



Doing Nexus Differently: How can Humanitarian and Development Actors link or integrate humanitarian action, development, and peace?

RESEARCH PAPER

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More than 16 CARE regional leaders from the MENA Regional Leadership Team also contributed to this learning and reflection process, including representatives from the Regional Management Unit and several country offices.

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Picture front page: 2016, CARE WBG, picture header: 2017 Nancy Farsese/CARE Jordan.

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Abbreviations

CI	CARE International
COs	Country Offices
EU	European Union
GBV	Gender Based Violence
Hub	CARE's Regional Applied Economic Empowerment Hub
LRRD	Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development
MEAL	Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
RMS	Resilient Market Systems
RMU	Regional Management Unit
UNCT	United Nations Country Teams
VSLAs	Village Saving and Loan Associations
WBG	West Bank and Gaza
WEE	Women Economic Empowerment

CARE International in MENA Regional Applied Economic Empowerment Hub

The Hub works with practitioners and thought leaders to produce and advocate for practical learning and applied innovation in proximity to our impact groups. In October 2017, CARE International members, the MENA regional management unit, and several country offices supported the establishment of the Regional Applied Economic Empowerment Hub in the MENA region, focusing on three core pillars:

- 1) Ground up Thought Leadership on nexus programming; women's economic empowerment; leveraging market and business forces for social impact (e.g., through resilient market systems in fragile settings, social entrepreneurship); etc.
- 2) Applied Innovation, building on the diverse expertise of COs in the region and beyond.
- 3) Technical Support with project design and capacity building on specific themes (demand-driven).



Executive Summary

Introduction

Two-thirds of all humanitarian assistance is provided to long-term recipients facing protracted crises of a duration of eight years or more. This number reflects the great need to reconsider the longstanding impact of aid and its connections with development and peace more consistently. CARE International in the MENA region, through the Regional Applied Economic Empowerment Hub, aims to contribute to programmatic learning and organizational innovation with regard to specific themes with high relevance for the MENA region and beyond. One of its key research streams has become the Nexus (meaning greater integration of Humanitarian/Development/Peace activities) utilizing different resources and research methods, including an organizational-wide engagement process. This discussion paper is part of this process which has utilized webinars, surveys, global case studies, literature reviews, and summary papers to pull discussions and lessons from many departments and teams of CARE's global presence, including more than 30 global and regional thought leaders.

This paper targets a wide range of global stakeholders of the humanitarian and development sectors with the following aims:

- Present and strengthen the internal and external evidence of and for a *different* Nexus approach that works better for our impact groups.

- Contribute to internal and external dialogue, build collective voice among peer organizations, create linkages with partners (research institutes, specialists in the field) and influence the way the Nexus is, and will be, implemented globally and locally.

Different Approaches

Over the years, two distinct systems have been created that resulted in drastic contrasts between the world of humanitarian assistance and that of development aid. Each had separate funding resources and streams, different authorization procedures and management styles, various implementation cycles and different evaluation and research processes. However, an increasing number of researchers and, most importantly, practitioners realize that these artificial distinctions do not serve our target groups who have holistic needs and find themselves often over long periods of time in humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding categories. A much more effective and impactful way of connecting our actions is needed to reach better results but also to deal with limited organizational capacity and reduced resources.

Initial attempts of integration focused on better streamlining linear/sequential attempts of relief and development (e.g. in LRRD). However, the Contiguuum concept established that the cycles of relief and development are NON-linear and can happen simultaneously, in reverse and in different areas/

sectors of the same country at the same time. This understanding remained crucial in the approaches that followed, recognizing the different “stages” of relief, rehabilitation, early recovery, development, peacebuilding and stabilization are highly interrelated on the ground. Previously, this did not lead to a great deal of organizational restructuring, adjustments of funding streams, or changes in roles of program (and support) staff. However, the current discussions (picking up after initial piloting and reforms at both EU and UN level from 2016 on) around the Double (and Triple) Nexus have often much more far-reaching consequences for the organizational structure and business models needed for implementation than previous approaches.

Review of evidence from the ground shows that many country teams are already connecting and integrating humanitarian action with development goals. A wide range of examples show opportunities such as VLSAs that integrate social cohesion while addressing both short and long-term community needs. Other examples show the creation of community-led hubs that promote socio-economic development while responding to urgent needs, the acceleration of social enterprises that address social issues, the integration of women’s rights in refugee support programs, and the stimulation of markets through innovative cash and voucher services, to name a few. The Nexus discussion can be greatly enriched by reflecting on these examples more systematically and utilizing them to overcome its challenges and pitfalls. It is the fear of some (I)NGOs that the interests of states and political actors dictate the objectives of aid and development assistance; this apprehension is shared by CARE. Therefore, the Guiding Principles presented in this paper can be used as guidance to address these challenges and take advantage of the potential in the Nexus.

Realities on the Ground

Working in the MENA region comes with specific challenges, especially when we look at the linkages between humanitarian needs, development and peace. Instability and conflict increased substantially in the region in the past decade; this led to massive destruction of infrastructure and assets in some

areas as well as dense flows of refugees and IDPs, and rising levels of poverty. The (political) instability in the region raises crucial questions of legitimacy and accountability when it comes to working with state authorities. The region is also marked by a ‘Youth Bulge’; 31% of MENA’s population is in the age group of 15-25 years but is facing up to 30% unemployment which is the highest in the world. As well as the notion of micro-climates, all of these factors impact CO’s programming. In the context of each country, we can see many different micro-climates of varying social, economic, and political rules. These observations make it clear that no one-size-fits-all framework can be developed to solve the issues at hand. Rather, most importantly approaches should be based on the root cause analysis of poverty and injustice, immediate needs analysis and organizational position and theory of change.

Guiding Principles

The Hub, in collaboration with global and regional thought leaders at CARE, accepts there are challenges surrounding a highly integrated approach (especially a top-down one coming from the global level). Because of this, the Hub calls for developing stronger awareness and a more explicit evidence base to avoid negative consequences of the instrumentalization and politicization of aid, as well as the possible reduction of impact.

Mostly, however, we are enthusiastic about the many opportunities the Double/Triple Nexus offers for greater and more sustainable impact, including: addressing root causes of conflict and inequity; promoting more equitable development; integrating social cohesion and self-reliance; women’s political participation for peacebuilding; stimulating investments in underserved sectors; strengthening socio-economic hubs (e.g. CSOs) that play a role in addressing needs and reducing social tensions.





In cooperation with over 30 CARE thought leaders and practitioners and building on evidence from the research and the field, we want you to join our partnership in presenting, implementing, and advocating for the type of Nexus we want to see in the future – this is what we call Doing Nexus Differently:

- **Localization:** empower and utilize local actors and structures (civil society, the private sector and more) through bottom-up approaches, rather than replace them. Our impact groups and local partners should take the driver's seat!
- **Local ownership and participation:** gives practical and feasible openings at all steps of the project cycle, especially for women, to systematically include the voices of our partners and impact groups.

In cooperation with over 30 CARE thought leaders and practitioners and building on evidence from the field, we want you to join our partnership in presenting, implementing, and advocating for the type of Nexus we want to see in the future – what we call Doing Nexus Differently

- **Evidence-based analysis** informs our design, implementation, and evaluation; makes smart use of analytical tools to get an in-depth understanding of social norms, gender relations, power relations (and how they change in crisis), political economy and conflict dynamics.
- **Politically smart:** our actions should be done in good awareness of the local power dynamics while our analysis and organizational niche can guide how to deal with state actors, while also understanding social tensions and aiming to reduce them.
- **Gender and Women's voices:** supporting real and relevant engagement with all parts of our impact group is crucial (looking beyond the numbers towards meaningful engagement).

- **Resilience** can be seen as a major connecting concept in our programming, including communities' capacities to anticipate, absorb, adapt and *transform* in the face of emergencies or conflict.

- **Adaptive Management** as an agile management approach can facilitate flexible (Nexus) programs, responding to changes and new information swiftly to stay relevant and impactful.

- **Piloting** through e.g. cross-sectoral teams is encouraged to test new (management) structures that enable Nexus programs, when organizational-wide restructuring is not an easy option.

- Reinvesting in **Program Quality** as a key to keep our programs effective, regardless of which approach is taken. Strong MEAL systems are needed to facilitate organizational learning and innovation. High program quality should also integrate all of the above guiding principles in its content, guiding tools, and purpose!

Concluding

The plurality of actors, contexts, and needs involved in this discussion makes presenting a one-size fits all approach harmful. This paper instead aims to join others in the sector in calling for a revision of our current ineffective (e.g., too often top-down or highly separated) approaches to addressing human needs. The sector needs to deliver more with fewer resources, requiring all actors to be more effective in reaching lasting change and ending needs. We believe that a better, integrated approach to humanitarian assistance and development, that also works better for women and girls, is possible and can be implemented at local and global levels successfully.

*Photo header: Syrian women in Jordan—CARE Jordan
Page 5: Female farmers in Gaza - Maxime Michel/CARE
WBG, Participants of a Food Fair as part of the drought response in Mozambique—Johanna Mitscherlich/CARE Mozambique, Community-led socio-economic hub in the West Bank, CARE WBG.*



Introduction

Introduction

During the last decade, approaches that link humanitarian assistance with development aid and peace/security have greatly evolved. To close the gap between humanitarian assistance and development and increase their efficiency, different approaches progressed towards more integration and connection. For instance, CARE International in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) has recognized the need to use more transitional approaches and has documented this in its Regional Strategy which has a focus on Humanitarian Response, Economic Empowerment and Gender Based Violence (GBV). The same intention led to further piloting and innovating with Resilient Market Systems (RMS) in the MENA region where tools were developed to work in fragile and conflict-affected settings with an integrated approach.

These developments and discussions took hold globally when reforms at the UN and EU level adopted the shape of a Nexus approach where humanitarian action and development are integrated to a great extent. As a dual-mandate INGO, CARE is well positioned not only to partake in this discussion to improve the impact of our work on the ground, but also to have meaningful interaction at the global level, stimulate learning among peer organizations, and hold other institutes accountable when making reforms that will greatly affect the future of our work and our impact groups.

Dual-mandate organizations are well positioned to not only partake in this discussion to improve the impact of their own work, but also to have meaningful interaction at the global level and hold institutes accountable when making reforms that will greatly affect the future of our work and our impact groups.

1. Methodology

The Regional Applied Economic Empowerment Hub (the Hub), established in December 2017, aims to contribute to programmatic learning and organizational innovation with regard to specific, highly relevant themes for the MENA region and beyond. One of its key research streams has become the Nexus or integration

of Humanitarian/Development/Peace activities and utilizes different resources and research methods, including an organizational-wide engagement process. This published paper is part of this discussion process, utilizing webinars, case studies and summary pagers to pull discussion and lessons from many departments and teams of CARE's expertise, as described in figure 1.

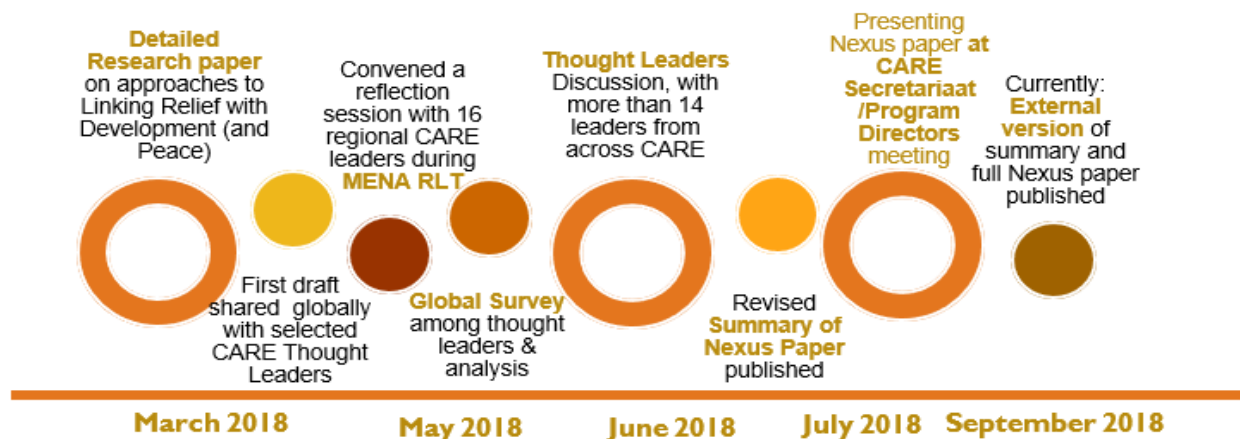


Figure 1 Timeline of the engagement process led by CARE's Regional Applied Economic Empowerment Hub on the Nexus.

Responding to both organizational and global trends, the Hub has recognized a great need for more clarity, discussion and guidance on how to increase our efficiency and impact when it comes to working in settings where humanitarian action, long-term development, and peacebuilding are required. This asks for a discussion, both internally and externally, to clarify approaches to the integration of humanitarian assistance and development, as well as their implications, risks, and gaps. This publication seeks to shed more light on the conceptual discussions at stake, which have been made urgent by the current global Nexus developments, as well as link these with examples of what CARE has already been doing on the ground. In the paper, the Hub also presents a set of key guiding principles with strong linkages to practical examples and evidence that argue for a localized, locally-owned, bottom-up, and impactful Nexus approach. Ideally, this will provide the sector with specific considerations that should ensure that negative consequences of instrumentalization and politicization of aid or loss of impact are avoided. These guiding principles are not only relevant for CARE's country offices globally, but also externally when influencing and connecting with peer organizations and other humanitarian and development actors (civil society, donors and national governments, UN agencies, etc.) to strengthen our collective voice and impact.

This publication seeks to shed more light on the conceptual discussions at stake, made urgent by the current global Nexus developments, as well as link it with examples of what CARE has already been doing on the ground.

The content of this paper will contribute to two aims of the learning process:

- Present and strengthen the internal and external evidence of and for a *different* Nexus approach that works better for our impact groups.
- Contribute to internal and external dialogue, build collective voice among peer organizations, create linkages with partners (research institutes, specialists in the field) and influence the way the Nexus is, and will be, implemented globally and locally.

2. Outline of the Paper

The next part of this paper will briefly present the main ideas of the dominant approaches towards linking humanitarian action with development, highlighting key content and implications, gaps and risks. Next, this discussion will be made more practical by looking at MENA, the regional dynamics and root causes of poverty and social injustice as a case to demonstrate how nexus approaches need to be grounded and adapted to local realities in order to produce sustainable and positive impact.

Finally, in partnership with others, the Hub sets out guiding principles for a different approach to the integration

of humanitarian assistance, development and peace, which can serve as a basis for organizational and sectoral innovation, including formulating position statements, convening more dialogue, conducting more learning and research initiatives, and engaging with global actors.

3. Key Findings

This engagement and reflection process has led to significant findings about where the sector stands with regard to further integrating humanitarian and development work and the strong belief in future opportunities for greater impact and connection.

- Both global and local discussions all show the Nexus is here to stay. All actors realize a closer integration of these activities should lead to more impact, benefitting the people the sector aims to assist more sustainably. It also revealed the golden opportunities (I)NGOs have to include many more local voices, especially women voices, in these discussions.

- At CARE, we collectively realize the need to stress a careful implementation of the Nexus, especially the Triple Nexus. We should ensure that positive opportunities are grasped and pitfalls avoided through a localized definition of problems and solutions and avoiding the use of only externally defined viewpoints on the most appropriate steps forwards.

- Amongst most actors, there exists a lack of clarity on the conceptual discussion behind the Double and Triple Nexus but, most importantly, there is a lack of in-depth knowledge on their implications at practical levels. There is a gap for COs, program staff, peer organizations, and other stakeholders about how humanitarian assistance, development and peace/security can be conclusively linked together on the ground without doing harm or losing impact.

- A consensus among respondents was noticed about the frequent application of a separate approach to relief and development or primary LRRD approach (a linear sequencing of phases) throughout the whole sector. Respondents went on to concur that these two should be the exception as opposed to the norm in the future, especially for humanitarian and development actors with a dual mandate.

- The most relevant approach as selected during the engagement process was the Double Nexus, followed by the Triple Nexus and the Contiguuum approach (joint humanitarian action with development in frameworks/strategies which are not necessarily translated into the business and operational model such as funding, org structure, etc.).

- Various meetings and sessions stressed the importance of placing gender and women's voices at the forefront of our approach to the Nexus and our integrated work; both in our programming as well as in our advocacy. They revealed the niche and opportunity for humanitarian and development organizations like CARE to leverage Nexus programming for women's empowerment and gender equality.

- All of the research processes led to the realization that we should be shifting towards a localized application of the Nexus discussion, avoiding the dependence on external considerations or interest to lead the way. Practically, this implies a bottom-up way of working, utilizing localization, local participation and ownership, and working politically-smart. Additionally, it means integrating women's voices in all of our work and using evidence-based analysis to measure and understand local needs and contexts to base our programming on. It also proposes a reinvestment in our program quality to guarantee that our advocacy strategies and MEAL systems are capable of the learning and implementation required to reach a successful integrated approach on the ground.

- A crucial realization is: one size does not fit all. Instead, setting and context (including organizational position, capacity, niche, etc.) should define the objectives and modes of operations. This means that analysis will show which tools are most appropriate in each context *and micro-context*, making it impossible to set out a "nexus operational manual" that could be used in all situations.

- While discussions around the Nexus concept have been ongoing at different levels, there is added value in adopting a practical perspective looking at cases from the ground to realize the opportunities and recognize implications. This includes and builds upon cases from CARE WBG, CARE Jordan, CARE Mozambique, Resilient Market Systems (which covers both livelihoods and also access to inputs such as food as well as services) and many more discussed in the rest of the paper.

Photo header: Resilient farmers in the West Bank—CARE WBG.

Part I: Conceptual Discussion

Review of common approaches to more integration

1. Two different worlds

Two-thirds of all humanitarian assistance is provided to long-term recipients facing protracted crises of a duration of eight years or more.¹ Currently, 80% of humanitarian needs emanate from violent conflict.² These numbers reflect the need to consider the long-term impacts of aid and its connections with development and peace, while also realizing that vulnerable impact groups will often fall in all of these categories or even outside any of them. Lack of clarity on definitions and approaches, as well as the absence of a common translation of these approaches on the ground, is seen as a major obstacle to the successful integration of the different efforts. A very elementary distinction between humanitarian assistance and development can be made based on the duration of an activity (short- or long-term), the type of activity (service-delivery or building local systems) and the engagement of state-actors (involving local government actors or not).³ The aims of humanitarian assistance are widely seen to save lives and alleviate suffering; while respecting the humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality, and independence. In practice these principles are often more fluid as organizations are forced to prioritize, are limited in their information and resources or need to prove value for money towards donors (which can sometimes lead to reaching the less needy when e.g. more needy populations are more costly to reach).⁴

On the other hand, traditional development work is more concerned with structural changes and addressing causes of poverty or inequality (though it is not always capable of addressing the actual root causes) and broad-based promotion of local (civil or public) structures (KFW, 2016). Development assistance, in all its forms, has been criticized for its ineffectiveness, conditionality and problematic alignment with (unequal) interstate relations like trade and military assistance. These last trends have a huge impact on developing countries (see Kharas, 2007 and Moyo, 2009). A basic description of the common approaches to integration are set out in Figure 2. More detailed information is provided in Annex 1 and Annex 2; knowing that a wide range of actors might give slightly different meanings to these concepts or how they are applied on the ground.

LRRD (Linking, Relief, Rehabilitation, Development)	Contiguum	(Double/Triple) Nexus
Different phases, but better connected	Non-linear and overlapping/ongoing phases, not possible to separate (Mosel & Levine, 2014)	Non-linear and overlapping phases, not possible to separate or clearly distinguish.
Aims to more effectively sequence activities, starts earlier with development	Simultaneous, complementary use of various tools (Otto, 2013)	Context and organizational position dictates which tools will be applied.
No tools for combined analysis or action	Combined analysis and sometimes planning/evaluation; not necessarily translated into an integrated business and operational model for the organization	Sometimes integrated teams, leading to one analysis and plan.
Sometimes more flexible funds allowed for “bridge” activities	Using funding from each other, but limited impact on funding streams	Integrated funding streams, with flexible use of funds for different activities and settings.
Practical challenges: different funding streams, authorization processes, different implementation cycles.	Lack of clarity on concepts and practical tools. Little organizational impact (no restructuring of teams or funds).	Reorganization required at global and organizational level to allow for full implementation.

Figure 2: Summary of the most important approaches to linking humanitarian assistance and development

2. The Double Nexus

In short, the Nexus calls for increased coordination, joint humanitarian-development approaches and a collaborative implementation, monitoring, and progress tracking (ICVA, 2017). The EU, together with the UN as its main supporter, has piloted this in 6 countries since 2016, putting joint analysis and collaborative implementation in practice through multi-year programming, while respecting different mandates (EU, 2017). The Nexus is also a major theme in the ongoing UN reform, aiming to create stronger, highly integrated UN coordination at national country levels through empowered Residence Coordinators and Country Teams. These should take up national strategic planning for all UN action in one country, using “collective outcomes” to set common objectives that all UN actors and their partners work towards (ICVA, 2017). Refer to Annex 3 for more insights on UN reform. Also, within CARE various country offices have been applying Nexus approaches as early as 2012 and even before (more on this in the case studies and below).

Based on the fact that development and humanitarian action are inherently linked both in theory as in practice, there is a practical, conceptual, and ethical argument to have a more effectively combined application of these two (Slim, 2017). This is the same conclusion generated by our programming in the field and the insights from CARE’s thought leaders. Under Nexus programming, this will be reached through calls for more flexible, longer term funding that allows for agile responses to vulnerabilities and shocks while working towards long-term goals, organizational restructuring that will allow for joint analysis, planning and implementation among humanitarians and development actors.

3. Exploring a Triple Nexus

The Triple Nexus includes the dimension of peace or security in addition to the Double Nexus, to form a triangle. The call for closer integration of these three since the 2000s did not happen in a vacuum, but they can be seen in the light of global security/economic/social trends. In many contexts, these three objectives interact over time, both positively and negatively. For example, development can (but does not always/automatically) relate positively to local peace and security, while conflict negatively impacts development even though some actors will likely profit (H. Slim, 2017). This has also been echoed by the Secretary-General of the United Nations General Assembly who called for “sustaining peace” to be considered “the third leg of the triangle” (ICVA, 2017). This does not mean that the three components make up equal parts of any approach/program. A Nexus approach does allow for different emphasises in each context, while different donors/organizations might also stress different components unequally. Several organizations, in particular those having a field presence related to peacebuilding, argue for increased attention for this leg of the triangle and stress the close relations and openings for extra impact.

Different Perspectives on “Peace”

The different mandates, institutional identities, and experience of the UN and World Bank [and others] carry through to their respective approaches to the Nexus’ peace-component. Three broad strands can be distinguished:

- a) **Peace processes** and other interventions in active conflict (where risks of Nexus politicization are high),*
- b) **Peacekeeping** and special political missions (where risks tend to be mitigated by protocols that separate political interventions from UNCT/ HCT work), and*
- c) **Peacebuilding** efforts (a common form of Nexus work where risks of politicization are generally very low).*

A reasonable approach to reduce insecurities and find common ground around the “P” is to be pragmatic and avoid one-size fits all solutions. The benefits and pitfalls of peace-work will look different in different contexts (and conflict-affected environments) and ought to be determined on a case by case basis, while being mindful of the risk of setting negative precedents.

PACE for CARE International, The Nexus - Issues, Opportunities and a Way Ahead, July 2018

It is especially important to realize that the peace-component is being interpreted differently by many global and local actors. The quote from the recent PACE paper on the Nexus (an assignment for CARE) shows the most common approaches taken by global institutes. Plurality of definitions is also seen among European states and the EU bodies. Given the vagueness of the concepts, it is not unseen that national interests (of donor states, for security, stability, limited immigration and others) are added to the list of objectives⁵. In contrast, peacebuilding organizations like Interpeace argue to define the Peace component as a mission to strengthen the non-violent mechanisms in countries for sustainable conflict resolutions. This encompasses not only public services, courts, and police systems, but also horizontal and vertical trust, social cohesion, and a community’s self-reliance (Interpeace, 2016).

While some actors will be, understandably, initially hesitant to engage in their work with the Peace component, there is still a strong case for doing so. There is a wealth of data on the (at times negative) impact that humanitarian and development actors have on local processes of trust, social cohesion and self-reliance (Interpeace, 2016). Several cases show how humanitarian action has occasionally contributed to creating mistrust due to shortcomings in partner selection, fuelling social tensions through harmful participant selection procedures, or undermining local capacities by continuing distribution activities for too long. CARE's practical experience, however, proves that there is an opportunity for positive impact on social cohesion, self-reliance and trust in society, e.g. through VSLA's promoting social cohesion, linking WEE with political participation, strengthening women's voices for peacebuilding, and sensitive partner selection. Practically speaking, many CARE country offices also aim for social cohesion within their emergency programming, especially amongst hosting populations and refugees. Other country offices like Palestine and Syria aim to eliminate drivers and root causes of the conflict and reduce sources of tension.

The lack of conceptual clarity on what the Peace-component contains presents a challenge and leads to mistrust among all actors, prohibiting increased cooperation. It is the fear of some (I)NGOs that national interests of states and political actors dictate the objectives of aid and development assistance, which is also a concern shared by CARE. It is therefore vital for INGOs to stress the definitions they apply and the objectives they are working towards in each context and urge their donors, peers, and partners to be transparent in the same respect.

In Conclusion—from the research and the field

The progression of these approaches has been shaped by sectoral learning and innovations as well as global and regional trends (economic, social, security, technology) impacting the national/global discussions and considerations in HQs and ministries. They all share the vision to improve effectiveness in all humanitarian/development work and recognize the need to link and coordinate more effectively. While they might not call for immensely different things, their general understanding of the challenges and opportunities ahead have progressed. Advancement has also been made in the international community's understanding of the relations between relief, development and peace/security, but serious gaps in evidence and practical tools still remain.

In short, it became clear that initial efforts were focused on streamlining linear attempts of humanitarian assistance and development. The Contiguuum concept established that the cycles of relief and development are NON-linear and can happen simultaneously, in reverse and in different areas/sector of the same country at the same time. This understanding remains crucial in the approaches that follow; recognizing that different "stages" of relief, rehabilitation, early recovery, and development overlap, link, are reversed or happen at the same time on the ground. Previously, this did not lead to a great deal of organizational restructuring, adjustments to funding streams or changes in roles of program (and support) staff. However, the current discussions around the Double/Triple Nexus have much more far-reaching consequences for the organizational structure and business models needed for implementation than previous approaches. For example, this can be seen globally in the UN reform that impacts Country Teams and UN Residence Coordinators but also several CARE COs who have gone through restructuring to allow new types of programming. The Triple Nexus is also a significant change because it aims to include an entire field of peacebuilding/security/stabilization that was previously kept out of the more a-political fields of humanitarian assistance/development (even though connections were acknowledged on a small scale). This addition not only brings many theoretical questions on how exactly program linkages with peace can be made on the ground, but also more political questions surrounding the priorities of funding and programs, selection of partners and target groups and other choices during implementation.

Various COs use different labels to define the same approach (especially regarding Double Nexus and Contiguuum approaches). It is important to acknowledge that most of these approaches fall short in translating these high-level frameworks, brands, and approaches to practical implementation on the ground. This was also

stressed by the different global webinars/discussions and surveys organized during this learning process, which confirmed a gap in documented, systematic learning and piloting around these approaches in the sector. Through engagement processes inside CARE, good evidence from the field was collected that shows successful examples do exist of how COs and project teams are connecting and integrating different activities to reach higher and more sustainable impact for our target groups. This went sometimes together with a strong awareness from donors regarding the benefits of integration/linkages and could lead to CO level restructuring or innovative project design. Good examples of this evolution can be seen in the cases of CARE Jordan (page 15) and CARE WBG (page 16) where a long-term program approach and integration was made relevant to the specific contexts based on careful analysis and in alignment with CARE’s programmatic priorities, impacting all staff positions and country-wide programs.

Several teams have been piloting with combined activities, such as VLSAs that integrate social cohesion while addressing both short- and long-term community needs, the development of community-led hubs for socio-economic development which also respond to urgent needs, market based approaches and acceleration of social enterprises which are flexible and responsive to address immediate and longer-term needs, integrating women’s rights in refugee support programs, stimulating markets through innovative cash and voucher services to name a few. In Figure 3, this plurality of integrated activities also shows how they work on all three sides of the triangle even though it does not necessarily occur in equal portions. We argue therefore that integrated approaches are very much possible, but also might look different in each context. All these examples from the field provide us with a basis to further build upon in the following parts of the paper and innovation process. They allow us to construct new ways of working by utilizing such examples in a more systematic way across whole organizations and not keep them limited to selected projects only.



Figure 3 Examples of Nexus programming in the MENA region by CARE International (regional Applied Economic Empowerment Hub, 2018)

Footnotes Part 1

¹ These and other humanitarian trends are discussed in e.g. the Global Humanitarian Assistance Report (2018) published by Development Initiatives available at <http://devinit.org/post/global-humanitarian-assistance-report-2018/>

² These and other humanitarian trends are discussed in e.g. the Global Humanitarian Assistance Report (2018) published by Development Initiatives available at <http://devinit.org/post/global-humanitarian-assistance-report-2018/>

³ This remains a very theoretical separation however that is rarely true in practice. While review of organizational statements shows that most humanitarian assistance comes from actors who state to be purely driven by human needs and development is driven by more objectives (like national goals, economic development, reduction of conflict to name a few); in reality we need to recognize and be aware that any organization or actor will be driven by a plurality of motivations in designing and implementing its programs, including donor restrictions or priorities, accessibility of areas, familiarity with partners/areas/target groups and more.

⁴ For a more elaborate discussion of humanitarian principles in practice see e.g. the [NRC study about ECHO partners in Iraq](http://www.principlesinpractice.info) and their different ways of dealing with the humanitarian principles and more resources can be found at: <http://www.principlesinpractice.info>.

⁵ One example of this can be found in the discussion of the EU’s Emergency Trust by Oxfam (November 2017)



Part II: Context

Realities on the Ground

Putting these approaches to the (Relevance) test

Time and time again, the need is expressed for practical implications and reality-checks for theoretical frameworks and conceptual discussions. It is therefore valuable to place these different approaches in the context of the MENA region to see how the regional trends invite or challenge such a highly integrated approach to humanitarian and development work. CARE has a long history in this region, with a presence of more than 70 years and a growing existence in several countries. Following its dual-mandate, CARE has been working both in humanitarian crisis as well as on long-term development goals. Currently, CARE responds to the crisis in Yemen, West Bank and Gaza, Iraq, and Syria, as well as the refugee crisis in Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey. Especially in countries where CARE had a longstanding presence pre-crisis, much of its humanitarian work can be integrated into or build upon existing partnerships and networks. Gender and supporting women's voices are priority points for CARE throughout all programs.

It is crucial to place the different approaches in the context of the MENA region to see how the regional trends invite or challenge such a highly integrated approach to humanitarian and development work.

The Context in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA)

Clearly, this region presents multifaceted challenges with huge humanitarian needs, longstanding economic inequalities and persistent poverty, as well as a lack of accountable non-violent conflict resolution mechanisms (e.g. responsive and accountable governance services, trust, and social cohesion). While worldwide poverty is said to be declining, the MENA region is lagging in their poverty reduction and economic development. As highlighted in CARE's MENA Social and Gender Justice Framework developed in 2015 and many other assessments, the root causes of poverty and social injustice in MENA include (1) poor governance (high corruption, favoritism, weak/inefficient/unaccountable state sectors, inequitable services and infrastructure, etc.); (2) social and gender norms, especially affecting women; (3) the political crisis in many countries causing clashes, restrictions on political rights, wars, and a significant destruction to livelihood and agriculture resources as well as to basic services (health, water, education, etc.); and 4) a distorted private sector that is not able to generate enough jobs for the youth bulge – also due to poor, enabling environment.

The ongoing conflicts can be considered as protracted humanitarian crises, especially in Yemen, Syria and its neighbors. MENA is currently seeing an increase in the number of overstretched countries (e.g. Lebanon, Jordan) that are dealing with the impact of the conflict inside Syria and other regional tensions. Looking at the political trends, the main certainty that can be noted is that stability has been replaced with insecurity in many MENA countries. While Arab countries have been known for the stability of their regimes, especially prior to 2011, this is currently no longer the case.

In the Arab countries, young people are the fastest-growing demographic. 31% of the population is in the age group of 15-25 years but is facing up to 30% unemployment; the highest in the world.⁶ Unequal distribution of wealth (between village/city and between the poorest and richest) and jobs are of serious concerns for this age group. This is coupled with rising dissatisfaction that reforms by countries have not sufficiently addressed

the concerns for representation, aspirations, and development for youth. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that youth play (and have played) roles as triggers in the transitions/ conflicts that arose in the region. Urbanization is one of the major trends that are fast-coming. This does not only have implications on where most of our impact groups, especially youth, will be, but also has various implications on the sectors they are engaged in.

Besides these demographic and economic trends, natural and environmental challenges are of great importance. Water scarcity, land degradation including desertification, coastal and marine environmental degradation, air pollution and climate change are all major concerns in the region. According to the latest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)'s assessment, the climate is predicted to become hotter and dryer in most of the MENA region, reducing rainfall and increasing the number and impact of droughts. It is further estimated that an additional 80–100 million people will be exposed by 2025 to water stress (World Bank, undated).

In these countries with their specific challenges and characteristics, we can add another lens of multiple micro-climates/micro-systems in each country with their specific social/legal/economic/political/security challenges. Often caused by conflict and power dynamics, humanitarian and development actors need to be very sensitive to the different micro-climates from area to area within the same country and adjust their programming accordingly. In Jordan alone, CARE works in more than 4 micro-systems: refugees in camps; refugees outside camps; Jordanian communities hosting refugees; and communities not directly impacted by displaced people. The same holds true for CARE West Bank and Gaza (WBG); even within the same tomatoes value chain there are at least five micro-systems with different legal, security, and political measures– all in a small country.⁷ The relative teams have therefore been grounding their work on evidence-based analysis and bottom-up approaches to guide their programming (see the text box on CARE Jordan's Nexus programming).

CASE STUDY 1: CARE JORDAN

Since 2014, CARE Jordan has been merging its humanitarian and development activities for both Jordanians and refugees. This new approach required programmatic and organizational shifts, which impacted job descriptions, local partnerships and donor contracts. At the organizational level, some donors provided flexible “bridge” funding and some development proposals allowed for flexible emergency budgets to be built in. In addition, the support systems at the country office level were merged to a large extent, saving resources but improving impact. The teams are exchanging knowledge, learn from each other and even rotate jobs at times to keep staff engaged and informed.

On the ground, a key step in the Nexus shift was the focus on livelihoods, with gradual implementation of economic empowerment activities for refugees through the application of practical tools such as Village Saving and Loans Association's (VSLAs) combined with social cohesion activities for hosts and refugees, vocational training together with small business grants for refugees, and support to community centers. Together these form a suite of social protection products, which can be utilized as part of CARE's ongoing efforts to combine humanitarian action with long-term goals of development, justice, gender equality and peace.

Implications for our programming

The situation in the MENA region cannot be generalized and today's statements will be less valid tomorrow. This is an example of how diverse and dynamic the countries in the MENA region are. The trends discussed here in relation to poor governance, youth bulge, instability, gender restrictions, violence, persistent poverty and unemployment all ask for the most efficient programming including humanitarian assistance, development and peacebuilding. It is clear that these dynamics and root causes of poverty and social injustice should not be looked at as separate issues, but rather as interconnected problems that affect each other.

The context in MENA, especially in fragile crisis-ridden countries and their micro-climates, requires much more agile programming that addresses the interrelated causes and dynamics of poverty and crisis. A one-size framework does not fit all. Rather, approaches should be based on the root cause analysis of poverty and injustice, immediate needs analysis, and organizational position and theory of change. The case studies from CARE Jordan and CARE WBG illustrate successful methods for integrating humanitarian and development programs over the last several years.

CASE STUDY 2: CARE WBG

CARE WBG made a major shift in 2012, from a delivery oriented agency towards a partnership approach that takes a localized, participatory and sustainable method towards the empowerment of our target groups. The team has evolved from using Contiguum approaches to Double and Triple Nexus in the last four years. CARE WBG has used an integrated and complementary view of both humanitarian action and development, aspiring to utilize tools that will build local social and economic structures and use local partners as much as possible.

This changed the way CARE responded to the crisis in the Gaza Strip significantly. During the war in 2014, CARE mobilized mobile health teams, while also rehabilitating local health structures with robust emergency preparedness mechanisms. In addition, CARE applied resilient food market systems approaches to resume food supplies after major destruction and improve food availability in addition to food distributions by CARE or its partners. Besides, the team has been integrating gender equal approaches in all of its work. These shifts also turned around other aspects of CARE's work – for example developing socio-economic hubs that are now capable of serving community needs and responding to farmers' vulnerabilities during droughts or floods, poverty, and social tensions. Almost all local partners (CBOs, localized authorities, local implementing NGOs, and even the private sector) engage in humanitarian responses, development, and even in grassroots peacebuilding! CARE WBG has also been active through its advocacy strategy by joining others to promote ceasefires, enable better flow of material into Gaza, and improve the security situation. Advocacy complements CARE's work; it is a way to continuously address root causes of injustice and poverty (e.g. occupation, access restrictions, ineffective markets).

It is interesting that most of the two-year livelihood/emergency projects include elements of humanitarian assistance, development (private sector development and engagement, entrepreneurship, gender equal programming) and sometimes protection and peacebuilding. Interestingly enough, the same teams play a role during spikes in emergencies as well as in development. CARE WBG believes that Double and Triple Nexus have a significant role in achieving a gender responsive/equal strategy that will ensure women's equal (political/social/civil/economic) participation and contribution at any time.

Photo header: Syrian refugees in Mount Lebanon—Jacob Russell/CARE Lebanon

Footnotes part 2:

⁶ See the ILO reporting Global Employment Trends for Youth 2015, available [on their website](#) (last checked 13/08/2018)

⁷ For example on the West Bank Area A, Area B, Area C as well as East Jerusalem, and Gaza.



Part III: Connecting the Dots

Guiding Principles and Key Messages

Building on the previous sections, literature review, practical Nexus examples, and global engagement with thought leaders, the following key messages are formulated to present the kind of Nexus approach we can all advocate for locally and globally. We all acknowledge that the Nexus is here to stay. Faced with increased needs, limited resources and the necessity to cut down costs, global organizations such as the UN and EU are already rolling out pilots and reforms to integrate humanitarian aid with development, to various degrees. Most importantly, this is how many of CARE's COs are already building and implementing their programs. This paper also acknowledges many examples of CARE's humanitarian assistance already contributing to women's economic empowerment (WEE), longer-term objectives of resilience, food and nutrition security, and gender-equal programming. There are many examples of nexus programming already happening in countries leveraging VSLAs linked with social cohesion, local private sector engagement to achieve both humanitarian and development outcomes, community-wide socio-economic hubs which have been a key mechanism to respond to emergencies, engage in development, and affect the political/security context, to name a few (see Figure 3 above for more nexus examples that have already been applied by various country offices at CARE). The Nexus discussion is not only relevant to MENA but also holds global significance. CARE International has documented Nexus cases globally and Mozambique is a great example of the global relevance of this discussion (see the CARE Mozambique case study).

CASE STUDY 3: CARE MOZAMBIQUE

Mozambique knows high vulnerability to shocks with frequent occurring natural disasters as well as social tensions coming from civil conflict. CARE, also as part of a country consortium, has taken a highly integrated approach where Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) is part of longer term programs that have high flexibility to respond to shocks. CARE Mozambique's recent work shows good examples of the impact of this integrated Nexus approach. Emergency tools could be integrated into existing "development" programs; e.g. in their Early Childhood Development program that started to monitor and address child malnutrition during the worst drought in years. Also, other humanitarian programs continued to address longer term development needs; e.g. in their response to the 2015 drought where water committees were set up and trained to continue to serve their communities and run water facilities over the long-term, as well as promote good water and health practices.

As a dual-mandate organization with a global presence, CARE wants to partner with others in order to influence the Nexus discussions while integrating the voices, needs, and aspirations of our target groups (especially women) and other local ecosystem actors (including local civil society, private sector, and local government). In short, organizations, especially those with a dual mandate, can be opportunistic about the Double and Triple Nexus if certain conditions and guidelines are in acknowledged. To really benefit from the opportunities of the Nexus, we stress the need for a Nexus that is grounded in local realities by using immediate and root causes analysis, mapping and understanding local partners, and a Nexus which uses local responses to local challenges. This means utilizing localization, local ownership, and local participation as core drivers for Nexus programming and not just national, donors or multilateral organizations' agendas. Applying the following guiding principles will bring about a Nexus that should work for organizations as well as for our impact groups. This Nexus will be capable of addressing current needs in a way that uses organizational resources effectively and with maximum impact.

Guiding Principles

1. Localization – grounded in bottom-up approach

Programs should utilize local actors (civil society, private sector, public sector, etc.) with the intent to empower them, not replace them. This does not only focus on empowering local organizations, although a crucial part, it should take into account and aim to strengthen the overall local capacity and mechanisms (meaning from the bottom up) that are responding to crisis and upcoming needs. It also advocates for using local definitions of needs and understanding the locally appropriate ways of addressing them. Based on examples from the field and Nexus cases from MENA CARE offices, localization is one of the most meaningful and impactful methods for achieving impact. In fact, all of the integrated approaches in Figure 3 (e.g. resilient market systems, VSLAs connected to social cohesion, etc.) would not work if they were not localized in a meaningful way; meaning locally defined, owned, and most of the time implemented by local actors. The approach of localization has already been recognized by both humanitarian and development actors in the past few years. It was in a main commitment in the [Grand Bargain](#)⁸, [Charter4Change](#)⁹ and [the Doing Development Differently movement](#).¹⁰ This principle, however, will require a considerable amount of practical learning and documentation of lessons in order to be more meaningfully implemented on a wider scale. Additionally, the Hub believes that localization and bottom up approaches should also be discussed under the Nexus - NOT just in either humanitarian or development discussions in a siloed way.

Programs should utilize local actors, such as civil society, businesses and local private sector, public sector and existing solidarity networks, with the intent to empower them, not replace them.

In the global discussion, the emphasis is often placed on channeling funds through and to local implementing partners.¹¹ However, this is not sufficient. The majority of thought leaders and most practical cases indicate that there can be moments when local partners are politicized or selective, frequently limited in their representation/responsiveness and not reflecting the needs, voices, and opportunities of their target groups (women, small-scale farmers, youth, etc.) at all times. Therefore, donors and global partners need to continuously apply bottom-up approaches to evaluate the capacities of local actors and their responsiveness to

target groups, and ensure our strategies are empowering our target groups rather than silencing them. This has implications for our project design and implementation, but also specifically for our Impact and Learning mechanisms. One example is the baseline/end-line which should be done directly with the impact groups and direct clients, not merely building on partner's information. We should also have mechanisms in place for communities to give direct feedback. When working from the bottom up, it remains extremely important to keep a strong gender lens.

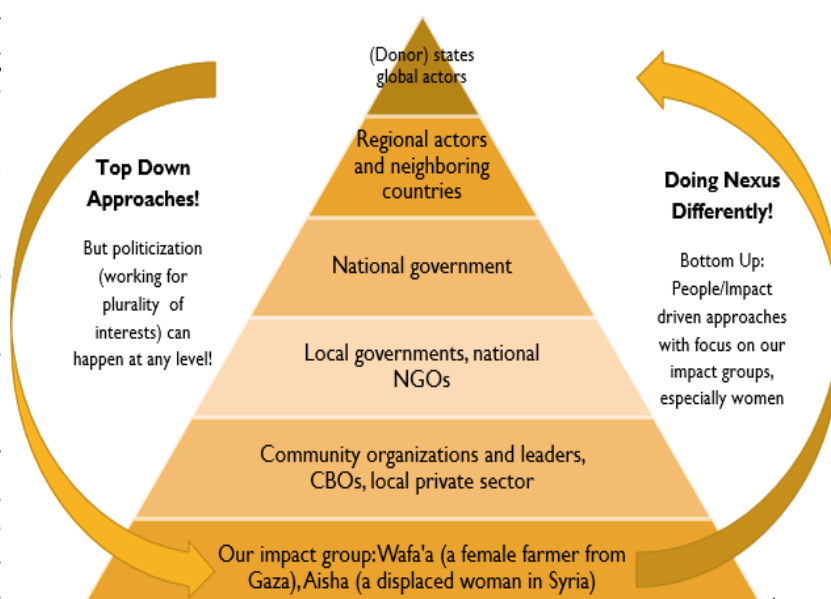


Figure 4 Doing Nexus Differently through Bottom-up Approaches by the Regional Applied Economic Empowerment Hub. 2018

This will allow practitioners to notice when/how male-dominated partner organizations might actually not contribute to gender equal change and how localization presents a golden opportunity to strengthen organizations that promote women empowerment and leadership. This is all to ensure that our interventions are centered on the voices, needs, and opportunities of those at the lowest layer of the pyramid in Figure 4 .

2. Local Participation and Ownership

Our target groups should hold key positions in the analysis and design of concrete project actions. They will be the ones leading their own recovery and resilience. Again, this goes much further than simply implementing through local partners; a beneficial relationship must be established with target communities and involve them in every step of the way. This also includes their participation in the needs analysis, design, learning, adaptation, and evaluation phases. Partners can and sometimes must include unconventional ones to produce locally rooted impact. Examples of such partners are social movements, modern religious or civil leaders, workers organizations or cross-sectoral (business) groups. The role of women can not be stressed enough, and implementors should ensure their full participation. This can include (but is not limited to) ensuring partners build their gender capacities, search for partners with women in leadership positions, arrange participation sessions that specifically target women and girls on suitable (and safe) times and locations, etc.

3. Evidence-based

Any programming should be guided by root causes analysis, gender analysis (including how gender relations and roles are changing under conflict, social norm change, gender-specific barriers to receiving assistance or accessing resources), and power analysis to strengthen our project choices and avoid doing harm by adding to social or political tensions. There are different frameworks of analysis available that should be used when relevant to the local context. Among these are fragility analysis frameworks, gender in emergencies analysis, rapid gender assessments, political economy analysis, and so on. Even when quick action is needed in response to emergencies, rapid analysis tools are available or can be built into an intervention to adjust and respond to new information even after the start of activities. This principle also aims to include the recommendation that continuous research for evidence is needed on how peace, humanitarian assistance, and development interact in each specific context, as their relations are ambiguous and cannot be generalized (Syria is different from WBG, Yemen, Iraq, etc.). Even inside the same country, this can greatly differ as discussed in Part II. In addition to the CO level, this analysis holds importance at the global level; our global advocacy strategies should be based on field cases and ongoing analysis on the interaction of peace, development and aid in each context to advocate for suitable and relevant approaches globally.

4. Politically Smart

We need to complement our approach with a sound understanding of the political realities of a given context. Taking a Nexus approach does not give a clear cut direction on how to deal with governmental and political actors; it is the political reality and organizational capacity that will direct the steps of this approach. Depending on context work can be done with or around state actors; with community leaders, local government bodies or national structures. Only when teams have a good understanding of social tensions they can aim reduce them. This component is popularized in the [Thinking and Working Politically movement](#) that has collected many cases and data on the importance of this lens. There is a need for the whole program design to include the political realities; thinking politically is not only for governance or conflict experts – all technical staff are also required to obtain this mindset.

Politically Smart

Thinking politically does NOT mean being politically driven – this is a fine line for many actors in the field. Concerns to loose neutrality are a real issue. But working on Double/Triple Nexus does not have to include taking sides or loosing independence. A Nexus approach gives many options for different strategies that we can take towards engaging with or avoiding state actors or parties to a conflict. It is required to build in flexibility and allow for different strategies in different contexts in the same country.

Adaptive Management and Complex Systems Thinking in Practice

What do Adaptive Management and Complex System thinking mean in practice? It means that we need to invest in **strong and ongoing analysis** NOT only for immediate needs but also on root causes of poverty and social injustice as well as their **triggers** of change (e.g. youth bulge in MENA, climate change, etc.?) and **trends** (in order for teams to understand the linkages, feedback loops and dynamics of a conflict setting).

Other practical tools for sound analysis that can lead to better understanding and programming are:

- 1) include **political-economy and power analysis** in program designs and frameworks in addition to strong gender analysis;
- 2) ensure that especially the micro-climates in countries **are well-understood** (Syria/WBG are good examples);
- 3) **Do No Harm analysis** is extremely crucial NOT just on the impact of the four humanitarian principles but also in terms of re-enforcing/ strengthening the root causes of poverty and social injustice (e.g. *when engagement with specific actors will be harmful in some contexts.*)

Based on the strong analysis, the organization would weigh in how they can combine, separate, layer or bridge humanitarian action, development, and peacebuilding.

5. Adaptive Management

To deal with the complexity of Nexus programming, we argue that adaptive management should be integrated throughout the organization, including the skills of learning, experimentation, flexibility and responsiveness. Coming from organizational theory, this management approach has previously been integrated in different ways in several INGOs and should be further explored in relation to the Nexus. The value of this type of management are its openness to flows of research and analysis, new information, and insights that impact all levels of management of an intervention (Intrac, 2018). In short, adaptive management is an intentional approach to making decisions and adjustments in response to new information and changes in context (Intrac, 2018). Even though it can be the case, adaptive management is not about changing goals during implementation, it is more often about changing the path taken to achieve the goals. This also means shifting away from Complicated System's thinking towards Complex System's thinking in the

Complex vs Complicated

Complicated systems are hard, highly interrelated, but deterministic – when one follows the linkages outcomes can be estimated to some degree. Complex systems are highly interrelated and impossible to predict. All system parts have own interests and needs that can change outcomes; plus rules in the system are constantly changing!

management of programs and organizations. Complex System's thinking will acknowledge that the outcomes of systems and processes cannot be predicted. It is evident that the various root causes of poverty and social injustice in MENA and beyond are interrelated and make up a complex system as opposed to a complicated one. Even if our project managers do not readily recognize this, we often deal with our environment as a complicated system, with the risk to turn to a manual or an operational framework as if the context and approaches are based on calculated parts with a known set of expected outcomes and behavior. This is not the case and our tools and frameworks should not be applied as such.

Therefore, organizations should recognize the wide range of system actors and stakeholder that can be partners and create a positive change for our impact groups. We should, where relevant, engage with local civil society, women's organizations, different levels of state actors, and, of course, the often neglected local private sector. In addition, we should make constant learning and innovation/experimentation part of our way of working. This is important from an innovation perspective (to facilitate piloting and prototyping) but also because it will inform the team and the local communities about the dynamics of the system and the behavior of ecosystem actors. This will lead to a better understanding for the organization to set program priorities and activities.

6. Gender and Women's Voices

Women's empowerment and strengthening their voice throughout the Nexus in humanitarian action, development, and peace poses a great opportunity for organizations with a strong field presence. CARE's 'Women, Work, and War' study (2016) and many other program/project assessments and evaluations have stressed the interconnectivity between these phases to advance women's empowerment. Many cases have also shown how gender relations and social norms become fluid during crises and emergencies with changing roles for both women and men in conflict-affected settings leading to openings as well as threats to work on gender equal change.

We can view the Nexus in light of a gender equal approach to achieve impact not only for women but also for all others. To further support the development of Gender Equal approaches at CARE, the Hub has been engaged in a learning process with all CARE MENA offices on Gender Equal approaches in Women Economic Empowerment, of which the initial guiding paper is available upon request.

7. Resilience Based Programming

Resilience is a major theme in Nexus programming, including communities' resilience against conflict and man-made disasters. Building communities' and local actors' resilience against shocks and emergencies is seen by some as the strongest common ground between the divergent sides of humanitarian assistance, development, and peace (e.g. UN-Habitat, 2016). Our understanding of resilience goes beyond the traditional definitions of an "ability to withstand shocks" and looks to the capacity of individuals and communities to anticipate, absorb, adapt and transform. In the current time of major geopolitical, social and environmental change, it is not enough for individuals or communities to merely adapt to change. They should be able to transform and deliberately create a new, more desirable system. This concept recognizes linkages between many different systems (social, ecological, technological, and economic) which are all complex, non-linear, characterized by feedback loops and uncertainty. Resilience thinking understands that changes in one of these systems will have an impact on other systems. Transformation in some cases of destruction or displacement is the only choice for a community to survive. Resilience in the face of conflict also includes the capacity to access non-violent mechanisms for conflict resolution and the society's assets of horizontal and vertical trust, social cohesion, and self-reliance.

8. Piloting Nexus Projects through Cross-Sectoral Teams

The Nexus is all about putting non-linear views on humanitarian/development work into operation and breaking the artificial silos in our thinking and organizational structures. Putting the Nexus effectively to practice will require significant shifts in management, organizational structures, funding streams, implementation cycles, and support staff. Through leveraging cross-functional task forces or teams, it will be possible to pilot different forms of Nexus projects when major reorganizations are not (yet) feasible. CARE in MENA is already leveraging this mechanism to advance our Nexus programming and further integrate the programmatic areas within projects and theories of change (e.g. WEE/Food Market Systems/humanitarian responses and GBV). The design of such teams should highly depend on the local context and organizational strengths/opportunities as well as all guiding principles mentioned in this document. The documentation of lessons while working with cross-sectoral teams will be invaluable for the sector to learn from.

Resilient Market Systems

Building on local lessons learned, insights from both sectoral and external innovations and addressing the regional challenges, CARE MENA is a strong advocate of applying a **Resilient Market Systems** approach. This is a systematic and a systemic approach that integrates resilience with a combined analysis of local immediate needs, strengths, root causes of poverty and social injustice, as well as power dynamics, fragility and political economy. This approach is about the livelihood of the people (e.g. farmers), but also the community's access to key products (e.g. food), services, etc.

The emphasis is on root causes of poverty and conflict, building (on) local structures and applying locally grown solutions, but flexible enough to apply emergency tools to meet urgent needs. Stressed are the forces of local solutions; the power remains at the hands of the people and the power/governance analysis informs how other stakeholders like state authorities, private sector and others are engaged. The approach also has awareness of possible micro-climates; parts of society/economy that are governed by different dynamics and acknowledges sometimes different parts of a society are in need of different tools.

This approach does not argue for a fixed way of combining humanitarian action, development and/or peace-building tools in a society, **instead the analysis, and in particular the context and organizational analysis** (looking e.g. at organizational capacity, position and niche), **inform the selection of tools**. In this approach, value chains make up an important mode to work in, looking at the whole production line.

A market system also includes the surrounding enabling environment which is mostly regulated by national and local policies, as well as supportive functions and stakeholders such as micro-financial entities. The market system of any value chain interacts with and is sometimes majorly influenced by social and gender norms, governance, rule of law, power structures and political system, security measures, climate change, etc. In some cases, (like in many parts of MENA), these political systems shape a lot of how market systems function and they are often a direct cause of vulnerability.

9. Reinvest in Program Quality—especially MEAL systems

Being capable to implement Nexus programming will require strong program quality and accountability, including a reinvestment in our impact, learning, and knowledge management systems. A durable Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL) system is crucial, as continuous learning needs to take place both on project level as well as program/CO/organizational level to capture progress on cross-cutting issues like gender, GBV and advocacy. CARE in MENA has learned invaluable lessons in relation to the same and can highlight the following evolving list of principles:

- A strong MEAL system is key to enable agile and flexible implementation, responsiveness and relevance, as well as piloting and innovation. The MEAL system must not only measure impact, but also the roles (I)NGOs and other stakeholders undertook to produce the impact (e.g. full implementer, service delivery, facilitation, ecosystem strengthening, percentage of funds channeled to local partners) and most importantly how bottom-up mechanisms were utilized and integrated (as discussed above).
- Teams should be encouraged and equipped to undertake learning and reflection as part of impact measurement. COs and programs are highly advised to set learning questions and prepare their MEAL systems to answer these community-wide questions in areas such as resilience, how different local actors are co-investing in certain solutions, and unintended (negative/positive) impact on markets, local trust or peace.
- Upgrade our tools for analysis, and offer more guidance on how teams can conduct and leverage analysis that look at the interlinkages between peace, immediate and longer term (economic/social) needs, fragility, and power/politics. The political economy analysis is a case in point. This also means establishing strong tools for gender analysis, especially the ability to capture how women are impacted differently by conflict, how social norms and gender roles change during crisis, and what openings can be found for gender equal work.
- As discussed above, stronger integration of adaptive management, especially at the Country Office level is promoted. Evidence can be taken from cases like the CARE Syria case study below on how different management structures, e.g., those of a consortium, can contribute to agile programming that allows for Nexus approaches. Implementing these steps does not mean introducing a tsunami of operational tools. Instead, it involves working through guiding principles and practical sessions that equip managers with the insights to lead a management shift relevant and suitable for their own context and setting. Detailed operational manuals should be avoided as they are too rigid to promote the kind of adaptive management style that is needed.

CASE STUDY 4: CARE SYRIA

Given the protracted nature of the Syrian crisis, CARE recognizes the great need to move to more sustainable action and planning for livelihoods for the affected populations. In one of its project, CARE Syria has therefore chosen, to complement humanitarian components with resilient food market system approaches. This in turn supports local entrepreneurial initiatives via cooperatives and entrepreneurs, applying market oriented approaches building on market assessments, recovery and rehabilitation of social and economic structures (e.g. roads, markets, etc.) This is to ensure that Syrians do not only meet their immediate needs but to also enable them to secure their long-term needs (e.g. recover their livelihoods AND improve food availability for key food items such as dairy, vegetables, etc.).

In addition, CARE has taken the lead in the Syrian Resilience Consortium that brings together six INGOs working in the region. The Syrian context is still marked by quickly changing frontlines, huge destruction and movement of people, rendering long-term planning very challenging. The Syrian Resilience Consortium has significant learning about how partnerships and consortia structures can be leveraged to enable the design and implementation of Nexus programming in the future – especially if local actors are core contributors in these structures.

- Organizations should reflect more on the meaning of the complex systems thinking for their specific setting. This might mean integrating minor changes in program designs, theories of change, approaches, project management set-up, partners management and collaborations, or scenario building.
- All staff members, including partners, should build their capacities in gender awareness and supporting women voices throughout project activities and inside the management/organizations itself. This in the realization that women empowerment is not just about “counting female participants” or working through a women-led CBO. Taking into consideration that women can also disempower women, the point is to spread the attitude, awareness, and tools to work towards genuine women empowerment and gender equal change.
- Advocacy should be an integral part of our work to influence and connect with other actors at both global level (donors/governments, humanitarian and development actors, UN and EU, etc.) and national levels (peer organizations, UN Country Teams, national donor mechanisms, state actors and other local stakeholders) on the importance of locally owned opportunities for Nexus programming, including the guiding principles mentioned in this paper. MEAL systems and communication capacity should also enable us to use evidence from the field effectively and integrate practical data and stories into our global advocacy/communication.

Photo header: VSLA meeting in Mozambique, Prtic/CARE Mozambique

Footnotes part 3:

⁸ Commitment between the biggest global donors and Humanitarian organizations signed at the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016. One of these commitments was around localization and getting more funding to local/national NGOs.

⁹ Charter4Change became a movement around the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016 focussed on the Localisation of Humanitarian Aid. It is an initiative, led by both National and International NGOs, to practically implement changes to the way the Humanitarian System operates to enable more locally-led responses.

¹⁰ Following workshops in 2014 a Doing Development Differently manifesto was set up to envision a shift among development workers; more information on [their website](#).

¹¹ See e.g. the commitments of the Grand Bargain stating that: “*The Grand Bargain commits donors and aid organizations to providing 25 per cent of global humanitarian funding to local and national responders by 2020, along with more un-earmarked money, and increased multi-year funding to ensure greater predictability and continuity in humanitarian response, among other commitments.*”



Concluding Message

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The plurality of actors, contexts, and needs involved in this discussion makes presenting a one-size-fits-all approach harmful and ineffective. This paper aims to join others in the sector in calling for a revision of our currently divided and ineffective approach to addressing human needs. The sector needs to deliver more with fewer resources, which will require all actors to be more effective in reaching lasting change and ending needs. We believe that a better integrated approach to humanitarian assistance and development work, which also works better for women and girls, is possible and can be implemented at local and global levels successfully. Based on our understanding however, this process needs to be strongly fueled by bottom-up approaches and by voices from the field, especially those of women. There is a need to create systems and structures that will serve communities and lead them towards self-reliance and resilience. What was presented here are guiding principles (see Figure 5) that can steer local, national, and global processes of Nexus programming to come to a new way of working that will serve our participants with impact and efficiency.

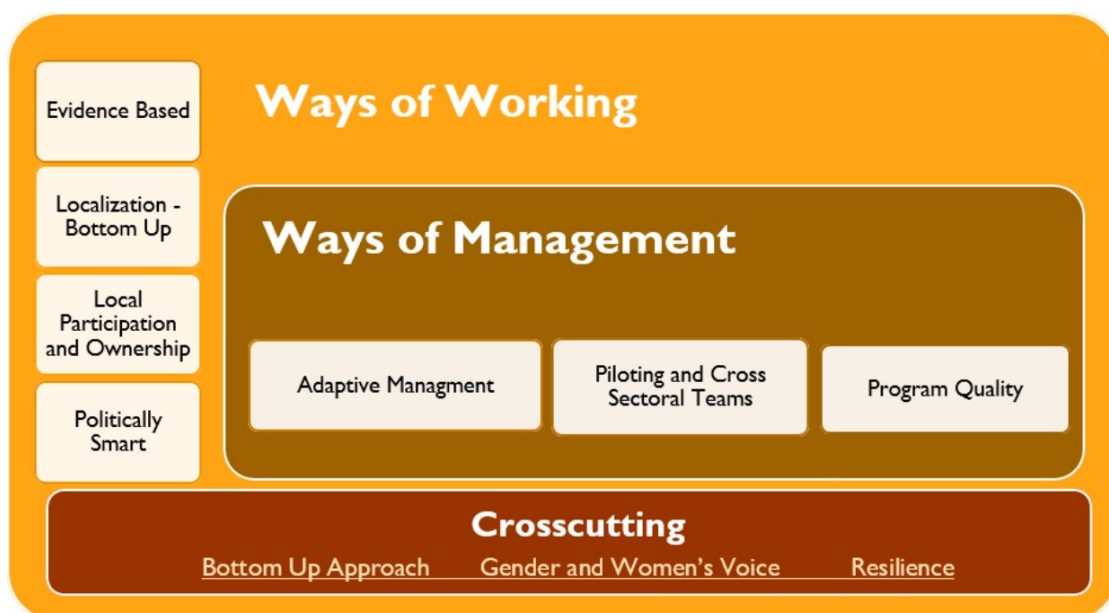


Figure 5: summarizing the Guiding Principles, Regional Applied Economic Empowerment Hub, 2018

Photo header: Community-led socio-economic hub on the West Bank, CARE WBG



Call for Action

Call for Action

The CARE Regional Applied Economic Empowerment Hub, the MENA regional management unit, CARE's thought leaders, advocacy experts, and practitioners, call upon you to take action and join the Doing Nexus Differently movement by engaging in any of the following:

- Contribute to the ongoing discussion by taking [the following short survey with your own views and insights on the Doing Nexus Differently approach](#). Your input (anonymously treated) will be valuable to continue to build a Nexus approach that is deeply rooted in the practitioners' experience and views from the field.
- If your team or project has been learning about how to link Humanitarian action with Development and/or peacebuilding, [please share with us your lessons through this short survey!](#) The Hub is eager to hear stories from the field concerning the implementation of these Guiding Principles and what works or does not work in implementing a locally-rooted Nexus.
- Take an internal learning and reflection process within your organization, strategy, or unit on what Doing Nexus Differently means for your team in light of your mandate and strategic niche/objectives. How can you customize/implement the Guiding Principles with an eye for your specific impact groups; producers, youth, women, girls, refugees? [Share with us your findings and project/programmatic stories!](#)

For more information on the research paper or the engagement process, please contact:

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Annexes

Annex 1

This table provides a very basic comparison of the different approaches, in the knowledge that reality is much more diverse and dynamic. In order to have some clarity, this table below describes some of the key concepts.

Approach	Key documents	Content	Calls For	Implications	Weaknesses	Gender
Traditional Humanitarian actions	See e.g. the Sphere Handbook (available at www.sphere-handbook.org) and other key websites like: http://principlesinpractice.org/ https://www.icrc.org/en/ihl-and-humanitarian-principles	Saving Lives. Limited or no attention for building state actors / local capacity building.	Addressing immediate human needs, no matter where or who. Guiding Principles: humanity, impartiality, neutrality, and independence	Rapid action, rapid assessments. Often through delivery of externally sourced materials, but modes of operations have greatly changed over the years.	Some cases have shown negative impact; creating dependency, disrupting local private sector, short-term impact, ignoring local structures, adding to mistrust and broken social relations.	Often no place for gender in humanitarian actions, or gender sensitive at best. This is in the recognition that humanitarian responses have also greatly developed in more recent years to include gender responsive/sensitive implementation.
Traditional Development	See e.g. Kharas, 2007, Dambisa Moyo's book Dead Aid (2009) and key websites like sustainable-development.un.org	To improve the social and economic circumstances of the world's poorest, most vulnerable people in a sustainable manner.	Wide range of funding modalities and thus of activities. Some work is done through national governments following their priorities.	Too little attention for local structures / capacities and (unequal) power relations. (Otto, 2013)	How to be impactful / effective? The value for money of many funding flows is not proven. (Kharas, 2007)	Separate issue or no issues at all. Again in the knowledge that this aspect has developed greatly over the years, meaning some work is being doing to re- envision gender norms, while other work streams have little attention for gender.
		Different approaches possible, but often stress on top-down (one size fits all) investments	A significant part of money flows go to building public services including infrastructure, security, water/ electricity.	Little attention for risks / disaster preparedness / vulnerability (Otto, 2013)	Conditionality of certain funding streams restriction local development (you buy this from me then I will give you aid) (Kharas, 2007)	
		Different funding modalities (grants, loans, restricted funds) and money flows, either from nation-state to nation-state or through (I) NGO or global institutes.	Other money flows go through INGO working on economic development, gender equality and climate change adaptation to name a few – often working with local partners.	Little attention for local market dynamics and local private sector. (THORPE & IDS, 2017)	Problematic alignment with other state objectives / world structures (e.g. countries in huge depth, combination of loans & grants / trade flows and military assistance) (Kharas, 2007)	

	Around Since	Selected Key Documents	Content	Calls For	Implementation	Weaknesses	Gender
Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development (LRRD)	1980s	(ECHO, 2012; GSDRC, 2015; Mosel, 2014; Otto, 2013)	Seeks ways to combine Relief & Dev Aid. Both are different phases, that are (most often) sequenced after each other more effectively.	Design appropriate exit strategies from aid. (Koddenbrock & Büttner, 2009)	In some interpretations this meant that humanitarian funds were allowed to include more developmental goals. (USAID, 1996)	Rarely organizations could get needed expertise from “both sides” in the project.	No specific attention
			Linking aims to avoid negative impact of aid and break continuous cycle of requiring relief/emergency aid.	(Seamlessly) sequencing interventions. (Koddenbrock & Büttner, 2009)	But very often, donors and organization were not flexible enough to bridge the gap or respond to upcoming needs.	No attention for notion of “build back better” or “preparedness”. Example of ECHO in DRC in Koddenbrock, 2009.	
						When implemented, service-delivery activities often continued for too long, with developmental activities being delayed.	
Contiguuum	1990s	(GSDRC, 2015; Koddenbrock & Büttner, 2009)	Relief and Development are not two different phases but can take place at the same time and are non-linear.	Development activities started soon after start relief.	Strong overall coordination between two different departments.	Challenge of working around or with state structures. How to be effective in absence of effective state structures?	There is little clarity on how Gender is integrated in the contiguuum approach and individual organizations take different steps. (UNWomen, 2014)
Contiguuum			Tries to meet different needs of different sectors/segments of society at the same time.	Combined (by both teams) vulnerability studies implemented.	Combined analysis undertaken, with focus on key causes of vulnerability. Including; Initial assessments of local capacities	Challenges of reinforcing local tensions through selective activities.	Some initial lessons came from UN-Habitat on gender responsive programming in the contiguuum approach. (UN-Habitat, 2016)
Contiguuum			Focus on effectiveness and sustainability; no real changes in organizational structures were made!	More effective and proactive combination of tools.	Reorganization of staff to support the combined activities.	Lack of impact of this approach in the organizational structure and operations; procurement not always capable of doing this approach.	

Annex 1 Continued

	Around Since	Key Documents	Content	Calls For	Implementation	Weaknesses	Gender
Double Nexus	2000s but gaining more popularity in 2010s.	(EU, 2017; Kevin Dunbar, 2016; NGO Voice, 2016; D. H. Slim & ICRC, 2017)	Humanitarian action and development are closely related and should therefore be addressed proactively.	Combined action on all levels; strategic, planning, design, evaluation.	Organizational restructuring; combined coordination but keeping specialization. Staff rotation is an option.	Lack of clarity on what the linkages exactly are between development and humanitarian assistance (as it is also context-specific).	More systematic gender programming is possible (incl. gender equal approaches) through the joint analysis.
			Coordinate humanitarian and development actions to address the root causes of vulnerability, fragility and conflict (thus aiming to end needs) while simultaneously meeting humanitarian needs.	Strategic partnerships with local actors and other stakeholders	Teams with both humanitarian and development experts undertake vulnerability analysis at start of activities. Based on this, together they approve action plan. (see e.g. (EU, 2017)	Lack of attention for protection and security issues according to humanitarian actors. (IFRC) Some concerns from humanitarian actors with regards to diminished attention for humanitarian principles and IHL.	
			Humanitarian assistance and development are non-linear, but complementary and reinforcing.	Resilience and self-reliance are mentioned as additional objectives. (See e.g. (EU, 2017)	Activities should be implemented through multi-year long term programs in which both humanitarian mandates and development mandates are included. (EC, 2017)	Is a 'do-it-all' approach always feasible? Will high-level coordination of all action in a context be possible given the plurality of stakeholders and man-	
			This approach calls for a close integration, not only in projects but also in organizational structure and operational models; impacting all parts of the organization including support staff.	Staff rotation / quick and flexible procurement rules / flexible funding streams that can apply to different types of activities.	In some contexts (in particular in the piloting at UN level) national governments of the recipient country have a large role to play in setting priorities – this state-focus is of concerns for some INGOs.	Will funding streams really be adjusted sufficiently to allow for long-term but flexible programming? Will cost-efficient/cutting costs be driven force or our impact?	

Annex 1 Continued

	Around Since	Key documents	Content	Calls For	Implications	Weaknesses	Gender
Triple Nexus	2000s but gaining more popularity later in the 2010s	(Denmark, 2015; D. H. Slim & ICRC, 2017; WHO)	Relief, Development and security are linked; both on a theoretical and practical level. Relations of influence exists in both ways, both positively and negatively and a context should therefore be viewed in such way (holistically)	Combined action on all levels; strategic planning design and evaluation. Joint analysis with different actors and perspectives	Change in funding mechanisms required. Organizational restructuring required; group different experts together. Reorganization will impact all staff; including procurement.	Lack of clarity on definitions and causal relations. There is no concluding evidence on the connections between e.g. peace/security/development. Does economic growth always cause peace?	More systematic gender programming is possible through the joint analysis (and vulnerability analysis at the start)
			Since relations exist, they should be addressed collectively, or at least impact of all should be acknowledged. .		States and organization group their funding for security/peace/development/relief together.	Plurality of definitions and vagueness leads to fear that national security interests take over the agenda. (NGO_voice, 2016)	

Annex 2

Elaborating on the different approaches to integrating Humanitarian Assistance and Development

1. Humanitarian Assistance and Development Aid

According to literature and common perceptions, humanitarian assistance often does not address the root causes of the crisis at hand (Koddenbrock & Büttner, 2009). This is both their strength and a weakness, as humanitarian programs are quick in relieving needs, but have sometimes less attention for underlying causes of vulnerability. This, together with their general hesitance to include governance actors as partners, makes such programming at tension with developmental assistance. The humanitarian component however is crucial, not only because it brings the focus of “leaving no one behind” (behind fire lines, behind political lines etc.) but also because it will promote the application of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) in order to reduce destruction and suffering. (Guinote, 2018)

On the other hand, traditional development work is more concerned with structural changes and addressing causes of poverty or inequality (though it is not always capable of addressing the actual *root causes*) and broad-based promotion of local (civil or public) structures (KFW, 2016). Some forms of development assistance go from governments to governments, through grants or combinations with loans or trade-arrangements, while other streams are going from INGOs to civil society/non-state actors. Development assistance in all its forms however has been criticized for its ineffectiveness, conditionality and problematic alignment with (unequal) interstate relations like trade and military assistance that have huge impact on the developing countries (see e.g. Kharas, 2007 and Moyo, 2009). One of the biggest challenges of traditional development is that it has not been able to address long standing inequalities and root causes of injustice nor did it achieve inclusive or equitable economic growth.

2. Linking Relief Rehabilitation and Development (LRRD)

The approach of linking relief, rehabilitation and development (LRRD) emerged in the 1980s when practitioners identified a funding/organizational/practical gap between humanitarian assistance and development activities while they were often both present in the same contexts. Both instruments however, involve separate funding sources, different authorization procedures, unlike implementation cycles and evaluation processes (KFW, 2016). A key theoretical challenge to overcome, when working on more integration is 1) the approach to local actors including the state and parties to conflict as well as 2) the tension between service delivery (sourced externally) or building local systems and structures. (Koddenbrock & Büttner, 2009) On an organizational level, LRRD activities face major obstacles in 1) clarity in common concepts and strategies, 2) different funding structure and mechanisms, and 3) nature of (local) partnerships and coordination. (GSDRC, 2015) Most importantly, these initial LRRD activities focussed on sequencing activities timelier and bringing in development assistance earlier (through early recover techniques) to hopefully avoid repeated cycles of humanitarian assistance, but they fell short to recognize the dynamic relationship between the two. Calls for more flexible funding were made, and sometimes humanitarian funds were, infrequently, allowed to include more long-term goals. The table in Annex I elaborates more on the initial content of LRRD practices, highlighting some of its tools and weaknesses.

3. Contiguum; non-linear Humanitarian Assistance and Development

Rejecting the linearity and simplicity of the initial LRRD framework of a continuum, the notion of ‘contiguum’ was introduced that saw the two stages in a non-linear and ongoing relation (Mosel and Levine 2014). It was recognized by practitioners, including by CARE and researchers that the two clearly distinguishable, consecutive phases were artificial: the contiguum approach places the focus on the simultaneous, complementary use of the various instruments (Otto, 2013). It became especially relevant for situations of protracted conflicts and post-crisis situations where the dynamics of a conflict are fluctuating and different segments of the society and population are in different needs at the same time (Koddenbrock & Büttner, 2009). The practical implementation calls for combined analysis, with developmental activities simultaneously planned along with humanitarian assistance. Major practical challenges remained however; prominently a lack of conceptual clarity and a lack of guidance on practical tools. There was not enough evidence on how this approach really impacted a community and they ways it benefited from humanitarian assistance and development support. It is also important to note that is understanding on non-linearity did not lead to major organizational restructuring or changes in funding streams, program support systems like procurement and others.

Annex 2 Continued

4. Challenges of a (Triple) Nexus approach

Humanitarian organization as well as dual-mandate organizations have voiced concerns around the politicization or securitization of humanitarian and developmental activities when a Triple Nexus approach is being applied (Castellarnau & Stoianova, 2018; Slim, 2017). While overlapping objectives of peace, security and development can be found in several contexts, there are other examples that prove the highly political and sensitive nature of “peace”, e.g. in Afghanistan. The integration of three objectives is more problematic in some cases than in others; mixing humanitarian aid with (more political goals of) development and security is less controversial from the perspective of the communities in e.g. DRC, but highly sensitive in Afghanistan and Iraq (Koddenbrock & Büttner, 2009).

Annex 3

UN Reforms and the Nexus

Current UN reforms are led by Secretary General Guterres who worked actively on this since December 2016. The aims are more coherent UN action, more efficiency and better placed to address the high amount of current needs. Some also say: less bureaucracy and more action.

Since July 2017 three main changes are suggested:

1. Repositioning the global UN Development system by creating a new global steering committee with OCHA and UNDP combined leadership. National resident coordinating systems move from focussing on only UNDAFs to more a Country Hub, setting out strategic leadership for countries. This includes UN Resident Coordinators who should take a more senior / leading role on all UN action in one country. UN agencies should report to their own offices but also the UN Resident Coordinator. This aims to close the gap on the ground; in information and unconnected actions between all UN bodies and possibly between partners.

2. Shifting the management paradigm internally, by changing the management culture (including certain administrative structures) to allow for more efficient, agile and flexible management.

3. Restructuring UN peace and security pillar, which is not clearly put in practice yet.

More on UN reform also in the [PHAP webinars on the UN and the Nexus \(2018\)](#)

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MENA Regional Leadership Team, April 2018, Approaches to Integrating Relief and Development, Conference Contribution by Regional Applied Economic Empowerment Hub

Survey:

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