

Reading Guide: NORRAG Policy Insights: Education and the HDP Nexus at 10

Welcome to the quick-reference reading guide for the NORRAG Policy Insights publication, *Education and the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus at 10*. Ten years after the Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP, sometimes called 'Triple') Nexus was conceptualised, this collection critically examines to what extent a nexus approach has been implemented so far, and the priorities for achieving more coherent and effective education programming in crises contexts under local leadership.

This Reading guide provides an overview of the publication's five core themes. It focuses on the **practical guidance and key takeaways** provided by the authors, which help bridge the gap between humanitarian aid, development, and peacebuilding. The hyperlinks in each heading take you to the relevant section in the online version of the publication.

1. Theme 1: Taking Stock

This section assesses the current relevance of the Nexus framework, examining systemic coherence, financing models, and lessons learned from the past decade.

Key Practical Takeaways:

- **Coordinate through country-led structures:** Humanitarian coordination platforms are temporary; they should actively support and transition their functions to nationally-led structures, such as Local Education Groups.
- **Design multidirectional strategies:** Strengthen representation by local actors, including teachers and communities, as decision-makers, not just implementers. Operationalise the Nexus by designing education responses that allow movement between emergency, development, and peacebuilding pathways, including the most vulnerable groups such as refugees and out of school children. Multi-year, flexible donor funding is critical to facilitate this.
- **Break financing and information silos:** Promote interoperability across humanitarian and development data systems. Standardise definitions, and invest in transparent, accessible financial data to inform predictable, context-responsive decisions.

2. Theme 2: Centring Humanity

Focuses on reimagining education around human well-being, highlighting psychosocial support (PSS), social-emotional learning (SEL), strong relationships and community resilience.

Key Practical Takeaways:

- **Affirm learning as life-saving:** Recognise the cognitive and emotional urgency of learning during displacement, as well as the literally lifesaving aspects of relevant knowledge and practices. Ensure catch-up education programmes are protective, emotionally supportive spaces rooted in local, lived experiences.
- **Prioritise well-being as a cross-sectoral outcome:** Embed PSS and SEL into the core of education planning. Ensure leadership by local actors, integrating local knowledge in the co-design of flexible education systems that can withstand shocks, while promoting equity across crises cycles.
- **Engage caregivers and communities:** Integrate remote learning tools, including for Early Childhood Development (ECD), into disaster preparedness, and facilitate community-led activities such as youth-led sports clubs, to support system resilience. Expand social protection to include maternal health, and promote male caregiver involvement in parenting programmes.
- **Centre local conflict analysis:** Let locally-led conflict analyses guide programme design rather than donor-driven agendas. Invest in teachers' mental health and agency, recognising them as critical actors in long-term peacebuilding, founded on strong social and emotional learning within pedagogy.

3. Theme 3: Teaching at the Heart of the Nexus

Explores the crucial role of educators as frontline actors in operationalising the Nexus, emphasising their professional development, agency, and capabilities in building just peace.

Key Practical Takeaways:

- **Integrate psychosocial support for educators:** Address the psychological toll of instability by embedding psychosocial support directly into teacher professional development and ongoing support, as well as in pedagogical content.
- **Centre teachers in decision-making about the HDP Nexus**, including through coordination mechanisms: the value-driven nature of teaching means that neutrality is difficult; peacebuilding should focus on justice, beyond the absence of conflict. Locally, co-developed content serves teachers and learners alike.
- **Resource refugee teacher inclusion as an investment, not a cost:** View refugee teachers as a critical group that unites the nexus. Transitioning from aid-dependent, parallel systems to integrating refugee educators into national systems fosters self-reliance and reduces social friction. Prioritise direct funding for refugee-led educational initiatives within flexible, multi-year nexus financing.
- **Invest in accreditation for a coherent system:** Develop formal accreditation systems to integrate non-formal education into national frameworks.

4. Theme 4: Leading Locally

Examines the necessity of shifting power to local leadership, empowering community actors, and addressing structural barriers to funding and coordination.

Key Practical Takeaways:

- **Embed local leadership in design:** Ensure resource delegation and decision-making authority at the local level; prioritise women-led organisations. Ensure multi-year planning with flexible funding as far as possible. Incorporate performance metrics that prioritise community decision-making, supported by training where necessary. Align HDP evidence generation around collective outcomes.
- **Anchor innovation in government frameworks:** Invest in governance systems and digital infrastructure *before* a crises hits; align humanitarian and development actors under

national digital strategies. Embed transformative pedagogies into materials' development, reflecting the cultural, linguistic and emotional realities of learners.

- **Move beyond access to quality:** Shift priorities from temporary education access towards long-term investments in safe, inclusive national systems. Make contextualised, school-wide safeguarding policies mandatory, particularly in conflict-affected areas.
- **Institutionalise peace-sensitive frameworks:** ensure programme frameworks incorporate conflict sensitivity and ethical humanitarian engagement. Support teacher agency with transformative, nexus-aligned pedagogies and learning materials.

5. Theme 5: Making the Connections

Focuses on linking coordination bodies, bridging evidence systems, and advancing anticipatory action to protect education.

Key Practical Takeaways:

- **Build alliances and intentional coordination:** Ensure coherent responses across all stages of planning, implementation, and monitoring. Institutionalise joined-up HDP coordination efforts, prioritising education and child protection, through formalised agreements to ensure continuity despite staff turnover.
- **Engage children, teachers and community members in designing anticipatory action**: work through schools as community hubs for risk identification and monitoring,
- **Promote pooled and flexible funding:** Use financial mechanisms to facilitate anticipatory action, and support joint sector planning and transitional education sector plans that actively include stakeholders from across the humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding fields.