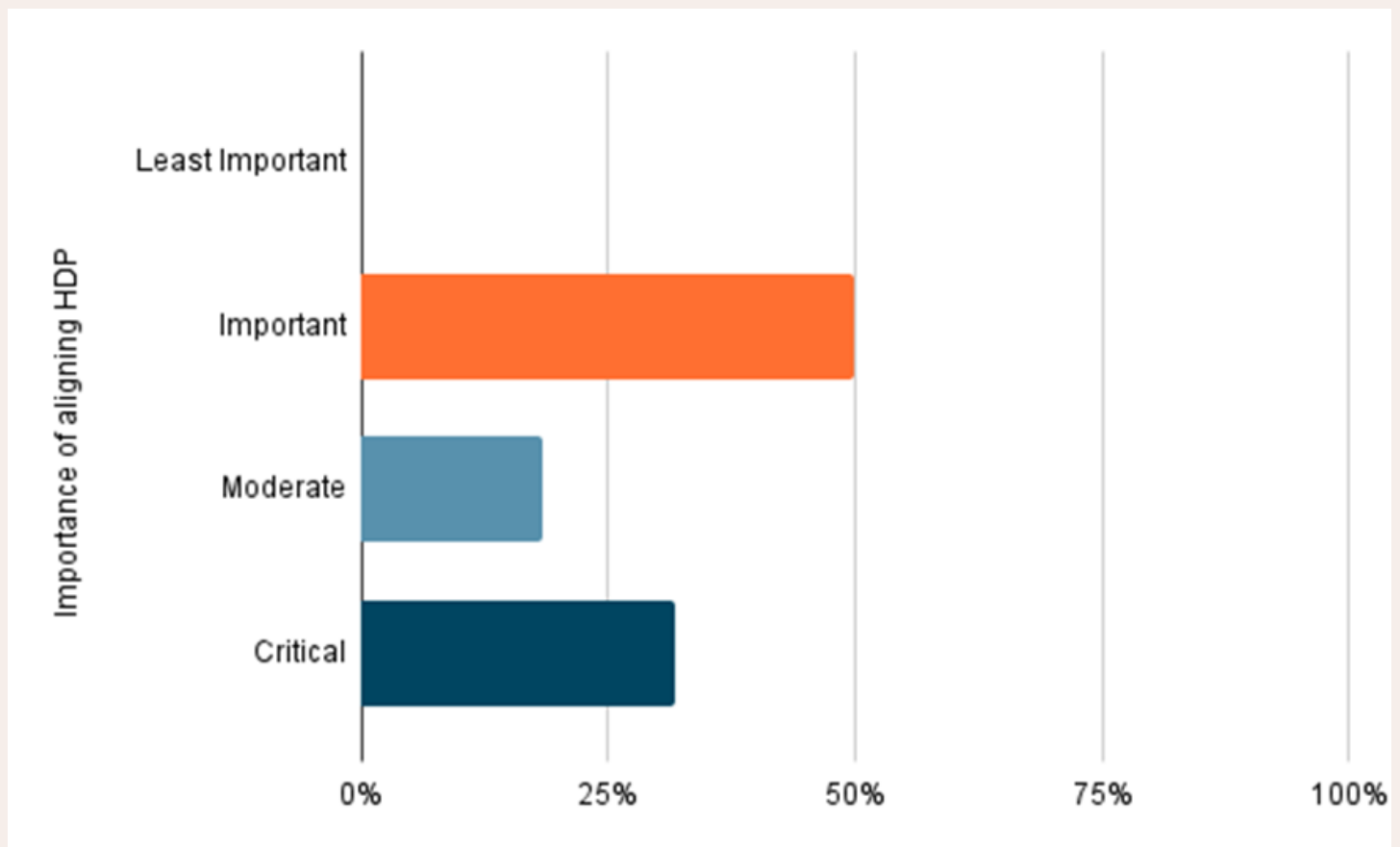

Graph 4. Importance of aligning HDP

When asked about how actors carry out HDP work, the majority responded that it is being used as a framework in their overall strategy, in conducting research, and in engaging HDP actors to develop and advocate recommendations. Thirty one percent (31%) mentioned delivering HDP services.

Meanwhile, 2% of actors responded that they are not at all involved in the HDP or Triple Nexus work, but are learning how to implement nexus-related activities and/or integrating it into their strategies. Actors find it critical for donors to simultaneously "support research, evaluations, and the dissemination of good practices" on the nexus in order to "build a collective understanding of effective approaches and encourage their adoption by implementing agencies".

In terms of respondents' relationship with actors working on the ground, 66% mentioned that they treat local actors as equal partners while 44% mentioned that their relationship is more as implementing partners. Some 11% said that they have no relationship at all.
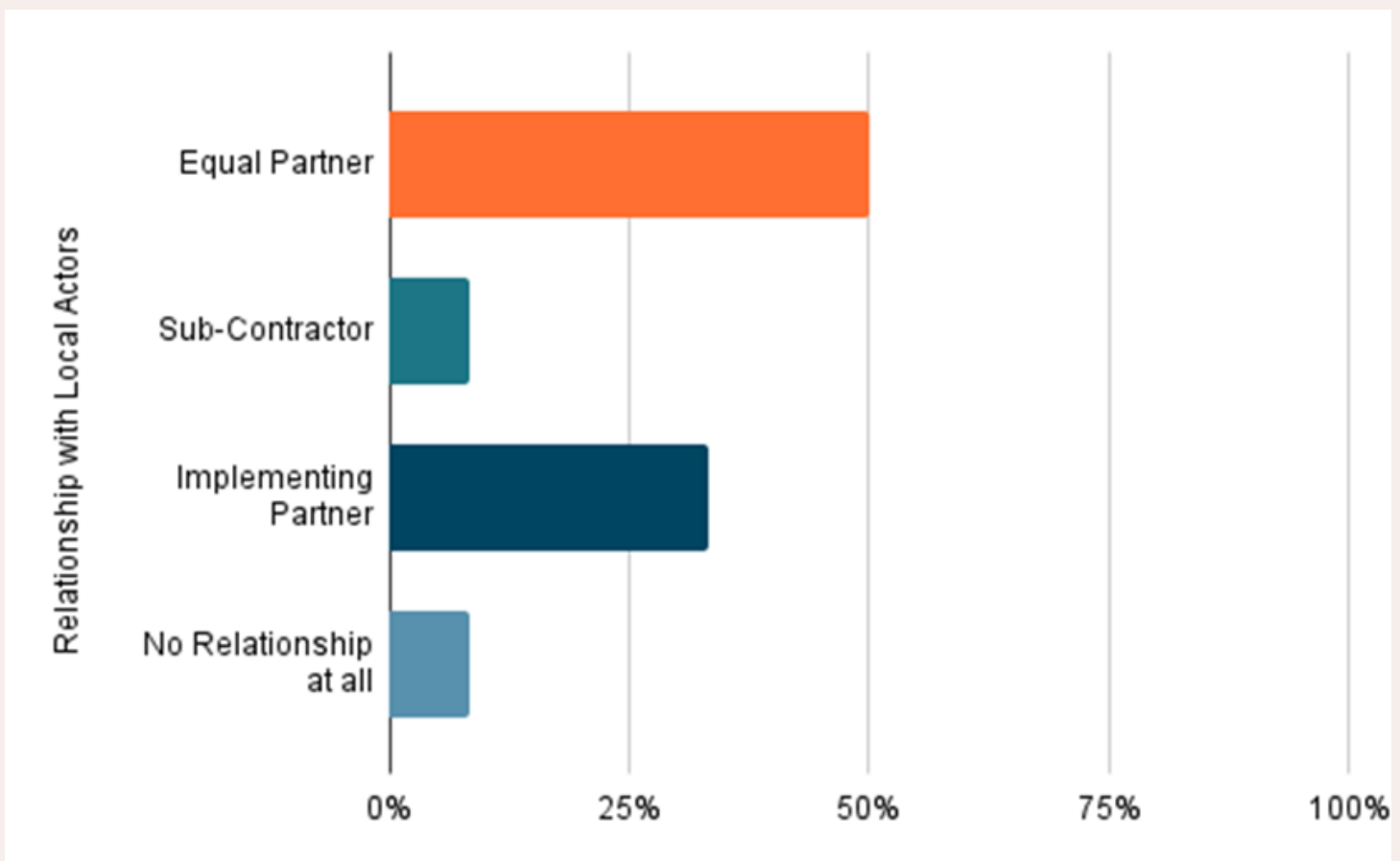
Graph 5. Relationship with Local Actors

Survey respondents recognize that challenges attached to humanitarian, development, and peace issues are not distinct from each other. Some intersections include: militarism, conflict, and humanitarian emergency; climate-induced conflict and humanitarian emergency; women and migration or forced displacement; and climate migration, among others.

Specifically, respondents try to integrate, link or cover these thematic areas when discussing the nexus:

- Climate change and the environment
- Women and gender
- Resource-grabbing and food insecurity
- Migration and forced displacement

So are possible responses to these challenges. The nexus approach is not a ladderized or linear approach to interlinked crises. In fact, in principle, it promotes a systematic, comprehensive, and holistic approach toward a people-centered, rights-based development. However, in order to get there, a respondent suggested that "interventions and funding should be planned according to concrete assessments involving key local stakeholders, and adapting these with the specificities of the context of intervention - without insisting on preset models that might not fit".

More broadly, a respondent shared how looking through the lens of decolonization and localization could improve how actors develop a nexus strategy, design a nexus program (or a nexus-related activity), and of course, execute plans.

When asked about monitoring and measuring progress, nearly half of the respondents reported that they monitor the results of their nexus interventions through qualitative methods such as gathering best practices and harvesting lessons learned. Less than half employ quantitative methods - some do not have a set monitoring mechanism specific to their nexus work, but only utilize their traditional Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning (MEAL) tool, while others do have their own, internal monitoring tool.

While measuring progress is a critical aspect of project management, many global South organizations do not have sufficient capacity to conduct a systematic monitoring & evaluation (M&E) process; some are actually unable to do so because of political conditions restricting them from accessing government data. It is thus an imperative for nexus actors to allot enough resources (time, staff, budget) in capacitating local organizations on M&E not just as a requirement for project management, but more so as an organizational skill towards ensuring uptake on learnings and sustainability of interventions.

SNAPSHOT OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DAC RECOMMENDATION

In 2022, the DAC published an interim progress review of the DAC Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus. The survey asked respondents to assess donors' progress of the following findings from the hyperlinked report one year later. The scale used is as follows: poor, fair, average, good, and excellent. **Overall, donors received a grade between fair and average from the 64 respondents.**

In relation to coordination:

a) The DAC Recommendation is becoming a widely accepted common standard beyond its original signatories or adherents.	fair
b) Donors prioritize the dissemination of the DAC Recommendation in terms of translating the principles into practical and concrete actions that inform organizational processes, partnerships and programming. Messages are jargon-free and practice-oriented.	tie between fair and average
c) Donors ensure adequate political engagement.	fair
d) Donors link the nexus with other relevant policy agendas.	average

In relation to programming:

a) Donors integrate the nexus approach in their strategic and policy frameworks and ensure that their institutional systems and processes are adapted to implement this approach.	average
b) Donors are able to define success in implementing the nexus approach in terms of change in ways of working and achievement of sustainable outcomes	fair
c) Donors make joint context analysis and joined-up planning work.	fair
d) Donors prioritize prevention and peacebuilding, investing in development whenever possible.	average
e) Donors enhance application of conflict sensitivity and do no harm.	fair
f) Donors invest in learning and evidence.	fair

In relation to financing:

a) Donors ensure an empowered leadership for cost-effective coordination.	fair
b) Donors harness collective financing strategies for coherent action.	average
c) Donors ensure that financing is more nexus ready - that is, they are flexible and predictable, allow for a timely crisis response, and facilitate greater involvement from a broader set of actors.	poor

3 - PROGRESS AND BOTTLENECKS

Civil society, through the global survey and an online consultation, shared the challenges and gaps they have observed and/or experienced in the course of working on nexus-related activities and in conflict and fragile contexts. Below summarizes three main assessment points of how the nexus is in practice: donors' lack of political will; deprioritization of peace; and insufficient funding.

DONORS' LACK OF POLITICAL WILL

Political will moves the game. Without it, or the lack of it, progress slows down and may even impede implementation progress. Political will is supposed to propel donors to act as the driving force of the triple nexus, but experiences show otherwise. One major observation is that donors are actually averse to change. Despite committing to the Nexus Recommendation and other HDP-related frameworks, current administrative and financial policies and practices limit HDP actors, especially local actors on the ground, from carrying out the urgent work they have to do.

Respondents noted that donors ask partners to do more than their regulations allow for, and this creates a heavier workload that paralyzes any possible action. Local organizations have a heavy load to juggle between authorities and donor requests as well as immediate and long-term needs of beneficiaries. When one side is creating impediments, the other side is also doing the same, and they are caught in the middle. Moreover, donors tend to transfer responsibilities to partner NGOs in figuring out how to make the Triple Nexus happen without reducing red tape, adapting funding mechanisms, or updating policies to ensure the implementation is feasible. Funding structures and donor-driven silos remain the main barrier to the nexus implementation.

While the report notes most progress around the coordination pillar, silos among actors need to be addressed. According to another respondent, while some donors have made structural changes to accommodate nexus approaches, accepted more risk for development funds (to be able to target fragile contexts), and created more alignment between development and

humanitarian departments or ministries, others are less open. Furthermore, development and humanitarian structures within donor departments or ministries remain extremely siloed and synergies are not sought to the extent desired in line with the DAC Nexus Recommendation. This is often due to political influence over development budgets, different credit lines, and competition or lack of collaboration between the two sectors.

Some have also observed how DAC donors seem to compete with the UN system, heavily impacting programming and implementation. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) and INCAF need to increase coordination efforts too, ensuring that initiatives are aligned and complementary. However, there are also silos among civil society, and this adds pressure to the sector in making a case for a people-centered, rights-based triple nexus programming. Such silos, along with administrative burdens, cause the lack of flexibility and adaptation in the daily work of CSOs, especially those in the frontlines. Lastly, localization still seems to be a standalone segment while it should be integrated in the HDP approach.

The overwhelming challenge in delivering effective and sustainable aid to people in countries with natural and political emergencies can be traced back to the independent or siloed channels and systems used by various types of assistance. For instance, humanitarian assistance is mostly built around urgent relief activities which are short-term, omni-dimensional interventions in targeted areas and communities - and adhering to humanitarian principles. Meanwhile, development aid and conflict prevention and peacebuilding interventions aim to respond to ongoing structural issues and are based on longer-term, integrated, multisectoral interventions implemented in a broader context.

DEPRIORITIZATION OF PEACE

While the report recognizes that conflict prevention and peacebuilding should be at the core of HDP programs, there is limited or marginal progress to this, and the funding support for peacebuilding and conflict prevention are gradually shrinking while the demands for these are all apparent and more needed now than ever. In fact, the report underscores how ODA for humanitarian needs is constantly increasing while ODA for longer-term development assistance and peace-supporting activities are gradually reducing. xty three percent (63%) of the 2020 gross bilateral ODA to fragile

contexts went to the development component, 25% went to the humanitarian component, while a meager 12% were allotted for the peace component. In the 2021 ODA, the peace component only received 10.8% of the total, a 15-year record low. Meanwhile, aid for peace in fragile contexts declined by 19% from 2010 to 2020 and country allocable aid towards conflict prevention only reached 4%. Data on aid budgets shows that progress has been uneven, unbalanced, and uncoordinated.

On a more sectoral level, it is widely recognized that supporting the rights of women and girls is a sure contribution to peace. Studies have shown the link between conflict and gender discrimination. For instance, "Twenty three of the 33 armed conflicts in 2022 were in countries with a low to medium level of gender equality" (Escola de Pau, 2023). However, funding for gender equality and women's empowerment lags behind most other investments (OECD Development Policy Paper 2020 No. 25). One result is the lack, if not absence, of gender and conflict-sensitive mechanisms that can respond to worsening gender-related violence (GBV) at different levels and fronts.

As mentioned above, HDP nexus is not a ladderized approach; the peace component has to be urgently integrated systematically and strategically with humanitarian and development components. This is linked to the changing international context since the launch of the Recommendation, e.g. increased polarization, polycrisis, dysfunctional multilateral system, military response to crises, and compounding effects of various conflict stressors, among others. Moreover, these issues may also result in the gradual erosion of institutions and security, which may then lead to conflict relapse or eruption of new ones. Generally, response to sudden political disruptions and conflict is still the priority. Thus, donors really need to ramp up efforts and sufficiently increase funding for conflict prevention and peacebuilding, as well as promote a better aligned, coordinated and comprehensive approach in tackling these issues via HDP nexus interventions.

The failure to put the peace component, along with the prevention agenda, front and center has allowed 55 protracted conflicts all over the world to persist. Political context is important and does play a big role in how donors and the international community traverse the triple nexus. Civil society highlights how current donor response sets the tone for the future of the nexus, as well as the public perception of donors themselves. As civil society, we call for true political commitments to operationalize the recommendations and implement coherent and aligned donor policies.

In the Palestine experience, for instance, limiting the provision of ODA, restricting the entry of aid, non-lifting of economic sanctions, militarization, and the failure to promote a ceasefire, have all contributed to the increasing starvation and dehydration, leading to increasing death tolls. Such failure in addressing the peace component hinders directly the other two components of the nexus. For example, securitization hinders access to humanitarian assistance and there are obvious impacts on development programmes. Civil society also laments how unbalanced donor response is when a similar aggression happened in Ukraine last year. Just by looking at the outpour of aid, categorical statements in support for the people of Ukraine, and urgency of the response, it is inevitable to compare the two. To mitigate the risk of using HDP nexus in militarization and securitization, interventions must be based on human rights principles, departing from a human security perspective.

INSUFFICIENT FUNDING

Among the three pillars, financing has seen the least progress. The report acknowledges that "the way funds are currently allocated, and programmes funded do not always support conflict prevention and peace", and funding remains "standalone" and "unsystematized". The report also emphasizes, "The full potential of the HDP DAC Recommendation will not be achieved without a fundamental change in the financing architecture and current crisis response models." In short, calls to reform the international aid architecture are now more important and urgent than ever. Linked to this is the conversation around resolving the crisis of multilateralism.

As if funding is not insufficient in conflict contexts, donors have pulled out development funding and issued new donor regulations before other actors could access funds. In the case of Palestine, some donors have requested HDP actors to condone Hamas, and this has been very challenging, specifically for humanitarian workers. On a similar vein, the EU withdrew funds for resilience and livelihood (supposedly under development funding), and are not transparent on this.

In terms of donor contributions to the UN Peacebuilding Fund (UNPBF), the United Kingdom and Sweden, among others, saw a drop in their voluntary contributions. Only a slim proportion of the UNPBF funding is accessible directly to NGOs, and often only by the larger ones. At the same time, it is

good to note that earlier this year, Member States in the 5th Committee of the UN General Assembly approved USD 50 million worth of assessed contributions to be allocated per year to the UNPBF.

Another issue in terms of access is how counter-terrorism laws related to financing have been impacting civil society. In the Philippines, for example, bank accounts of progressive CSOs have been frozen in the name of countering terrorism. This is ridiculous as these funds are from international actors whom CSOs have contractual obligations with.

The review of the Counter-Terrorism (CT) Compact has also led Member States to recognize the need for more human rights-based approaches to counter-terrorism. One one hand, securitized responses have only been creating more grievances amongst civilians in terrorism-affected contexts, and on the other, authoritarian Member States have been using CT frameworks and funding from donors to quash political opponents, constrain civic space, and carry out human rights violations through their security forces.

More broadly, donors always argue that ODA is scarce. However, this narrative needs to be further examined given how governments have responded to other financial needs. For example, it is difficult to imagine and believe that money is scarce given the aid readily provided to Ukraine, Israel or COVID-19. Governments are also known for readily providing major tax breaks to their national companies and the top 1% of their populations, as well as for being lax on fighting fiscal evasion. These scenarios should not be tolerated at the expense of not meeting their 0.7% GNI ODA target for the SDGs, or the delays in meeting their payments to the Loss and Damage Fund among other funds they have committed to provide for.

Another narrative is how ODA is needed to leverage and catalyze private sector investment. Incentives can only go so far; it is regulation that is needed. The private sector cannot be allowed to resort to philanthropic window dressing. Moreover, when donors say they need or want to incentivize the private sector, they need to be clear with their expectations from them given the private sector's track record of violations and non-transparency and accountability. How this partnership triumphs over "business as usual" practices should also be clear.

It is thus imperative that OECD/DAC members should overturn the current scenario and allot sufficient funding - one that is adequate, reliable, flexible and sustained, especially for local CSOs, including sectoral organizations such

as women, Indigenous Peoples, etc. There is a practice among Pacific CSOs called "prepositioning funding", which is a mechanism where local actors can access funds way ahead of the project. Moreover, competition in the aid sector is counterproductive to addressing long-term issues that drive protracted crises. On the contrary, this incentivizes a political economy of aid actors that compete for the means to get more resources and beat the competition, rather than serve the people in need and provide a conducive environment for political actors to agree on political solutions.

However, what is most urgently needed is to reform the way that ODA funding is disbursed and accounted for. The reality is that donors do not measure success based on improvements of the affected populations' human security needs. Rather, there is a disconnect between the higher-level policy objectives stated in donor strategies and how success of the funding is measured. Currently, the narrative is about putting a price tag on the outcomes, or the amount of dollars spent viz accounted for.

Measuring the grant equivalent instead of its real face value also diminishes the integrity of ODA as this risks inflating ODA. Private Sector Instruments (PSIs), meanwhile, risk pulling ODA to different directions thus sidelining its fundamental role purpose. Following the UK, Sweden announced that they are cutting their ODA by 50%. Such a move may soon become prominent across the DAC, heavily impacting the very foundation of ODA and its commitment of 0.7% to the poor and marginalized. There is a serious need to rethink the donor club structure that governs ODA and its non-legal binding status.

Donors should then go back to the basics; uphold what ODA is really for. ODA is for addressing poverty and inequality for the most marginalized; addressing long-term crises while responding to short-term ones; ensuring that finance for climate is new and additional, especially amid climate-induced conflict and other crises; ensuring support for civil society who are in the frontlines.

4 - THE WAY FORWARD

Based on the previous section, progress and bottlenecks, the following three main recommendations have sufficed: transform the humanitarian-development-peace system; intensify efforts toward localization; and strengthen capacities of civil society.

TRANSFORM THE HUMANITARIAN-DEVELOPMENT-PEACE SYSTEM

Donors play a significant role in driving the implementation of the HDP nexus. Their behavior, including their funding decisions, policy priorities, and engagement with implementing agencies have a profound impact on the adoption and progress of the nexus approach. In transforming a donor-driven system to a people-centered system, citizens are able to reclaim what is rightfully just for them. This is the kind of system that a people-centered triple nexus approach aspires to forward.

One reminder from the report that actors should really heed is to "link political dialogue with development or humanitarian programming". It has been observed that the Recommendation is strongly "owned" by the development sector when it should be made equally relevant to humanitarian work, as well as to the peace and reconciliation sector. For instance, there has been an experience in Somalia, at the sub-national level, where a nexus program links inter-clan political dialogue to local development planning, to local development funding, and to district council formation.

Political dialogue, on the other hand, should encompass a broader societal dialogue. There is a need to restore a functioning social contract, allowing for civic space and healthy state-society relations for discussing and addressing manifestations of fragility, conflict, and violence. For example, it would be beneficial to look at how donors from the global North have supported (incoherently, at that) national dialogue processes, which excluded critical political stakeholders (e.g. the military in Sudan, the Taliban in Afghanistan, and some elements of the Tuareg in Mali, among others) and how they allowed Western-aligned authoritarian leaders to make a masquerade out of these processes to consolidate their grip on power (e.g. national dialogue initiatives in Chad, Mali, Cameroon or Ethiopia).

INTENSIFY EFFORTS TOWARD LOCALIZATION

Another potential of the triple nexus lies in how it can advance the localization agenda. Civil society believes that locally-led development should be entrenched in any HDP framework, policy or approach. One concrete way to make this happen is to look at both the DAC Nexus Recommendation and the DAC Enabling Civil Society Recommendation, and see how they could complement each other. With a more integrated approach, this could reverse the transactional relationship between donors and CSOs. Power, agency, and funding, especially those going through local ones, is still marginal. Moreover, the role of INGOs as partner and collaborator of local actors should be strengthened and maximized.

INGOs, as well as regional platforms, should also strategize how they can contribute to empowering local CSOs and grassroots organizations to take charge, create and own their own narratives. This all starts with enabling a common analysis of the context and with facilitating discussions on how to address the short-, mid- and long-term needs of affected actors. Donors thus need to invest more in taking political risks for these analyses and discussions to take place. CSOs, as actors in their own right, are not just mere operations but are actual agents of change. However, as it currently stands, shrinking civic space remains a major barrier, especially for women and youth, whose voices and rights are still undermined. Exclusion and criminalization also impede locally-led development.

There is also a suggestion from the draft report to build an HDP nexus platform per country to ensure its coordination with regional and global structures. This should be explored, especially in operational terms. If this platform does not or could not bring all relevant HDP nexus actors together, the value would be questionable. Moreover, decentralized and inclusive coordination working groups must be set-up in areas where nexus approaches are implemented. But then again, the lack of political will of donors will only hamper any potential collaboration between the two mentioned recommendations, and as we know, policy and financing are major enablers of the localization agenda.

STRENGTHEN CAPACITIES OF CIVIL SOCIETY

Reflecting upon the survey highlights in section 3, it must be noted that while civil society understands the relevance of the nexus approach in their programming, it is another thing to understand how it could or should work in practice. Therefore, awareness-raising, peer-learning, and knowledge-generation initiatives should be broadened, systematized, and sustained. Contributing to these efforts will help to strengthen civil society (including grassroots organizations) capacities in relation to organization, leadership, alliance-building, policy and advocacy, research, and fundraising.

Supporting civil society to upskill and facilitating an enabling environment for them to flourish pave the way toward the sustainability of their organizations and development of CSO actors as leaders, mentors, and experts in their field. Investing in their capacities also means enabling them to be more creative in exploring, testing, and improving solutions that respond to challenges at hand; helping them enhance their confidence and knowledge when engaging with various development actors in different policy spaces; and providing them opportunities and space to share and cascade their skills and expertise.

EPILOGUE

Parallel and simultaneous to improving the triple nexus practice is the call for systemic change. Addressing the root causes of conflict and fragility should be the ultimate goal; the overarching framework in which a triple nexus approach is embarked upon. A triple nexus program should not just be a band-aid solution to protracted HDP challenges. In fact, the nexus approach should not just be thought of as an approach fit for doing joint programming. It is a macro level approach that first and foremost needs to materialize at the political level, then the financing needs to enable a coherent response. Analysis, coordination, M&E, and programming will follow suit. The enabling framework for a people-centered nexus approach needs to be in place, because as reports have shown, trying to tinker with the operational aspects without the political coherence has only led to shortcomings. Instead, the triple nexus approach should be able to aid our interventions to respond to the integrated crises of climate change, gender-based violence and inequality, and security threats, among others. Moreover, there needs to be a fervent follow-through of all other crucial commitments, declarations, or frameworks related to the nexus.

As civil society actors working across the HDP nexus, we stand ready to accompany and support further work done by OECD/DAC donors in implementing the recommendation for the benefit of target sectors and communities, and toward the positive impact of coherent, aligned and coordinated responses.

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