



WEBINAR SUMMARY

Humanitarian Development Nexus: What is the New Way of Working?

26 April 2017 & 10 May 2017

The majority of humanitarian operations around the world are protracted, with humanitarian appeals lasting for 7 years on average. Humanitarian emergencies can no longer be viewed as short-term events as they are often manifestations of structural and complex socio-economic developments. In addressing these situations, the linkages between humanitarian and development plans and operations are often weak or absent. For example, humanitarian planning cycles are typically annual and do not easily fit with longer-term development planning processes. The World Humanitarian Summit emphasised the need to bridge the gap between humanitarian relief and development. With this in mind, the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) generated the “New Way of Working” (NWoW). But, concretely, what is the New Way of Working? This is a summary of the webinar on the New Way of Working (Part 1 and Part 2).

Panellists

Part 1

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Part 2

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What is the New Way of Working?

Humanitarian and development actors, governments, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and the private sector have been progressively working better together to meet the needs of affected people. While the divide between humanitarian and development action has been previously recognised and attempts at bridging these gaps exist, the NWoW is different in that it understands the need for collective outcomes to reduce vulnerabilities and risks that cause humanitarian crises in the first place. The NWoW offers a concrete path to remove unnecessary barriers to such collaboration in order to enable meaningful progress. The NWoW can be described as working over multiple years, as opposed to on an annual basis, based on the comparative advantage of diverse range of actors, including those outside the UN system (who may have different mandate-driven expertise, capabilities, and resources), towards collective outcomes. Although the NWoW is context specific, it typically entails:

- **A joint analysis** to identify priorities and to form a joint problem-statement based on collective data. In Burkina Faso, the team innovatively incorporated data from the Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) into the Common Country Assessment to inform a joint analysis.
- **A joint vision**. When all actors in an operation, including NGOs, jointly partake in risk and vulnerabilities assessment, a shared vision can be reached. In Burkina Faso, the team is now able to identify very concrete and measurable collective outcomes that can be aligned to the National Development Plan, as well as to the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF).

- **A joined-up planning and programming.** In Sudan, the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) and the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) are aligning their multiyear humanitarian response plans to the UNDAF with the intention of conducting joined-up planning and programming. In this regard, the country team is reviewing existing coordination mechanisms to adapt to the new context and is also looking at what new or additional financing modalities will be needed. In Lebanon, work is being done to develop the Refugee Response Plan in coherence with the multi United Nations Strategic Framework.
- **An empowered leadership and coordination.** Humanitarian leaders are responsible for facilitating joint analysis, shared problem statements, and collective planning, programming and implementation of collective outcomes. Additionally, they are tasked with supporting connectivity between all actors and capacities available in country to contribute to said outcomes. To fulfil these functions, the RC/HC must be supported by adequate capacity and resources, and collective and individual accountability of actors contributing to this approach would need to be strengthened.
- **New modalities of financing.** Bridging existing humanitarian and development gaps in an operation may require surging staff with particular expertise. Especially in protracted crises, financing must include a broader range of flexible and predictable multi-year programming and diversified funding tools that are aligned to enable layering of short-, medium- and long-term programs.

What practical steps should Resident Coordinators and Humanitarian Coordinators take to address the Humanitarian-Development Nexus?

1. **Aligning of planning cycles.** Recent efforts to make the HRP a multi-year one instead of an annual one gives a unique opportunity to understand the coherence between the HRP and the UNDAF and to put forward a more sustainable solution for affected communities' problems.
2. **Encouraging coordination and dialogue between the HCT and UNCT.** In many countries, the HCT and UNCT do not have a sustained and consistent dialogue around analysis and planning, even though many UN agencies sit in the HCT and UNCT. Encouraging dialogue is important in enabling analysis that is truly joined-up, as only joint analysis and shared problem statements can lead to joint collective outcomes. In Ethiopia, Yemen, and Somalia, humanitarian leaders have led initiatives to bring relevant actors around the same table. Furthermore, the RC/HC in Yemen invited World Bank colleagues to UNCT/HCT meetings in view of aligning the financing elements necessary for the NWoW.
2. **Leveraging the Grand Bargain** at country level. The Grand Bargain includes a series of proposed changes in the working practices of donors and aid organisations. It commits donors and aid organisations to provide 25% of global humanitarian funding to local and national responders by 2020, along with more un-earmarked money, and increase multi-year funding to ensure greater predictability and continuity in humanitarian response. Humanitarian leaders in field operations should leverage the Grand Bargain commitments to initiate dialogue with donors present in the operation as well as in capitals.
3. **Requesting human resources and political support if necessary.** Headquarters often receive requests from field operations for human resources support in implementing NWoW. The "People Pipeline" aims to develop a roster of humanitarian-development professionals across the UN system who are familiar with the NWoW and have the capacity to engage in complex, system wide processes of Nexus issues. Additionally, UNDP, OCHA, and the IASC can provide and/or strengthen the political support required by humanitarian leaders in field operations to roll out the NWoW.

In contexts where not all national territories are under government control, is it feasible to work with local authorities in non-government controlled areas?

A joined-up way of working between humanitarian and development actors may not always be possible. The need to protect humanitarian space may contradict, diverge from, or simply not contribute, to the calls to work on sustainable development solutions. Especially when working with authorities in non-government controlled areas, special care should be taken to ensure that humanitarian collaboration with development actors and mechanisms is principled and rights-based at all times. Humanitarian and development actors can begin by conducting joint analyses to arrive at a shared understanding of challenges specific to the context. Then, humanitarian and development actors, with the help of local NGOs and communities, can decide whether collective outcomes are appropriate and feasible during the planning and programming phases.



Ahunna Eziakonwa-Onochie
Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator, Ethiopia

What steps did you take to bring closer the humanitarian short-term and development longer-term support to affected people?

1. **Understand the development context** in which the humanitarian operation was taking place. This has, in turn, led to the important understanding that humanitarian work, especially in Ethiopia, must protect development investments and gains made in the country in the last few years in order to ensure minimal needs for humanitarian relief in the future.
2. **Promote joint analysis, vision shaping, messaging, and advocacy between humanitarian and development partners** through, for example, organising joint retreats between actors on both sides of the divide in which joint messaging are developed for advocacy activities with the government, national authorities, and donor community. The team in Ethiopia asked for additional human resources from headquarters in terms of a Nexus advisor that would facilitate discussions and assist the planning of joint initiatives.
3. **Maximise opportunities for complementary humanitarian and development programming.** In Ethiopia, food insecurity meant high malnutrition rate. Humanitarians needed to understand how national health systems work so as to identify opportunities for collaboration (instead of creating parallel systems of response). This approach is not about shifting development resources to deal with humanitarian needs, but to bring together efforts in a complementary manner to ensure the achievement of collective outcomes.
4. **Bring humanitarian and development partners around the same table** can promote cross-pollination of ideas and expertise. In achieving this, coordination structures in the country may need to be re-thought. For example, in Ethiopia the RC/HC made sure humanitarian issues were a standing agenda item in the Development Assistant Group monthly meeting, as well as ensured that there is participation of development actors in the HCT to improve shared problem analysis.
5. **Ensure that there are balanced and well-informed humanitarian leaders in the field.** Humanitarian Cluster Coordinators should have sound and deep knowledge of the local development context, as well as not have a purely humanitarian or emergency background. With support from OCHA and UNDP, ensure also that advisors are appropriately trained prior to being surged or are given crash courses on the NWoW.

What are the lessons learnt on the New Way of Working that can be helpful for other operations?

- **National leadership and ownership.** Use existing national systems, when available, to respond to humanitarian needs. This is crucial for gaining trust and achieving impact.
- **Think creatively and design appropriate structures.** A Strategic Risk Management Forum will be created that will include actors across the divide to look at how to respond to risks before they turn into emergencies. The platform will also be useful for Nexus discussions.
- **Consider innovative funding options that support the Nexus.** The innovative solution of reaching out to the Ethiopian diaspora and increasing engagement with the private sector was identified. During the El Nino crisis, the private sector helped with satellite images to determine where to find water. Non-humanitarian organisations may have resources, technologies, and capacities that can complement our own.
- **Crises often generate opportunities and momentum to improve existing response systems.** In the past, parallel system led to inefficiencies. A 'One UN team' with integrated programming was implemented at field level, which reduced resources required thanks to increased efficiency.



John Ging
Director of Operations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)

How is the New Way of Working different from previous efforts at addressing the Humanitarian-Development Nexus?

Demands on humanitarian relief have expanded while development gains have been negatively impacted. The NWoW is a renewed effort at addressing the division between immediate lifesaving humanitarian relief and longer-term development assistance (i.e. the humanitarian-development nexus). The NWoW builds on lessons learned from past endeavours and realises that short, medium, and longer-term support needs to be provided to vulnerable people concurrently, in a 'contiguum'. This time, what is different is the Sustainable Development Goals and the commitment by humanitarian and development actors to work towards collective outcomes around the reduction of needs over multiple years. The NWoW appears to have greater support and commitment from different actors from across the board (humanitarian, development, civil society, financial institutions, governments, etc.) than previous efforts to address the issue, including the World Bank who has committed to engaging earlier and more robustly in fragile humanitarian settings.

What are some practical steps to implement the New Way of Working at the field level?

The specific challenges involved in applying the NWoW will depend on the context. Field colleagues interested in implementing the NWoW should discuss within their HCT and UNCT to review context-specific opportunities. To translate into better results for people and effectively reduce needs and vulnerability, the UNCT and HCT need to think about what programmes need to be re-designed, implemented or scaled up to lead to a reduction in needs - and not focus overly on process. There are two key steps to kick off the process:

1. **Support joint analysis of needs, vulnerabilities, and risks, and of capacities to address them.** Humanitarian and development actors need to share their information and analyses to arrive at a shared understanding of the situation that needs to be addressed.
2. **Develop collective outcomes to reduce needs, vulnerabilities, and risk, and identify activities needed to achieve them.** Planning and programming need to be joined-up, as humanitarian and development actors do not work independently of each other in a vacuum. Humanitarian and development actions should be complementary in order to achieve collective outcomes, avoid gaps in programming, and minimise duplication. Donors have a pivotal role in encouraging and supporting development programmes that are more adaptable, risk-tolerant and risk-informed which will be critical to reduce vulnerability and risk in fragile and crisis affected contexts.

Does the New Way of Working take into consideration the peace and stability context?

The NWoW acknowledges that collective outcomes can contribute to sustaining peace and that peace and stability are important for reducing humanitarian needs. However, the main purpose of humanitarian action is to address life-saving needs and alleviate suffering, and so cannot be driven by political end or purpose: to do so would risk politicizing humanitarian action and compromising the humanitarian principles that allow humanitarians to work and reach those most in need. Coherence and coordination within the UN system in support of peace consolidation is grounded in the UN Integrated Assessment and Planning (IAP) policy, which outlines important guiding principles, including respect for humanitarian principles. The IAP is still an appropriate framework and is in the process of being updated.

How can the nexus work in non-government controlled areas?

Humanitarian actors already operate in areas under the control of non-state actors or de-facto authorities and their presence is often possible due to their strict adherence to the principles of impartiality, neutrality, and independence. This is more difficult for development organisations whose work is based on a strong partnership with, consent of, and support to governments. This is not to say development actors cannot work in areas controlled by de-facto authorities. Some partners have found ways to continue to do community-based development in such environments thanks to certain donors who are supporting more risk-tolerant and flexible programming. But their added value and potential impact on working in these areas need to be carefully considered and their modus operandi needs to be adapted to the context.



Marta Ruedas
Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator, Sudan

What steps did you take to bring humanitarian and development actors and programs closer?

- **Mind shift and joint analysis.** The main challenge in addressing the humanitarian-development nexus is not to bring humanitarian and development actors together per se, since most agencies across the spectrum are already double-hatted. Rather, it is to link humanitarian and development programming as organically as possible, where and when possible. In Sudan, we created the position of Humanitarian-Development Nexus Advisor in the RC/HC office (in the spirit of the 'People's pipeline' mentioned by Assistant Secretary-General Izumi Nakamitsu during the webinar on the NWoW Part 1) and established RC/HC Senior Advisory Team to facilitate joint analysis, planning, and programming.
- **Regular engagement with the donor community.** Working with the donor community ensures more coherent financing in line with NWoW and the Grand Bargain. In Sudan, we benefited from a financing mission composed of the OECD, the Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF), and OCHA, to support the development of a financing strategy that is more coherently in line with collective outcomes. We also have regular joint 'humanitarian' and 'development' donor meetings to underpin how donor funding can support the NWoW.
- **World Bank engagement and durable solutions.** Funding from the UN-World Bank Partnership Trust fund for the Humanitarian Development Peace initiative (HDP initiative) has provided better-informed durable solutions for IDPs. The initiative has provided stronger quantitative data on poverty which will inform joint strategies and plans to support IDPs in a more sustainable manner.

- **Instruments that facilitate a coherent humanitarian-development response.** In Sudan, we postponed the development of a new UNDAF to allow a Multi-Year Humanitarian Strategy (MYHS) to develop simultaneously. The multi-year nature of the humanitarian strategy provided a broader perspective from which to look at chronic issues in the appropriate context e.g. addressing the underlying causes of malnutrition rather than its symptoms). In Sudan there is also a Joint IASC Sector and UNDAF Results Group meeting to make sure humanitarian and development plans are mutually reinforcing. We also have a joint OCHA/RCO Information Management Working Group to make sure information, upon which decisions are based, relates to common baselines and indicators and are inter-changeable to the degree possible. There has also been a Humanitarian-Development Nexus/Coordination Review Mission composed of Global Cluster Leads, the IASC Task Team on the Nexus in Protracted Crisis, and the UNDG Working Group on Transition, to unpack the NWoW in the context of Sudan. The mission resulted in a set of recommendations and suggestions for the country team and partners to further develop steps to achieve collective outcomes.

What are some lessons learned from implementing the New Way of Working in Sudan?

- **Drastic measures will be counter-productive, while slow, incremental change will not sufficiently change the way we work.** The NWoW needs to be done seriously but not radically. We need to avoid adding additional layers to an already multi-layered humanitarian and development system and make sure the system that exists adapts its way of working to enable development interventions to address the suffering caused by humanitarian crises, alongside traditional humanitarian actors. Development funding also need to support this new way of thinking/working.
- **Ambition and innovation.** We need to have a clear vision of where we want to get to. It is always uncomfortable to change one's way of working but by challenging ourselves and helping each other, it makes it easier. Humanitarian Reform, the Transformative Agenda, and other processes have brought improvements to the humanitarian system but we cannot deny that we are still discussing the same fundamental issues; for example, the discussion about financing is also largely still the same. We have to be courageous to challenge ourselves and to leave our comfort zone, and the donor community has to do the same.
- **Change how we work, collectively. We need to adapt the way we work to become more relevant and to be more effective in responding to needs.** This change has started in Sudan where humanitarian and development actors have agreed on collective outcomes to their work, which are identified as priorities in both the HRP and the UNDAF.
- **Establish coordination structures to enable organic shift** in how we address issues pertaining to humanitarian, recovery, and development. This does not mean bringing everything under one structure. Rather, it means greater flexibility in how to engage on issues than currently exists. Additionally, operations need to be determined by the needs of people rather than institutional mandates or systematic labels such as development or humanitarian. **Structures need to suit the agenda.**
- **Flexible funding.** Multi-annual funding commitments are crucial: Too often aid actors cannot move with sufficient flexibility and timeliness from humanitarian programming to recovery or development programming, because of structural impediments on the donor side and the humanitarian side. Nonetheless **the fundamental issue is not lack of funding, per se, but two ways of working that are not compatible enough to facilitate the organic shift between humanitarian and development programming.**