

VOICE OUT LOUD

#32

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



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**THE EU MEMBERS STATES'
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE HUMANITARIAN-
DEVELOPMENT-PEACE NEXUS**

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

VOICE wishes to thank the
contributors of this issue.
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Editorial



This edition of the Voice Out Loud focuses on how VOICE members and EU Member States are interpreting and implementing the humanitarian-development-peace nexus (sometimes referred to as the HDP or the 'triple' nexus), and revisits the recommendations made by VOICE in the 2019 nexus study: *'NGOs Perspectives on the EU's Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus'*. While the idea of adopting a nexus approach is not a recent concept in its dual humanitarian-development dimension, or indeed in terms of the debates about coherence, integration and comprehensive approaches, the global and EU policy frameworks around the topic have been evolving over the years, seeking to integrate the peace component.

But what is the state of the discussions around this HDP nexus in 2021? The nature of humanitarian crises has drastically changed. The COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, and increasingly severe and protracted violent conflicts are now driving hunger and exacerbating existing inequalities and cracks in the food system (*Global Hunger Index 2021*). Humanitarian needs are steadily growing and funding to address these needs is lagging ever further behind, creating a record funding gap. In this context, the European Commission (EC) recently launched a new *Communication on the EU's humanitarian action*, stressing the need for the EU to step up its efforts towards a stronger implementation of the triple nexus aimed at addressing the root causes of crises and ultimately reducing the level of humanitarian needs. In its *Conclusions* to the Communication, released in May 2021, the Council of the EU also emphasised the need for a more consistent and effective implementation of the HDP nexus approach. Subsequently, EU Member States have been developing guidance notes on the implementation of nexus projects, and the OECD is due to issue a progress report on *Development Assistance Committee recommendations* on the nexus.

Humanitarian NGOs are essential actors in the delivery of principled humanitarian aid, and have substantial experience in quickly adapting to different types of crises. Based on this expertise, many have expressed concerns regarding the implementation of the HDP nexus approach, particularly in relation to its potential impact on the humanitarian principles and the risk of the politicisation of humanitarian aid. The key recommendations for the EU and its Member States in the 2019 VOICE nexus study included the need to: 1. ensure an approach in line with humanitarian principles; 2. build on NGOs' experiences and learn lessons; 3. adapt financial frameworks and tools to suit a nexus approach; 4. recognise the need for all relevant actors to work towards a cultural shift and build trust, find flexible ways to meet the needs of crisis-affected populations, and share risks and accountability.

Building on these recommendations, VOICE members based in Denmark, Finland, Germany, Italy and Sweden have been asked to share their views on how their respective governments are approaching the implementation of nexus programmes. While some EU Member States are quite advanced on this, others are still working towards the elaboration of their own guidelines. However, both are equally valuable for our analysis as they help shed light on possible solutions to some critical challenges, such as on funding and provide interesting thoughts on how to involve key stakeholders, including NGOs, at the earliest stage. As such, this edition of Voice Out Loud has allowed us to gather key insights that could feed further reflections at the EU level on how to operationalise the nexus.

As you will see from the articles that follow, the VOICE recommendations were reconfirmed as being highly relevant, no matter what the level of implementation of nexus projects, whether at national or EU level. Among the key themes emerging are that: the different roles and mandates of the actors involved need to be respected; that humanitarian principles cannot be undermined; and all political actors, the EU or its Member States, need to guarantee that the peace dimension of the triple nexus will not be used as a synonym of stabilisation and security. The divide between donors and practitioners on the definition of the peace component of the HDP nexus feeds this risk. While humanitarian NGOs refer to the peace element as a way to further integrate a 'Do no harm' approach and conflict sensitivity into their work, political actors often link it to their own political and security agenda, seriously undermining the implementation of principled humanitarian aid. As rightly stated in the *European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid*, reconfirmed in 2017, the fundamental humanitarian principles must be promoted and upheld; humanitarian aid is not a crisis management tool and should not be used for accomplishing any objectives other than principled humanitarian ones.

Dominic Crowley
VOICE President

OPERATIONALISATION OF THE TRIPLE NEXUS: THE ITALIAN INITIATIVE TO ENGAGE WITH INGOS' PERSPECTIVES

THE ISSUE

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



Distribution of triage PPE kits at Al Jadeed HCF, Libya - © Anchor Colors - Ali Maouhob

“From We World’s perspective, active exchanges among members of the Working Group have helped in providing proper consideration to a bottom-up approach, grounded in joint and thorough evidence-based analysis, and looking at the calls for change made at the World Humanitarian Summit.”

The discussions following the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit brought to the development of a comprehensive and evolving policy framework of the Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) Nexus, in alignment with the Grand Bargain commitments. Since 2016, the current understanding of the HDP Nexus draws upon international policy dialogues, frameworks recommendations and commitments. Among others: the *OECD DAC recommendation on the HDP Nexus*, the *UNHCR Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework*, the *UN New Way of Working*, the *EU Council conclusions on the integrated approach to external conflicts and crises and on the operationalisation of the humanitarian-development nexus*.

Governments subscribing to these recommendations and commitments are therefore facing a demanding endeavour of aligning with the principles of the HDP Nexus, and improving their analysis, programming, and financing modalities, in order to better address both the urgent/rising humanitarian needs and the root causes of conflicts and fragility.

In early 2019, Italy established a dedicated Working Group (WG) to elaborate the *Strategic Guidelines on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus* (HDP Guidelines), composed of representatives of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA), the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS), the University system and different networks of Italian INGOs, namely LINK 2007, CINI and AOI.

The finalisation of the HDP Guidelines by the WG is due for December 2021. The HDP Guidelines will help strengthen the coherence and complementarity of the humanitarian, development and peacebuilding activities undertaken by the Italian Cooperation. They will contribute to improve the existing programming and financing modalities, in order to better reflect the Nexus approach in a couple of pilot countries. The WG is also discussing the elaboration of potential follow-up *Operational Guidelines*, building on the pilots and aiming to set forth a blueprint for the implementation of Italian development cooperation's initiatives in accordance with the HDP Guidelines.

CHALLENGES AND BENEFITS OF COLLABORATIVE EXCHANGE TO OPERATIONALISE THE HDP NEXUS.

The Nexus is an open-ended process, with many international actors seeking ways to push the agenda forward, both from an operational and a global policy perspective. There is no agreed blueprint for transforming the way international assistance operates in response to complex and protracted crises; rather it is up to each actor to improve the existing modalities, share best practices and advocate for much-needed change, whether locally or at global level.

We World, representing LINK 2007 in the WG, welcomed the group's work, since the HDP Nexus requires a plurality of different approaches to progress. From We World's perspective, active exchanges among members of the WG have helped in providing proper consideration to a bottom-up approach, grounded in joint and thorough evidence-based analysis, and looking at the calls for change made at the World Humanitarian Summit.

That said, We World, in resonance with other INGOs, has committed to pursuing practical ways forward on the HDP Nexus, agreeing on the need to close the gap between the three pillars, to go beyond sector-specific programs and foster greater collaboration and coherence between different actors. Operationally, this requires best-placed

actors to intervene in a specific context, in light of their comparative advantages. Consistent with the OECD DAC Recommendation, donors also are called on to promote and support programmes that address the HDP Nexus approach and the need for a greater localisation of responses.

Since there is not yet a blueprint of the HDP Nexus agreed at global level, the WG has first worked to understand the role a national development cooperation system should have (i.e. should the Italian cooperation focus on the internal coherence and complementarity of the three pillars, or consider whether to frame the HDP Guidelines in multi-stakeholders' strategies or programmes in a particular context?). This consideration alone has been a long-lasting challenge for the WG and has been addressed thanks to the variety of its members' perspectives.

This challenge faced by the WG is actually widespread and potentially hindering the HDP Nexus to bring real change towards more effective coherence and complementarity of actions, abiding by humanitarian principles. In this regard, having the presence of INGO representatives, the University system, AICS and the Italian MoFA at the same table has helped narrow the debate around specific components and concepts necessary to adhere to HDP Nexus principles.

The operational understanding of INGOs, the research and innovation expertise of universities, together with the perspective of the Italian MoFA and AICS, helped focus the HDP Nexus component of *Joint Analysis*.

The same considerations have been made with HDP Nexus concepts, like *joined-up programming and peace*, for which there are not yet common approaches generally accepted. As a result, both components are being tackled in the HDP Guidelines in a way to address the root causes and drivers of fragility, while providing a certain level of mutual accountability between the actors of the Italian Cooperation.

The WG recognised that the Nexus discipline continues to evolve, and thus the HDP Guidelines will require future revisions, together with a general commitment to learn from solutions and best practices identified at global and regional level, starting from the EU.

This commitment reflects the identified need for more and better-defined initiatives to be taken to ensure the complementarity of actions and to push the Grand Bargain agenda forward with clear examples of an effective and concrete operationalisation of the Nexus.

> Enhancing new ways to operationalise collective outcomes by engaging multiple perspectives.

The collaboration with the Italian Working Group has been helping We World better understand our role as an INGO in providing meaningful inputs to operationalise the HDP Nexus. For example, as a member of the Nexus Working Group in Libya led by the World Food Programme (WFP), we identified our potential position to test some of the modalities under discussion within the Italian Working Group to elaborate the *HDP Guidelines*.

Together with the Social Change School (SCS), and in coordination with donors and other actors, we put a Context Analysis and Mapping Matrix into practice, drawing upon elements of analysis discussed in the framework of the *HDP Guidelines*. The Matrix is benchmarked to existing working standards and includes specific dimensions of analysis, meant to provide a thorough profile of the context to guide HDP Nexus operational strategies.

The application of the Matrix helped We World advance the thinking - together with AICS and other members - of the Nexus Working Group in Libya, as well as gather inputs to enrich the discussion on the Italian *HDP Guidelines*. It helped consider what it means to apply *Collective Outcomes* and how to move from outcomes to operational programming. In the specific case of Libya, We World has been working on intermediate outcomes through a clustering analysis of problems in Southern Libya, in the attempt to bridge the operational gap between ongoing actions in the region with the *Collective Outcomes* identified.

This case displays once again the benefit of our joint dialogue with the members of the Italian Working Group, and how the coherence with the HDP Nexus starts from accepting the need to incorporate other actors' perspectives in our learning and experience.

In this regard, what We World considers fundamental is the centrality of those directly affected by protracted crises, in the decision-making processes. The affected communities have often the means to best address the threats and risks they face, and they could play the role of agents for change in their own environments. Localised responses continue to operate externally to the humanitarian-development sectors and remain underfunded, even in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic, which saw local actors immediately mobilised to address exacerbated needs. This is what the localisation of action implies.

With a greater support provided to local infrastructures that address the long-standing risks communities face, involving those ultimately responsible for upholding their rights to a safe and dignified life, the cycle of never-ending conflicts and crises can be reversed with people having greater autonomy in making informed decisions directly impacting their lives.

“Since there is not yet a blueprint of the HDP Nexus agreed at global level, the WG has first worked to understand the role a national development cooperation system should have.”

Francesco Michele, International Advocacy,
Policy and Innovation Area Coordinator
Nick Gianni, Advocacy and Policy Officer
Anna Maria de Biase, Nexus Policy Intern
[We World](#)

THE DANISH APPROACH TO NEXUS – DOES THE ‘DANISH MODEL’ TO OPERATIONALISING NEXUS OFFER A UNIQUE APPROACH?

THE ISSUE

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

A recent evaluation was commissioned by the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the Danish support to strengthening civil society in the global south and working across the humanitarian, development, peace (HDP) nexus¹. The document highlights that flexible funding modalities, focus on quality partnerships with local actors, and working in the ‘peace’ component of the nexus are key factors for Danish NGOs effectively operationalising the HDP nexus approach.

As nexus is becoming the new norm, many humanitarian agencies and donors are still grappling with translating the concept into practice. Covid-19 has highlighted the important role of local leadership, support to front-line workers and quality funding as key enablers of the HDP-nexus. In a fast-changing environment increasingly marked by *multicausal* drivers of crisis, it is paramount to integrate long-term and holistic solutions from the onset of crisis, and to strengthen collaboration and complementarity between diverse actors.

Danish civil society organisations (CSOs) bring considerable knowledge and expertise to the operationalisation of nexus approaches. According to the evaluation commissioned by the Danish MFA, around a third of Danish CSOs’ total (including humanitarian and development) project portfolio includes triple nexus programming. Most of the Danish organisations have long-term presence in project locations and demonstrate a deep understanding of local context and capacities. As NGOs spanning the humanitarian-development-peacebuilding spectrum, DanChurchAid and Danish Refugee Council are well positioned to address complex crisis and development challenges in fragile contexts with comprehensive and coherent solutions. However, doing so requires flexible and long-term funding, support to local leadership and quality partnerships, people-centred and conflict-sensitive approaches, and investment in joint capacity strengthening of both local and international actors.

FUNDING MODALITIES FOR NEXUS

The OECD DAC peer review of the Danish government highlights that Denmark has been a pioneer in incorporating a nexus approach across its development cooperation and humanitarian assistance long before the

nexus guidelines were developed by OECD DAC. By linking development and humanitarian streams into a single joint strategy and opening for flexible funding modalities across the HDP-nexus, Danish NGOs have clear incentives to integrate innovative and sustainable solutions into their humanitarian programming. This modality has become even more flexible with the new 2022-2025 Danish MFA strategic partnership framework which merges humanitarian and development funding streams into one instrument.²

MAINSTREAM CONFLICT SENSITIVITY AND INVEST IN BOTTOM-UP PEACEBUILDING

The new Danish cooperation policy *The World We Share* emphasises peacebuilding and conflict prevention in fragile and conflict-affected contexts. This opens for stronger support to NGOs and local actors, notably faith actors, youth and women that are operating in the peace component of the nexus. However, as the OECD-DAC peer review highlights, the Danish government’s nexus approach needs to better implement the peace component of the HDP nexus. Danish policy so far has been nearly exclusively on stabilisation, top-down and securitised approaches with the risk of blurring of lines between humanitarian aid and security policy. In its ambition to span the HDP nexus, the Danish government will have to carefully manage the blurring of lines and move away from a narrow ‘stabilisation’ concept to a broader ‘peace’ vision with emphasis on locally driven, bottom-up peacebuilding efforts, and mainstreaming of conflict sensitivity into humanitarian and development pillars.³

“In its ambition to span the HDP nexus, the Danish government will have to carefully manage the blurring of lines and move away from a narrow ‘stabilisation’ concept to a broader ‘peace’ vision with emphasis on locally driven, bottom-up peacebuilding efforts, and mainstreaming of conflict sensitivity into humanitarian and development pillars.”

1. The thematic evaluations on strengthening civil society in the global south and on the HDP nexus commissioned by the Danish MFA and conducted by Intrac and Nordic Consulting Group are not yet published
2. The Danish government’s flexible funding is also reflected in its commitment to the Grand Bargain where 91% of the Danish government’s humanitarian funding is reported as flexible (The Grand Bargain at five years, HPG commissioned, June 2021)
3. Triple nexus and the role of local actors in South Sudan, DanChurchAid/ACT Alliance, 2019

➤ Sudan Case Study, DCA

In response to the humanitarian crisis in South Kordofan and Blue Nile ('the two areas'), Sudan from 2011-2021, a unique collaboration between local civil society actors, international NGOs, and donors (including DCA & the Danish MFA) was established giving priority to a locally led but internationally supported humanitarian programme. In 2021, more than 500,000 people were supported with activities spanning humanitarian coordination, logistics, livelihood interventions, basic health and education services, women led-protection, including gender-based violence, COVID-19 awareness, mine risk education and locally led conflict transformation. The activities were implemented by local NGOs, community-based organisations and volunteer community groups with a strong female participation. A deep understanding of the context played an instrumental role. With ongoing support from international humanitarian actors, the local actors were able to effectively align humanitarian, peace and development efforts based on local needs and capacities available. More than 30 peace committees have been supported throughout the two areas reaching across front lines and tribal divisions. Such peace activities have markedly reduced conflict and improved access, protection and saved lives. As a result of the programme, several thousand individuals have been involved in local level peace work such as inter-tribal conferences, cross frontline dialogue over issues relating to livestock raiding, grazing, water and other resources. Access to markets, livelihoods and veterinary support have enabled farmers and livestock herders to uphold a reduced but nevertheless crucial food production throughout the crisis.

Throughout the period and with funding from the Danish MFA, DCA has played the facilitator role, provided expertise, training, equipment, hands-on mentoring and guidance across all relevant aspects of the humanitarian-development-peace (HDP) nexus. The flexibility and collaborative efforts by donors have helped DCA to be a constructive, loyal, and flexible intermediary towards the local partners. The response has been extremely cost-effective and has successfully spanned the entire HDP nexus allowing local actors to lead and practice a well-rooted tradition of self-reliance and social cohesion.



Men - peace singers Nuba 2016.



Woman peace singers Nuba 2016
© Nils Carstensen/Local2global protection

STRENGTHEN NATIONAL AND LOCAL CAPACITIES

In *the World We Share* the Danish government stresses local leadership and partnerships with local actors as key to prevent conflicts and strengthening resilience. For Danish NGOs this is translated into long-term partnerships and engagement with local actors, mutual capacity strengthening, a strong practice around joint

analysis, and adaptative and flexible ways of working together founded on mutual trust and respect. This helps advancing locally led peacebuilding efforts and mobilise communities, government, local armed actors, and local authorities around joint solutions to tackle root causes of conflict.⁴ This places partnerships and localisation approaches as central pillars of Danish NGO's HDP nexus programming.

4. Triple nexus and the role of local actors in South Sudan, DanChurchAid/ACT Alliance, 2019

In summary, Denmark's approach to nexus supports a broad range of local and global actors to strengthen collective impact. It paves the way for a nexus approach that puts people affected by crisis at the centre and encourages Danish NGOs to maximise their joint efforts across the HDP nexus, including working in the peace component. By committing to empowering local (HD&P) actors in protracted conflict and fragile contexts, investing in bottom-up, local peacebuilding and establishing

funding modalities that are both flexible and multi-year, DanChurchAid and Danish Refugee Council believe that the Danish nexus approach offers an effective model for a better 'grounding' of the HDP nexus and encourages more donors to follow.

Maria Pade Lange, Global Lead on addressing root causes of displacement, [Danish Refugee Council](#)
Fie Lauritzen, Senior Global Policy Advisor, [Danish Church Aid](#)

➤ Somalia Case Study, DRC



The Durable Solutions Program in Somalia © Danish Refugee Council

The Durable Solutions Program in Somalia implemented by Danish Refugee Council (DRC), Tetra-Tech and the Regional Durable Solutions Secretariat (ReDSS) aims to benefit communities in return and displacement affected areas with increased stability, livelihood opportunities, social solidarity, as well as trust in service delivery and protection by the different levels of governance. The program engages both traditional and emerging development and humanitarian actors across different sectors.

The final evaluation found that the programme contributed to durable solutions and sustained (re) integration/return of IDPs and returnee communities. Working across the HDP nexus, the programme reached 257,642 beneficiaries through a multisectoral and multi-agency response.^[1] Results ranged from enhanced *safety and security for displacement affected communities*, by support to dialogue and cooperation forums amongst community members and local police, mine awareness sessions etc. (79% of IDPs felt safe and secure), to improved access to safe water through rehabilitation and construction of water supply points and networks (71% obtained drinking water from safe sources). The programme also focused on *increased Government ownership and involvement in facilitating durable solutions*. The secondment of staff to the Somalia Ministry of Planning^[2] and training of policy makers etc., resulted in a [National Durable Solutions Strategy](#) and the establishment of a durable solutions coordination unit within the Government.

DRC's long-standing presence in the areas and quality of relationships with a wide selection of local and national stakeholders enabled strong multi-stakeholder coordination at national and district levels. Close engagement with the Government was key to guarantee impact and sustainability in the solutions processes. The focus on adopting innovative approaches, including private sector partnerships and use of new and emerging technologies, led to higher efficiency and improved results.

[1] Further information on [Advancing multi-stakeholder engagement to sustain solutions](#) on the ReDSS website

[2] MOPIED - Somalia Ministry of Planning, Investment and Economic Development

COORDINATED MULTI-ANNUAL, FLEXIBLE AND PROGRAMMATIC FUNDING CAN CONTRIBUTE TO BETTER BUILDING THE NEXUS: A PERSPECTIVE FROM GERMANY

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Enabling local solutions: Refugees and host community jointly farming on the land of the host community contributing to peacefully living together; Adi, Haute-Uélé, DR Congo, ©: Malteser International/ Antoine Mopepe

Malteser International is a multi-mandated organisation working in crisis settings. With expertise in Health, WASH and Food and Nutrition Security we incorporate the nexus in many of our programs. To this end, combining humanitarian, transitional, and development funding is essential.

“Coordination between FFO and BMZ aiming at collective outcomes enabled a flexible exit from the humanitarian assistance transferring into a transitional approach.”

DONOR LANDSCAPE – SETTING OUT TO SUPPORT THE NEXUS

The German Federal Foreign Office (FFO) coordinates with the Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) under the Triple Nexus approach. Both ministries coordinate some of their grants through the “Nexus-Chapeau-Approach” where humanitarian and transitional projects have been working towards “collective outcomes”. With a dedicated budget-line for “transitional” funding the BMZ has gone a step further and created a special instrument supporting the implementation of the HDP Nexus⁵.

As FFO and BMZ have committed to more multi-annual and programmatic funding during the World Humanitarian Summit, they are now moving towards that direction. Malteser International was the first to pilot in a programmatic funding by FFO and our experience shows that this enables more flexible and adaptive nexus programmes in crisis settings.

5. [BMZ Strategy on Transitional Development Assistance](#)

➤ Building the Triple Nexus in DR Congo

The northeast of DR Congo is a marginalised part of the country with weak social infrastructure. Local communities become hosts to refugees and IDPs from surrounding crises.

With development funding from the EU, Malteser International has been strengthening health systems in Ituri and Haute-Uélé for years. Through its *Emergency Program Africa*, co-funded by FFO, Malteser International was able to flexibly assist newly arrived refugees from South Sudan to access health services. Additionally clinical WASH and malnutrition treatment were implemented. In the prolonged presence of refugees in the area, a grant from BMZ for transitional aid helped to further assist the refugees, especially to continue treatment of malnutrition. With the BMZ transitional grant we were also able to follow the explicit preferences of the refugees and host communities: supporting them with agricultural training and inputs. This supported their food and nutrition security and increased resilience. To cope with the additional burden of refugees, the health system was supported by cost reimbursement for treatment of refugees, avoiding a conflict over access between refugees and host communities. The reimbursement was then gradually reduced in order not to disturb the long-term cost recovery approach aiming at sustainability for the health system.

As a result of the combined interventions, refugees could integrate into the local communities rather than having to move to camp settlements to secure their survival. Health structures and their development model were not disturbed through the humanitarian situation but enabled to increase and further strengthen their capacities. With the continuation of the situation the refugees were enabled to pursue their own priority by farming themselves⁷.

KEY FEATURES CONTRIBUTING TO GOOD PRACTICE IN THE NEXUS

FFO humanitarian *Emergency Program Africa* funding enabled timely and adapted response to the refugee crisis. Coordination between FFO and BMZ aiming at collective outcomes enabled a flexible exit from the humanitarian assistance transferring into a transitional approach. Multi-annual EU development funding had played an important role for deep understanding of context and good relations with stakeholders in the area. With trust built over the years, the programme featured a very people centered approach using P-FIM methodology. The refugees' prioritised to be able to farm instead of receiving food distributions. With a strong focus in health, Malteser International would not have prioritised assistance to farming. But with the flexibility of the transitional funding, an approach open to peoples' choices could be pursued. Taking up peoples' priorities, farming was hence supported.

Supporting agricultural activities not only provided the needed resources but provided also space to local leaders and communities who then integrated refugees on their community lands, by this contributing to peaceful co-existence and strengthening social cohesion⁶.

WHAT STILL NEEDS TO MOVE TO BETTER FUND THE NEXUS?

The coordinated FFO-BMZ Nexus approach, and especially the conditions given (relatively flexible, less earmarked funding given for a 3-year up to a 5-year period) are a good practice. But there are also clear limitations: The BMZ transitional funding and with it the Nexus-Approach can currently only be applied to responses in 11 countries worldwide so, we are missing opportunities in those regions in crisis that are not on the list. Therefore, we urge the BMZ to consider enlarging the list to further crisis settings. At the EU level, more multi-annual, untied, programmatic and coordinated funding - including transitional funding - would very likely strengthen timely and adaptive Nexus programming.

Annette Wächter-Schneider,

Program Director and Deputy Secretary General
at Malteser International

[Malteser International | For a Life in Health and Dignity](#)

6. BMZ Strategy on Transitional Development Assistance, p.14, 5.4 "The aim is to strengthen the population and local structures so as to resolve conflicts peacefully at the local level and close to the target groups, thus preventing new conflicts from arising."

7. <https://www.malteser-international.org/en/our-work/africa/dr-congo/improved-living-conditions-for-south-sudanese-refugees.html>

WORKING IN THE TRIPLE NEXUS – A REFLECTION FROM SWEDEN

THE ISSUE

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



Team at a Completed Water Yard - ©: Paul Hayes (IAS Niger)

Reflections on the Swedish government position on the Triple Nexus in this article have been based on the Government of Sweden's Strategy for Sustainable Peace 2017 – 2022, Sida's Guidance Note on the Triple Nexus, and an interaction with a key contact person at Sida (Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency).

The Sida strategy highlighted some key words like speed, flexibility, and calculated risk-taking as being crucial for the effective contribution by actors in the prevention of armed conflict, strengthening conflict management and peacebuilding. This is quite impressive and, as an encouraging part of the process there have been deliberate steps taken by the implementers of the strategy to see this being developed further. Efforts have been made to increase the internal collaboration between the respective desks focussing on humanitarian, development and peace actions.

In Sida's guidance note there is a reflection on the small "p" and the big "P" when referring to peace⁸. Listening to CSOs, one realises that a lot is already happening around the "p" and it seemed strange to some that it would still cause so much confusion. It was indicated

by Sida that the guidance note is considered as one step to encourage better coordination within Sida, but also a political signal. At the same time there is an acknowledgement that while coordination is big both internally and among implementing actors, it requires resources and active engagement by Sida colleagues in the countries. Giving an example of an effective nexus approach, reference was to the work in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), where Sweden is leading the Nexus donor group and has one full-time staff focusing only on this. Sida also indicated that the Swedish Foreign Ministry and political secretaries in the embassies mostly focus on the big "P". This focus is largely through the political engagement with actors involved in peace keeping, including funding of (and participation in) UN peace-keeping missions. Furthermore, Sida states that local organisations are key in the realisation of the triple nexus approaches and emphasises the need of building strong partnerships.

FUNDING SILOS

Several actors, both from the donor side and the CSO side have observed that there is continued categorisation

8. <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/humanitarian-development-collaboration/issue-paper-exploring-peace-within-humanitarian-development-peace-nexus-hdnpn/>

of funding channels as “humanitarian”, “development”, etc. By the nature of the guiding principles for these different funding mechanisms, limitations and restrictions emerge when the nexus question comes up. This is a discussion that has taken place for quite a while now, and it is necessary to get serious about the way forward in resolving the “silos”.

A question related to the funding silos is whether donors are willing to broaden the perspective on the fact that many CSOs are multi-mandate and recognise that there is a possibility of an actor to comprehensively work with triple nexus approach. Another topic that keeps popping up is that of collaboration and how to improve it, as many actors have already collaborated on the ground in programming, sometimes through the cluster coordination mechanism, and in different networking setups.

Discussions in various CSO networks in Sweden have also tried to capture the sentiments and practices of network members when it comes to the triple nexus. Both members of the Swedish Network for Humanitarian Actors (SNHA) and the Swedish Network for Resilience have expressed their engagement in nexus approaches in one form or another. It has been expressed that the peace factor is crucial in implementing any activities, to the effect that even though an organisation might not be termed as being a “peace actor”, the applications of principles like the “Do No Harm”, and deliberate efforts to ensure that social cohesion is considered in project design cannot be ignored. Several CSOs contacted during the writing of this article⁸ have operations in some of the conflict-prone countries of the world, like Yemen, Syria, Sudan, South Sudan, etc.

“It has been expressed that the peace factor is crucial in implementing any activities, to the effect that even though an organisation might not be termed as being a “peace actor”, the applications of principles like the “Do No Harm”, and deliberate efforts to ensure that social cohesion is considered in project design cannot be ignored.”

LÄKARMISSIONEN'S (LM INTERNATIONAL) WAY OF WORKING

LM International is one of those multi-mandate organisations. In both our development and humanitarian programming, our teams constantly operate with a strong conflict sensitivity approach. With operations in some of the most conflict-prone areas, conflict sensitivity is not an option in programming, but a necessity for successful implementation. To strengthen the work around nexus approaches, a new Unit for Humanitarian Affairs and Triple Nexus has recently been established under the International Programme Department.

SHARING GOOD PRACTICES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The operationalisation of the Triple Nexus approach needs constant learning by both implementing organisations and donors. Some of the key responses on good practices and recommendations captured during the writing of this article are as follows:

- There is a need to search for common ground;
- Complementarity is key in considering collaborations;
- There is a need to ensure good analyses that capture and tackle underlying risks and vulnerabilities;
- CSOs are seeking for clarity on funding mechanisms that would strengthen their work with the “small p” with an understanding from donors that their approach to the Triple Nexus is valid and worth investing in extensively;
- Both donors and major international organisations need to recognise the important role of “smaller” CSOs and put in place systems that will ensure that these are not victimised by the confusion in the terminology and the lack of clarity in funding mechanisms.

Swedish CSOs continue to engage in discussions to clarify their positions and operationalisation of the Triple Nexus.

8. Plan International Sweden, ADRA Sweden, and PMU were directly consulted for this article and the ideas shared by the Swedish Network for Humanitarian Actors and the Swedish Network for Resilience are also reflected in the article

➤ Real Action with Nexus approaches

1. Uganda

Following the 2013 war in South Sudan, notable among the refugees arriving in Uganda was that they expressed the desire to think long term in the country. Stepping in as a humanitarian responder, we realised we needed to immediately think long term and designed our humanitarian projects with significant “development” considerations, including aspects like VSLAs (**Village Savings and Loans Associations**) in the project planning as we assessed the needs. We also noted that there was a risk of conflict in the settlement among the different ethnic groups.

Projects were designed to ensure that peace building, development and humanitarian activities were implemented concurrently. It was encouraging to have Sida supporting our approach, although it was not “traditionally” humanitarian. This approach, implemented over a period of three years, led to significant transformation and built resilient refugees’ communities. This is one of the examples where an implementing agency can be fully multi-mandated. Collaboration took place to build on specific competencies in a complementary manner. Our approach was not without some challenges in the design stages, as we needed to justify to the donor that this approach should be funded from the humanitarian pot since it had a broader perspective.

2. Niger

The refugee and internal displacement crisis in the Diffa region of Niger saw many responders stepping in to support the affected communities. From our thematic core competence of WASH (Water Sanitation and Hygiene), using an Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) approach, we became one of the key responders in the crisis. With adherence to the Do No Harm principle, we were able to detect potential trouble when host communities were not benefitting from the ongoing humanitarian response. We therefore factored the host populations in subsequent project planning, thereby ensuring that the humanitarian response would not initiate a conflict. Our approach to the provision of potable water in humanitarian situations has always ensured long-term sustainability, effected by the establishment of solar-powered water systems after drilling successful high-yield boreholes. This, coupled with the training of community water management committees and the engagement of designated government departments and officers, is a long-term development approach within the humanitarian response. We are thankful to donors like Sida and ECHO who trusted our approach in this humanitarian response and enabled us to effectively work in the Humanitarian-Development Nexus, but also actively engage within the peace pillar through our community engagement.

Milward Mwamvani,
Head of Unit for Humanitarian Affairs and Triple Nexus
[LM International \(Läkarmissionen\)](#)

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.



“More than a fifth of Finland’s development and humanitarian funding is allocated through the EU. Finland continues advocating the Triple Nexus approach and enhancing coherence in the EU’s external action while respecting humanitarian principles. Thus, Finland’s goal with other EU member countries is to support funding solutions for greater coherence, consistency, flexibility and efficiency. ”

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).

More than a fifth of Finland’s development and humanitarian funding is allocated through the EU. Finland continues advocating the Triple Nexus approach and enhancing coherence in the EU’s external action while respecting humanitarian principles. Thus, Finland’s goal with other EU member countries is to support funding solutions for greater coherence, consistency, flexibility and efficiency.

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.

Eija Alajarva
Head of Humanitarian Assistance
[Finn Church Aid](#)

HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE IN AFGHANISTAN: HOW WILL NGOs WORK UNDER THE NEW REGIME?

VIEWS FROM THE FIELD

On 15 August, 2021, with the official collapse of the Islamic Republic of the Government of Afghanistan (GoA) combined with the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan's (IEA) takeover, the people of Afghanistan unceremoniously entered a new era of uncertainty and even more complexity that challenges their everyday life. Approximately four months into the IEA's regime, just some of the drastic consequences from political uncertainty, drought, widespread unemployment, and imminent economic collapse that the Afghan people face include:

- near universal poverty (95-97 percent) by mid-2022 (UNDP Afghanistan).
- escalating hunger for more than half the country, with a projected 22 million people in crisis or emergency levels of food insecurity next year ([Afghanistan IPC Acute Food Insecurity Analysis \(October 2021\)](#)).
- mounting protection risks for more than 16 million people (Afghanistan Protection Analysis Update, October 2021). Despite IEA assurances, as women experience a rollback on their rights, they have reduced access to life-saving and/or essential services.
- a growing struggle to meet basic needs, and so they resort to negative coping mechanisms such as borrowing money, child labour, early marriage, and selling assets.
- rising concerns around safety and rights for minorities, women, and other groups including human rights defenders, GoA employees, and journalists (Afghanistan Protection Analysis Update).
- impending collapse of basic services such as health and education.

With humanitarian needs growing at an alarming rate, and more than 24 million people in need of assistance next year, NGOs must deliver life-saving and enabling assistance – and quickly. With all eyes on them, NGOs must not only grapple with the vast numbers of people in need, but do so despite overwhelming hurdles, including:

- acts of violence and/or threats toward humanitarian staffs and assets – which saw a 230 percent increase in July-September when compared to April-June 2021 (Humanitarian Access Group quarterly report).
- unclear policies and varied enforcement from various IEA authorities – particularly around women's full participation in the humanitarian response, NGOs safety, and unfettered access to people most in need.
- previous bureaucratic and administrative impediments continue: interference in recruitment, influence on needs assessments and beneficiary selection, and delays/manipulation regarding project approvals.
- loss of national staff members – particularly senior, experienced staffs and/or women – through evacuation to other countries.
- a banking and cash liquidity crunch that impacts NGOs' ability to access cash. Limited funds impact the ability to deliver a rapid humanitarian response at scale. NGOs often do not, for example, have access to sufficient funds to pay staff salaries and procure needed items and services.
- sanctions affect organisations' ability to work – even causing confusion for NGOs on whether they can to transfer tax withholding payments (e.g., income taxes) or pay their utility bills to the IEA regime.
- pending back payments of World Bank-funded national development programs is forcing national NGOs to reduce operations, deal with security threats for non-payment of salaries and vendors, and face potential closure.

To better address the needs in Afghanistan and ensure that they are able to stay and deliver a safe and equitable response across the country, NGOs require swift action from different actors, including:

- increased funding that 1) is longer-term and flexible to enable NGOs to quickly adapt programming to a rapidly changing country context, 2) supports increased operational costs, and 3) re-invests in NGOs' national staffs.

- a humanitarian exemption to the UN 1988 sanctions regime, which should clarify that any sanctions of individuals do not apply broadly to the IEA de facto government, that it is impossible for NGOs to eliminate all risks of aid diversion, and that these risks must be managed in coordination with NGOs.
- safe, efficient, and reliable financial channels with international partners, financial institutions, and NGOs so that they can quickly access funds and sustain humanitarian operations.
- advocacy for World Bank direct disbursement to NGOs regarding pending payments, and continued financial support from all donors for activities that sustain basic services in Afghanistan, particularly health and education.
- continued engagement with the IEA to hold them accountable for their commitments to protection of life, property, rights, and unimpeded access to humanitarian workers (e.g., [letter to the UN's Under Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs](#)); engagement should advocate for sustained access of all Afghans to critical assistance.
- a coordinated approach among donors that includes strong accountability mechanisms on how humanitarian partners meaningfully involve affected people in decision-making regarding the humanitarian response in Afghanistan.
- establish a monitoring and resolution mechanism that has a joint UN/IEA/NGO structure; also mentioned in the letter to UN's Under Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs.

Give all of the above challenges, it is crucial that all actors maintain a constant and consistent dialogue with the IEA authorities at all levels, discuss and train on humanitarian principles, standards, and our Joint Operating Principles in Afghanistan, and hold the IEA accountable for its verbal and written commitments.

This article attempts to cover key information on needs, challenges, and solutions, but it was not possible to discuss everything. What is crucial now, however, is that the solutions are immediate. Afghanistan and its people do not have years to wait.

Lisa K. Piper

Director

Agency Coordinating Body
for Afghan Relief & Development
[ACBAR](#)

Interview with Sonya Reines-Djivanides

Executive Director, EPLO

VIEWS ON THE EU



➤ **EPLO** is the independent civil society platform of European NGOs, NGO networks and think tanks which are committed to peacebuilding and the prevention of violent conflict.

1. As co-manager of the Civil Society Dialogue Network (CSDN), together with the European Commission (EC) and the European External Action Service (EEAS), how have you seen the discussions among civil society actors and EU policy makers around peace and conflicts evolving over the years?

The CSDN is a mechanism for dialogue between civil society and EU policymakers on peace and conflict. Its overall objective is to enhance the EU's and civil society (CS)'s capacities to anticipate, prevent and respond to violent conflict and crises, and to support conflict-affected countries in building peace. Over the years, we have seen an increasing diversity of EU actors involved in CSDN meetings. I believe this is hugely important because conflict prevention is not only carried out by a division in the EEAS – it should instead concern everybody, as it provides essential tools to be able to respect the Do No Harm principle and to maximise various actors' positive impact on peace dynamics.

There is also more diversity in the issues we are addressing – for example with respect to discussing issues relating to illicit economies, cultural heritage, and climate change, but also with respect to integrating gender dynamics in a cross-cutting manner in all discussions. We have invested a lot of effort in developing this aspect; it is of course not just about the gender of participants but about asking the right questions and integrating them in agendas. Another interesting aspect of the mechanism is that it is a partnership: it is not only about what is useful to the EU but also about how it benefits civil society actors, as it helps strengthen their engagement with the EU on peace and conflict issues. Thanks to the CSDN, we are now able to offer a training seminar twice a year to civil society actors on how to do peacebuilding advocacy towards the EU.

2. Among other objectives, EPLO wants the EU to recognise the crucial connection between peacebuilding, the eradication of poverty, and sustainable development worldwide and the crucial role NGOs have to play in sustainable EU efforts for peacebuilding, conflict prevention, and crisis management. Based on your experience:

a. Do you think the EU is making progress in these areas?

The EU has been working on the implementation of the triple (Humanitarian-Development-Peace) nexus across a variety of countries, including in six pilot countries: Chad, Iraq, Myanmar, Nigeria, Sudan and Uganda. We have seen a number of positive developments in the EU's implementation of the nexus, but of course some challenges remain. In terms of progress, we have seen a growing recognition of the value of joint conflict analysis involving actors from the three pillars of the nexus, as developing a shared understanding of a given context is extremely important in designing and implementing comprehensive responses. There is also an increasing willingness to engage with CS actors across the nexus, for example as part of conflict analysis and to inform programming. As part of these efforts, the EU is trying to engage more directly with civil society actors at the local level, including to develop and support community-driven interventions – although this can remain challenging. The EU has also been expanding the thematic areas of focus it is looking to address through a nexus approach, including in relation to education, natural resources management, environmental restoration, health issues, etc.

b. Do you see the new Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe (NDICI-GE) and Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) reflecting this interconnected approach?

There are some encouraging elements in the new NDICI-GE. Previously, peacebuilding actions were funded in particular through the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace, which was evaluated very positively. Some of the promising elements in the NDICI-GE include strengthened provisions relating to gender, engaging with civil society and conflict sensitivity (e.g. the requirement under article 12, paragraph 2(b) to carry out conflict analysis to ensure that programming is conflict-sensitive). However, how these elements will be implemented is still to be determined – e.g. who is involved in conflict analyses and how the analyses are used to inform actions and programming, how budgets are used, etc. We will monitor closely the implementation of the instrument and the use of the MFF.

3. When speaking about the “peace” component of the triple nexus approach, there is still a certain unclarity to what it exactly refers and how the EU and Member States (MS) will concretely operationalise it. Based on this, what is, in your opinion, the concept of “peace” that the EU and its MS should promote in a triple nexus approach?

It should be very clear that we are referring to peacebuilding and conflict prevention, carried out by civilians. It is particularly important to be careful in this regard as the language of ‘peace’ is unfortunately being adopted by some actors to refer to securitised / militarised approaches. It is easy for actors across the nexus to be associated with military actions carried out by international actors, and this has contributed to putting the lives of humanitarians in danger across the world, with increasing numbers of aid workers being the targets of violent actions.

Our understanding of the peace component of the nexus involves that engagements across the nexus should follow a people-centred approach, integrating human security at their core and being driven by local needs and initiatives. Engagements should also be conflict-sensitive, to Do No Harm and to maximise positive impacts on peace and conflict dynamics whenever possible. It is also important to push back against shrinking civic spaces for civil society, and to promote inclusive governance and accountability. We are not advocating for mandates to

be erased or mixed, as people across the nexus have diverse roles to play – but we are all intervening in the same places for longer than expected and we should seize on opportunities to maximise our positive impacts and to help populations transition out of conflict cycles.

4. What would you see as main challenges and limits of this triple nexus approach?

There is a need to provide more resources and training to the actors tasked with implementing the nexus (whether in EU delegations or CS organisations) – for example, despite the growing recognition of the need to carry out conflict analysis, implementers often lack resources to do so adequately. Funding streams should also be sufficiently flexible and integrated to allow all partners, including CS, to carry out nexus actions and to adapt them to changing contexts. Finally, it is also necessary to continue promoting the right understanding of the peace component of the nexus in a variety of fora.

5. In the humanitarian sector the triple nexus is sometimes perceived as a threat to principled humanitarian aid, as it could bring to a politicisation and instrumentalization of humanitarian aid. From your perspective, how could this be avoided?

Whenever there is an unclear or difficult situation on the ground, it should be highlighted and brought up to the attention of the policy hubs in Brussels, Washington, Geneva and the capitals of EU MS. At the European level, the political discourse and investments are primarily focused on foreign security and short-term approaches. It is important to embrace and promote (with donors and partners, in capitals and on the ground) an understanding of the peace component of the nexus that is based on (civilian) peacebuilding and conflict prevention rather than on State-centric, ‘hard security’ approaches.

Actors across the nexus have a lot to gain from the inclusion of the peace component, particularly around issues like Do No Harm and conflict sensitivity, and ensuring the sustainability of engagements. As with any type of engagement, humanitarian actions have an impact on power dynamics within the contexts where humanitarians are operating, and it is important to understand, anticipate, analyse and monitor these impacts. Peacebuilders have expertise to share on ensuring the conflict sensitivity of engagements and avoiding unintended negative consequences – including with respect to the possible instrumentalization of aid. If information is

jointly understood, particularly through joint conflict analysis processes, this also allows actors across the nexus to work together better. In addition, the integration of the peace component involves supporting actions that contribute to the resilience of populations whenever possible, and addressing the root causes of the conflicts that are behind a significant proportion of humanitarian emergencies.

Overall, integrating the peace component is essential to better understand the needs and support the efforts of the communities and local actors that we are trying to help, and to break off the logic of working in silos in order to address their human security in a more comprehensive and sustainable manner. Understood to refer to conflict prevention and peacebuilding, the peace component therefore helps to strengthen the positive impact of humanitarian aid and to protect it against the risks you highlight.

6. How important is the context-specificity of the nexus from a peace perspective?

Any type of engagement should be adapted to local realities: it is the only way to operate with a Do No Harm approach and to have a positive impact. This need to adapt to specific contexts is at the core of the conflict sensitivity principle. There are lessons learned and best practices that can be identified from experiences in implementing the nexus in different countries, but any individual engagement, including any effort to implement the nexus, must be tailored to the context where actors are looking to intervene. In addition, there can sometimes be a disconnect between policies and their implementation – and the more we consider implementation as we shape our approach, the stronger its impact may be.

Interviewed by Roberta Fadda, Francesca Giubilo
25 November 2021

The European Humanitarian Forum (EHF): A key moment to influence EU decision-makers

The European Humanitarian Forum (EHF), foreseen by the EC's Communication on Humanitarian Action, will take place from 24 to 26 January 2022, in Brussels. Currently, it is planned in a hybrid format.

The main objective of the Forum is to foster a strategic dialogue on the main humanitarian policy issues, bringing together a large spectrum of stakeholders: EU and non-EU humanitarian bodies, UN agencies, NGOs, the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement, international financial institutions, academics, think tanks, local responders and people affected by humanitarian crises.

The Forum will serve as a platform for European political decision-makers and the wider humanitarian community to identify solutions and improve modalities of action.

On 23 November, the first warm-up webinar, the 'Partnership 2021 Webinar', organised by DG ECHO with support of VOICE and the Red Cross EU Office draw a state of play after the first year of the new Humanitarian Partnership which followed the former Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA). Bringing together DG ECHO and its certified NGO and Red Cross partners, the webinar fostered a fruitful technical exchange on some of the key current priorities (including new environmental requirements and first lessons learned from the Pilot Programmatic Partnerships).

VOICE co-organised the Preparatory webinar on Climate (see below) and is working intensely to influence and shape the High-level panel sessions to make sure that the voices of humanitarian NGOs are heard, especially the High-level panel on Hunger & Conflict.

The humanitarian NGOs' perspective on climate resilience: We need to act now!

Climate change, together with Conflict and the Covid-19 pandemic (the three Cs), is one of the main drivers of humanitarian needs. The most vulnerable and marginalised communities, who have historically contributed the least to climate change, are the hardest hit.

Humanitarian NGOs are working to deliver life-saving aid, contributing to enhancing resilience in climate-affected communities through prevention measures and anticipatory actions.

To raise awareness on the need of the European Union (EU) and its Member States (MS) to step up efforts to address the climate crisis and its effects, VOICE launched a position paper outlining the key role of humanitarian

NGOs in addressing climate change and environmental degradation and setting clear recommendations for the EU and its MS on how to enhance climate resilience:

1. Step up efforts to scale up climate finance aimed at building climate resilience.
2. Ensure climate measures include locally led adaptation actions and prioritise vulnerable and marginalised people, especially women and girls.
3. Enhance strong collaboration with other actors to promote climate resilience.

The Position Paper was launched at the European Humanitarian Forum Preparatory Webinar on Climate "Tackling the humanitarian consequences of climate change: Scaling up anticipatory action" on 14 December. This warm-up webinar was jointly co-organised with DG ECHO, Anticipation HUB and France.

More funds to communities in need: Increased Humanitarian aid budget line in the EU annual budget 2022

Thanks to joint advocacy efforts, at Brussels and at national level with our VOICE members, the VOICE network is happy to see that the EU Humanitarian budget line was finally increased by €211 million Euros compared to the initial EC's Draft budget, bringing the overall amount for Humanitarian aid to €1.8 billion Euros for 2022.

In 2022, 274 million people will need humanitarian assistance and protection (GHO 2022). As the gap between the needs and the funds is dramatically growing, securing a robust EU budget for 2022 was one of the network's main advocacy goals.

Indeed, on 15 November 2021, the Council of the EU and the European Parliament (EP) finally agreed on the EU's annual budget for 2022, setting total commitments at €169,5 billion and payments at €170,6 billion.

The Council of the EU unanimously adopted this agreement on 23 November, shortly followed by the EP, which adopted the budget in Plenary seating on 24 November.

In 2022, VOICE will continue to advocate for quality funding to address the growing humanitarian needs.

Influencing the European Parliament report on new orientations for the EU's humanitarian action

VOICE has been very active in influencing the European Parliament (EP)'s own-initiative report on new orientations for the EU's humanitarian action, which intends to wrap

up the policy reform process started with the European Commission's Communication on the EU's humanitarian action: new challenges, same principles, published on 10 March 2021.

This marked the first of three European policy orientations on humanitarian action. The Communication sets out several key objectives to address growing humanitarian needs and to support a better enabling environment for the delivery of principled humanitarian aid.

The document was shortly followed by Council conclusions, issued in May 2021.

On December 2021, the EP Plenary adopted the report, including many amendments suggested or supported by VOICE. Among others:

- an increased, flexible, predictable, and timely humanitarian funding, which is suited to local contexts, needs-based and people-centred;
- the enhancement of harmonisation and simplification of donor proposal and reporting requirements for NGOs;
- the development of an ambitious European localisation policy, notably supporting women-led initiatives.
- the need to ensure respect of humanitarian principles when implementing the nexus approach, which should strengthen resilience, promote sustainable responses, and build on NGOs practical experience.

VOICE MEMBERS 2021

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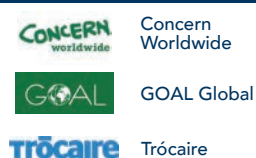
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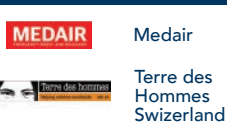
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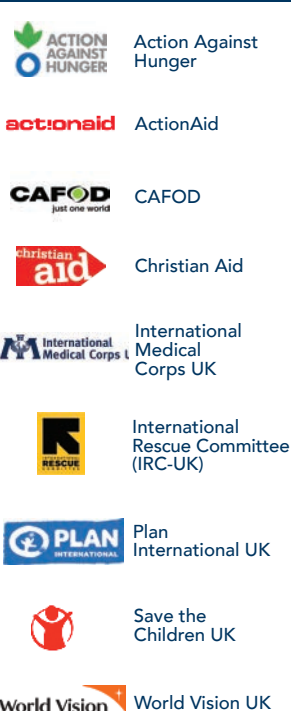
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SWITZERLAND



UNITED KINGDOM



86 members
19 countries



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VOICE is the network of 86 European NGOs promoting principled and people-centred humanitarian aid. Collectively, VOICE aims to improve the quality and effectiveness of the European Union and its Member States' humanitarian aid. The network promotes the added value of NGOs as key humanitarian actors.

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