

Supporting the Sustainable Development Goals in conflict-affected countries: operationalizing the triple nexus through a risk-informed human security approach



Countries

Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, State of Palestine, Somalia, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Yemen

Duration

24 months

Partners

ESCWA, United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security, League of Arab States

Target SDG

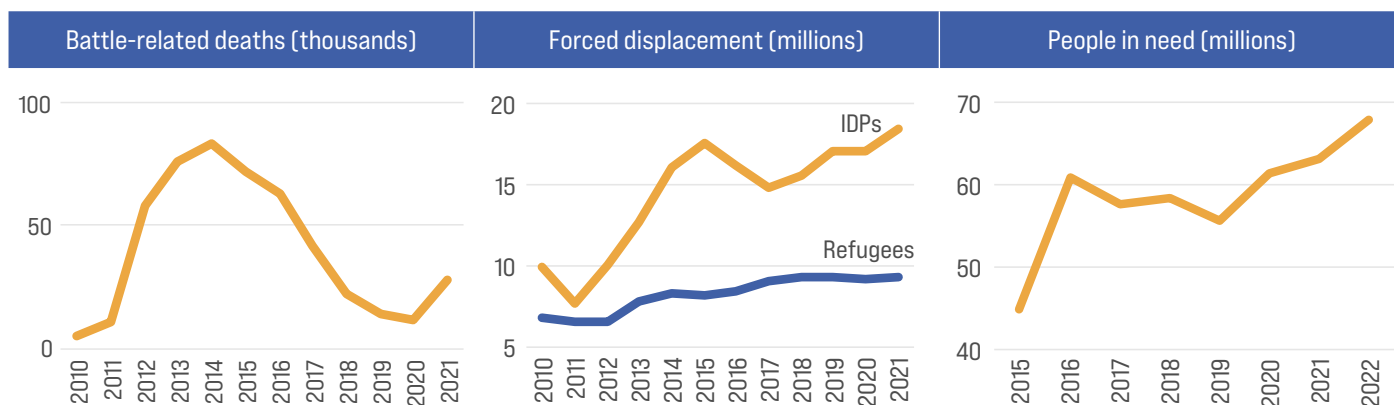
SDG 16

Background

The Arab region has been deeply affected by protracted conflict, the repercussions of which continue to reverberate through the years and across generations. Forced displacement and reliance on humanitarian aid persist at alarming levels, despite a reduction in violence since its peak in 2014. The scale of conflict-induced vulnerability is immense, with an estimated 65 million people requiring humanitarian assistance. Current and emerging challenges have proven complex, damaging the region's rich socioeconomic landscape, which is facing various future risks including the far-reaching implications of mega trends like climate change.



Figure 1. Key conflict trends in the Arab region



Sources: Left figure – Uppsala Conflict Data Program; Centre figure – Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), and the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre; Right figure - United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

Note: No data for the State of Palestine in the figure on the left; data for Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, the State of Palestine, Somalia, the Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen in the figure on the right.

Challenges

Conflict has far-reaching implications, even more so in protracted contexts, hindering progress towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In fragile and conflict-affected countries, achieving the SDGs requires a comprehensive and integrated human security approach, which takes into account national priorities and systems.

It is essential to recognize that humanitarian, development and peace initiatives do not take place in chronological order: they are interconnected and interdependent, requiring coordinated efforts to address complex challenges. The convergence of these diverse pillars necessitates effective coordination and synergy among a wide range of stakeholders, including Governments, the United Nations System, development partners, and local communities.

Triple nexus

To effectively address multifaceted challenges in post-conflict situations, it is crucial to establish long-term, integrated and sustainable solutions that bring together humanitarian, development and peace efforts. Adopting a triple nexus approach, which emphasizes the interlinkages and synergies between these sectors, makes it possible to bridge gaps in service delivery and tackle the underlying causes of conflict. This integrated approach facilitates a smooth transition from immediate response to long-term recovery and sustainable development.

Fostering collaboration and complementarity helps achieve a cohesive response, bolstering the prospects of successfully advancing the SDGs in conflict-affected countries. This collaborative approach enables the pooling of resources, expertise and perspectives, resulting in collective outcomes.

However, despite the numerous advantages of the nexus approach, adoption remains limited in practice owing to several factors. Firstly, the complexity of crises and their intricate dynamics present challenges for implementing a nexus approach, particularly in the absence of crisis contingencies at the people, social and institutional levels. Secondly, limited technical or operational capacities among national stakeholders can hinder the effective implementation of the nexus approach. Thirdly, the absence of robust national coordination mechanisms poses a significant barrier to the adoption of a nexus approach.

The unique context and nature of conflict-related issues require tailored interventions. Building the necessary skills and expertise within public institutions is crucial for the successful integration of humanitarian, development and peace efforts. The establishment of coordination structures that bring together diverse stakeholders is also essential to agree upon “collective outcomes” and achieve meaningful impact.

Project overview

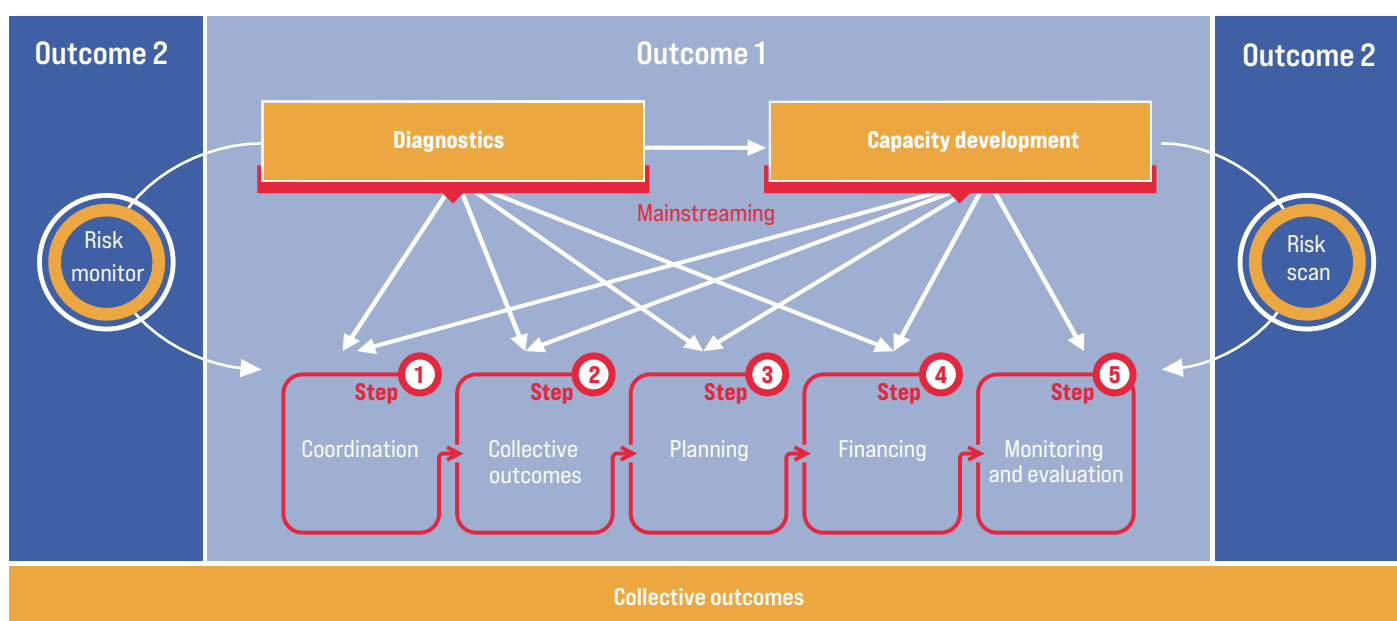
The goal of the project is to bridge gaps by operationalizing the triple nexus approach within a risk-informed human security approach among key stakeholders in nine Arab conflict-affected countries.

The general objective of this project is to contribute to supporting relevant actors at the national and subnational levels, especially in fragile and conflict-affected contexts, to achieve the SDGs

by operationalizing the triple nexus approach within a human security framework. The project aims to achieve the following outcomes:

- Mainstreaming and operationalizing the triple nexus approach within a human security framework (outcome 1).
- Mainstreaming a risk management approach within a human security framework (outcome 2).

Figure 2. Project overview



To achieve outcome 1, the project will support relevant actors to operationalize the triple nexus within a human security approach in nine Arab countries, by identifying, bringing together and training key actors at the national and subnational levels through a combination of the following:

- **Diagnostics:** Before developing collective outcomes, national actors need to undertake a detailed examination of the socioeconomic and institutional situation in their country and the different humanitarian, development and peace dynamics, so as to decide on the collective outcome or outcomes. Therefore, evidence-based assessments of existing stakeholders, aid flows, system capacities, and operational and political contexts will be made. This will help national development actors, including the concerned public administration, to prioritize the root causes of the protracted crises, determine how they are interlinked, and what collective outcome could support a transition towards sustainable peace and development.

- **Capacity development:** Several training modules aim to build the institutional capacity required to operationalize the humanitarian, development and peace (HDP) nexus among national development stakeholders, including the public sector. The modules focus on key capacities needed by development stakeholders, including public institutions, to implement each of the five steps to operationalize the nexus. Capacity-building is required in Governments at all levels and for all involved actors, covering various needs including institutional structures, human capital, roles, skills, management techniques and tools. Capacity-building will build on the diagnostics, and will be calibrated to support advancement of the nexus/collective outcomes.
- **Mainstreaming:** ESCWA developed a five-step process to operationalize the HDP nexus.¹ There is no one-size-fits-all. This can take various forms, depending on the context, situation, and the specific timepoint of the emergency. Having a joint-vision and understanding of the nexus is a pre-requisite for successfully establishing and working towards formulating collective outcomes.

1. ESCWA, Supporting the humanitarian-development-peace nexus in conflict and fragile settings, 2023.

• To achieve outcome 2, the project will support national and subnational actors in nine Arab countries to mainstream a risk management approach based on human security, and to integrate prevention into planning. This step will feed into supporting the resilience of collective outcomes produced by the multi-stakeholder dialogues. More specifically, the project will provide key actors with the following:

- Access to tools to identify, analyse and communicate risks (**risk monitor**), and to nine training modules including a manual on human security-based risk scanning tools and methodology.
- Additional capacity development aimed at strengthening their ability to avert downside risks, mitigate their impact on human security, and avoid escalation across insecurities (**risk scan**).

Outcomes and outputs

Outcome	Output
1. Mainstreaming and operationalizing the triple nexus approach within a human security framework	1.1: Diagnostics
	1.2: Capacity-building
	1.3: Mainstreaming
2. Mainstreaming a risk management approach within a human security framework	2.1: Risk monitor
	2.2: Risk scan

Human security lens

From an operational perspective, the project will adopt a human security approach to address complex challenges through collaborative, responsive and sustainable measures that are people-centred, comprehensive, context-specific and prevention-oriented.

- The project is **people-centred** as it emphasizes capacity-building as one of its key components (output 1.2). The context analysis will be informed by the perspectives of communities and individuals, and every diagnostic report (output 1.1) will disaggregate data to the extent possible, so as to allow for a nuanced understanding of differential vulnerabilities across groups, particularly those left the furthest behind (“leave no one behind” principle).
- The project is **comprehensive** as it brings together the full range of challenges (at the HDP nexus) facing communities and Governments, so as to seek integrated solutions (collective outcomes agreed upon in the national dialogue, output 1.3) based on strong partnerships with actors at various levels, including the private sector, the public sector, municipalities, and social and economic councils, according to their comparative advantage.
- The project is **context-specific** as the context is its starting point of analysis, and as it treats contextual factors as key information of the diagnostic reports (output 1.1). The project will identify capacities, assets and resources at the local level in the mapping to leverage them through the capacity development activities (output 1.2).
- The project is **prevention-oriented** as it is founded on a risk-informed approach. The series of risk monitors produced under output 2.1 will provide tools to key actors to mainstream and integrate prevention in their planning, and enhance their capacity (output 2.2) to use such tools to identify, analyse and communicate risks. The risk monitors and the risk scans are prevention-oriented as they aim to anticipate risks by addressing root causes of insecurities, and adopting a long-term view to allow key actors to address gaps and tackle the structural and behavioural conditions of insecurity.



Shared Prosperity Dignified Life



VISION: ESCWA, an innovative catalyst for a stable, just and flourishing Arab region

MISSION: Committed to the 2030 Agenda, ESCWA's passionate team produces innovative knowledge, fosters regional consensus and delivers transformational policy advice.

Together, we work for a sustainable future for all.

www.unescwa.org