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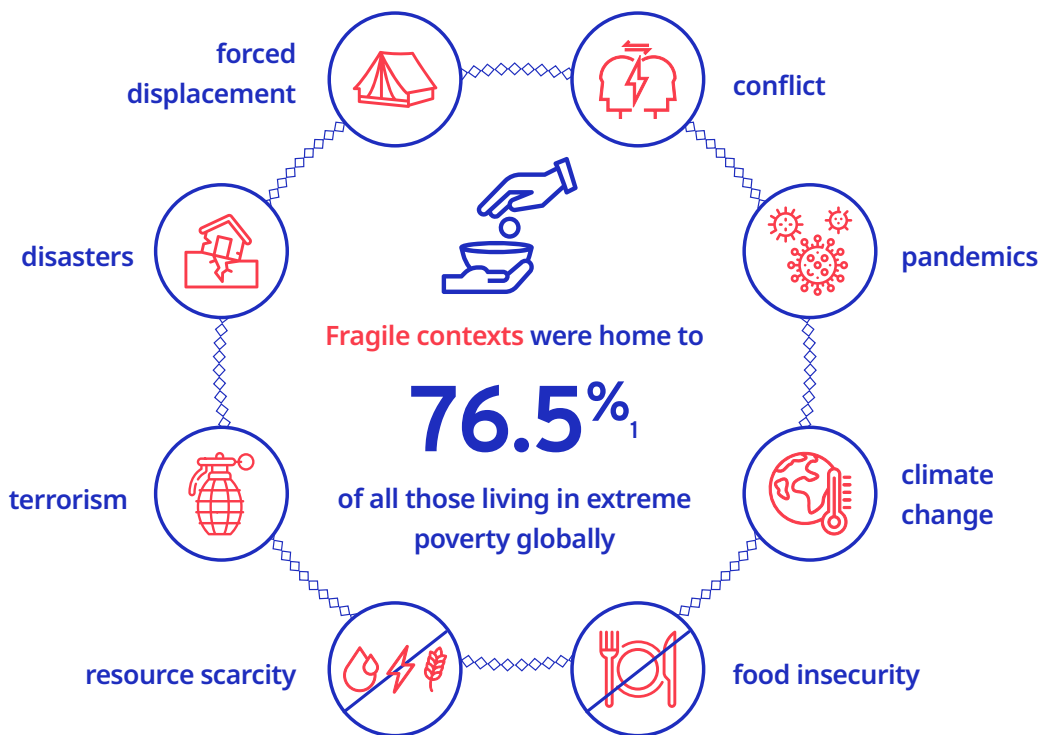


► Sustaining peace through decent work and employment



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More countries are experiencing some form of conflict than at any time in the past three decades. Before the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak in 2020, fragile contexts were already home to 76.5% of all those living in extreme poverty globally, while hosting only 23% of the world's population. The interlinked nature of the threats they face – conflict, pandemics, climate change, food insecurity, resource scarcity, terrorism, disasters, forced displacement – requires multidimensional thinking and integrated, evidence-based strategies that equally embrace inclusion and innovation.¹



Countries that are already experiencing protracted conflict, disaster, climate change and forced displacement are facing multiple burdens due to the pandemic. They are less equipped to respond to COVID-19, as access to basic services, especially health and sanitation, is limited, but also to cope with the socio-economic impact, particularly on the informal economy. The COVID-19 crisis has also exacerbated gender inequality and jeopardized women's economic empowerment, posing a threat to women's engagement in economic activities. Furthermore, the crisis has ignited or exacerbated grievances, discrimination, mistrust and a sense of injustice over access to health services, decent jobs and secure livelihoods. These are potential conflict drivers that could undermine development, peace and social cohesion. Those living in fragile and conflict-affected contexts are left furthest behind, yet the great majority of humanitarian, development and peacebuilding programmes persist in silos.

¹ OECD (2020), *States of Fragility 2020*, OECD Publishing, Paris. <https://doi.org/10.1787/ba7c22e7-en>





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The **ILO** has been working on peacebuilding since its foundation in 1919 by the Treaty of Versailles, in line with its constitutional principle that **“universal and lasting peace can be accomplished only if it is based on social justice”**. The engagement of the Organization in this area was recognized with the Nobel Peace Prize in 1969.



DPPA
Preventing Conflict, Sustaining Peace

The **Peacebuilding Support Office** within the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA) plays a central role in United Nations efforts to prevent deadly conflict around the world, by fostering international support for peacebuilding efforts that are nationally owned and led.



Recommendation N° 205

Employment and decent work
for peace and resilience

Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience Recommendation, 2017 (No. 205)

In 2017, the ILO reinvigorated its mandate in the Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) Nexus with the adoption of the [Recommendation No. 205 on Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience](#). It is the only international normative framework providing guidance for addressing world-of-work issues in response to crisis situations, including health pandemics, armed conflict, natural disaster, environmental degradation, and forced displacement.

► The vicious cycle of crisis, conflict, climate change, unemployment and decent work deficits

Violent conflict, climate change and disasters have staggering economic costs,² and there is evidence that they are linked to unemployment and decent work deficits through a “vicious cycle”. On the one hand, crises – including the COVID-19 pandemic – can severely halt and reverse sustainable economic development, with large implications for the world of work in terms of availability and quality of jobs.³ Regarding the quality of work, **conflict and widespread violence may increase informal, non-contractual and unregistered work**, particularly for youth and women, which can prop up illicit economies built around – and making workers dependent on – continued violence. Conflict severely limits the degree to which workers enjoy basic social protection and fundamental rights and principles at work, often pushing many children into worst forms of child labour. On the other hand, **unemployment and decent work deficits can themselves be key contributing factors to conflict**. For example, the lack of respect of fundamental rights at work (such as child labour and discrimination), the scarcity of equal economic opportunities or the absence of social dialogue at work can trigger grievances and lead to conflict.

► Figure 1: The vicious cycle of crisis, conflict, climate change, unemployment and decent work deficits (ILO)



2 UN and World Bank (2018), *Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict*, World Bank, Washington, DC. <http://hdl.handle.net/10986/28337>

3 ILO and CCDP (2016), *Employment and Decent Work in Fragile Settings: A Compass to Orient the World of Work*, ILO, Geneva. https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/documents/publication/wcms_467329.pdf

► Employment and Decent Work in the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus

As illustrated in the Box 1, various UN agendas – including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDG16 in particular) and the Sustaining Peace resolutions⁴ – and discussions around the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus recognize that achieving development outcomes, and reducing humanitarian need, is dependent upon preventing and transforming violent conflict. The UN Secretary-General has called on all UN entities to integrate the approach to sustaining peace in their strategic planning, and to regard sustaining peace as an important goal to which their work contributes.

► Box 1. Employment, decent work and livelihoods in peace and development frameworks

- **SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth** and **SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Effective Institutions** requires an integrated approach across sectors and stakeholders to “promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all” and to reduce all forms of violence, end exploitation, promote rule of law and ensure participatory decision making and improve public accountability.
- **Recommendation No. 205 on Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience** is a landmark normative framework guiding employment in situations of crisis, conflict, disaster and displacement.
- **UN Secretary-General Report on peacebuilding in the immediate aftermath of conflict (2009)** and **UN Peacebuilding Fund** Priority Area 6 focuses on economic revitalization, including employment generation and livelihoods (in agriculture and public works) particularly for youth and demobilized former combatants, as well as rehabilitation of basic infrastructure.
- **UN Sustaining Peace** agenda stresses the importance of comprehensive approaches that must include the entire UN system to prevent the outbreak, escalation, recurrence or continuation of violent conflict, creating durable peace and prospects for economic development.
- **UN Secretary General’s Prevention Agenda** focuses on taking early action on emerging risks and targeting the root causes of vulnerabilities, and building resilience to external economic shocks, including promoting job-led growth.
- **The New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States, which include Peacebuilding and State building Goals**, and focuses on guiding country-level implementation of peacebuilding priorities in fragile contexts. Within these, goal 4 focuses on creating employment and improving livelihoods as an economic foundation.
- The UN-World Bank **Pathways for Peace** study prioritizes livelihoods as a pathway to peace in fragile contexts.
- **World Bank Group Strategy for Fragility, Conflict and Violence 2020-2025** commits to protecting the human capital of vulnerable groups and building resilience for recovery, including through promoting livelihoods and job creation, and protecting institutions critical for economic recovery, in its programmes in crises and violent armed conflict.
- The **Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth** invests in employment as a pathway to peace. It is a comprehensive UN system-wide effort that brings together the vast global resources and convening power of the UN and other global key partners to promote youth employment investments.

⁴ General Assembly resolution [A/RES/70/262](#), Security Council resolution [S/RES/2282 \(2016\)](#) and twin resolution adopted on 21/12/2020 at the end of the 2020 Peacebuilding Architecture Review: [A/RES/75/201](#) and [S/RES/2558 \(2020\)](#).

Furthermore, according to the [UN Secretary-General report on peacebuilding in the immediate aftermath of conflict \(2009\)](#)⁵, one of the six recurring peacebuilding priorities⁶ is economic revitalization, including employment generation and livelihoods (in agriculture and public works) particularly for youth and demobilized former combatants, as well as rehabilitation of basic infrastructure. Keeping in mind that peacebuilding always requires a localized, context-specific approach, these priorities can nonetheless help promote a shared understanding of peacebuilding, structure planning and programming processes, complement monitoring of and reporting on activities, and facilitate coordination between different actors within and outside the UN system. To address the need for increased coherence, transparency and accountability in UN headquarters-based trust funds, and global programmes related to peace, the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) of the UN Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs has developed a Peacebuilding Priorities Coding System. This is based on a UN understanding of peacebuilding and sustaining peace.



5 SG report A/63/881-S/2009/304 (2009)

6 The 2009 Secretary-General's Report on peacebuilding, identified recurring peacebuilding activities under six peacebuilding priorities (PBP): 1) Political Processes; 2) Safety and Security; 3) Rule of Law and Human Rights; 4) Core Government Functions; 5) Basic Services; and 6) Economic Revitalization.

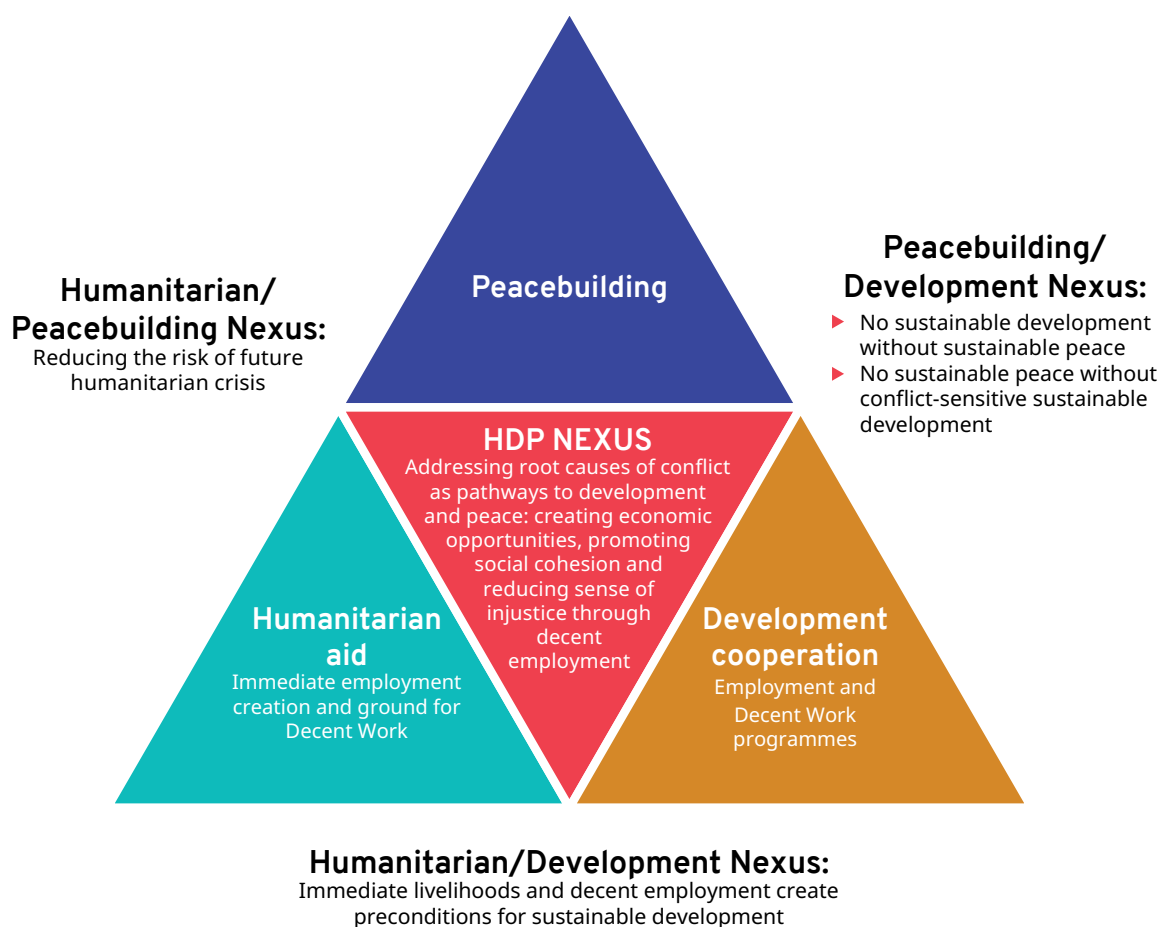
- **Box 2. Peacebuilding Priorities Coding System developed by PBSO (2021) – Priority 6 on economic revitalization (see footnote 5)**

6. Economic Revitalization

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>6.1 Employment generation and livelihoods (e.g., in agriculture and public works), particularly for women, youth and demobilized former</p> | <p>Support conflict-sensitive and peacebuilding-relevant employment policy and planning; institution capacity building and advice; employment creation and income-generation programmes (e.g., in agriculture and public works), contributing to increased resilience; skills programmes, vocational training and apprenticeships, including activities specifically designed for the needs of women and vulnerable groups, such as youth and demobilized former combatants. Includes programmes on micro finance and credit co-operatives, etc. (see also category 2.5 “Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR)”)</p> |
| <p>6.2 Economic recovery through enterprise recovery, including value chain</p> | <p>Support economic recovery, enterprise recovery through conflict-sensitive and peacebuilding-relevant public sector policies and institutional support to the business environment and investment climate; public and private provision of business development services, including support to private organizations representing businesses. Direct support to improve the productive capacity and business management of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, including accounting, auditing, advisory services, technological transfer and skill upgrading.</p> |
| <p>6.3 Management of natural resources (including land and extractives) and climate change</p> | <p>Support sustainable management of natural resources with a view to managing conflicts and sustaining peace: Fair and sustainable agricultural development and use of land resources, including land reform and land (use) rights; land inventories, cadastre and information systems, institution capacity building and advice; soil degradation control; soil improvement; drainage of water logged areas; soil desalination; agricultural land surveys; land reclamation; erosion control, desertification control. Sustainable forestry development, including afforestation, erosion and desertification control.</p> <p>Sustainable water management, including fishery development, river basins development.</p> <p>Sustainable mineral resource management, including mineral and mining sector policy, planning and programmes; mining legislation, mining cadastre, mineral resources inventory, information systems, transparency (e.g. on concessions, contracts, tenders, revenues, royalties), institution capacity building and advice; mineral extraction and processing, infrastructure, technology, economics, safety and environment management.</p> <p>Support activities related to adaptation and mitigation to the impacts of climate change with a view to managing conflicts and sustaining peace.</p> |
| <p>6.4 Basic infrastructure rehabilitation and development</p> | <p>Infrastructure rehabilitation and development to facilitate recovery and resilience building and enable populations to restore their livelihoods in the wake of an emergency situation: restoring pre-existing and building essential infrastructure and facilities (e.g. roads, bridges, irrigation, water and sanitation, shelter, health care services, education). Includes longer-term reconstruction (“build back better”) or construction of new infrastructure (see also categories 5.1 “Water and sanitation”, 5.2 “Health”, 5.3 “Education”, and other categories for relevant sectors).</p> |

As illustrated in the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus triangle below (figure 2), the Decent Work Agenda is an essential element of the triple Nexus where employment, decent working conditions and social dialogue can contribute to peace and resilience. In collaboration with Member States, tripartite constituents, international and national partners, and with the direct involvement of local populations and stakeholders, a two-fold approach to crisis response can allow for an immediate response centred on employment. This will simultaneously stimulate and assist long-term socio-economic development in an inclusive and rights-based manner. By doing so, decent work and social justice are promoted as key drivers of resilience and peace,⁷ addressing the underlying factors of fragility that made the society and economy particularly vulnerable to external shocks in the first place.

► **Figure 2: Employment and Decent Work in the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus (ILO)**

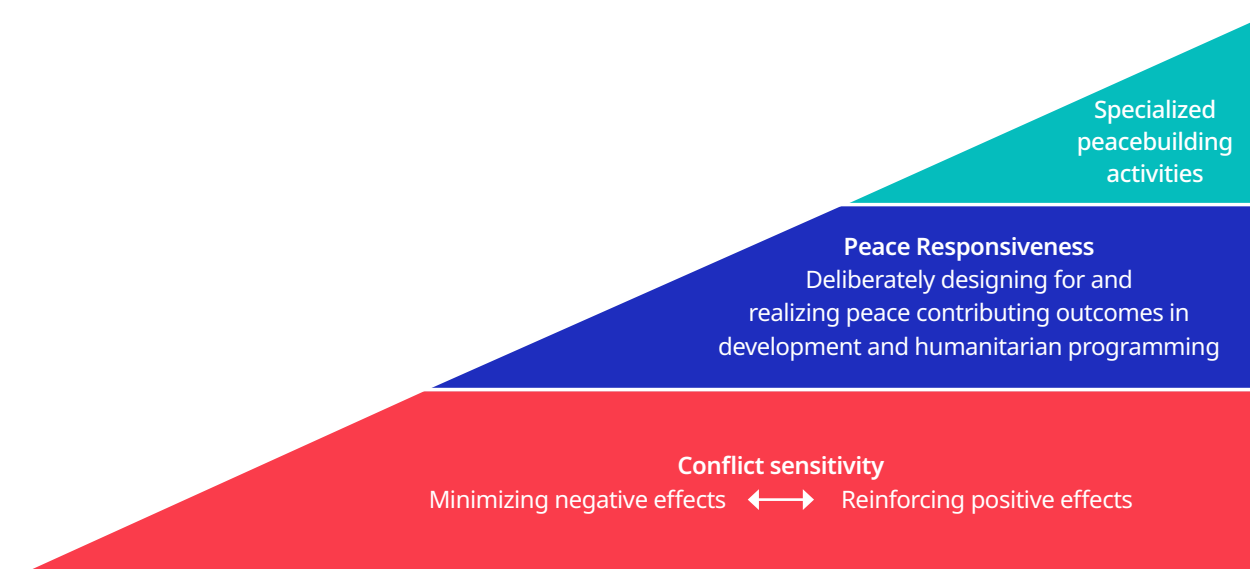


► Moving beyond conflict sensitivity to peace responsiveness of employment programmes

A proactive and strategic approach to planning is critical to well-designed interventions aimed at building peace by addressing root causes of vulnerability, conflict risk and decent work deficits. It is therefore important that an employment programme taking place in a conflict-affected country is distinguished from an employment programme with peacebuilding as its goal. Indeed, the conceptual link between employment and peace does not mean that all employment and livelihood initiatives necessarily contribute significantly to peace. Furthermore, simply adding peacebuilding activities into an employment programme without considering how they complement each other does not constitute an integrated employment programme for peacebuilding.

In conflict settings, employment and decent work initiatives must always be designed and implemented in a **conflict-sensitive way**⁸ to ensure they do no harm to already volatile environments. These programmes and projects must also go further, identifying how they can **contribute purposefully to peace**, which means that: (a) they provide concrete decent work opportunities; (b) they enhance contact among the crisis-affected population to increase social cohesion; and (c) they aim at reducing (real or perceived) grievances and sense of injustice.⁹

◀.. Conflict insensitive Doing no harm Doing some good Proactively contributing to peace ..▶



⁸ The ILO has developed in partnership with Interpeace a "Peace and Conflict Analysis for Programme and Project Design - Guidance for the ILO" (January 2021 - available soon)

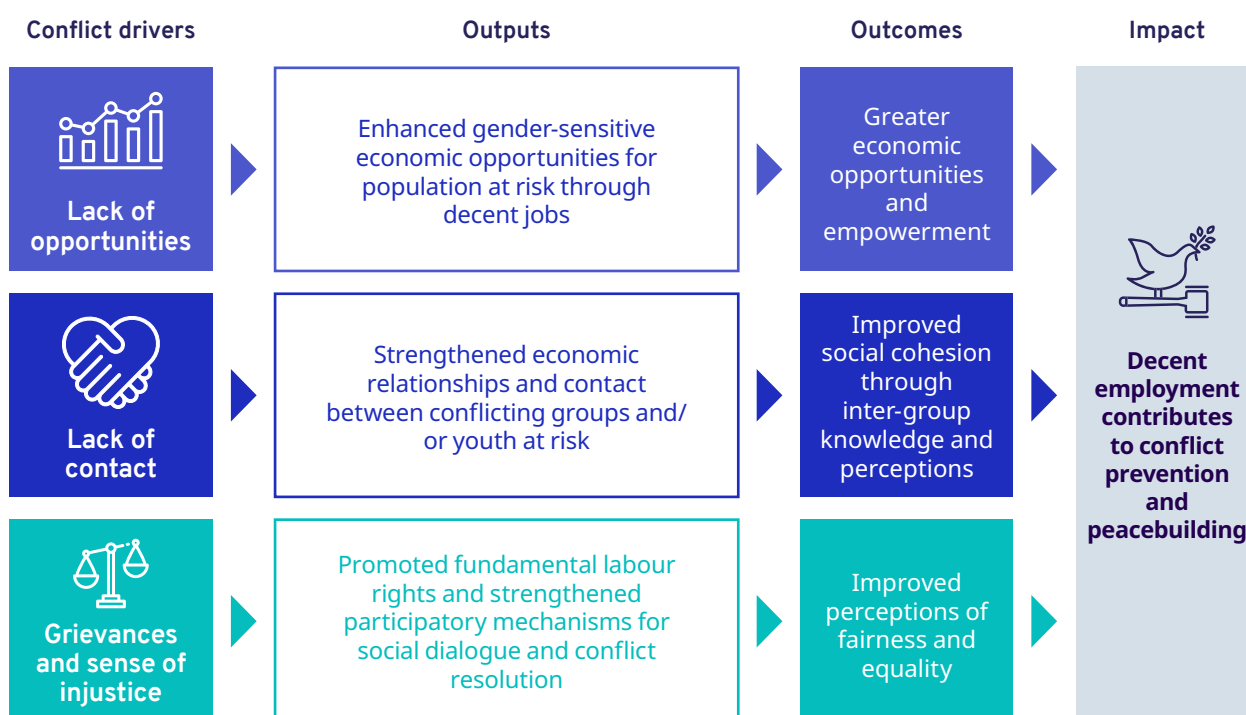
⁹ ILO (2019), *Handbook on How to Design, Monitor and Evaluate Peacebuilding Results in Jobs for Peace and Resilience Programmes*, ILO, Geneva. https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/documents/instructionalmaterial/wcms_712211.pdf

► A theory of change on how employment and decent work can contribute to peace

The ILO, the PBSO, the World Bank and the UN Development Programme (UNDP) issued their [joint statement on employment for peace](#) in 2016. On this basis, the ILO has identified a theory of change linking three conflict drivers and outlining some of the ways its programming can contribute to peace. Simplified and summarized in Figure 3, this shows how the world of work can contribute to peace: by creating decent economic opportunities to reduce the opportunity costs of violence; by bringing people together to break down horizontal divides; and by promoting social dialogue and labour rights to resolve grievances. These three conflict drivers are inter-related, and if a peace-responsive employment or livelihood programme is to be implemented, it must simultaneously address the lack of economic opportunities, lack of contact and the existence of grievances (through the decent work agenda). Addressing only one of the three conflict drivers will probably not contribute to both employment and peacebuilding results.

This theory of change is in line with the peacebuilding priorities coding system developed by PBSO (2021). Indeed, in the case of the priority areas of Basic Services and Economic Revitalization, not all activities are necessarily fully focused on and aimed at sustaining peace, but could contribute to sustaining peace depending on the theory of change and the design of the projects or programmes.

► **Figure 3: The ILO's theory of change elaboration based on ILO-PBSO-UNDP-World Bank joint statement on how employment and decent work contribute to peacebuilding**



First, employment, and the income associated with it, **increases the opportunity cost of engaging in violence**. When populations of working age have access to livelihoods and decent employment opportunities with adequate social protection coverage, they may be less prone to political and armed violence.

Secondly, there is evidence that if conflict is driven by negative perceptions and lack of trust among groups, decent employment programmes may reduce conflict and promote social cohesion by **increasing constructive inter-group contact**. By bringing people together, and strengthening opportunities for dialogue among social groups – including between the government, the workers and employers' organizations – employment programmes may break down stereotypes, increase understanding and trust, and enhance social cohesion.

Thirdly, many of today's violent conflicts relate to group-based grievances arising from inequality, non-respect of human and labour rights, exclusion, lack of participatory mechanisms and dialogue, as well as feelings of injustice. In some cases, it is not unemployment, but the experience of exploitative, precarious, informal work – basically non-respect of fundamental rights at work – that spurs grievances. It follows that inclusive and transparent employment and social protection programmes, which aim to improve equality in opportunities and livelihoods (as well as quality and fundamental rights at work) could reduce the risk of conflict by **addressing grievances**.

► What does the HDP Nexus mean during the COVID-19 crisis?

Employment and decent work initiatives are key to tackling the socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 crisis, but also to addressing potential grievances, discrimination and stigmatization over access to resources, livelihoods and health services. A focus on employment and decent work with a peacebuilding approach can help maintain and reinforce social cohesion and peaceful coexistence during the COVID-19 crisis. This can prevent outbreaks of social tension among communities experiencing a sense of inequality and injustice, including refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and host communities. While focusing on the immediate and direct needs of the responses required to mitigate and contain the effects of the disease, responses in conflict-affected settings also need to alleviate any social tensions that arise – and avoid any worsening of pre-existing conflict dynamics – to prevent a vicious cycle where the disease and conflict are mutually reinforcing. In other words, the responses need to be conflict sensitive and do no harm.



► Conflict often arises from the absence of decent work. The COVID-19 crisis has worsened already fragile situations, and requires stakeholders to work together in partnership to address the root causes. The ILO is more aware than ever of its responsibility to promote peace and resilience in the time of this global pandemic.

► Mr. Guy Ryder, ILO Director-General, 28 September 2020

► With the economic fallout of COVID-19 often affecting the most disenfranchised among us, the issue of livelihoods, employment and social safety nets are integral vehicles to restore trust and confidence in institutions, to sustain peace, and to underpin effective handling of the COVID-19 pandemic.

► Mr. Oscar Fernandez-Taranco, Assistant Secretary-General for peacebuilding support, 28 September 2020



The ILO, the WHO, Interpeace and the PBSO joined forces in 2020 to examine key policy and programmatic considerations for international health and employment interventions responding to COVID-19 in conflict-affected countries. The result of this collaboration is a [joint paper](#) that outlines a range of important peacebuilding considerations and highlights significant contributions the WHO and the ILO are making to mitigate the impacts of the pandemic. The key recommendations are:

- ▶ approach the multidimensional crisis with a multidimensional response;
- ▶ commit to conflict-sensitive, peace-responsive and tailored policy and programmatic approaches;
- ▶ use the COVID-19 crisis as an opportunity for a genuine shift to locally led responses, including the participation of the social partners;
- ▶ adapt programmatic approaches to local realities and capacities;
- ▶ use and adapt approaches to maximize positive secondary impacts, including employment and decent work programmes;
- ▶ lay the foundations for structural change and build resilience.

▶ Potential pathways to sustaining peace through employment and decent work

Crises are multidimensional and thus call for multidimensional responses. Guided by rigorous conflict-sensitivity and peace responsiveness, by the three theories of change presented above and in line with the Recommendation 205, the following recommendations can support the inclusion of employment and decent work in the HDP Nexus¹⁰:

Employment and decent work should be mainstreamed into Joint UN planning frameworks

In light of the potential contribution to peace principles and approaches, policy specialists and decision makers should jointly consider introducing employment and decent work in their programme planning and design processes, as illustrated in the theories of change above. For the UN and partners, this could be done through: a joint conflict analysis as part of the Common Country Analysis (CCA), Recovery and Peacebuilding Assessments (RPBA), and Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks for UN Country Teams; Integrated Strategic Frameworks or Strategic Reviews in settings with UN peace operations; or Regional Crisis Response Plans in humanitarian emergencies. Assessments and consultations with national stakeholders should include the national labour institution or ministry, and workers' and employers' organizations. When these planning processes are carried out in conflict settings, specialists should also consider linkages with ILO Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCPs), where they exist.

Employment and decent work programmes need to be conflict-sensitive and peace-responsive

If the link between unemployment and conflict is clear, this does not mean that all employment and livelihoods programmes automatically do as much for peace as they ought. An essential prerequisite to being conflict sensitive and positively contributing to peace is to gain insights into the opportunities and risks the context provides.

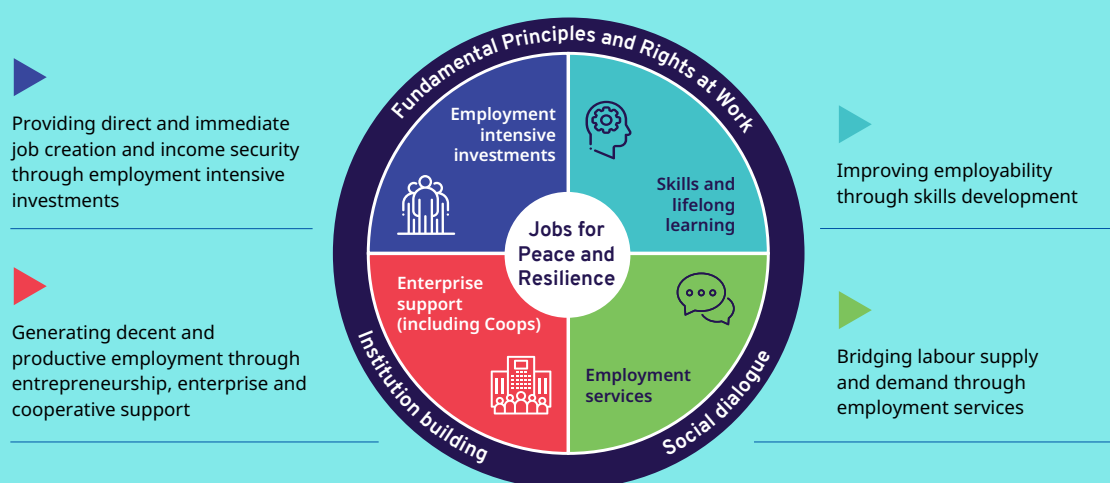
Immediate jobs and livelihood opportunities can be effective in humanitarian response, but they must be used as an investment in long-term development.

They must also be embedded into a longer-term employment strategy that aims to create decent jobs for strengthening dignity, security, trust and peace. All actors involved in employment programming for peace should make an effort to ensure the initiatives also contribute to sustainable peace.

¹⁰ The ILO has developed a Guide on "[Employment and decent work in situations of fragility, conflict and disaster](#)" (2016), which provides multidisciplinary portfolio of policies and approaches. A revised version of this guide will be available end of 2021.

► **Box 3: Examples of ILO flagship programmes working throughout the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus**

Jobs for Peace and Resilience – A programmatic example of ILO's approach to the HDP Nexus, is its Jobs for Peace and Resilience (JPR) flagship programme launched in 2016. The JPR acknowledges the HDP Nexus by pursuing interrelated and mutually reinforcing strategies through a downstream-upstream approach. While delivering quick and tangible benefits in terms of job creation, skills development and employment services in the humanitarian phase, the JPR promotes an enabling business environment as well as inclusive and effective labour market governance in the longer term. This is essential for sustaining peace and resilience in conflict and crisis situations. These key objectives are achieved through institution building, respect and promotion of fundamental principles and rights at work, and social dialogue. The programme places a strong focus on youth and women, given the specific challenges and needs they face in situations of crisis, conflict and disaster. By simultaneously enhancing economic prospects, inter-group contact, and by addressing grievances of the most vulnerable communities, JPR projects aim to reinforce social cohesion and build resilience to future shocks.



JPR Example: Bridging short and long-term approaches through employment intensive investments and environmental-friendly infrastructure

Short-term investment in infrastructure, for example as part of public employment programmes (PEPs), can lead to more long-term infrastructure investment that can help generate long-term employment opportunities. A focus on building infrastructure, assets and services that promote social and economic development, increasing agricultural productivity, providing care work, supporting education and health as well as access to natural resources, and addressing environment and climate-related challenges, is a way of investing in the future. These investments are best aimed at addressing inequalities (notably horizontal inequalities among social groups) in access to basic services, as well as to productive resources. This can be combined with additional investment in skills development, employment services and strengthening the business environment to promote inclusive and effective labour-market governance in the longer term – including the social and economic empowerment of women, which is essential for sustaining peace and resilience in conflict situations.

Building Social Protection Floors for All – Today, 73 per cent of the world's population does not have access to adequate social protection. It means 5 billion people live in anxiety every day. The ILO supports governments, workers' and employers' confederations, and civil society organizations in 21 countries, including conflict-affected countries, in collaboration with other UN agencies, to define and implement tailor-made and functional social protection floors. In conflict-affected countries, this will reduce poverty and inequalities and foster growth, development and social justice.

International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour and Forced Labour (IPEC+) – From the village to the global stage, the ILO works with its constituents (governments, employers' and workers' organizations), as well as with enterprises and small producers' organizations, NGOs and civil society organizations, to promote the eradication of child labour, forced labour and the realization of all fundamental rights at work, with a focus on rural and informal economies, enterprises and global supply chains, along with countries in crisis and fragile situations.

Employment and decent work programmes should not focus only on the quantity of jobs created, but also on the quality of work, if they are to contribute to peace

As illustrated in the theory of change presented above (figure 3), decent employment programmes can contribute to peace through a holistic and integrated approach, beyond just creating economic opportunities. Employment and decent work programmes in conflict-affected settings can and should contribute to dignity, social transformation, social cohesion and social justice. Decent work sums up the aspirations of people in their working lives. It involves opportunity for work that is productive and delivers a fair income; security and representation in the workplace and social protection for families; better prospects for personal development and social integration; freedom for people to form and join organizations, express their concerns, and to organize and participate in the decisions that affect their lives; along with equality of opportunity and treatment for all women and men.

Employment programmes for peace should also strengthen labour and economic institutions and social dialogue

To ensure long-term sustainable peace and meet the needs of the entire population, especially the most vulnerable, social and economic stability should be promoted through effective social dialogue in all its forms, based on inclusivity, participation, respect for freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining. Promoting freedom of association and social dialogue in conflict-affected situations enables effective interchange and contributes to participative democratic reconstruction processes and good governance. Independent organizations of employers and workers can play a significant role in the democratic transformation of a country. Special effort will be needed to ensure that excluded and vulnerable groups, such as workers in the informal economy, women, young people, internally displaced people and refugees, are included in such social dialogue institutions and processes, as they are the most affected by containment strategies. Furthermore, in order to serve as an effective strategy for bridging humanitarian crisis response and longer-term peacebuilding and development, there must be consistent engagement with national and local labour and economic institutions and with the private sector to ensure local ownership, enable national policy support and break aid dependency.

Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work should be linked to peacebuilding

Employment and livelihood programmes in conflict contexts must be grounded in a set of universal rights, such as freedom of association and collective bargaining, and protection from discrimination, forced or child labour. Without such human, social and labour rights protections, the prospects for equitable and inclusive development are threatened, and the risks for conflict triggers unabated.

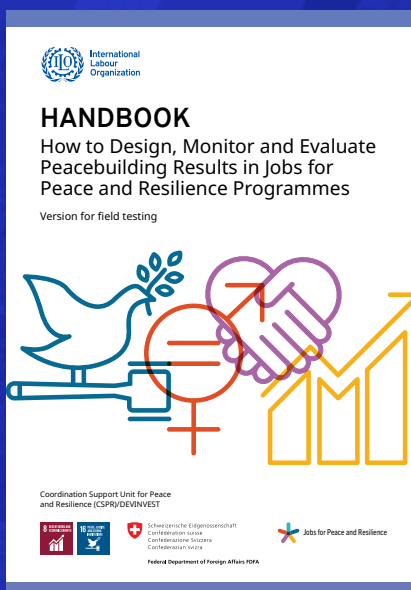
Employment for peacebuilding programmes should focus on youth and women

Decent employment for women is a key source of empowerment but also a proven conflict prevention success strategy, as it improves social dialogue and contact while diminishing grievances around inequality of opportunity and resources. Women and men are affected by crisis in different ways due to their different roles, responsibilities, needs, and activities. For example, conflicts often exacerbate women's already disproportionate care role. For women entrepreneurs, finance may become more difficult to secure, and access to inputs and markets may become limited due to insecurity and damaged or destroyed infrastructure, reinforcing women's already disadvantaged economic position.

Youth participation must also be a priority based on the specific challenges they face. As illustrated in *The Missing Peace: Independent Progress Study on Youth, Peace and Security* (2018), among youth there is a global sentiment of exclusion from governance systems, and a sense of injustice. The value of investing in employment opportunities for youth is evident, yet only decent work can promote their participation and give them a voice. Therefore, youth employment policies need to highlight the importance of decent work and social dialogue, and inclusion of young people should be pursued in a comprehensive economic, social and political manner.



► Building and sharing evidence on the contribution of decent work, employment and livelihoods programmes to peacebuilding processes



While there are well-established theories on the link between employment, decent work and peace, empirical evidence remains scarce. This is why it is important that employment and livelihood programmes in conflict-affected countries put particular emphasis on conflict and peacebuilding analysis, design a theory of change with **peacebuilding and social cohesion perception indicators and baselines**, and set up a monitoring and evaluation system of the contribution of employment to peacebuilding outcomes to allow to build evidence. To support these efforts, the ILO developed specific guidance and tools in the handbook *How to Design, Monitor and Evaluate Peacebuilding Results in Jobs for Peace and Resilience Programmes*.

As another relevant tool, the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) developed a specific **PBF guidance on perception surveys and community-based monitoring**. A consistent use of qualitative and quantitative data on peacebuilding and livelihood programmes fills knowledge gaps created by the lack of peacebuilding indicators and baselines in such programmes. This evidence base can then promote learning across programmes, spur innovation, fertilize exchange of good practices and inform policy decisions upstream.

► Financing employment for peace programmes

In contexts considered “fragile”, it is estimated that nearly half (46%) of all Official Development Assistance (ODA) arrives as humanitarian assistance, and as such, often does not directly address underlying structural drivers of conflict.¹¹ However, many such contexts lack access to funding for larger-scale development assistance and loans. Strategic partnerships and planning are crucial and can leverage funding for greater impact when considering the potential of factors of livelihoods, employment and decent work throughout the HDP Nexus. For instance, in 2020 the ILO and UNDP signed a framework for action which includes close cooperation across the HDP Nexus.

UN Peacebuilding Fund

The UN Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) is a country-focused, globally-pooled fund that provides “timely, risk-tolerant, and flexible” funding to peacebuilding initiatives, before, during and after conflicts. The Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) is responsible for the overall management of the PBF under the authority of the Secretary-General. The Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office (MPTFO) is the PBF’s fiduciary agent. Between 2017 and 2019, PBF approved over US\$531 million in peacebuilding initiatives in fifty-one countries. The PBF allocates money through two funding facilities, the Immediate Response Facility (IRF) and the Peacebuilding Recovery Facility (PRF). In addition, the Gender and Youth Promotion Initiative is launched on a yearly base and promotes joint UN-CSOs programmes. PBF-funded projects supporting employment and livelihoods tend to fall within its Priority Area “Revitalization of the economy and generation of immediate peace dividends” through support to employment and equitable access to basic services.¹²



From 2017 to 2019, 53 livelihood or employment projects were funded through the PBF in 23 conflict-affected countries for a total of US\$ 30 million according to the Peacebuilding Fund’s Dashboard.

These diverse projects aim to invest funding in catalytic and innovative ways by identifying strategic entry points for directly supporting the most vulnerable with better access to jobs and livelihoods while also addressing underlying drivers of conflict. These interventions range, for example, from youth employment, entrepreneurship training, value chain and cooperative development, empowering women-led Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs), support to local peacebuilding structures, to conflict resolution and social cohesion and peaceful coexistence activities.

¹¹ OECD (2018), *States of Fragility 2018*, OECD Publishing, Paris. <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264302075-en>

¹² From 2006 to 2017, the PBF has allocated US\$772 million to 41 recipient countries, <https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/fund>.





► **Box 4: Examples of livelihoods and employment projects sustaining peace**



Lebanon

In a conflict-affected area of Northern Lebanon where enduring tensions among groups of different religious affiliations were stressed further by hosting a large number of refugees from Syria, a Peacebuilding Fund joint project *Building Bridges Amongst "Youth at Risk"* (ILO and UNDP, 2017-19) facilitated contact and fostered positive interactions between Lebanese and Syrian refugee youth between the ages of 15 and 24 years. This was done through livelihood opportunities and social stability activities, including entrepreneurship training, business plan development; funding for business start-ups; vocational training in agriculture, general services and hospitality; internship placements with existing businesses; and strengthening Lebanese-Syrian socio-economic committees.



Mali

A Peacebuilding Fund joint project (IOM, UNESCO, UNICEF), *Les jeunes acteurs pour la Paix et la Reconciliation Nationale* (2018-19), focused on livelihoods through youth employment and women's SME development in conflict-prone areas of Mopti and Ségou. This innovative project integrates short-term jobs in community infrastructure and women's micro-enterprises with skills and mediation training. It simultaneously provides social services and promotes inter-community dialogue as part of broader reconciliation efforts.



Central African Republic

An ILO project (own funding), Decent Jobs for Peace and Resilience (2018-19), created jobs for marginalized youth in an area of high conflict risk. This was achieved by rebuilding deteriorated infrastructure and supporting SME growth among young women and men, while promoting social cohesion and dialogue among disparate groups and communities. Informed by labour market studies and benefitting from national leadership and investment, the project improved contact and opportunities among violence-affected communities.





Somalia

A Peacebuilding Fund [joint project](#) (ILO, FAO, UNICEF, WFP, IOM, UNHCR) (2017-2018) supported Somali returnees from Kenya and their host communities in a volatile, conflict-affected border region. It did this by creating basic livelihood opportunities through resources and capacities, including skills, vocational training, and market analysis; and employment schemes from cash for work to microenterprise support. This joint, cross-sector, cross-border project was innovative in its tripartite approach to cooperation between UN and the Governments of Somalia and Kenya, with private sector involvement. The project informed Somalia's strategic priorities for stabilization and delivery of direct peace dividends, including commitments to reconciliation and investing in job creation.

Sri Lanka

Since 2011 the ILO has led a multipartners' programme, including the PBF, [on local empowerment through economic development and reconciliation](#). Following the end of the civil war, the North largely missed out on the economic boom experienced by the rest of Sri Lanka. The project provided economic opportunities to marginalized people in the North, giving them access to livelihoods and employment, while facilitating economic partnerships between North and South. It also promotes a feeling of inclusion and belonging to a united Sri Lanka among the communities in the North, facilitating a greater involvement by these groups in the national reconciliation process. For example, farmers from this disadvantaged region are supported to access new economic opportunities, which enable them to build new ties with buyers including across ethnic, religious, and linguistic boundaries, and obtain a sense of fair treatment, leading to the enhancement of social cohesion. The project exemplifies how employment and decent work can produce positive peace and social cohesion dividends thanks to improved economic opportunities for disadvantaged populations (particularly female farmers), enhanced contact and interactions between the different groups who come together in these joint economic ventures, and through the reduction of grievances linked to perceptions of economic and regional inequality and injustice.

International Labour Organization (ILO)
Route des Morillons 4
CH-1211 Geneva 22
Switzerland
www.ilo.org

Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA)
Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO)
United Nations | Room S-3480 |
New York, NY 10017
USA
www.un.org/peacebuilding