



HEKS/EPER Guidance

# The Triple Nexus in HEKS/EPER Programmes

Strengthening collaboration, coherence, and complementarity between Humanitarian Aid, Development Cooperation and Peacebuilding to reduce vulnerability, better cover needs, and address root causes of conflict.

## Background And Definitions

### What is the Triple Nexus?

The Triple Nexus combines Humanitarian Aid, Development Cooperation, and Peacebuilding elements for every engagement and is applied in fragile and conflict-affected contexts. It stresses the need for collaboration, coherence, and complementarity within interventions and between different actors such as communities, authorities, and between aid/development/peace actors.

#### OECD DAC Definitions

- Nexus refers to the interlinkages between humanitarian, development and peace actions.
- Nexus approach refers to the aim of strengthening collaboration, coherence, and complementarity. The approach seeks to capitalize on the comparative advantages of each pillar – to the extent of their relevance in the specific context – to reduce overall vulnerability and the number of unmet needs, strengthen risk management capacities and address root causes of conflict.
- Collective outcome refers to a commonly agreed measurable result or impact enhanced by the combined effort of different actors, within their respective mandates, to address and reduce people's unmet needs, risks and vulnerabilities, increasing their resilience and addressing the root causes of conflict.
- Comparative advantage refers to the demonstrated capacity and expertise (not limited solely to a mandate) of one individual, group or institution to meet needs.
- Joined-up refers to the coherent and complementary coordination, programming and financing of humanitarian, development and peace actions that are based on shared risk-informed and gender sensitive analysis, while ensuring that humanitarian action always remains needs-based and principled.

<https://legalinstruments.oecd.org/public/doc/643/643.en.pdf>

Applying a Nexus approach thus means thinking of humanitarian aid, development cooperation and peacebuilding in combination, simultaneously and coherently. When planning, implementing, and evaluating an intervention, both the immediate/ emergency needs and available resources and the longer-term needs, resources, and perspectives, including conflict prevention or peacebuilding requirements, are always considered. This is done in close cooperation and complementarity with the respective actors.

Applying the Triple Nexus aims to effectively reduce people's needs, risks, and vulnerabilities, supporting prevention efforts and addressing key drivers of conflict. This requires the engagement of a diverse range of actors, based on their respective comparative advantage, a shared understanding of risk and vulnerability and an approach that prioritises "prevention always, development wherever possible, humanitarian action when necessary". The concept of the Nexus reinstates the assumption that there is a natural time sequence from early response to recovery and then to development and peacebuilding.

Working with a Nexus approach does not necessarily mean being active in all three dimensions in a project, but instead being aware of all of them, understanding how they influence each other and how to contribute to the positive development of all of them. The Nexus requires more cooperation with other actors to respect the three dimensions. It may not be possible to cover all dimensions in one assessment or intervention fully, but efforts should be put into using assessments from others, doing joint assessments and analysis, agreeing on common goals, with each organisation strengthening a part of it.

### Why and where do is a Triple Nexus necessary?

Conflict and fragility pose a major threat to the implementation of the SDGs. Durable solutions to humanitarian crises are not possible without lasting peace and addressing the drivers of development problems. A Triple Nexus is supposed to enhance coherence between the sectors and increase synergies, paving the way to preventing or de-escalating conflict and addressing the root causes of vulnerability instead of the symptoms only. This would finally enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of our work. Although not an entirely new idea on how to improve aid work, the difference lies in a) stressing towards enhancing prevention, b) taking conflict transformation systematically into account, c) deepening understanding of unintended effects of different interventions and last but not least, an attempt to address the aid structure which tends to be divided into silos.

The paradigm of 'No sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development' is enshrined in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), especially in SDG16. The starting point for a broader commitment to the Triple Nexus was UN Secretary-General António Guterres' call for a Sustaining Peace Agenda with the imperative to prevent the outbreak, escalation, continuation, and recurrence of conflict.

The **World Humanitarian Summit** in 2016 and the 'Grand Bargain' were other occasions in which the current aid architecture and the potential of increased cooperation across sectors have been reflected. Subsequently, several multilateral actors and bilateral donors committed and drafted guidelines to implement the Triple Nexus, such as the **OECD DAC 'Recommendations on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus'**.

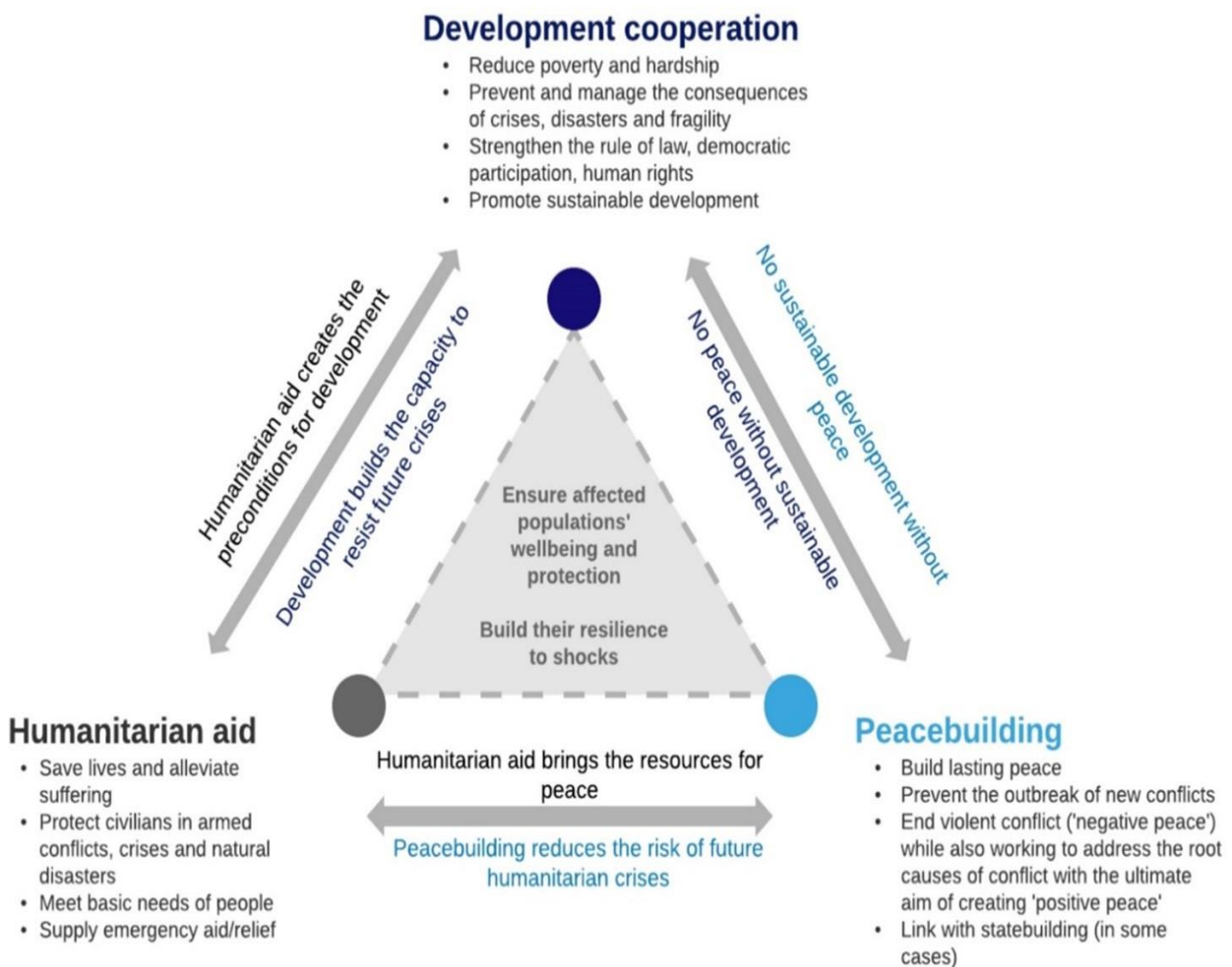
70 % of the countries where HEKS/EPER is active are fragile or affected by a protracted conflict. In these contexts, HEKS/EPER must reflect on how to enable and protect development and peacebuilding gains and enhance the effectiveness of humanitarian aid, thus applying a nexus thinking. The three pillars of the Triple Nexus are supporting each other. In this way, humanitarian aid provides emergency relief in situations of crisis, conflict and disaster – development and peace work address its root causes. Just 'quick fixing' humanitarian emergencies without paying attention to longer-term development that addresses the root causes of conflict and fragility can undermine sustainable peace and development visions.

### Definition of fragility (OECD DAC 2011)

A fragile state has a weak capacity to carry out basic functions of governing a population and its territory and lacks the ability to develop mutually constructive and reinforcing relations with society.

- As a consequence, trust and mutual obligations between the state and its citizens have become weak, with the following elements being characteristic:
- Weak state legitimacy, capacity, and lack of political will to change the situation.
- The state is incapable of assuring basic security, maintaining rule of law and justice, or providing basic services and economic opportunities for its citizens.
- Weak state-society relations and lack of trust in institutions
- Violent armed conflicts, insecurity and criminal violence can be symptoms or reason of a fragile situation.

See more information on the concept of fragility and conflict in the 'HEKS/EPER conflict transformation implementation concept'.

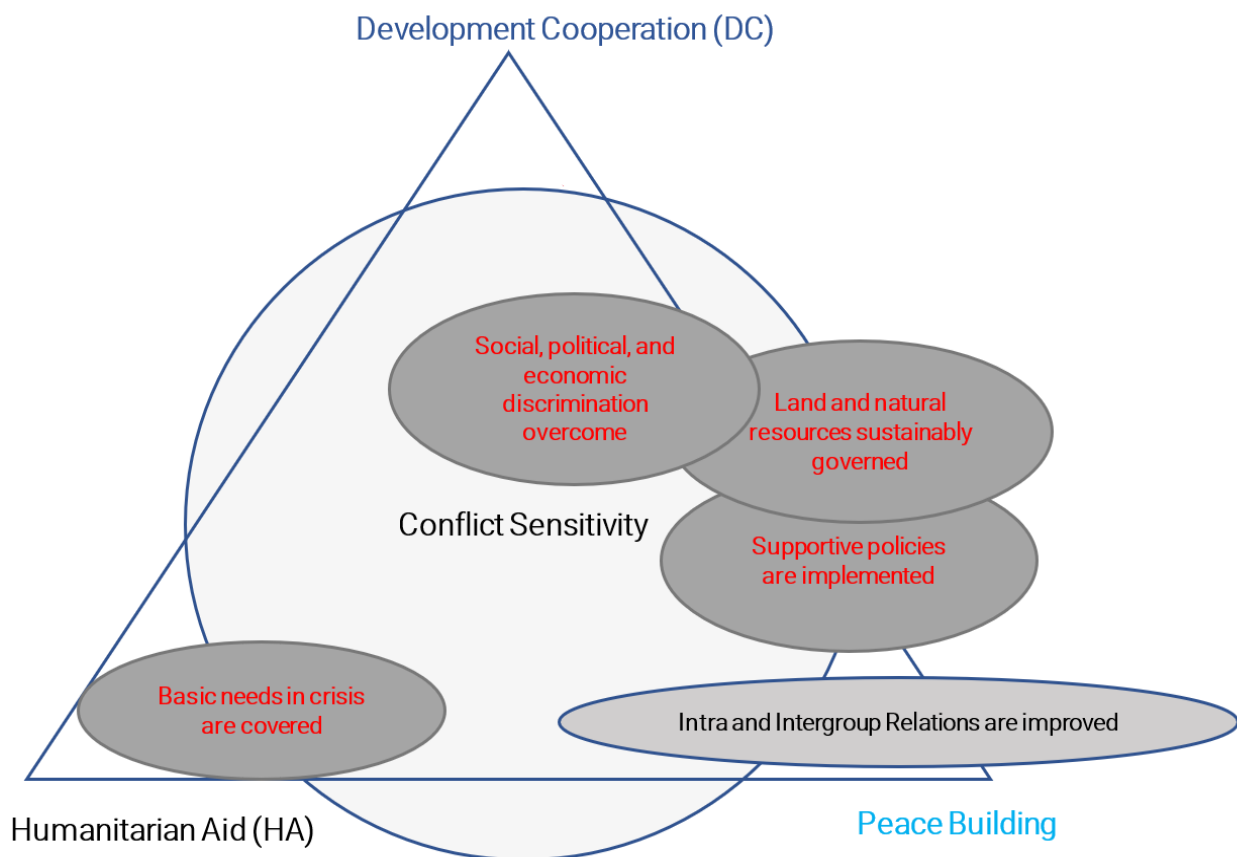


**The Triple Nexus.** Source: Tana Copenhagen (June 2020).

## HEKS/EPER and the Triple Nexus

For HEKS/EPER, the Triple Nexus approach means using its combined expertise, experience and the operationality of its various sections to work on the root causes of discrimination and injustice, thereby addressing the key drivers of conflict and bringing about systemic change while providing emergency relief and promoting recovery from crises. HEKS/EPER has the necessary preconditions and resources to apply the Nexus approach by having specialised departments for development cooperation and humanitarian aid, each closely linked to the other, resulting in joint planning of interventions and flexible deployment of financial and human resources. For many years, HEKS/EPER has been working with a systemic approach to address the root causes of discrimination with a rights-based approach. Discrimination and exclusion are the root causes of both latent and overt conflict. Thus, addressing the root cause of conflict has long been part of to the HEKS/EPER DNA.

Furthermore, HEKS/EPER's conflict transformation efforts transform conflictual relationships into constructive co-operation. Therefore, many projects labelled as "development cooperation" contributed to both development and peacebuilding outcomes. An example of this is the diapraxis approach described below. The starting point for planning a peace and justice component or conflict prevention is the conflict sensitivity assessment, which is mandatory for HEKS/EPER projects and programs. Once "dividers" and "connectors" between different parties of the actors' map have been analysed, ideas emerge on how the preventive and peacebuilding components within a project or programme can be strengthened. By reinforcing this already common practice within the organisation, HEKS/EPER can further enhance its contribution to the Triple Nexus. With the "HEKS/EPER International Program" goals of covering basic needs in crisis (outcome 1), overcoming economic, social and political and discrimination (outcome 2), promoting good governance of natural resources (outcome 3) and enhancing the creation and implementation of supportive policies and structures (outcome 4), combined with the sub-goal of improving inter-and intra-group relations and the rights-based approach and conflict sensitivity as cross-cutting themes, the "Nexus approach is at the core of the HEKS/EPER's strategy. The aim is to continue strengthening the links between the goals and the joint work towards them. The building blocks below may serve as a guideline:



## Applying the Nexus Approach

Operationalising the Triple Nexus goes beyond projects and requires a rethink of how we work and how we are structured. A cross-organisational approach forces us to rethink how program goals are set in specific contexts, and more emphasis is placed on long-term results at strategic and operational levels. It requires consistent cross-departmental conversations - these need to be institutionalised and resourced. In addition, the Nexus approach needs reflection on HEKS/EPER's role in the aid and development community, which determines our contribution as facilitators, active experts and/or implementers to address the root causes of fragility and reduce needs. HEKS/EPER uses its different departments' combined expertise, experience, and operability to work on root causes of discrimination, lacking opportunities and injustice, and conflicts to bring systemic change while also providing emergency assistance and rehabilitation.

The **core building blocks** are:



### Collaboration across organisations, sectors and stakeholders

First, we shall **allow time and resources towards enhancing collaboration and coherence** between sectors, internally and externally. We shall reflect on our role – are we only participants of the existing platform or even facilitators **towards cooperation** and exchange? As enhancing collaboration is of utmost importance, facilitating **joint analysis** and the **identification of common goals** can be a project goal in itself.

Depending on gaps and the expertise required, HEKS/EPER provides its core expertise in a specific region in Development Cooperation incl. Conflict Transformation, and Humanitarian Aid. In this role, HEKS/EPER is filling a gap and is consciously linking this with what the other actors are doing. Ideally, if broader external cooperation works, HEKS/EPER fully aligns its activities in a given country or region to collectively agree upon **collective outcomes**.

The starting point for improving coherence between different organisations and sectors would be to analyse short-term needs - where people are at the centre of the nexus efforts. This includes a joint assessment of the causes of conflict and vulnerability, gender perspectives and anticipation of future scenarios - all involving local communities, civil society as rights-holders, and different aid agencies across sectors - which feeds into joint strategy-building and planning.

### Theory of change of the Triple Nexus approach

#### IF

- a. International national and local actors (humanitarian, development, security, political and diplomatic – governmental and non-governmental) come together to develop and share a joint context, conflict, and risk analysis and ...
- b. Based on the joint analysis the actors define a political strategy/process for delivering shared outcomes for: i.) inclusive conflict prevention/resolution, ii.) building the state including of security and justice structures, based on an inclusive peace process, including civil society, private sector and relevant regional and international organizations, iii.) livelihood and employment opportunities and iv.) basic social, service delivery, and humanitarian support focusing on building resilience to future shocks, ...
- c. Local inclusive ownership of the plans is ensured through inclusive political structures e.g., national and local governments, civil society and customary institutions, and...
- d. Joint flexible, coordination, monitoring and funding mechanisms are established.

#### THEN

Chances for sustainable peace and development outcomes are increased, survival needs are covered and the foundation for meeting the SDGs is established.

### Localisation, country ownership and strengthening civil society

At least since the 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, there has been consensus on the importance of "country ownership" for the success of development efforts. However, country ownership has often been misinterpreted as 'government ownership'. To strengthen country ownership, we must apply a whole of systems approach involving a diverse civil society that shall participate in order to own the development process. Similar notions are debated in the frame of the "localisation agenda" defining localisation as: a process of recognising, respecting, and strengthening the leadership by local authorities and the capacity of local civil society in humanitarian action, in order to better address the needs of affected populations and to prepare national actors for future humanitarian responses. Important: Localisation goes beyond including local NGO's but includes recognizing and strengthening the leadership of formal as informal civil society.

**For example, the Open Forum experience in Israel and Palestine has shown that** cross-sectoral collaboration between humanitarian, development, and peace organisations and across 'borders' has led to shared analysis and the setting of common goals towards which partners work either together or separately. This frequent but non-binding collaboration is beneficial when humanitarian agencies' conflict sensitivity must be improved. This could include strengthening peace and rights-based thinking capacities or collaborating to claim civil society space, or obtaining media coverage of rights violations that affect partners' development efforts. Another example of cooperation and localisation is HEKS/EPER's work in Myanmar after the 2021 coup. After a quick assessment showed that almost half of all households had sold their household items to meet their daily food needs, HEKS/EPER worked with a start-up company from Shan State that sells food online. The start-up procured food from farmers who were unable to sell their crops during the crisis and delivered it, along with other staple foods, to households in

Yangon facing food shortages. The distribution of food was carried out by local volunteer networks who lived in and knew the areas and could prioritise support in a conflict-sensitive way for the most disadvantaged areas.

**Action:** Invest in leadership and resources to facilitate joint assessments, shared analysis, and mutually agreed-upon goals. This includes improving technical expertise at headquarters and field level, setting strategic priorities raising our technical profile with other organisations.

### Prioritise prevention

More energy should be devoted to prevention, mediation, and peacebuilding to reduce the risk of violent conflicts, disasters, and crises that generate humanitarian needs. This includes positively contributing to **voice**, access and **rights**, social **cohesion, trust** between state and society, **inclusive and meaningful political dialogue, fairer power structures, economic development**, and legitimate and effective institutions. We should identify means to motivate and incentivise our partners to focus on long-term structural factors to reduce humanitarian needs through prevention and sustainable change. This includes strengthening mechanisms to ensure accountability to right holders - our target group and promoting transparency and participation as an element of sustainable community development. Moreover, the unfolding climate and environmental crisis increases the risk for disasters linked to natural hazards manifold and will bring about long-term changes regarding temperature increase and resource scarcity. Prevention, preparedness, and anticipatory action to reduce vulnerability and exposure are key to any humanitarian and development programming. Furthermore, **climate change and disaster risk reduction programming** might offer windows of opportunity to initiate dialogue on inequality, conflict, and peace.

In Bidibidi, one of the largest refugee settlements in Uganda, the number of open and latent conflicts is high. In the frame of a livelihood project, HEKS/EPER invests in training government representatives and local leaders in conflict transformation. By addressing issues at an early stage, techniques to deal with conflict in a constructive manner and reconciliation and values of non-violence small scale conflicts which may otherwise escalate and finally feed into the more significant conflicts back in the countries from where refuge has been sought.

**Action:** Assess possibilities to prevent violence by strengthening values for peace, inclusive voice, cohesion, and more balanced power structures. Thoroughly assess climate and disaster risk in every project region and integrate prevention and preparedness measures in both Development Cooperation/Peacebuilding and as early as possible in Humanitarian Aid projects. HEKS/EPER is committed to going beyond conflict sensitivity and investing in conflict transformation and advocacy.

## Standards across sectors

If a Humanitarian Aid (HA) project is planned in a country with a protracted crisis, the other two dimensions should be included in the long-term planning from the beginning. In doing so, the principles/approaches of development cooperation/peacebuilding must be integrated into HA projects and vice versa. In concrete terms, this means that HA projects should be implemented in a conflict-sensitive and human rights-based manner and, where possible, contribute to long-term development and peace. On the other hand, Development cooperation/peacebuilding projects adhere to core humanitarian standards and principles. This may include humanitarian support to conflict/crisis-affected people. To enhance complementarity between sectors, the HA approach shall address basic needs.

In contrast, at the same time, Development cooperation performs to motivate and facilitate that duty bearers meet their obligations to provide basic needs. On the other hand, integrate mechanisms that allow anticipating and rapidly responding to sudden shocks, such as crisis modifiers and preparedness. Consider, where possible and appropriate, how to implement joint programme development that more effectively addresses conflict's root causes and structural drivers. For example, with a consequent application of rights-based approach across sectors, HEKS/EPER partners in Gaza incorporate participatory approaches into their humanitarian aid and development interventions to enhance empowerment for right holders and hold duty bearers to account.

**Action: Include standards, cross-cutting themes, and indicators of humanitarian assistance, development cooperation and conflict transformation in program development and implementation**

## Simultaneous timelines

The Triple Nexus approach demands working with different timelines simultaneously, planning week to week, addressing intermediate goals within one or two years and the long-term goals, which may take 4 to 7 years and orienting the projects accordingly. The emergency response must start to work in an area covering basic needs, while for development cooperation, an analysis at the same time includes longer-term systemic change and starts to work once the region is enough stabilised. Humanitarian aid should consider longer-term needs as early as the provision of necessities, e.g. using cash for labour to improve roads (DRC) or using cash so that local markets can be used or using food for distribution from local farmers. These are responses to make humanitarian aid more development-oriented from the start. For example, as part of a response after the February 2021 coup in Myanmar, HEKS/EPER helped employ community cooks whose work was negatively impacted by COVID-19 to develop new recipes for fried snacks, a popular traditional delicacy in Shan state. By converting perishable products like potatoes, chillies, and chives into non-perishable foods, they were able to help farmers currently struggling to sell crops that would otherwise go to waste. In this way, the intervention worked along with simultaneous timelines by helping to cover the basic needs of farmers, cooks and households whilst also helping to catalyse the development of new products and business models. Likewise, conflict transformation, including dealing with trauma after a disaster, may even be the entry point for humanitarian aid. For example, in South Sudan, 'quiet diplomacy' enabled humanitarian access to affected regions. Conflict transformation and trauma healing was the entry point to provide access to land for enhancing livelihood through agriculture. On the other hand – fulfilling basic needs with humanitarian assistance may be the entry point to enable and motivate longer-term development and peacebuilding endeavours.

Based on the above-mentioned joint analysis, peace and development programs anticipate future disasters and have funds for humanitarian aid ("crisis modifiers") integrated into original project funds, enabling fast response within existing project structures.

**Action: Wherever possible, define short term goals to address needs and long-term goals to address causes of vulnerability and fragility.**

## Flexible short- and long-term resource allocation

The current aid architecture is unsuitable for putting the Nexus approach into practice. Funding is often tied to humanitarian, development or peace or peacebuilding activities, and virtually no funding for nexus programmes. In addition, humanitarian funds are earmarked for humanitarian purposes only and are often only one-year funding, while development and peace programmes are typically planned for several years. Furthermore, funds for humanitarian aid, development cooperation and peacebuilding are in most cases separate and have to come from different

sources. Therefore, most of the funding mechanisms are incompatible with the Triple Nexus, as multi-year planning is one of the core innovations of the approach.

Consequently, it is necessary: on the one hand, to look at how the corresponding long-term financial needs of the nexus can be provided within the framework of the financing planning of own resources. Strategically, it can cover the more difficult parts to finance through core funding and the missing parts through external sources. This provides HEKS/EPER with the opportunity to test the implementation of the nexus. In turn, this can be a strength to receive funding from other donors to implement the nexus. On the other hand, it is essential, through lobbying, to hold donors accountable for implementing the promises made and to make funds available for the implementation of a Nexus approach - or to create opportunities for long-term investment in humanitarian aid and vice versa.

For example, HEKS/EPER Myanmar has used core funds to design and implement the Fostering Food Security, Food Systems and Inclusive Business (FOSTER) Programme, which pursues a Nexus approach. The FOSTER programme has a relatively broadly defined strategy rather than a prescriptive list of detailed activities to enhance flexibility. This provides a range of options across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus that can be used according to the situation. These options range from supporting conflict- and crisis-affected groups to meet urgent food security needs, increasing agricultural productivity and smallholder incomes, and improving IDP and host community relations, skills, and employment opportunities.

**Action:** In collaboration with other network partners such as Act Alliance, participate in nexus discussion fora in the countries and on regional and HQ level and advocate for increased funding for a Nexus approach. Furthermore, apply and advocate for flexible use of funds, joint funds and timelines and results frameworks that cater for a Nexus approach for predictable, multi-year financing.

## Complementarity, coherence and synergies within and between projects

### Definition of the diapraxis approach

- Diapraxis means – dialogue through practice.
- Diapraxis is a methodology designed to contribute to nonviolent transformation and prevention of conflict and addressing needs and vulnerabilities at the same time.

Diapraxis describes the work of developing mutual appreciation among adversary groups in open or latent conflict, by collaborating in common development endeavours with a shared goal with the end to promote peaceful co-existence.

Through practical work focussing on rural development and peacebuilding in the same region, HEKS/EPER has discovered the synergies between the two components and developed methods to exploit them further. It has been found that rural development work can contribute to good governance and peace. On the other hand, the benefits of livelihood activities and the trust built in this collaboration have been an excellent entry point to address socio-political aspects and peacebuilding needs. For example, conflicting groups in Zimbabwe have worked together to create a new hospital, reconciling with each other as a result. Local and traditional leaders alike reported a sustained shift from perpetual conflict to a shared sense of cooperation and development in their community.

Similarly, in South Sudan, trauma healing and conflict transformation capacity building combined with quiet diplomacy conflict management have served as the basis for seed and food production and have enabled access to land. In Uganda, HEKS/EPER supports refugees to generate their income, strengthening relations between host communities and refugees through inclusive agriculture and market systems development accompanied by conflict transformation measures. Building shared value chains for profitable income generation in the South Caucasus is central to bringing antagonistic groups together. The main idea of the HEKS/EPER "Diapraxis Approach" are common practical goals in the interest of the antagonistic groups are the catalyst of the willingness to cooperate. Conflict transformation experts as project staff organise and coordinate the encounters of adversary groups sensitively, thereby creating opportunities for reconciliation. These

### Theory of change of a diapraxis approach

If different identity groups characterized by grievances work together on issues of mutual interest, they will have direct contact, begin to cooperate and then develop increased trust and positive relations, thus working towards overcoming their (mutual) grievances. This theory assumes that if contact among different identity groups occurs in the form of activities based on mutual interest, understanding will increase, prejudice will be reduced, and a 'safe space for healthy relationships to develop' will be created.



development projects aim to address needs and vulnerabilities and, at the same time, provide a safe space to overcome prejudices against each other and enhance peaceful living together. The specificity of a diapraxis approach is that the target group selection of a Humanitarian Aid and/or development endeavours purposely integrates different identity groups, who are in open or latent conflict with one another, to provide space for reconciliation.

**Action:** In HEKS/EPER priority countries where humanitarian aid, development and peace work are carried out, the joint analysis assesses the potential of enhancing peaceful living through joint practical work in the field of development cooperation and or humanitarian aid, defining common short and long-term goals.

## Examples of Nexus Projects

### Reflections on the Triple Nexus from HEKS/EPER's work in Myanmar

In Myanmar, developments since the military coup on the 1st of February are driving new conflict dynamics, causing a breakdown in critical public services and increasing humanitarian needs. These impacts, coupled with the COVID-19 pandemic, compound existing humanitarian needs in the country and pose a dire risk to progress on development, democratisation, and human rights. More than one-third of all townships in Myanmar are affected by long-term, protracted conflicts<sup>1</sup>. There are now an estimated half a million internally displaced persons (IDPs)<sup>2</sup>. UNDP has estimated that an additional 12 million people could fall below the poverty line by 2022, resulting in nearly half the population – 25 million people - living below the poverty line.



Ensuring food security by humanitarian assistance, mid- and longterm economic development and resource allocation combined with peace work thanks to shared interested in agricultural production and trade.

HEKS/EPER commenced working in Myanmar in 2017 as part of a pilot phase that explores new and innovative approaches and partnerships to develop cooperation. While initially focused on inclusive business promotion, HEKS/EPER has recently adapted its approach to responding to the rapidly changing and increasingly complex context. This has involved revising its strategic focus towards an integrated approach that links food security relief with development and peace work. This learning brief will share some initial reflections on this transition concerning core building blocks (shown in bold) that HEKS/EPER has documented as critical to applying a Nexus approach.

The fragility and fluidity of the context in Myanmar necessitate a **flexible and adaptive management** approach to programming. HEKS/EPER Myanmar recently designed and commenced implementing the Fostering Food Security, Food Systems and Inclusive Business Programme (FOSTER) (2021-2023). The programme has a relatively broadly defined strategy, with intervention areas and expected lines of intervention rather than a prescriptive list of detailed activities. Depending on the context, this provides a range of options across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus. This ranges from supporting conflict and crisis-affected groups to meet critical food security needs, enhancing agricultural productivity and incomes of smallholder producers, to strengthening skills and employment opportunities amongst IDPs and host communities. This integration of humanitarian alongside development activities and the programmes longer 3-year timeframe integrates both flexible **short- and long-term resource allocation**. In the form of a *crisis modifier*<sup>3</sup>, this will efficiently address food security shocks and limit the adoption of harmful coping

<sup>1</sup> The Asia Foundation (2017). *THE CONTESTED AREAS OF MYANMAR Subnational Conflict, Aid, and Development*. Accessed at: <https://asiafoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/ContestedAreasMyanmarReport.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> UNHCR (2021). *MYANMAR EMERGENCY UPDATE as of 01 June 2021*. Accessed at: <https://reporting.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/Myanmar%20emergency%20update%201%20June%202021.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> ODI (2017). *Crisis modifiers: a solution for a more flexible development-humanitarian system?* Accessed at: <https://odi.org/en/publications/crisis-modifiers-a-solution-for-a-more-flexible-development-humanitarian-system/>

mechanisms such as the sale of productive assets or further indebtedness of beneficiaries). The programme's design involves piloting smaller interventions, which will be iterated upon and scaled up or down based on their results and contextual developments. This approach can more easily allow for flexibility and innovation. Evidence from work in fragile contexts has shown can play a critical role in supporting an effective recovery from COVID-19 and other shocks.<sup>4</sup>

As part of FOSTER's design, the programme aims to generate learning on using the diapraxis approach by supporting mutual collaboration and trust-building between ethnic minority groups with a shared interest in collaborating on agricultural production and trade. This will involve working with local organisations to conduct conflict analysis and facilitate joint cooperative actions with divergent groups, such as shared access to solar irrigation services, agricultural inputs and end-market opportunities. By integrating conflict transformation measures into agricultural market development, the programme aims to strengthen the **complementarity and synergies** between disciplines



Food box of the online food sales startup Yaw Nee Nar.

A pilot project supporting food relief in peri-urban areas of Yangon from April to July 2021 generated some initial insights on building links between humanitarian and development goals. In the months following the coup, the multiple crises and declaration of martial law in 6 Yangon townships resulted in thousands of families facing job losses and unprecedented economic hardships. Surveys by WFP in April found that nearly half of all households had sold household assets to meet daily food needs.<sup>5</sup> To respond to these needs, HEKS/EPER worked with online food sales start-up Yaw Nee Nar from Shan state. Yaw Nee Nar sourced food produce from farmers struggling to sell their crops amidst the crisis and delivered this along with other basic food items to food-insecure households in Yangon.

The food distributions were conducted by local community volunteer networks who lived in and knew the areas and could prioritise support to the most disadvantaged areas. By working through community volunteers as opposed to military-aligned authorities (whose involvement in food distribution may have contributed to further exclusion and social tensions), the pilot was able to work in a conflict-sensitive way. Engaging the private sector and community volunteers in planning and implementing the food response demonstrated a **collaboration across organisations and sectors** which leveraged the respective expertise and networks of the actors involved. This resulted in an effective community-led approach that efficiently reached more than 5000 marginalised households with critical food supplies and supported 180 farming households to sell their produce for a fair price. In addition, the pilot helped to protect development gains by enhancing Yaw Nee Nar's ability to maintain the continuity of its services at a challenging time for start-up enterprises in Myanmar. Since the intervention, Yaw Nee Nar has developed new supply relationships with some Yangon volunteer networks, becoming food retailers. As part of the pilot, Yaw Nee Nar were also supported to employ community cooks whose work was negatively impacted by COVID-19 to develop new recipes for fried snacks, a popular traditional delicacy in Shan state. By converting perishable products like potatoes, chillies and chives into non-perishable foods, they were able to help farmers currently struggling to sell crops that would otherwise go to waste. In this way, the intervention worked **along with simultaneous timelines** by helping to cover the basic needs of farmers, cooks and households whilst also helping to catalyse the development of new products and business models. Khun Lar Bway, the Founder of Yaw Nee Nar, had these reflections to share on the engagement:

"Our previous experience working on the delivery of farm produce and food, the connections we have with farmers and our operations network were critical components to have the right capacity to be involved in the project. It helped Yaw Nee Nar with the continuity of its business operations and engagement with farmers in an uncertain and difficult time for our business. Still, it also supported the team to develop and expand its network with new partners and small businesses throughout the project period and helped us explore new business opportunities."

<sup>4</sup> OECD (2020). Innovation, development and COVID-19: Challenges, opportunities and ways forward. Accessed at: <https://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/innovation-development-and-covid-19-challenges-opportunities-and-ways-forward-0c976158/>

<sup>5</sup> OCHA (2021). Addendum to the 2021 Myanmar Humanitarian Response Plan. Accessed at: [https://drive.google.com/file/d/11cYdTyHvAPXUHL20x7\\_66eqyGhFsOXF/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/11cYdTyHvAPXUHL20x7_66eqyGhFsOXF/view)

Disruptions in the distribution of agricultural inputs due to the impacts of the multiple crises in Myanmar pose significant risks to crop yields, rural livelihoods and food security. HEKS/EPER conducted a rapid market assessment in July and August 2021 to understand the impacts of the crisis on farmers access to agricultural inputs and identify feasible response options. The findings illustrated the significant challenges smallholders face with accessing affordable inputs, with the cost of some inputs such as chemical fertilisers more than doubling. To **prioritise prevention** and mitigate food security needs from worsening in the medium-term due to reduced agricultural outputs, HEKS/EPER is implementing a response with an agricultural service provider to enable access to partially subsidised inputs for particularly vulnerable households. To further mitigate farmers vulnerability to future market shocks, this will involve promoting organic fertilisers as a more affordable and accessible alternative to chemical fertilisers.

Some key initial lessons from the programme design phase and pilots thus far have been the importance of adequately analysing the potential to leverage longer-term impacts when supporting relief interventions and selecting partners to work with. Conducting rapid assessments, where the data is more likely to be utilised, can be effective. Another lesson has been the importance of building trust with new partners across sectors and contributing to long-term strategic partnerships emerging from initial collaborations. A key enabling factor for the programme has also been access to flexible funding. In discussions with donors on co-funding, its FOSTER programme HEKS/EPER has advocated for flexible use of funds. Ensuring a shared understanding and valuing of such an approach with any future donors will be critical to the programme's success. Whilst still in the very early stages, HEKS/EPER Myanmar hopes to continue to generate learning on the nexus through its implementation of the FOSTER programme.

### Ways to operationalise the Triple Nexus in Israel/Palestine

As a response to the escalations and continued conflict, the Israel/Palestine programme has developed in an unstable intervention context ranging from development and peace projects to a need-based humanitarian context. Working in the complex context of Israel/Palestine for the last 14 years, HEKS/EPER has developed a unique platform for Civil Society Organizations (CSOs). This platform is called the "Open Forum" (OF), and it has been actively meeting regularly since 2006.

#### Collaboration across organisations: the Open Forum



HEKS/EPER partners in Palestine/Israel enable communities to negotiate access to land and resources, improve livelihood and engage in peacebuilding.

The OF has been the overarching framing of the HEKS/EPER Israel/ Palestine County Programme. The overall goal of the Open Forum is: "To maintain and strengthen the strategic work of CSOs in the fragmented Palestinian and Israeli societies working for achieving rights-based conflict transformation and justice in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict." The Members of the OF adopt the Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA) of HEKS/EPER as a main overarching approach. From 2020, the OF focusses on Access to Land and Adequate Housing, Advocacy for the observance of Human Rights,

Protection of Civic Space, Capacity Building and Community Resilience. It is paramount to follow the "no-harm" principle and maintain and strengthen empowerment and resilience. In addition to continuous context analysis, the Open Forum serves as the starting point to implementing the peacebuilding component in the Nexus approach. Member CSOs search for opportunities to complement and contribute to work in different fields such as research, urban planning, advocacy, context analysis and other topics. The OF project creates opportunities among partner organisations on a more targeted level that can lead to better networking and cooperation in an increasingly shrinking space that limits civil society organisations' scope in both Israel and Palestine. As the Nexus approach addresses the different levels of intervention in development and humanitarian work, the OF cannot directly address complex interventions requiring direct global and national policy responses. We remain committed to partners' choices and views

on how they want to work together and enjoy a safe space for sharing thoughts and ideas. The partners themselves decide how they want to work together. This bottom-up approach is essential.

This space provided a medium offering complementarity that would not have been possible without the facilitation of HEKS/EPER. For example, +972 (an Israeli organisation) reported on human rights violations of farmers in Area C supported by Maan (a Palestinian organisation). The OF brings partners together across different borders (and even divides).

### **Triple Nexus Approach in the Gaza context**

In Gaza, nexus thinking on the three aspects mentioned is always in demand due to the constant Israeli attacks and the conflict that affects almost all areas of life.

#### **Project context**

The Gaza context is very fragile and is characterised by a long-standing blockade, frequent Israeli violent attacks and conflicts in escalating rounds, weak state legitimacy and divided national governance, a lack of political will to change the situation and end the political division, and a lack of resources for a functioning rule of law and governance. HEKS/EPER projects in Gaza have addressed these issues by meeting the basic needs of communities through the humanitarian part of the crisis response while building long-term development approaches through human and organisational capacity building and making the best use of available resources. Although it is difficult to address the root causes of the conflict, prevent new conflicts and end the violence, most partner organisations attempt to end the political division between Palestinians and improve the prospects for peacebuilding by applying conflict sensitivity, and conflict transformation approaches.

#### **Project description**

An example that illustrates the approach is the humanitarian assistance provided after the attack on Gaza in May 2021. Early recovery plans (livelihood mapping) by agronomists were combined with cash transfers (Poverty Graduation Cycle) and capacity building and skills development for youth. As indicated in the triangle above, this example illustrates how humanitarian aid has created the conditions for development. Furthermore, the approach is already embedded in the context of Gaza, as the organisational working approaches of our local partners are already in line with the nexus (capacity building components).

#### **Limitations**

All funding for this project arrived shortly after the conflict and was allocated to disaster response. Following the Nexus approach required much longer planning to integrate development and peace aspects for both local partners (Maan and CFTA). With only six months, the project duration was remarkably short as humanitarian needs had to be complemented by long-term development projects that build on HA's successes

#### **Opportunities**

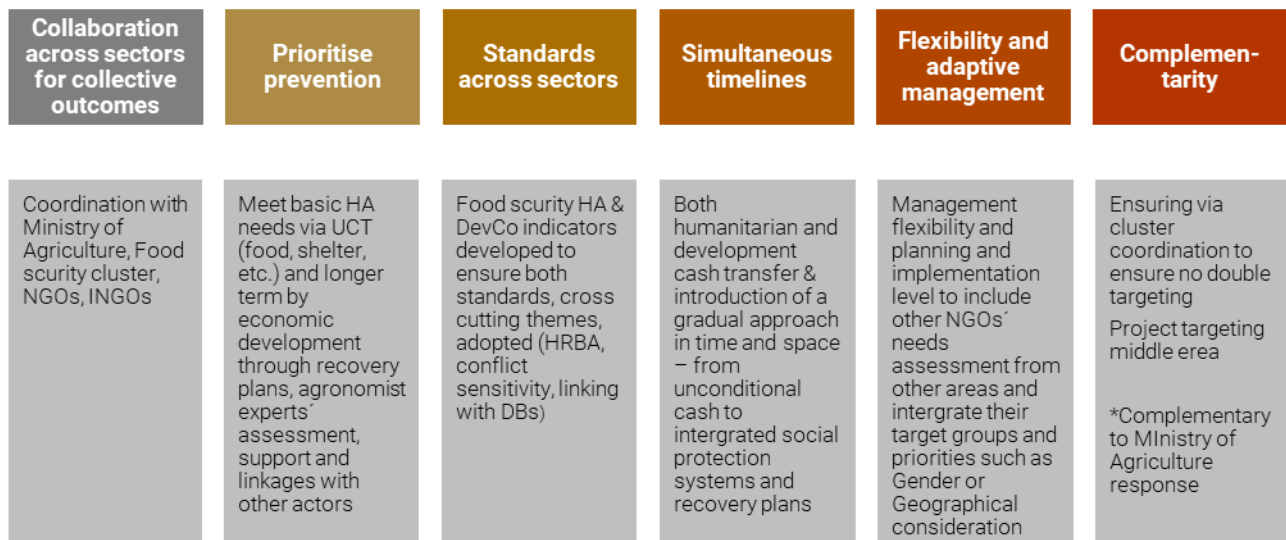
Due to the short response time after a crisis and to benefit from this approach, a plan should be made before a crisis occurs (anticipatory resilience) to respond immediately after a crisis. Applying the Nexus approach in our context would allow CO and CSO partners to intervene immediately after shocks and stresses: They could work together to address people's vulnerabilities, move from providing humanitarian assistance to development (absorptive resilience) and support sustainable peace (transformative resilience), leaving no one behind. This will allow for more sustainable project implementation and long-term planning.

The peace aspect in Israel/Palestine should be considered at two levels: internal peace amongst Palestinian communities and external peace and negotiation process at country level (i.e. between Palestinians and Israelis). The Nexus approaches support these two levels by identifying all peace actors when planning interventions.

Capturing HEKS/EPER approaches to conflict sensitivity: HEKS/EPER partners in Israel/Palestine have been working for years on HEKS/EPER approaches to conflict sensitivity, which monitors connectors and dividers within a defined area of intervention, leading to neutrality and impartiality to avoid escalation of the conflict and mitigate risks. This is

a key component of peacebuilding that can be built upon, as it is already one of the approaches adopted by HEKS/EPER.

The OF provides a complementary pillar of peacebuilding for Gaza projects. Due to the blockade and the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, partners from outside can advocate for the sake of the crisis. This is one of the main tasks HEKS/EPER intends to undertake by producing an advocacy document for OF partners. This document will strategically support the efforts to achieve more impact.



Building blocks towards implementation- Gaza HA project example

## Challenges

Applying the Nexus approach requires some flexibility on the part of donors. Typically, humanitarian donors stick to their short-term crisis response mandates. The Nexus approach to programming allows for more long-term thinking by setting broader objectives and managing projects flexibly. Therefore, the Nexus approach still needs to be put on donor agencies' agendas and promoted. Funding modalities need to be changed to allow more flexibility for such integration. At the country level of peacebuilding, the imbalance of power in Israel/Palestine makes applying the peace component under nexus very difficult due to the stalled peace process and the ongoing conflict in Israel/Palestine. However, internal conflicts (e.g. within Palestinian society) can be targeted.

## Complementarity

The complex, fragile and conflict-ridden context in the Israeli-Palestinian region cannot be addressed by one actor alone. Linking humanitarian aid, development and peace efforts recognises that complementary, coordinated and coherent approaches between humanitarian, development and peace actors are needed to address these complex, multidimensional and high-risk challenges. The political fragmentation of Palestinian society and the stalemate in the peace process make cooperation between sectors difficult, especially at the official level (West Bank/Gaza/Israel), as there is no political stability between the different governments.

Funding - As HEKS/EPER is not only a humanitarian aid actor but focuses more on longer-term impact. HEKS/EPER can advocate with HA donors for a shift to the Nexus approach.

Flexibility and adaptive management: As we are in the early stages of introducing the Nexus approach to local partners, such an approach also needs flexible partners and adaptive management structures that can respond constructively to this new approach. HEKS/EPER should also ensure that these local partners have the capacity and resources to implement such integration and think together.

## This is HEKS/EPER

In its projects **worldwide** and in its work of raising awareness around development and social policy topics **in Switzerland**, HEKS/EPER emphasizes the four topics of **climate justice, the right to land and food, refuge and migration, and inclusion**.

In 28 countries across four continents and jointly with 100 partner organizations and global alliances, **HEKS/EPER global cooperation** combats with its projects hunger, poverty and injustice and advocates for a life in dignity for all people. HEKS/EPER cultivates constant policy dialogue with all relevant humanitarian, development, and Government actors, protecting civil society actors, promoting peaceful coexistence and reinforcing people and communities to advocate for their needs and rights, and to strive towards and self-determined perspectives.

HEKS/EPER campaigns for systemic change throughout its work enabling sustainable land and resource governance, securing basic services such as education or health and social schemes, fostering agroecological production and inclusive market systems. It promotes inclusive governance structures in the countries to overcome social, economic, and political discrimination of disenfranchised people.

Also, HEKS/EPER provides **humanitarian assistance** around the world for victims of disasters caused by natural hazards and armed conflicts and supports the **social work of church organizations** in Eastern Europe and the Middle East.

Through its work **in Switzerland**, HEKS/EPER fosters social inclusion for marginalized people, promotes equal opportunity and supports jobless people, asylum seekers, migrants, and socially deprived people with legal advice, vocational trainings, language courses and dialogue platforms.




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