

FINLAND

AND THE HUMANITARIAN-DEVELOPMENT-PEACE NEXUS

THE ISSUE

THE EU MEMBER STATES' IMPLEMENTATION OF THE HUMANITARIAN-DEVELOPMENT-PEACE NEXUS



FCA's country case in Uganda (Triple Nexus). © Finn Church Aid/Hugh Rutherford

The Triple Nexus is still challenging among many EU Member States and humanitarian actors though many definitions have been drafted and many discussions have been organised to shed a light on this approach.

Several Finnish NGOs working in humanitarian assistance and development cooperation still face challenges on how to adopt the Triple Nexus approach in their program work, even though many of them have written or are in the process of drafting their internal guidance or definition papers on the approach. What makes it so challenging?

One of the main reasons is **financing**. Different donors have different approaches to define and adopt the Triple Nexus, or still have strict funding silos for humanitarian assistance and development cooperation. Additionally, guidance from donors on how to integrate the Triple Nexus approach into programmes might still be too vague or abstract. There should be more predictable, flexible, and multi-year funding instead of short project-specific funding in humanitarian assistance. Fortunately, a few humanitarian donors have started using programme-based and multi-year funding rather than short-term project funding.

Peace programming might also be challenging in humanitarian assistance. Donors might have a strict interpretation of how it is possible to integrate it into humanitarian programs, or there might be fears of jeopardising neutrality or access to the countries or areas of operations. It seems to be challenging for the whole humanitarian sector to specify how peace should be defined in humanitarian programming. There is no one-fits-all solution. However, there are discussions on how to strengthen the prioritisation of conflict preventive sensitivity in the Triple Nexus approach. Naturally, the Do No Harm principle and other Core Humanitarian principles must be respected in all humanitarian programming.

There should be more holistic **coordination** at country level as it seems that there are often different coordination mechanisms or forums for humanitarian assistance and development cooperation. A joint approach is much needed, such as undertaking joint risk-informed and gender-sensitive analysis for all the program work or creating joint information collection tools. It would be time and resource saving as well as more efficient.

Many NGOs are working in all three sectors: humanitarian assistance, peace programming and development

> Finn Church Aid's experiences of Triple Nexus in Uganda

Finn Church Aid (FCA) has a long working history in Uganda, both among Ugandans and refugees from neighbouring countries. There are currently more than 1.5 million refugees in the country.

FCA has been working for a long time with refugees from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in Rwamwanja, northwest of the country. FCA has been providing emergency assistance and supporting children to attend school upon arrival in the country. As part of this, FCA has built semi-permanent school facilities to meet the additional needs of refugee flows in the education sector, distributed school supplies, covered teacher salaries and strengthened teachers' skills.

FCA has worked in Rwamwanja since 2015, in line with the Nexus approach, with vocational training programs involving both refugee and Ugandan youth, a division of 70% refugees, 30% Ugandans, as defined in the REHOPE Framework. In this work, funded by development cooperation funds, young people receive vocational training following the Ugandan state curriculum. FCA has also developed a model in which students are supported with internships and applying for a job as part of their training program. The content of teaching has been designed to meet the needs of employers, whilst the chosen trades are also based on employment during a potential return to the home country or relocation to other areas. It has been essential that young people with both refugee and Ugandan backgrounds are involved in training programs. This has also made it possible, in accordance with the Triple Nexus approach, to prevent tensions and conflicts in the region and to support coexistence between refugees and Ugandans.

Uganda is continuously receiving new arrivals, with the most significant large-scale influxes from South Sudan and DRC. FCA works closely with the UNHCR and local authorities to support new arrivals and the refugees in protracted situations. FCA has, for instance, built semi-permanent learning spaces, distributed teaching materials, and campaigned on the importance of schooling for new refugees.

The challenge is to find long-term funding for operations in the area based on the needs of refugees and Ugandans living there. Many donors still operate in funding silos. Humanitarian aid donors no longer prioritize the region's needs, even though a significant number of refugees still live there, and new refugees are still arriving. At the same time, there have been challenges in including refugees in the region's development plans, despite the Ugandan State's welcoming approach to refugees.

cooperation, but they still face challenges with strict silo thinking among back-donors and even inside the organisations. Inside humanitarian organisations, there might exist invisible walls between humanitarian assistance and development cooperation work modalities, especially how to transfer humanitarian programmes to more sustainable and longer-term development cooperation programming, if needed.

Finland's Development Policy Committee (DPC) published an analysis document "Greater than the sum of its parts" in spring 2021 to elaborate why the Triple Nexus approach is needed for Finland's development cooperation, humanitarian assistance and peace programming. DPC established an expert group to prepare the publication, with a wide range of stake-

holders in Finland, including a few Finnish humanitarian organisations. DPC used the [DAC Recommendations on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus](#) in the document to analyse challenges and opportunities in adopting the Triple Nexus approach in a more systematic and harmonised way.

The process itself was beneficial and useful, and many different actors in Finland, including humanitarian organisations, can utilise the document and its recommendations in defining or reconfirming their Triple Nexus approaches. The publication also included recommendations to the Finnish Government and Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland (MFA) to determine how to apply the Triple Nexus approach in their policies and funding instruments.

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The MFA established a Nexus network in 2019 with members from different departments and units within the Ministry to coordinate the implementation of the Triple Nexus approach in the MFA. The network is writing a Guidance note for Triple Nexus covering different working modalities in the MFA. It will be comprehensive and cover all the various departments and funding instruments. The guiding principle is that the Triple Nexus approach should be mainstreamed in all the program work instead of having separate Triple Nexus projects or program work in humanitarian assistance or development cooperation. The goal is to use it to guide funding decisions without drafting separate Nexus guidance for different departments or funding instruments in the MFA, too.

Currently, there are no plans to make changes on how to release humanitarian assistance and development cooperation funding in the MFA. The draft Guidance Note for the Triple Nexus will be shared with different external stakeholders, including the MFA’s humanitarian partner organisations, for their input and comments before finalising it in 2022. Finland has also integrated the Triple Nexus approach in Finland’s Humanitarian Policy (2019) and the Government Report on Development Policy Across Parliamentary Terms (2021).

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There is still work to be done on how to adopt the Triple Nexus better and more systematically in humanitarian assistance and development cooperation, but the direction is good. However, there is a need to continue a virtuous dialogue between different actors and accept

that the best way to understand the Triple Nexus is to analyse how we could use it and mainstream it in different contexts. The Triple Nexus is more than words on paper. In the end, we should respond to the needs and fulfil the rights of beneficiaries and communities instead of paying too much attention to different funding sources, working modalities or definitions.

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