SBP Talk Session Series on the HDP Nexus

Session One Report

Overview:

On June 27th 2023, the German Center for International Peace Operations (ZIF) and the Standby Partnership (SBP) Network hosted a talk session on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) nexus. This virtual event with 47 participants marked the first session of a three-part series laying a focus on the deployment of HDP nexus experts through the SBP mechanism. Several deploying and receiving partner organizations were present during the call, demonstrating the strong interest of many partners within the SBP Network to further contribute to the realization of the HDP nexus approach.

Mr. Sebastian Dworack (Head of the International Capacity Development Team of ZIF and Member of the SBP Steering Committee) delivered the opening remarks. Moderated by Mr. Romano Lasker (Nexus Academy, UNDP), the first talk session presented the experiences of two panelists who are currently deployed in HDP nexus roles through the SBP mechanism - Ms. Sahra El Fassi (HDP Nexus Coordination and Conflict Sensitivity WFP East Jerusalem) and Mr. Jahal de Meritens (HDP Nexus Advisor UN RC/HC Madagascar).

The fruitful discussion revolved around recommendations for the deployment of HDP nexus advisors and comments on the implementation of the HDP nexus approach in general.

Recommendations for the deployment of dedicated HDP nexus capacities:

- **Dedicated nexus capacities** are important for a successful implementation of the approach. An HDP nexus team is ideal, including a MEAL expert and potentially staff located at the local level.
- There are **different HDP nexus roles** (advisors, coordinators), **purposes** (advocacy, inter-agency /multi-stakeholder coordination, programming, etc.) and **levels** (regional/national/local). These different roles require different skillsets. The type of deployment depends on the purpose and TORs should be carefully adapted.
- For **inter-agency and multi-stakeholder coordination**, dedicated HDP nexus capacities should ideally be placed within United Nations Resident Coordinator Offices (RCOs) or OCHA and reporting directly to the United Nations Resident Coordinator / Humanitarian Coordinator to avoid friction. Here, dedicated capacity can make a difference to address silos including different analysis frameworks, response mechanisms, financing mechanisms, etc. It can also support multi-stakeholder engagement.
- For more **programmatic, mandate related HDP nexus work**, deployments to other UN agencies or other actors (including government) can also be useful.

- Questions remain on how decisions on **where to deploy** HDP nexus capacities are made, if they are necessary in all contexts and how the decision-making could become more strategic. Information on processes should also be shared with country offices / RCOs
- Due to the complexity of HDP nexus roles, staff would benefit from a **community of practice**, potentially with an option to pair new and experienced HDP nexus advisors (mentoring). This recommendation could potentially be taken forward by / with the Nexus Academy.
- It is also necessary to continue to **build and share knowledge** about the HDP Nexus more broadly, amongst other things by widening the scope of the Nexus Academy. Several initiatives are ongoing (e.g. by NORCAP, ZIF) to develop additional training tools.
- Building an **HDP nexus roster** or mapping and aligning existing capacities (including SBP member pools, Nexus Academy alumni) could make deployments faster. It will be key to disseminate information on processes to country offices / RCOs.

Regarding the implementation of the HDP nexus approach participants noted the following points:

- Need to meaningfully **include national and local governments as well as civil society**. While not always easy to do in practice, this is key to ensuring sustainability of the approach and avoid it being viewed as an "UN approach" by important stakeholders. Dedicated HDP nexus capacities can also play a role in supporting other stakeholders to organize and coordinate themselves.
- Further reflect on how the HDP nexus can be implemented in **different contexts**, including politically highly sensitive contexts. Here a practical community-based approach can help to avoid the big debates and rather work with civil society organizations that are less siloed.
- Need to continuously **adapt to changing circumstances** while not turning the Collective outcomes into a shopping list.
- Maintain an **openness for other related topics** such as durable solutions, climate, peacebuilding, resilience while not labeling everything "nexus". For instance, there are a lot of complementarities with the Action Agenda on Internal Displacement. The HDP nexus is a discussion of networks and between networks.
- Further reflect on **how to measure success** of implementing the HDP nexus (and of nexus advisors), for instance in terms of sustainability of programming.
- Reflect on **how to overcome competition** as this can be a hindering factor to greater cross-pillar collaboration. Even information sharing, for instance for mapping of actors and activities can be difficult.
- Keep in mind that some challenges and bottlenecks (for instance regarding different programming cycles, budget lines etc.) can only be solved through **changes on global policy level** or within donors.

Next steps:

- Organize an SBP talk session with a focus on the concrete modalities of deploying dedicated HDP nexus capacities.
- Organize an SBP talk session on building more HDP nexus capacities and on how to create synergies between different efforts.
- Explore how SBP network could contribute to building a community of practice of HDP nexus experts with an option to pair new and experienced HDP nexus advisors (mentoring).
- Explore how SBP network could contribute to building an HDP nexus roster or to mapping and aligning existing capacities.