



Emergencies often occur in fragile states and regions, which are affected by multiple crises, including longstanding conflicts such as in Mosul, Iraq.

Photo: FFO

CLOSING THE GAP – THE GERMAN PERSPECTIVE ON THE HUMANITARIAN-DEVELOPMENT-PEACE NEXUS

Germany's Federal Government Guidelines "Preventing Crises, Resolving Conflicts, Building Peace" presents a range of objectives for the country's crisis engagement in the years to come. Here, the German Federal Foreign Office and the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development describe some of the new instruments they are implementing in situations of crises and fragility world-wide.

By Ralf Schröder and Mirko Schilbach*

People living in crisis-prone regions such as Haiti, Somalia or Iraq face life-threatening challenges – they lack protection, shelter, food and clean water. In order to cope with these threats, get on with their lives and possibly return to their homes after a conflict, they need security, stability, basic services, work and assets to thrive, and they need resilience, i.e. the capacity to live a life worth living in the most adverse circumstances, and to protect themselves against losing everything again. For decades, these people faced a lack of assistance in a time when they most needed it – in the transition from survival to resilience.

Now, the international system is addressing this gap under the umbrella of the "Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus". The German Federal Foreign Office (FFO) and German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) are key actors in meeting this challenge. In their crisis response, they employ a variety of instruments, including humanitarian assistance under the lead of the

FFO and instruments of development co-operation under the lead of the BMZ.

Protracted crises have unfortunately become the new normal in many parts of the world. Over recent years, the nature of crises has evolved both in sheer numbers and in complexity. Such crises are often located in fragile states and regions, which are affected by multiple crises, including longstanding conflicts. In many regions, we observe that climate change is negatively impacting on competition for scarce resources like water and land, exacerbating conflicts and grievances. Protracted and recurring crises lead to increased humanitarian needs all over the world and force millions of people to flee their homes. It is thus pivotal to not only address humanitarian needs but also to prevent crises, resolve underlying conflicts, build peace and create sustainable pathways out of humanitarian situations.

Bringing all our instruments together that are required for such an approach, making the fit

for purpose, and ensuring that they work in complementarity and coherence, while respecting the specific principles of humanitarian assistance (see Box on page 18) – all this is the essence of the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus.

Funding gaps for humanitarian action must be avoided as needs have increased faster than funding. Conflicts and natural disasters cause the loss of numerous lives and a lot of human suffering, and they lead to record levels of displacement lasting for years and sometimes decades. In the same way, crises and conflicts have eroded development gains and threaten to undermine the achievement of Agenda 2030, i.e. the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

With the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the international community has recognised the indivisible interdependency between peace, security, human rights and sustainable development. Peace and security only

prevail in and between inclusive societies on the foundation of good governance and efficient institutions.

PROTRACTED AND RECURRING CRISES DEMAND A “NEW WAY OF WORKING”

The World Humanitarian Summit, which took place in May 2016, has recognised that, apart from addressing humanitarian needs through high-quality humanitarian assistance with maximum efficiency and effectiveness, more has to be done to prevent humanitarian needs from arising, to reduce humanitarian needs and to provide sustainable solutions wherever possible to lead people out of humanitarian crisis situations.

This requires a new way of thinking and joint efforts of all of us. It is high time for the international community and for us in Germany to act on crisis prevention – and to act early, swiftly and decisively. The best-case scenario means building resilience through strengthening institutions and capacities, improving livelihoods and increasing access to services that enhance people’s ability to withstand future crisis, while addressing the root causes of crises. In practice, this requires providing humanitarian assistance to vulnerable people, building stability and peace concurrently for them and promoting development. If a crisis or disaster is drawing very close, and prevention and preparedness are a matter of only a few months or weeks, urgent action is required through classical diplomacy hand-in-hand with modern foreign-policy instruments as well as humanitarian assistance and various tailored instruments of development co-operation. The engagement of a diverse range of actors is needed with an approach that prioritises “prevention always, efficient and practical diplomacy swiftly, development co-operation wherever possible, humanitarian action when necessary”. Operationalising nexus approaches in turn requires a context-specific and focused approach that is designed according to the individual crisis and includes all instruments of foreign, development and security policy as well as humanitarian assistance.

All our actions are closely co-ordinated with our partners in the international community and guided by international frameworks. Germany supports the findings of the World Humanitarian Summit, which aim not only at making the humanitarian system more efficient and effective, but also at improving the capacity of the international system as a whole

HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

The primary objective of humanitarian assistance is to save lives, alleviate suffering and maintain human dignity. It addresses the needs of people, who are affected or acutely at risk of suffering hardship due to crises, conflicts or natural disasters – and who are unable to overcome their acute hardship on their own. The focus of humanitarian assistance today is on conflict and crisis regions. Thus, humanitarian assistance is mainly being delivered in the home region of refugees and displaced persons where it can contribute to them not being forced to embark on a hazardous flight across long distances. Humanitarian assistance also includes humanitarian disaster preparedness and anticipatory approaches.

The support of humanitarian assistance is an expression of moral responsibility and international solidarity. It does not pursue any political, economic or other interest-driven goals and is committed to the humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence. The respect of these principles is a prerequisite for the work of humanitarian actors in the field, particularly in difficult political environments with poor security.

The FFO does not implement humanitarian projects itself, but co-operates closely with experienced and professional humanitarian organisations of the United Nations, the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement as well as with NGOs. In 2017, Germany became the second largest bilateral humanitarian donor. The budget for Germany’s humanitarian assistance in 2019 provides over 1.6 billion euros. Apart from being a major donor, the German Government also plays a crucial role as a driver of innovation and an active supporter of reforms in the international humanitarian system.

IRAQ – A NEXUS BEST PRACTICE

Since the outbreak of civil war in Syria, and the empowerment of the so-called “Islamic State”/Daesh, more than a million Iraqis have been internally displaced, and many Syrian refugees have fled to North Iraq. Local infrastructures are poorly equipped, non-existent or too small to serve all the newly arrived and locals.

In July 2017, Mosul was freed from three years of terror by Daesh. In the nine months of fighting for its liberation, more than 10,000 people died, and at least 54,000 were severely injured. The day after Mosul was freed from Daesh, the FFO and the BMZ came together to jointly plan a Whole-of-Government response along the nexus. The FFO focused on demining for making large areas of the almost completely destroyed city accessible again. The BMZ commissioned the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to build a new hospital. Furthermore, the BMZ appointed Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) to put in place a mobile clinic that would bridge the provision of health services until the hospital was functional. This kind of nexus-oriented planning is the best way forward for the people and institutions concerned.

to prevent and to act early on emerging crises, and to enable sustainable solutions to humanitarian situations, in order to prevent, reduce and end humanitarian needs and to protect development progress. In 2018, we supported the call of the United Nations and the World Bank in their Pathways for Peace study to work closer together in conflict-affected situations, emphasising the importance of a comprehensive approach to sustaining peace.

In 2016, major UN organisations as well as the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the World Bank committed to a “New Way of Working”, namely to work towards collective outcomes over a multi-year framework based on the comparative advantage of each entity. These commitments are being met by significant changes in how development resources and instruments are responding to the needs of crises- and con-

flict-affected countries and their population. The World Bank has increased its financing for these countries including several innovative initiatives for tackling the refugee crisis and supporting countries for more effective crisis prevention. The German Government encourages co-operation between different actors, e.g. between the World Food Programme (WFP) and the World Bank, to work closer together and bridge institutional differences.

GERMANY TAKES RESPONSIBILITY IN THE WHOLE-OF-GOVERNMENT APPROACH

And the joint effort continued – in June 2017, the German Government adopted Guidelines on “Preventing Crises, Resolving Conflicts, Building Peace”, which provide a strategic

framework for the crisis engagement of the German Government. In these Guidelines, the German Government committed itself to a comprehensive policy approach that bundles contributions by the various government departments into a joint political strategy and embarks on new ways of working for a joint analysis, and joined-up strategic and operative planning.

This means mobilising all instruments, resources and knowledge available. As Germany already stated at the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016, it is committed “to strengthen the linkages and synergies between its humanitarian assistance, civilian stabilization, conflict prevention, transitional development assistance and long-term development co-operation as well as climate change adaptation programmes according to the concept of linking relief, rehabilitation, and development. This will include introducing a new way of working including joint analysis, planning and programming with a multi-year perspective.” (German Commitment number 31; World Humanitarian Summit Shift 4B: Anticipate, Do not wait, for crises).

The German Government strongly supports the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Initiative (HDPI) of the UN and the World Bank, as well as the European Union’s nexus pilots. The UN and the World Bank as well as the EU have taken on the spirit of the Istanbul summit and are piloting new forms of co-operation in various regional contexts. In the same vein, Germany started a national nexus pilot in Somalia that links the different instruments it employs to improve the situation of the population, facilitate the repatriation of refugees and promote economic development in the country. The pilot aims to address and reduce humanitarian needs and increase the collective effectiveness of German support to peace and sustainable development in Somalia. As there is political progress despite all difficulties and overall German engagement has been developed on the basis of long traditional ties going back to the 1980s and in an optimistic spirit after having taken up diplomatic relations again in 2013, Somalia is a good pilot country. To date, it remains a fragile state, but with tendencies to move towards more stability, peace and development after decades of civil war. This is leading to a situation where humanitarian needs co-exist with the need for pathways to resilience building and economic development. By employing all instruments available in crisis response, Germany can support this transition. One secondary goal is to use the identified synergies and lessons learnt

GERMANY’S TRANSITIONAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE – A BEST NEXUS PRACTICE

In the early 2000s, BMZ established the “Transitional Development Assistance” (TDA). It is an instrument, and at the same time a budget line, that enables flexible financing in crises situations. Clearly focused on the most vulnerable populations, its intention is to strengthen the resilience of individuals and institutions, e.g. their capacity to withstand and adapt to crises by ensuring that short-, medium- and long-term measures are connected. TDA aims to pave the way for long-term development. It currently has a total volume of approximately 1.2 billion euros per year.

TDA employs a multi-sectoral approach, including the following four areas of food security and nutrition; the reconstruction and rehabilitation of basic infrastructure, such as clinics, schools, roads or bridges; disaster risk management; and strengthening social cohesion e.g. in communities hosting large numbers of refugees or displaced people. The peace pillar, conflict sensitivity as well as adherence to the “do-no-harm” principle, are fundamental to TDA.

TDA interventions receive multi-year funding, with an average duration of three to four years. BMZ works with a large variety of implementing partners, be it multilateral such as the World Food Programme and UNICEF, or bilateral such as GIZ and the German Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (financial development co-operation – KfW) as well as several German NGOs. This broad range of actors allows us to engage at all levels according to the respective context.

Where and what is TDA used for?

In 2018, BMZ focused its TDA on twelve countries: Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, the Occupied Palestinian Territories, Myanmar, Chad, Somalia, Sudan, Libya, South Sudan, Central African Republic and Nigeria. In order to allow for maximum impact, the country focus is not overhauled each year, but the BMZ claims the flexibility to add countries when need arises. Based on this list, close consultations with the respective BMZ regional divisions take place in order to strengthen the nexus through coherence with long-term programming.

From 2014, BMZ also launched a number of special initiatives on crisis and fragility, tackling the root causes of displacement and reintegrating refugees, and stabilising and developing the MENA region, as well as the One World – No Hunger initiative. They equally contribute to reducing the need for humanitarian assistance and preventing conflict, and are co-ordinated closely with regard to TDA.

TDA interventions do not necessarily require political preliminaries such as general agreements on technical co-operation. At the same time, TDA is a development-oriented instrument. This enables BMZ to flexibly implement projects according to contexts and needs with a development orientation and at the same time to massively shorten the funding process, which only takes four to six weeks, while the preparation of general agreements even on the fast track usually takes at least a year. Through TDA, the BMZ designed an instrument to engage as a development actor in highly volatile contexts and to add the expertise and experience of development co-operation.

to embed German support better in collective European and international efforts in this and other crisis contexts.

In addition, after the adoption of the guidelines, the German Government has embarked on a broader process of reviewing and revising its existing mechanisms for inter-ministerial co-ordination with a view to improving its comprehensive approach.

Accordingly, it is of utmost importance to find a Whole-of-Government approach in crisis engagement. Every institution has its own mandate, purpose and objectives, strategic goals and budget lines, and often adheres to different sets of standards. For example,

humanitarian assistance is based on the principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence and has the sole purpose of saving lives, alleviating suffering and preserving human dignity, whereas development co-operation works towards systemic solutions and sustainable approaches that often require government ownership. In order to move forward, we need the readiness of all actors to talk to each other and to take into account what the other is doing, why he/she is doing it, and what his/her modus operandi is. None of the actors should work in “splendid isolation” as has often been the case in the past. In particular, stabilisation measures that serve to create a secure environment, improve living conditions in the short term, and offer alternatives

to economies of war and violence require a comprehensive approach with a flexible and co-ordinated use of diplomatic, development policy and security policy measures.

PROMOTING THE TRIPLE HUMANITARIAN-DEVELOPMENT-PEACE NEXUS

The German Government promotes the triple Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus with the aim of reducing humanitarian needs through an earlier engagement of peace-building and development actors in crisis contexts. To this end, Germany promotes joint analysis and joined-up planning, while respecting the different mandates and principles – in particular the impartiality, neutrality and independence of humanitarian assistance and its actors.

Consequently, the German Government strongly advocates for the inclusion of the peace pillar in all nexus discussions and planning. For Germany, the meaning of the peace pillar is twofold.

Peace should be the long-term overarching goal of all political, peace-building and development actors in fragile contexts. Their activities should contribute to support political processes towards conflict resolution. Furthermore, the peace pillar underlines the necessity of a joined-up approach to crises by all diplomatic, peace-building, stabilisation and civilian security actors. Humanitarian, development and peace-building actors should be included in joint analysis and joined-up planning processes.

Ralf Schröder is Head of the Division Crisis Management: Transitional Development Assistance, Reconstruction, Infrastructure in Crisis Situations of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development in Berlin, Germany.

Mirko Schilbach is Head of Division at the department International Stabilization Policy, Crisis Engagement – Strategies & Coordination of the Federal Foreign Office in Berlin, Germany.

* They are also the lead authors on behalf of the drafting teams at the two ministries.

Contact: Ralf Schröder rl222@bmgz.bund.de or Mirko Schilbach s01-rl@auswaertiges-amt.de

A mother with child at the relief supplies distribution point in Rakka, Syria.

Photo: Help

