



#Lungtad,
Kalilintad

A review of the triple nexus approach in discourse and practice

with a focus on Islamic Relief's
triple nexus programme

August 2021

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Community peace consultations with a group of women in Mindanao, the Philippines [Photo: Islamic Relief, 2021]

Cover photo: Mural painting in the Philippines as part of a youth-led peace campaign in Mindanao in 2019. 'Lungtad Kalilintad' means 'Sustainable Peace' [Photo: Islamic Relief, 2019]

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Acronyms

CCA	Common Country Analysis
CDD	Community-driven development
COVID-19	Coronavirus
CTPSR	Coventry University's Centre for Trust, Peace and Social Relations
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DFID	Department for International Development (now the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office)
DM&E	Design, monitoring and evaluation
D-P	Development-peace
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
DRR	Disaster risk reduction
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
H-D	Humanitarian-development
HDP	Humanitarian-development-peace
H-P	Humanitarian-peace
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
IR	Islamic Relief
IRUSA	Islamic Relief, USA
IRW	Islamic Relief Worldwide
KII	Key informant interviews
LRRD	Linking relief, rehabilitation and development
MEAL	Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
NWOW	New ways of working
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
ODA	Official development assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
RC	Resident Coordinator
SDG	Sustainable development goal
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats
TN	Triple nexus
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
WFP	World Food Programme
WHS	World Humanitarian Summit

Foreword from the CEO of Islamic Relief Worldwide

Islamic Relief is a faith-inspired humanitarian aid and development agency working to save and transform the lives of some of the world's most vulnerable people. Established in the UK in 1984, we work in over 45 countries, assist people of all faiths according to need and do not discriminate in any way.

Though our roots are in providing lifesaving humanitarian aid, that is no longer all that we do. We also tackle the causes of poverty and crisis through providing long-term development support to communities. We improve access to vital services such as healthcare, water, sanitation and hygiene; and our livelihoods and education projects empower people to escape poverty and build brighter futures. Islamic Relief's broad-ranging development support encompasses child protection programming – including work to end female genital mutilation / cutting (FGM/C) and early child marriage – as well as climate adaptation projects, tackling gender-based violence and much more. We also campaign for positive change on some of the biggest issues facing our world today, including the climate emergency, gender justice and forced displacement.

To date we have helped over 120 million vulnerable people, and every year we manage to reach more people. However, need is also rising. Despite our efforts, and those of many other organisations, we are seeing growing numbers of people in crisis. The number of displaced people exceeded 80 million in 2020, according to UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency. Meanwhile the Food Security Information Network and Global Network Against Food Crises estimated that 135 million people were acutely food insecure or worse in 2020, most as a result of conflict or insecurity. This relentless rise in need and suffering, combined with global economic pressures and aid cuts, demands fundamental reform to the way that we, and the sector, operate. It also calls for greater investment in peace, and for such investment to be sustained.

One such reform, the triple nexus, has been presented as a way for the sector to more effectively tackle a multitude of inter-connected risks and meet the needs of vulnerable people. It builds on existing work to link humanitarian and development programming by bringing in the peace component, recognising that much of our work now takes place in places with underlying tensions or outright conflict.

Islamic Relief, with the support of Sida, has piloted our own triple nexus approach to programming. The learning this has generated is of great interest to me as I lead the

charity forward in increasing our impact. It demonstrates the importance of strengthening our organisational systems, creating more flexible processes and investing in staff learning, so colleagues can meet the complex challenges of programming in today's world. It also confirms the need to invest in long-term partnerships with local organisations that enable communities to take control of humanitarian response, development planning, and peace management. I hope that you also will find much of value in this report.

Given the scale of the challenges the world faces today, continuing with 'business as usual' is not an option. This report urges us to find the courage and moral conviction to challenge the status quo and try something new. This will not be easy for any of us, but I believe we must try, otherwise we will fail increasing numbers of vulnerable people around the world.

I thank Summer Brown and Rodrigo Mena for their considered analysis and the comprehensive recommendations contained in this report. I look forward to seizing the challenge they have set for us and ensuring the support we provide to the most vulnerable communities truly meets their needs and respects their dignity.



Waseem Ahmad
Chief Executive Officer,
Islamic Relief Worldwide

Executive summary

Three years after the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS), in February 2019, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development/Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC) issued recommendations in response to *“the call for strengthened policy and commitments across key global frameworks including Agenda 2030, the Sustaining Peace resolutions and Agenda for Humanity, among others”*.¹

These recommendations specifically address the need to strengthen coherence between humanitarian, development and peace (HDP) operations, with the *“aim of effectively reducing people’s needs, risks and vulnerabilities, supporting prevention efforts and thus, shifting from delivering humanitarian assistance to ending need”*.² The concept of the triple, or HDP, nexus reinvigorates the push for stronger collaboration and coordination among actors.

This review of the triple nexus takes stock of current policy, practice and academic discourse; reviews lessons learnt from organisations implementing programmes that use triple nexus approaches; and assesses Islamic Relief’s (IR) triple nexus programming. The review consisted of a literature review, IR programme document review and interviews with 55 individuals.³

Current triple nexus debates

From policy and academic discourse, there are three primary challenges that need to be overcome for the triple nexus to be a viable and effective approach to programming: (1) coming to a **collective and widely accepted understanding of each of the three components of the triple nexus**, especially the peace component, and how they connect; (2) **putting in place financial and operational mechanisms** that are conducive to a triple nexus approach; and (3) defining **with national governments, when possible and appropriate, how the triple nexus approach will support stronger aid initiatives** and longer-term impact in specific contexts.

Triple nexus projects in practice

The HDP nexus is still viewed as more theoretical than operational; however, over the past four years, there have been projects that explicitly state the use of triple nexus approaches. Key learnings from these projects include:

- **Connecting the triple nexus** approach to a framework such as resilience, helps to ensure alignment of activities to higher level collective outcomes or long-term change.
- **The peace component in practice** has many different meanings ranging from grassroots peacebuilding to security interventions to conflict sensitivity. This creates confusion and tensions, particularly among humanitarians, who fear that aid may be instrumentalised for political or security purposes under triple nexus approaches.
- **Flexible systems and skills are needed** to progress triple nexus programmes. It requires strong and flexible financial systems, management skills, technical expertise, attention, diplomacy, and clear processes that allow for modifications as needs change.
- **Long-term partnerships can support increased local ownership** through a clear engagement strategy with national and local government (as appropriate), community members, and local partners, which focuses on both short-term need and long-term change.

IR's triple nexus programme

In June 2018, IR began a 3-year⁴ programme (funded by Sida) focused on conflict prevention and peace using a triple nexus approach in **Pakistan, Kenya, the Philippines and Indonesia**.⁵ This review of the programme makes the following recommendations. While many of the recommendations are also applicable to non-nexus projects, the greater complexity inherent in a triple nexus project makes them more critical.

Strategic recommendations

- 1. Clearly articulate in IR's strategy how it envisions humanitarian, development and peace initiatives complementing each other to achieve IR's vision.** IR should identify an appropriate framework for the approach in order to more strongly align it to higher-level goals and priorities.
- 2. Continue to engage in sector wide discussions and debates on the triple nexus.** IR's experiences and learning on the HDP nexus as a multi-mandated and faith based organisation offer a valuable contribution on the approach from both organisational and operational perspectives.

Operational recommendations

- 3. Ensure systems are fit for purpose to manage an array of project and security risks.** Regular context analysis has brought to light risks and security challenges associated with implementing complex projects in fragile contexts. It is, therefore, a good moment to assess how operational and project risks, including staff safety and security, are managed and mitigated.
- 4. Continue to operationalise conflict and gender sensitivity** ensuring that different areas of work from humanitarian to development to peacebuilding are clear on how often and how deep conflict/context and gender analyses need to be for each intervention.
- 5. Continue to disseminate the "Introduction to Peacebuilding: An Islamic Relief Practitioners' Guide"** and include discussions on what peace programming means and looks like in practice in IR's programmes.
- 6. Review partnership models** with an eye to increase commitments to communities and local partners beyond funding cycles toward longer-term collaborations.
- 7. Use IR's own funding structures** to support triple nexus approaches. IR should explore the possibility of bridging funding silos by combining institutional funding with funding from the IR family's global fundraising offices. This may also offer IR greater flexibility to adapt activities.

Programmatic recommendations

- 8. In many cases, IR's faith foundation can provide openings for peace and conflict resolution initiatives.** IR's reach and trust among Muslim communities, as well as its perceived cultural proximity, provides an opportunity in many contexts for further engagement in grassroots social cohesion, conflict prevention and reconciliation initiatives.
- 9. Invest in staff** because implementing a triple nexus approach is complicated and takes regular reflection, planning and cross-disciplinary working and adaptation to meet the project's objectives.
- 10. Invest in learning** on triple nexus experiences, including dedicated opportunities and information technology (IT) systems that support cross-team learning.

The HDP nexus presents an opportunity to address one of the greatest challenges facing the international aid system which is to overcome systemic barriers to genuinely work for communities to end need. In increasingly protracted and complex aid contexts, and with ever-increasing humanitarian need, it is critical to create more holistic systems and interventions. This means putting communities at the forefront of assistance, understanding how local communities view their world and supporting local organisations to lead aid, development and peace interventions.



Peace football tournament for young men from conflicting clans in Mander County, Kenya
[Photo: Islamic Relief, 2019]

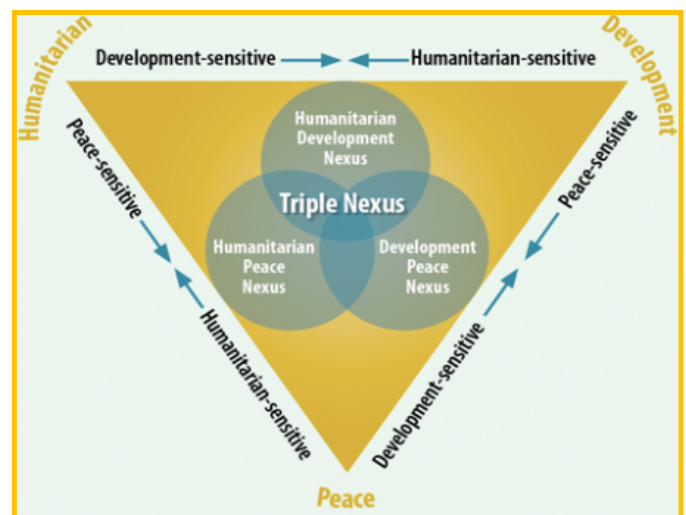
Introduction

The triple nexus approach arose out of the recognition that development, peace and stability happen in non-linear and context-specific ways, and that communities do not have single, isolated needs.⁶ The reality in most fragile and conflict-affected contexts is that conflicts are protracted. This means that humanitarian, development and peacebuilding actors often find themselves working side by side. The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), South Sudan, Colombia, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Syria, Myanmar, the Philippines and Indonesia are some examples of these circumstances.

“Humanitarian, development and peace actions all have a role to play in many of these crises: humanitarian response to save lives and protect people, development assistance to address multi-dimensional structural challenges, and peace action to ensure that countries can sustain peace, i.e. prevent the outbreak, escalation, continuation and recurrence of conflict. That is why in conflict-affected and protracted crisis contexts, ensuring coherence, complementarity, and collaboration across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus is so important in order to realise rights, reduce needs, vulnerabilities and risks, and address drivers and underlying causes of conflict over the long term. A sequential approach has shown not to be an adequate solution, and synchronous humanitarian, development and peace actions are generally considered more effective.” (Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Results Group 4 on Humanitarian-Development Collaboration)

and fora. For example, the former United Nations (UN) Secretary General’s report leading up to the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) in 2016, ‘One Humanity; Shared Responsibility’ noted that: *“An end to human suffering requires political solutions, unity of purpose and sustained leadership and investment in peaceful and inclusive societies.”*⁸ The WHS took up this challenge, resulting in the Grand Bargain.⁹ This led to a recommendation by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development/ Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC) specifically in regard to the triple nexus.

Figure 1: The triple nexus framework¹⁰



The concept of the triple nexus, or humanitarian-development-peace (HDP) nexus, advocates for stronger collaboration and coordination among relief organisations. Although this idea dates back to at least the 1980s, past attempts such as ‘linking relief, rehabilitation and development’ (LRRD) in the 1980s have failed to achieve the desired results of more systematic and long-term change.⁷ This need for more, and better, coordination and collaboration in the international aid sector has been highlighted in a number of international documents

In 2018, the current UN Secretary General, António Guterres, released a report entitled 'Sustaining Peace', which reiterated the importance of working together towards the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (Sustainable Development Goals) and the need for *"greater coherence and synergies across the United Nations system"*.¹¹ In practice, the focus of coordination up until 2016 had primarily been on double nexus approaches - primarily humanitarian-development and development-peace - but the 'Sustaining Peace' report pushed strongly for triple nexus approaches. Simultaneously, there was a drive, primarily from peacebuilders, for the integration of conflict sensitivity across interventions, including more context analysis, adherence to do-no-harm principles and the promotion of peace outcomes. This brought the peace component firmly into the triple nexus debate and led to the development of a number of pilot programmes to test a triple nexus approach.

This review has three primary objectives. First, it takes stock of current policy, practice and academic discourse in regard to the triple nexus. Second, it reviews lessons learnt to date from organisations implementing programmes that use triple nexus approaches. Third, it assesses Islamic Relief's¹² (IR) triple nexus approach in its 'Addressing the imbalance – conflict prevention and peacebuilding in fragile contexts' programme, funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida). The review was conducted by two consultants between January and March 2021. The findings and recommendations from this study will inform current and future initiatives of IR, as well as wider discussions within the international aid community.

This report is organised as follows:

Methodology for the review gives an overview of the review methodology;

Triple nexus discourse and debates reviews triple nexus discourse and debates from policy, practice and academic perspectives;

Triple nexus projects in practice highlights best practices and lessons learnt from organisations designing, piloting and implementing projects using triple nexus approaches;

Islamic Relief's triple nexus programme assesses IR's triple nexus approach in Pakistan, Kenya, the Philippines, and Indonesia to identify successes, challenges and lessons learnt to date; and

Recommendations for triple nexus programming presents practical and actionable recommendations for IR's strategic direction, operations and programming in regard to triple nexus approaches.



Youth peace talent show in Banisa, Kenya, for International Day of Peace [Photo: Islamic Relief, 2019]

Methodology for the review

The two primary methods used for the review were a literature and document review, and key informant interviews (KIIs). The review consisted of three phases: the inception phase; the data collection phase; and the analysis, synthesis, and uptake phase. The methodology was refined during the inception phase in consultation with IR. This included revising the KII questions, selecting the programming documents to review, and identifying interviewees.

A. Review phases

Phase 1: In the inception phase, the consultants met with IR to discuss and confirm the purpose and expectations of the assignment, the workplan and timeframe. They then revised the methodology, drafted interview questions for specific stakeholder groups, and identified literature and key programme documents for review.

Phase 2: The data collection phase was made up of the literature and document review, interviews and data analysis.

- The **literature review** consisted of: (1) academic materials, policy and UN documents; (2) models, strategies and project documents from organisations that are piloting triple nexus approaches; and (3) documents, strategies and reports from IR on its pilot projects. (See Annex A: Notes and resources consulted and Annex B: Bibliography.)
- A total of 45 **KIIs** were conducted with 55 people. The interviewees consisted of 24 females and 31 males including 27 IR staff members. It is worth noting that while many interviewees were advocates for the triple nexus, some were by no means completely sold on it. For the review, there was a strong focus on gathering different perspectives to understand where there was support for and opposition to the HDP nexus.
- An iterative process was used for **data analysis**, which informed data collection. This occurred throughout the data collection process, with the team reviewing their notes and findings and progressively analysing the data. These findings would inform subsequent interviews and identify emerging trends and patterns.

Interviews conducted

Islamic Relief	Number of interviews	Number of people interviewed
IRW	13	16
IR Sweden	2	2
Country teams plus East Africa regional team	6	9
IR total	21	27
International NGOs	8	8
Multi-lateral (OECD/UN)	5	7
Bi-lateral (donor)	7	9
Academics/think tanks	4	4
TOTAL	45	55
A list of interviewees can be found in Annex C.		



Stakeholders conference to discuss learnings and plan next steps in Islamic Relief's Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Programme in the Philippines [Photo: Islamic Relief, 2020]

Phase 3: The OECD/DAC criteria for evaluations¹³ was used to review relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and, where possible, the impact of triple nexus initiatives. This was combined with a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis. The SWOT findings were then used to identify gaps that might inhibit the goals of using a triple nexus approach. A discussion of initial findings with IR's triple nexus working group, and an internal workshop with a wider group of stakeholders, helped to validate and prioritise findings and ground subsequent recommendations to ensure they were actionable for IR.¹⁴

B. Challenges and limitations

Three specific challenges and limitations were faced during the review. First, the breadth of thinking and opinions on whether or not a triple nexus approach works and, if so, what a successful triple nexus model could look like, made distilling the information into a workable review an interesting challenge. To tackle this, the review focused on the issues that were frequently repeated in interviews. These recurring topics were then revisited in the literature to deepen the analysis. Second, even though more interviews were conducted than planned, the low numbers are still a limitation especially in regard to interviews outside of IR. This limitation was to some extent compensated by attempting to ensure a cross-section of roles, responsibilities and geographic location in the interviewees. Third, this review has not been able to engage with community members or local actors so perspectives on local engagement inevitably come from various levels of 'outsiders'.



Stakeholders conference to discuss learnings and plan next steps in Islamic Relief's Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Programme in the Philippines [Photo: Islamic Relief, 2020]

Triple nexus discourse and debates

Early efforts to improve the coordination between humanitarian aid and development-related actions started more than three decades ago in the 1980s by attempting to link relief, rehabilitation and development (LRRD). The primary intention of the LRRD strategy was to link short, medium and long-term solutions in the context.¹⁵ However, the LRRD approach faced criticism for being linear,¹⁶ not properly acknowledging the protractedness of many crises, the (in)ability of humanitarian actors to provide medium term solutions,^{17 18} and for having a top-down perspective of humanitarian aid.¹⁹

Considering the previous criticisms and the different challenges facing the international aid system today, the WHS in 2016 promoted the 'new way of working' (NWOW), which called for humanitarian and development actors to work together and advocated for the inclusion of peace to improve aid effectiveness and coherence and essentially achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)²⁰. This became known as the triple nexus or the humanitarian-development-peace (HDP) nexus.

"Through the HDP nexus, collaboration and cohesiveness are bringing us one step further along the path and even though we have been having this discussion for over 25 years, we are moving away from linear thinking. It is one more step in the right direction to move towards joint and shared programmes."
(Donor Interviewee)

In 2019, three years after the WHS, the OECD/DAC issued recommendations in response *"to the call for strengthened policy and commitments across key global frameworks including Agenda 2030, the Sustaining Peace resolutions and Agenda for Humanity, among others"*²¹ and strengthened coherence between humanitarian, development and peace operations to reduce risks and vulnerabilities, and ultimately end need.²² The DAC's triple nexus recommendations were adopted by 29 of its member states as well as the European Union (EU) and five United Nations (UN) agencies²³ in February 2019. This is seen by many as an important step to progressing the HDP nexus with a number of interviewees stating that OECD/DAC backing has added momentum to the triple nexus approach. However, many sector professionals still see the triple nexus as more theoretical than operational. As Howe notes, there

is *"significant confusion over what the triple nexus means in both conceptual and practical terms and how this approach concretely contributes to progress on the Sustainable Development Goals"*.²⁴

From the policy side, there are three primary challenges that need to be overcome for the HDP nexus to become a viable approach: a collective and widely accepted understanding and agreement on **what is involved in each nexus component**²⁵ and how these connect to one another; **financial and operational mechanisms** that are conducive to a triple nexus approach; and, where possible, **defining with national governments an HDP strategy** to support more effective aid initiatives and longer-term impacts in-country.



Erection of evacuation signage as part of the disaster risk reduction component of Islamic Relief's triple nexus programme in Indonesia [Photo: Islamic Relief, 2019]

A. Connecting the components of the nexus and the role of peace

The concept of the triple nexus is broadly defined as linking different components of aid to each other to move away from a siloed approach towards more collective outcomes.²⁶ Some people see the HDP nexus as three distinct areas of international aid; others consider the development component to include peace; while for others, peace has primarily a securitisation, militarisation, or peacekeeping connotation. The double nexus – humanitarian-development interventions – has been part of the conversation and practice for some time and has become an accepted part of the aid lexicon.²⁷ With the addition of peace to the nexus, a new layer of challenges have been added. Barakat and Milton describe the new scenario as follows:

“One major challenge facing the triple nexus is that the category of peace is the least clearly defined and understood, in particular by the humanitarian sector. Peace is a diffuse category that encompasses a wide array of international, regional, and local actors and institutions including on the ‘soft’ side of peacebuilding, conflict resolution, and the diplomatic architecture of the international system, and the ‘hard’ side of peace in terms of security, stabilisation and peacekeeping efforts.”²⁸

It is widely accepted that there are two types of peace – negative peace and positive peace. Galtung describes negative peace as the absence of violence, while positive peace is about ‘building better relations’, which includes justice, equity and cooperation.²⁹ One could see negative peace as the primary goal of peacekeeping and positive peace as the primary goal of peacebuilding. In 2010, Lederach and Appleby described peacebuilding as interventions that address “every stage of the conflict cycle and that it involves all members of a society in the non-violent transformation of conflict, the pursuit of social justice, and the creation of cultures of sustainable peace”.³⁰

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“The government stresses that the common goal underlines the coherence between humanitarian and development efforts as well as the importance of cooperation between the two. Also, Sida’s Operational Plan takes the principle of ‘leaving no one behind’ as a starting point and outlines that Sida should ‘develop methods, ways of working and routines that enable an effective interplay between humanitarian aid and long-term development, including peacebuilding contributions.’” (Sida, 2020, p. 5.)

International Alert, a peacebuilding organisation, defines peace as “when people are anticipating and managing conflicts without violence and are engaging in inclusive social change processes that improve the quality of life. They are doing so without compromising the possibility of continuing to do so in the future, or the possibility of others to do so. This is the idea of interdependent, positive peace”.³¹ It goes on to describe five interconnected factors that make positive peace in a person’s life, community, nation or global society:

“**Power:** How leadership is provided, how people inter-relate, and how they belong; **Income and assets:** How people make their living and manage their assets; **Fairness, equality and effectiveness** of the law and legal process: How justice is applied and received; **Safety:** How people can keep safe from harm; and **Wellbeing:** How people’s mental and physical wellbeing is maintained, and their aspirations are considered.”³²

Donor governments including the United Kingdom, Sweden, Norway, the United States, the Netherlands and the European Commission include in their descriptions of peace and peacebuilding both aspects of negative and positive peace. These include such activities as mediation, stability, conflict sensitivity, security sector (including enforcement) and conflict prevention at all levels.

The addition of the peace component to the nexus brings to the fore the fundamental tensions between “political agendas around security and stabilisation and needs-based principled humanitarian aid”.³³ This makes many aid actors wary, especially those working in the humanitarian sector. The primary pushback is that the triple nexus will further instrumentalise humanitarian interventions “for political purposes or to serve military/ security agendas to the detriment of responses to needs in accordance with humanitarian principles”.³⁴ This is seen as especially problematic when linking humanitarian and peace interventions because “some peacebuilding tools and interventions are not compatible with humanitarian principles. Military action against armed groups, for example, is a legitimate prerogative of states but must be kept separate from humanitarian responses”.³⁵ There remain some “deep reservations about the peace component of the nexus and the risks associated with blurred mandates and compromised humanitarian principles”.³⁶

IASC Results Group 4 on Humanitarian-Development Collaboration has sought to clarify the peace component of the triple nexus with its publication *Exploring Peace Within the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus (HDPN)*.³⁷

It argues that intervention in complex, protracted crises “requires more risk-tolerant development actions, attention by all actors to not undermine the action of others operating in the same space, and a commitment from humanitarian actors to be reflective of how they affect longer-term actions and objectives that can reduce humanitarian need over time, and how to programme in a way that also facilitates other actors’ efforts towards sustainable peace”.³⁸ However, it also makes clear that, ultimately, conflict resolution and the achievement of sustainable peace are political responsibilities and legal obligations of state governments. This work is a welcome reflection on the Peace component and an important step forward in the debate.

Peace is an integral part of “ending need” and “leaving no one behind” and without a focus on it, progress will continue to be fragmented without long-term societal change. The triple nexus provides an opportunity as well as a necessity to come to agreement on what is meant by peace and peacebuilding in a triple nexus approach. Uncomfortable or not, failing to recognise and acknowledge peace and its essential role in recovery in fragile and conflict affected contexts would be a naive error.

B. Financial mechanisms to support a triple nexus approach

There are two main interpretations on triple nexus funding and programming models: funding distinct (separate) projects that are nevertheless complementary, and funding merged projects that are principled (i.e. with explicit understanding of how each component fits and where the limits of neutrality and partiality are).³⁹ The hurdles primarily exist for the latter funding modality, which represents a greater divergence from business as usual.

For triple nexus approaches to be viable, some (not all) funding needs to be merged. Siloed structures and bureaucracies within individual donor agencies, and in recipient countries, need to be overcome with a view to move toward some kind of pooled funding (in-country) or combined funding streams (within individual donor agencies) in support of strategic objectives. At the same time, it is important to keep flexibility for implementers to deliver short-term, often unplanned, relief.⁴⁰ The change required puts a lot of pressure and expectations on financial systems that are often stuck in formality, accountability, and political and bureaucratic processes. This is especially true for development and peace funding.



Women involved in conflict transformation planning in the Philippines as part of Islamic Relief’s triple nexus programme [Photo: Islamic Relief, 2020]

Some donor governments and funding bodies are making efforts to shift their financial modalities. For instance, in December 2019, the Norwegian State Secretary to the UN said, *“we [Norway] are working to align humanitarian, development and peace financing more closely. Better financing across the nexus is one of the ways in which donors can create the right incentives for our partners to move beyond institutional silos and deliver results together, in line with the New Way of Working”*.⁴¹

Sida and the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (NMFA) are two donors that still see framework agreements (core funding) as critical to support organisations and help cover funding gaps.⁴² Frameworks allow organisations to be flexible as the needs in a community change, however, it is problematic that framework agreements do not necessarily incentivise organisations to coordinate efforts when they work in the same contexts. Donors could do more to encourage and facilitate coordination between actors, especially if the donor has in-country presence and conflict, development or humanitarian advisors, for example by facilitating joint context analysis.

A review of Sida and UK funding structures found that it is necessary for ‘central contingency financing mechanisms’ to plan for emergencies and to have reserve funding to be able to anticipate need and implement preventative activities.⁴³ Both Sweden and the UK have fairly *“decentralised decision-making in their development (and for the UK, humanitarian) funds”*.⁴⁴ While decentralised systems are generally more conducive to project adaptations because there is less bureaucracy compared with centralised systems, the degree of allowable adaptation often depends on the actual contract/grant manager’s appetite for risk and willingness to define some results in a less conventional manner. This makes adaptation ad hoc and personality-dependent, instead of context-driven.

“There was a general consensus that a nexus approach would only work with **multi-year funding**. This is because a one-year funding period does not give anyone enough time to think, build programmatic linkages with other organisations (or departments) and consult with a wider array of stakeholders. **Longer-term funding is essential.**” (Islamic Relief)

The model that would require the least amount of change from donors in regard to financial structures, would be for the triple nexus to remain primarily at the strategic policy level. This would mean that strategy documents would outline how peace, development and humanitarian goals fit together, but not fund them under one umbrella programme. The obvious problem with this approach is that it does not inherently push for change in policy and practice towards more coordination and collaboration. In this case, project implementers would have to find ways to “do” the triple nexus without the financial incentives. In reality, funding drives the majority of projects and implementation modalities on the ground, so this approach is unlikely to lead to meaningful change.

The EU’s Emergency Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF for Africa) provides an example of how funding agencies can support a coordinated, triple nexus response. In its annual report of 2020, EUTF states that it supports *“urgent development and security needs to ensure long-term stability and sustainable development...It has also worked along cross-border areas to stem conflict and boost economic development, and has contributed to pioneering the Global Compact on Refugees, reinforcing the humanitarian development-peace nexus”*.⁴⁵

Limited resources are an old narrative and combining funding to do more with less is a trend that is here to stay. However, the protracted nature of conflict today, the movement of people, and the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and subsequent economic downturn in donor countries, may force innovation in financial models out of necessity. While many governments recognise the need for more flexible funding models and there is a move toward pooled/basket funding in some recipient countries, donor governments have a long way to go both individually and collectively to find more effective ways to disperse funding in support of triple nexus approaches.

“For Sweden, examples of country teams using this **decentralised flexibility** include using development assistance both to support the humanitarian pooled fund in the DRC and to scale-up sustainable responses for Rohingya refugees and host communities in Bangladesh. At the same time, at headquarters level, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) has recently created a small resilience fund within its humanitarian budget (approximately 6% of the total budget) to ring-fence funding for discrete projects which did not quite fit the severe humanitarian needs profile, but which development programmes were not yet able to pick up, or in places where there was no development funding, such as parts of the Sahel.” (Dalrymple and Swithern 2019, 12)

C. National government engagement

The third key theme in the triple nexus discourse and interviews was how a focus on collective outcomes and triple nexus approaches may lead to more meaningful engagement between donor agencies and national governments.

As one interviewee put it *“Each pillar has something to offer as to its expertise in how to successfully engage with national level governments. This includes in regard to principled aid across the triple nexus.”* In ‘The Triple Nexus in Practice: Toward a New Way of Working in Protracted and Repeated Crises’, the Centre on International Cooperation states:

*“There are many situations in which donors bypass not only government systems, but also any discussion with government to coordinate interventions. Donors often have concerns that, even where national governments indicate a desire to coordinate the response in ways that respect humanitarian principles, capacity constraints mean they are not able to do so on the ground... however, prioritising national ownership is appropriate wherever key governmental sponsors genuinely support humanitarian principles.”*⁴⁶

Some, such as Nguya and Siddiqui, argue that maintaining a triple nexus approach at government level is critical for success: *“Often this means that national governments have adopted (or should adopt) dedicated laws to deal with protracted humanitarian crises, as well as consider including humanitarian crises and conflict drivers into national development or peace planning and analysis.”*⁴⁷ Others note that when national leadership is weak or highly corrupt, their involvement can create risks for triple nexus programming and those implementing them. In these cases, national governments are often bypassed by donors and implementing agencies.

When to bring in national governments and to what extent, is an ongoing dilemma - especially in the case of emergency relief and peacebuilding efforts, given that the national government can be part of the problem. On the other hand, completely bypassing the national government in all aspects of aid can also be ethically questionable given *“Governments bear the primary responsibility to respond to disasters, protect their own populations including displaced persons, abide by the refugee conventions, respect international humanitarian principles and law, and should drive the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs in their country.”*⁴⁸

The OECD-DAC’s Recommendation 2 suggests providing *“appropriate resourcing to empower leadership for cost-effective coordination across the humanitarian, development and peace architecture, by: Supporting local and national authorities, including legitimate non-state authorities wherever possible and appropriate and in accordance with international law.”*⁴⁹

“In Myanmar, we work on the double nexus H-D mainly in health areas – a little broader on GBV [Gender Based Violence], but to what extent that is actually building peace, is a big question mark. There is at least anecdotal proof that through building skills in health delivery systems, we are helping to build peace. (Donor Interviewee)

The UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF), which replaced the UNDAF in 2019 and lays out UN agency in-country cooperation agreements with national government, notes that *“The Cooperation Framework is first and foremost a partnership with the Government. Development, implementation, monitoring and reporting are co-led by the Government and anchored in national development priorities and cycles. The Cooperation Framework is informed by Government prioritization, planning, implementation and reporting vis-à-vis the 2030 Agenda.”*⁵⁰ The Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) continues, quite rightly, to sit outside the UNSDCF, but recent moves towards multi-year HRPs and greater articulation of the connections between the HRP and UNSDCF in-country will help to ensure greater coherence of plans. In theory then, the UNSDCF framework should provide strong support for strategic triple nexus approaches to be developed at the national level.

The guidance on collective outcomes developed with the IASC Results Working Group 4 in May 2020 provides further clarity for UN agencies on triple nexus approaches. It notes that determining success of actions must be done *“in consultation with government and leaders in all three pillars both within and outside the UN system.”*⁵¹ It goes on to give an example: *“In Burkina Faso, the RC [Resident Coordinator] found that the most effective way to build support for change was to hold individual meetings with leaders from each pillar [across the UN system] prior to joint discussions to understand their perspectives and attitudes on the HDPN before bringing the pillars together.”*⁵²

While the UN system empowers Resident Coordinators (RC) to bring UN agencies in-country together to overcome systemic divisions, no equivalent role exists within large donor embassies. As a result, donor governments in-country sometimes struggle between themselves to come to agreement on priorities, as one interviewee stated. Divisions within donor embassies compounds the difficulty of negotiating with national government. Ultimately, these divisions need to be overcome to enable humanitarian, development and peace operations in-country to be coherent, complementary and efficient, so that donors receive the best possible value for money and communities receive the service they need. This requires a step change in political will and leadership among donor governments and their embassy representatives.

Lessons learnt from the EU Delegations to Myanmar and Nigeria on triple nexus approaches

- Plan for an integrated approach linking immediate response, development and peace work.
- Build trust between all nexus actors.
- Go deep in your contextual analyses, triangulate, collect first-source information and tailor your action.⁵³

To summarise, this section discussed three challenges that the triple nexus faces. The first challenge is to **come to a consensus on what the peace component means** in practice and how it should be connected to the other two components. The discussions need to be inclusive and recognise the different experiences and mandates of organisations as well as differing country contexts. This includes delineating the difference between security focused interventions and community level peacebuilding efforts. Ignoring 'peace' is not an option. The second challenge is donor financing modalities. While there are some positive examples of change, in most cases, **financial systems are still too rigid and unable to adapt** between short-term and long-term needs as the context evolves. Without improving financial modalities, it is unlikely that the triple nexus will become more than a fleeting trend. The third challenge – managing strategic engagement between donor governments, UN agencies and national governments – is being tackled by the UN with reforms to the role of the RC and more intentional consideration of the connections between the HRP and the UNSDCF. **Donor governments, especially those with a large presence in a particular country, should follow this example by stepping up political will and leadership to overcome their own divisions.** Getting the best value for money is absolutely critical in the face of rapidly rising need and global pressures on official development assistance (ODA) which have worsened with the health and economic ramifications of COVID-19.

Inter-tribe cricket tournament to foster inter-tribal trust and social cohesion in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, Pakistan [Photo: Islamic Relief, 2020]



Triple nexus projects in practice

The majority of those interviewed felt strongly that the HDP nexus was still more theoretical than operational and that there remain many important questions and dilemmas before it can truly take root. However, over the past four years a number of projects have been implemented that explicitly state the use of a triple nexus approach. This section reviews learning from triple nexus projects implemented by organisations other than IR. In many cases, the results presented in this section align with the responses we heard during interviews with IR staff, donors and academics.

A. Framing the triple nexus

In the literature and in many of the interviews, it was seen as helpful for a project using a triple nexus approach to fit into a broader framework with overarching goals. A focus on goals such as 'leave no one behind' or 'building resilient societies' helps remove the tension of one of the nexus components being perceived as more important than the others. It also allows for locally important components that might be seen by some as outside of the triple nexus, such as climate adaptation, to be included.

A number of organisations use resilience as a framing lens for triple nexus approaches. According to Mercy Corps:

*"Accountability to this [resilience] agenda would further inform a coherent triple nexus strategy orienting collective action around three core practices that include: 1) rapid, real-time analysis of risk factors that drive and perpetuate fragility; 2) support to local systems and institutions to strengthen sources of resilience; and 3) short-term violence prevention paired with efforts to transform the structural drivers of conflict."*⁵⁴

ActionAid also uses a resilience lens, which it sees as key to ensuring integrated programming. It sees its humanitarian interventions as taking:

*"a long-term approach to recovery, working with communities over 2 – 3 years or more to enable them to recover...This means a focus on how we engage with communities and not just the provision of basic resources. Such strategies need to focus on building the resilience of affected communities to equip them with the knowledge, skills, resources and governance they need to mitigate or withstand future shocks and stresses."*⁵⁵

With this integrated approach, ActionAid also have programming on governance, education, women's rights, peacebuilding and natural resources which are *"linked and designed, so they can all contribute to building resilience"*.⁵⁶

Similarly, a review of projects implemented by various UN agencies in Colombia, Nigeria, Somalia and Mali stressed the importance of focusing on resilience, stating that: "Humanitarian actors also increasingly acknowledge... that they need to do more to ensure their interventions contribute to build the resilience of affected populations and contribute to *making conditions more conducive for development actors to engage earlier on in fragile contexts*."⁵⁷

"Resilience is the broader framework and the way to get there is through the triple nexus and alleviating poverty. Resilience is what we want to achieve, and one way is applying an HDP approach. The EU in 2013 concluded that the resilience approach includes everything from conflicts to climate, disaster risk reduction (DRR) and governance. It's all under there." (Donor Interviewee)

Resilience framing is just one of several potential frames for the HDP nexus, all of which have certain strengths and weaknesses. While a resilience frame offers a suitably broad and flexible conceptual lens, one of the weaknesses is that it can shift the responsibility of recovery onto communities excessively which could overshadow the responsibility of those who have created the need, such as the national government in some cases. Regardless of the most appropriate framework, interventions should, whenever possible, holistically and comprehensively address the underlying root causes of conflict.

B. The peace component in practice

Strong advocates for the inclusion of the peace component in the nexus argue that without a focus on peace, building resilience in communities will be difficult and ending need impossible. The 2020 State of Fragility Report noted that, “While 18.4 of the 26 million total refugees in 2019 originated from fragile contexts, approximately half are living in contexts that are themselves fragile, with seven of the top ten refugee-hosting developing contexts being fragile.”⁵⁸

It goes on to say that “Engagement in fragile contexts should thus prioritise prevention always, development when possible and humanitarian action when necessary.”⁵⁹ With shrinking ODA,⁶⁰ emergency relief will never meet all the needs of the most vulnerable and thus, emergency relief needs to be balanced with development and preventative interventions, including peacebuilding.

Positive peace, as outlined by the IASC:

“comprises the attitudes, institutions and structures that create and sustain peaceful societies. It implies creating social relationships that contribute to mutual well-being, creating an optimum environment in which human potential can flourish. The same factors that create positive peace also lead to many other favourable outcomes that societies aspire to, such as thriving economies, inclusive development, low levels of inequality, and higher levels of resilience.”⁶¹

What this means for organisations implementing “peace” programming depends on the organisation’s mandate. Some will naturally lean towards security sector reform or disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration; others may apply their expertise to mediation or justice and governance reform; and some may use their grassroots connections to focus on social cohesion or community-based peacebuilding. NGOs like IR, that specialise in local humanitarian or development initiatives and have built a locally trusted presence over time, are most suited to community-based peacebuilding and social cohesion programming, including supporting local government accountability for peace and conflict resolution. For example, Oxfam frames peace as a bottom-up, community-based approach that addresses root causes (‘positive peace’), rather than being framed in terms of security (‘negative peace’).⁶²

As the OECD-DAC recommendations stress, projects that use triple nexus approaches should always be based on regular context analysis⁶³ to understand the needs of communities and develop relevant activities. At the strategic level, this would mean that a context analysis is done jointly with as diverse a group as possible, including donors, UN agencies, NGOs, national level civil society organisations and government entities where possible. If it is a regional strategy, this would mean engagement with key actors across the region. At the community level, a context analysis should involve diverse stakeholders in the community as well as at various levels of government. While the analysis is important, the dialogue process that goes into the analysis is equally important because it can be used to bring actors together to discuss issues and needs and begin to create trust and a common vision.

Triple Nexus starting with peace and social cohesion: The Central African Inter-Religious Platform

“The Central African Inter-Religious Platform was founded in 2012 by the Evangelical Alliance, the Islamic Community, and the Episcopal Conference of CAR. In a particularly tense conflict, they partnered with CRS [Catholic Relief Services] and USAID [United States Agency for International Development] to launch a national campaign encouraging social cohesion and peace. They trained hundreds of religious leaders, civil society members, government officials and even armed group representatives to become ‘ambassadors of peaceful coexistence.’

LFAs [Local Faith Actors] are particularly influential in the country and they can help implement peace activities with a positive long-term impact on the conflict, reducing the needs for humanitarian aid in the future and enable the implementation of more sustainable development activities.” (p. 14)

One of the key conclusions is that “LFAs already operationalize a Triple Nexus approach by a) responding to the needs of the communities they are located within and serve, which transcend humanitarian-development-peace silos. Community needs are rarely isolated within one categorization or the other. For example, providing livelihood support that fosters inter-community relations and social cohesion.” (de Wolf and Wilkinson 2019, 5)

For community-level projects, specific peace activities should be derived from the context analysis and articulated clearly and precisely so that all stakeholders understand what the peace component will actually mean in practice. This is absolutely critical to overcome ambiguity. It is important to always remember that ideas of 'peace' are connected to both human and military security and that peacebuilding is a much over-used, non-specific umbrella term which has, in the past, been used to justify whatever one wants, from economic development, to community dialogue or even humanitarian relief.



Community stakeholders discussing learnings in Islamic Relief's triple nexus approach to Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Programme in the Philippines [Photo: Islamic Relief, 2020]

C. Flexible systems and skills are needed to progress triple nexus programmes

Delivering a triple nexus project in a way that ensures the progression of both short-term and long-term goals requires attention, diplomacy, strong project management and skill. Being able to manoeuvre between short-term emergency relief and long-term development and peace goals in a protracted conflict context is a challenging task for many reasons, including: (1) funding modalities rarely provide the level of flexibility and timeframe needed; (2) each component has its own specific culture and ways of working; and (3) working with communities to meet their evolving needs is time intensive. To overcome these challenges, systems need to be fit for purpose and staff need to be highly capable to drive adaptations. This is particularly important in triple nexus projects because they are inherently more complex as are the contexts where they are likely to be implemented. Both of these factors mean the risks are multiplied.

Lessons learnt from Oxfam's ongoing programming using triple nexus approaches

- the need for holistic, integrated contextual analyses that still ensure there is space for stand-alone, needs-based humanitarian assessments;
- long-term strategies that support systemic transformation across long-term cycles, particularly in fragile contexts; and
- investment in adaptive management.

These should allow programmes to remain agile and responsive to changes in context and enable capacity-sharing and collaboration between humanitarian, development and peace actors that helps implementers to step out of their comfort zones. Furthermore, using holistic analysis to inform cross-disciplinary indicators of success would incentivize work between humanitarian and development staff. Therefore, it is important to note that the 'how' is as important as the 'what' – when it comes to successfully implementing nexus approaches.

- Oxfam Discussion Paper (Oxfam, June 2019, 5)

Delivering a project using a triple nexus approach requires strong, motivated management, skilled technical staff and clear processes to identify changes in the context and be able to adjust activities appropriately. It requires agile financial systems and teams that have a sound understanding of the project goals, as well as clarity on which objectives are negotiable and which are not. Financial, management, IT and monitoring systems all need to be agile – more so than in a single component project where implementation is generally more linear.

Whether the project is managed through a multi-mandated organisation or as a consortium, the staff who manage these processes need to be able to manage the complexities of a nexus project as they evolve. This includes ensuring that programming tools such as context analysis, theory of change and logframes are regularly revisited to ensure they remain valid and are capturing the different elements within triple nexus programmes as well as the different programming goals. A general problem with theories of change is that they often end up too broad, making claims and connections that are wildly optimistic, which was found to be especially the case for triple nexus approaches. However, some organisations are attempting to address this issue. For example, UNHR and UNDP are using what they call a theory of change diagram. This tool is a table that allows the project team to outline how each component of the triple nexus should work together for a given project.⁶⁴

Agility, and the ability to pivot between elements as the context changes, is core to using a triple nexus approach and a logframe is seen as too rigid to capture this fluidity. While there has yet to be a shift away from theories of change and logframes towards more adaptive programming measurements, there are some examples of alternative approaches. Sida *“is adopting a new learning-based adaptive approach to results-based management, which focuses on long-term sustainable results and encourages real-time changes to programming. Like the triple nexus, this is iterative and experimental and currently far from becoming standard practice. Pilots for adaptive programming and budgeting under [Sida’s] the Africa Department intend to provide wider learning.”*⁶⁵ World Vision is also piloting a new approach to Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL) which works in an adaptive manner using context indicators which allow for the project and community to monitor specific aspects of the changing context overtime.⁶⁶

As triple nexus projects continue to be implemented, ways of working are tested and learning is shared, the hope is that staff and systems will also adapt and become more effective and efficient at addressing the inter-connected needs of communities in a more integrated way. However, for this to happen, there needs to be a reckoning with the time-poor culture in the aid industry which is perpetuated by funding which focuses solely on project delivery and support to beneficiaries. These objectives need to be balanced with support to improving internal systems and staff development to deliver and understand the impact of triple nexus projects.



A young man supported to become a motorbike mechanic under the livelihoods component of Islamic Relief’s triple nexus programme in Pakistan [Photo: Islamic Relief, 2021]

D. Long-term partnerships and localisation

In Section Three, which focused on triple nexus discourse, engagement with national level government was primarily reviewed from a policy perspective. In this section, engagement with national and local actors will be reviewed from an implementation perspective.

The triple nexus approach in practice should “Reinforce, rather than replace, local systems and solutions”⁶⁷ To do this, context analysis and a thorough stakeholder analysis are key tools to determine who to engage with at the national and local levels, from government authorities to community members. Interviewees raised the importance of ensuring, whenever possible, both national and local level government is aware of and involved in a project. In a triple nexus approach, this most likely will involve multiple ministries, which could make it especially time consuming.

Since humanitarian needs are frequently related to the presence of social conflict and fractured or weak governance systems, the need for long-term engagement with different governmental bodies may sometimes be challenging or even risky.⁶⁸ Closer government involvement in project delivery made some interviewees from a humanitarian perspective nervous because it was seen as potentially interfering with principles of neutrality and impartiality. However, others noted that it is much easier to get governments interested in short-term (humanitarian) interventions than longer-term peacebuilding, which comes with less tangible deliverables and may be viewed as more ‘political’ by government actors.

To protect humanitarian space and principles, it is important to keep in mind the overarching humanitarian imperative that “action should be taken to prevent or alleviate human suffering arising out of disaster or conflict, and that nothing should override this principle.”⁶⁹ This is also at the heart of most development and peace interventions. This imperative should never be held hostage to other goals and if this would happen by implementing a triple nexus programme then another approach should be used. Furthermore, the benefits of using a triple nexus approach need to outweigh the harm or risks.

Some of the challenges of negotiating a triple nexus approach with multiple government departments include finding ways to align the project’s goals to different government agendas, and balancing competing priorities among government. For instance, some ministries or governmental actors may see security as more important than ‘positive peace’, or as a pre-condition for development. Therefore, it is especially critical that a triple nexus approach is led by experienced staff with diplomatic ability to negotiate around multiple, competing government agencies and agendas.

Since an important aspect of the triple nexus is an ongoing iterative process of engagement with communities to address their short, medium and long-term needs, the triple nexus could in theory help to advance the localisation agenda. In a similar way to community-driven development (CDD), the triple nexus could help rebalance the shortcomings of top-down, often “*exclusionary reconstruction processes*”.⁷⁰ Using participatory approaches creates a way to engage with local partners and community members – it gives meaningful “*roles and responsibilities to local NGOs, private sector, and localised governmental actors...It also has a complementary view of humanitarian and development activities that will strengthen local partners’ capacities*”.⁷¹ Long-term partnerships between international actors, local organisations and communities could also help to address deeper social issues, such as issues around gender and inclusion.

Working with local partners remains a key component of engaging with communities, but it also poses a challenge. As one interview stated, “*we sometimes engage with local partners when they are strong enough, but in some countries, civil society is very weak and space is shrinking so it is more effective for us to work directly with community members and beneficiaries*”. Unfortunately, many interviewees still thought the localisation agenda remains primarily theoretical with little evidence that it is actually enabling change.



A community Peace and Development Facilitator in the Philippines
[Photo: Islamic Relief, 2020]

“We are making aid a difficult science. The reality is we go in the community, we try to understand their needs, and then we try to help them. There is nothing new in this thinking and our local partners know this best.” (NGO Interviewee)

Many interviewees also had the view that partnerships with communities and local organisations are still mostly focused on project deliverables and not the development of meaningful, mutually supportive partnerships. In many cases the same is true for engagement with the government, which often is primarily based on the need to deliver a project instead of supporting a longer-term agenda of building resilience or ending need. If donors and international organisations are committed to community resilience and clear on what that means in specific contexts, partnerships will have to change from focusing on project delivery to focusing on long-term societal change, including early risk identification and prevention, the development of strong national civil society and genuine cross-disciplinary cooperation to address people's rights, needs and risks. This will inevitably mean fundamental changes to funding modalities and the international architecture of aid. Without fundamental change to overcome pathological problems within the humanitarian, development and peacebuilding architectures, a triple nexus approach, like many other past attempts, will fall short of its potential.



A community youth group discussing social cohesion issues in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, Pakistan [Photo: Islamic Relief, 2020]

Lessons from Care's ongoing nexus approaches in Jordan, Palestine and Syria.

- **“Context matters:** Contributing to resilience can be done in many contexts and ways. So, programmes must be strongly rooted in local contexts, making use of evidence and different types of analysis, e.g. of political economy, power, fragility and conflict, gender dynamics and local market systems.
- **Gender opportunities:** More opportunities for gender-transformative change open up when the nexus lens is applied. In times of fragility, there are extra burdens and vulnerabilities for women and girls, but also openings and fluid social norms. Through sound analysis and locally rooted project design, transformative work can take place.
- **Partnerships matter:** They should be as local as possible, while reaching out to less traditional partners (such as the private sector) as well. This also means searching for complementarity to other (local) actions. A nexus approach does not mean working on every aspect of the human-development-peace spectrum; consortia and innovative partnerships can make a crucial contribution by pooling resources, sharing expertise and combining knowledge/learning production to multiply impact.
- **Management matters:** Implementing successful nexus programming requires our management systems to be much more adaptive, flexible, and open to learning, with a strong commitment of managers to communicate across traditional silos (of humanitarian-development-peace). This approach will also ask more from our support systems, stressing the need for high programme quality (M&E, HR systems).” (Doing Nexus differently – Lessons from the Middle East and North Africa, 2019, 23)

Islamic Relief's triple nexus programme

The purpose of this section is to review the learnings from Islamic Relief's (IR's) programme that piloted a triple nexus approach. The findings are based on 27 interviews with IR staff around the globe, the learning partner from Coventry University's Centre for Trust, Peace and Social Relations (CTPSR) and document reviews. It identifies the main components that have been critical to the programme's success, as well as structural/operational issues and challenges specific to the triple nexus. The review looks at lessons learnt on three levels: strategic, organisational and project. Whenever possible, these are linked to OECD/DAC's criteria for evaluation.

IR was established in 1984 to deliver emergency relief in response to famine in Africa. Today, it has offices in more than 40 countries with programming focused both on short-term humanitarian aid and long-term change. With a strong commitment to the communities where it works, it sees the need for long-term interventions to be as important as short-term relief in order to move towards more peaceful and stable societies. IR is a multi-mandated organisation working extensively on double nexus (humanitarian-development) approaches.⁷² When the opportunity presented itself to apply for a programme that incorporated humanitarian and development with peacebuilding activities, IR took the opportunity.



Youth leaders at a youth peace camp organised by Islamic Relief in the Philippines to establish the Maguindanao Peacebuilders Federation of youth groups [Photo: Islamic Relief, 2021]

Islamic Relief's peacebuilding projects

- 2018-2021 Conflict Prevention and Peace Programme in Kenya, Pakistan, Indonesia and the Philippines (funded by Sida)
- 2007-2009 Conflict transformation and peacebuilding programme in Yemen (funded by UK and Dutch governments)
- 2012-2014 Community conflict resolution and reconciliation in Darfur (funded by UNDP)
- 2014 Promoting peacebuilding and hygiene awareness among Jordanian host community and Syrian refugees (funded by IRUSA)



Young students in Maguindanao, the Philippines, participating in a training session on using social media for peace advocacy [Photo: Islamic Relief, 2020]

A. Overview of IR's Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Programme

In June 2018, IR began a 36-month⁷³ programme titled 'Addressing the Imbalance – Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding in Fragile Contexts' (referred to henceforth as the Programme) with funding from Sida.⁷⁴ The Programme is being implemented in Pakistan, Kenya, the Philippines and Indonesia⁷⁵ and although it has an overall peacebuilding goal, it works using a triple nexus approach with activities in humanitarian, development and peace areas.

The Programme is "a peacebuilding initiative aimed at significantly contributing to the peaceful transition of selected fragile and conflict-affected communities...and enhancing their resilience to conflict, so that they can resolve and manage their disputes and differences in a non-violent manner."⁷⁶ It has an overall budget of SEK 47,929,700 (approximately GBP 4 million) over the three-year period. With a strong focus on learning, the Programme has been adapting and improving throughout the implementation period and some of these experiences are included in this section.

From the initial Sida solicitation, a nexus approach was recognised, although not explicitly stated:

Theory of change of the triple nexus Peace Programme

- "Peace will come through transformative attitudinal and behavioural change of a mass of individuals, particularly women and youth, and key institutional partners.
- Peace will emerge through the breaking down of isolation, polarisation, division, prejudice and stereotypes within and amongst groups.
- If we mobilise enough support for peaceful resolution of disputes and for promotion of tolerance, then political leaders will listen and take action.
- If formal and informal institutions within government, civil society and the private sector perform in an effective and responsive way providing reasonable livelihoods, stability and quality of life then the extent of core grievances and conflict would decline." (IR, 2018, Application document to Sida)

"...explore possibilities to support initiatives that could contribute to strengthened synergies between humanitarian-development and peacebuilding objectives ... [and] to support actors with dual humanitarian-development mandates who apply the full range of a conflict-sensitive approach. The initiative aims to allow agencies with dual mandates to find synergies between its humanitarian and development interventions to contribute to strengthening the resilience, human security and inclusive participation of individuals and local communities through conflict prevention and peacebuilding initiatives."⁷⁷

Similarly, IR's proposal did not mention a triple nexus approach, but did draw together the three components of the nexus into each of the proposed country projects. Given that peace was the overarching goal, development and humanitarian activities also focused on supporting peace dividends. For example, the activities supporting youth economic activities were designed to build resilience so that youth would have livelihood opportunities drawing them away from violence. Humanitarian interventions were designed to provide immediate relief, from which opportunities to discuss issues of social cohesion could be drawn.



A training session for students in Datu Hoffer, the Philippines, on using social media for peace advocacy [Photo: Islamic Relief, 2020]

Table 2: IR’s Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Programme illustrative Activities⁷⁸

Peacebuilding	Development	Humanitarian	Links
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dialogues: -links between masculinity, conflict and GBV from an Islamic perspective -between conflicting clans/tribes/villages • Training on dispute resolution skills for civil society groups, including women and youth • Peace festivals • Support to implementation of local peace agreements • Community-based peacebuilding with women, youth, and other vulnerable groups to build sustainable, inclusive civil society groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills and vocational training for women and youth (including displaced and returnee populations) • Livestock restocking of returnees • Establishment and mentoring of community organisations and youth groups (for sustained development and peace management) • Trainings on savings and loan schemes to adopt a culture of savings as collateral for loans to expand economic activities • Establishment of business co-operatives, such as mushroom farming and baking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support to returnees in addressing immediate needs for their reintegration • Distribution of emergency bags to vulnerable groups along with training on how to utilize the bag during disasters • DRR training and planning with diverse actors including those involved in other components of the project • Natural Resource Management training to reduce risk of fighting/ conflict over water and land • Reconstruction of damaged water infrastructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Humanitarian support to returnees linked to livelihoods support and support to local governance of basic services • DRR planning focused on both natural disaster and conflict risk mitigation • Community members (especially youth) were involved in more than one area to provide an integrated package of support to the most vulnerable people • Conflict prevention linked to emerging disaster risks and development issues

**Specific activities depending on the country project and the communities’ need. This is not a comprehensive list of all activities implemented.

**Projects ebbed and flowed depending on the contextual changes. In one case, because of an emergency (flooding), priorities shifted to relief and then shifted back to longer-term programming.

B. The triple nexus at the organisational level

Finding: The triple nexus approach has a strong alignment with and relevance to IR's vision and mission.

IR's vision is: "Inspired by our Islamic faith and guided by our values, we envisage a world where communities are empowered, social obligations are fulfilled, and people respond as one to the suffering of others". Its mission is:

"Exemplifying our Islamic values, we will mobilise resources, build partnerships and develop local capacity as we work to:

- Enable communities to mitigate the effect of disasters, prepare for their occurrence and respond by providing relief, protection and recovery.
- Promote integrated development and environmental custodianship with a focus on sustainable livelihoods.
- Support the marginalised and vulnerable to voice their needs and address root causes of poverty."⁷⁹

IR clearly has a multi-mandated vision and mission. Its humanitarian interventions cover emergency relief and community mobilisation as a result of both violent conflict and climate related disasters, while its focus on integrated development and sustainable livelihoods take a broad view of human security. The double nexus of humanitarian and development is implied in IR's vision and was seen by all

staff interviewed as embedded in IR's ways of working. The focus on local advocacy, agency and root causes of poverty presumably includes all causes, whether they relate to disaster, conflict, inequality, climate change or inadequate income. Given that IR works in countries which are often in the midst of acute conflict or just coming out of it, some focus on stabilisation, early recovery, resilience and durable solutions is likely to be important in any initiative.

Peace and conflict issues cannot easily be separated from humanitarian and development support in many contexts because humanitarian crises, poverty and vulnerability are very often both a cause of conflict and a product of conflict. For instance, humanitarian protection includes the protection of civilians during conflict, and this could easily encompass community conflict prevention, negotiation and mediation efforts to facilitate humanitarian aid delivery and the re-opening of markets and trade routes. In terms of IR's development objectives, a lack of sustainable peace will negatively affect communities' capacities to address disasters, build and maintain sustainable livelihoods, or address the roots causes of poverty. Community development processes cannot easily ignore the impact of conflict and INGOs are often already aware of the need to manage local competition over the resources they bring in during the course of their work. This is integral to conflict sensitive development work, but in some cases more intentional community peacebuilding may also be needed. In summary, both double nexus (humanitarian-development; development-peace; or humanitarian-peace) and triple nexus approaches (depending on the context) are a good fit for IR at the strategic level.



Community conflict mapping workshop in Maguindanao, the Philippines
[Photo: Islamic Relief, 2020]

Finding: Many staff remain unclear and uncertain about the peace component of the triple nexus and its fit within IR's programming.

Culturally, IR continues to grapple with what peace programming means for the organisation and how and when it should engage in it. For an organisation with strong humanitarian roots, some interviewees felt that IR should not be engaged in peace programming because it moves IR away from the levels of neutrality and impartiality that they are comfortable with. However, most recognise that at some, albeit hopefully low, level humanitarian aid and activities need to make decisions that compromise the principles of neutrality and impartiality because all aid at some level is political. Also, the majority of interviewees saw the futility of only responding to emergencies without a longer-term vision to prevent their recurrence.

Another key concern among interviewees was that working on peace and conflict issues may create safety and security risks for staff if they are seen to be aligned with one side in certain contexts. Some also felt that peacebuilding was too closely linked with the visible imposition of physical security, such as through UN peacekeeping missions, and this presented a high level of discomfort for many staff. Islamic Relief's guidance to staff in its publication **'Introduction to Peacebuilding'** is seen as a useful first step for the organisation in articulating what its peace programming may look like, although uptake is still ongoing as awareness levels varied.⁸⁰

"The peacebuilding work could infringe on the humanitarian principles. We should not work for any political agenda which is a risk with peacebuilding. However, we are still working with international humanitarian law without a clear agenda and minimum standards for rights which can be seen as political - or women's rights or other rights - these could all be understood as politically motivated. The contradiction has to be there and has to be something that we continue to discuss."
(IR Interviewee)

Finding: Staff are more open to IR working on peace programming when it focuses on community-level social cohesion programming and makes sense in the specific context.

The most common sentiment among interviewees was that IR should focus its peace programming primarily on social cohesion. Social cohesion is part of IR's ethos and has often been part of its delivery of development activities and, in some cases, humanitarian relief.

In the past, interviewees said, social cohesion activities were sometimes implemented in order to move forward development and humanitarian objectives and these activities were considered part of how work was done without connecting it to a peace outcome. Ensuring social cohesion during aid delivery is a standard operating procedure for INGOs and is part of using a conflict sensitive approach to ensure that do-no-harm principles are followed. However, incorporating activities to maintain or build social cohesion during the delivery of aid or development initiatives does not necessarily mean it is a double or triple nexus project. Without explicit goals related to peace or conflict prevention, it is simply good development or humanitarian programming. Furthermore, in many cases, social cohesion fell outside the project's objectives and was untracked, so it is unclear how coherent and effective these approaches were.

Some interviewees felt that support to community trust-building and reconciliation is an area of opportunity for IR in the appropriate contexts, although at present the organisation has limited experience in these areas. Others felt that IR was well placed to do more long-term community-based peace programming, arguing for increased peace programming in places where IR has strong levels of trust. Those who were more nuanced in their responses stated that peace programming should always be assessed on a case-by-case basis, because in some contexts working on peace issues might be best done quietly or not at all.

The Programme has given IR the opportunity both to elevate and formalise peace programming or social cohesion activities, and develop a methodology of peace measurement using Everyday Peace Indicators developed jointly with communities and the learning adviser.⁸¹ In most cases, IR's move to be more explicit about its peace programming efforts (albeit while being conflict sensitive about the terminology) was welcomed as it was felt that this would make it easier to learn and measure effectiveness and impact.

Radio programmes cutting across the triple nexus, Kenya

In the Kenya project, one of the issues identified was the lack of community knowledge, information sharing and discussions on sensitive topics such as community conflicts, livelihood issues, natural resource management among pastoralists and early warning of risks. With this knowledge, the team worked with community radio stations to produce talk shows that opened communication channels with community leaders and members on important local issues. The talk shows included diverse voices such as government and clan leaders, faith leaders, women and youth. This diversity has contributed to a change in the local, patriarchal narrative and demonstrated that a wider array of community members have knowledge and opinions that are important for understanding and resolving community issues. For example, several female madrasa teachers were asked to speak on the programme about peace from an Islamic perspective which both promoted peace messages and women's voices in public discussions.

Frequent insecurity and violence in the areas where the project is implemented makes regular travel difficult and poses critical risks to team members. This results in postponements of planned activities, delays in payments, changes of routes and, potentially, being caught in the crossfire of outbreaks of violence. On the ground, activities can only be implemented when the situation is relatively safe. The COVID-19 pandemic further curtailed movement and face-to-face dialogue. Because of these movement restrictions, remote programming through the radio programme has become an even more important part of the programme.

Lessons Learnt: The radio programmes provided a way to reach communities when the team was unable to travel because of insecurity. It also increased the reach of the project, promoted inclusion and addressed some of the concerns of communities. - Adapted from Kenya Learning Report, 2019 Annual Progress Report, and interviews

Finding: There is wide acceptance of conflict sensitivity, specifically context analysis, gender analysis and do-no-harm principles.

IR staff and other interviewees agreed that the promotion and uptake of conflict sensitivity was an important step towards better programming and risk management, from both an organisational and a programmatic perspective. The overall sentiment of interviewees is that conflict sensitivity is a must in all projects. It is especially necessary in triple nexus projects which are more complex and have more risks associated with them. While there is wide acceptance for conflict sensitivity, most felt that peacebuilding activities must be done only when it is suitable for the context and the potential benefits outweigh the risks. One interview stated:

"We should be mainstreaming conflict sensitivity, inclusion and gender sensitivity and not necessarily aiming for peacebuilding outcomes. If there are areas where we can do peacebuilding, then we should look at those, but we have to be careful and ensure that we 'do no harm.'"

In the four countries implementing triple nexus projects, the context analyses were seen to drive activities because they were based on communities' needs. Therefore, interventions were thought to have strong relevance and effectiveness. Context analysis was also seen as highly relevant to understanding and managing risks in terms of staff safety and conflicts dynamics in communities. From those who are working on the triple nexus projects, there is some indication of impact and learning on conflict sensitivity, how it is integrated into projects and how it differs from peacebuilding. There is also more work to do, primarily with those outside the Programme, to expand understanding about what conflict sensitivity is and how it can be integrated into all projects.



A woman listening to the radio in Mandera County, Kenya [Photo: Islamic Relief, 2021]

C. The triple nexus at the programmatic level

Finding: Peace, peacebuilding and conflict language causes real challenges and potential risk in some contexts.

In the country programmes implementing the triple nexus approach, there was initial confusion about the definitions and use of the terms ‘peace’, ‘peacebuilding’ and ‘conflict’. This also posed real challenges and risks in some of the contexts where governments had a very specific view of peace and conflict and perceived that having programming with these themes would be admitting to having conflict and needing peacebuilding in their country. The view of some interviewees was that people who heard about the programme sometimes assumed IR was engaging with, or aligned to, the ‘other’ side, whether that be with the government, opposition or a militant group, thus creating potential risk for staff members as well as challenges for programme implementation. In one example, in the Philippines, some people misconstrued the term ‘peacebuilding’, believing at first that IR was going to construct a physical ‘peace’ building. The cultural sensitivity and contextual understanding of peace and conflict concepts and terminology is a lesson that has been documented in IR’s Annual Progress Report for 2019, which states:

“There is very little understanding about what ‘peacebuilding’ means and there may not be an equivalent word in the local language... Furthermore, people are more used to securitised definitions of ‘peace’ from political discourses, so they expect any projects related to peace to be delivered by security/military actors and have little understanding of community-based peacebuilding and the roles of communities themselves in managing tensions and disputes... The key learning was that the project team need to discuss internally and agree on the language used to describe and name the project, possibly testing out on a few people first, before communicating extensively with communities.”⁸²

Finding: Engaging with the right national and local government authorities from the beginning of the project is crucial to gain their buy-in and support in each component of the nexus.

The IR country projects had strong connections to local government authorities and the proposal highlights this engagement: “The programme puts a premium on the role of duty bearers – local government officials, security sector and culture bearers⁸³ and schools in promoting and acting for peace. It also emphasises the community’s participation in peace dialogues.”⁸⁴ There are many examples of how the programme worked with local authorities and, in many cases, with national authorities too, which is a notable strength. However, there were high levels of sensitivities around the terminology used to describe the project in some of the countries, and differing government priorities were navigated with varying levels of success. When the programme succeeded in engaging authorities, it supported the development of governant bodies and civil society, and the engagement between the two - both of which help support democratic processes.

“Understanding the conflict issues in the places where interventions are happening, and the politics of conflict, that takes real peacebuilding skill. Staff need to be retrained and ‘upskilled’ to understand what peacebuilding is and how to do it. A person can’t just go in and do peacebuilding. There needs to be instruction, practice and stages that one goes through to be effective. We can’t expect people without training to deliver peacebuilding activities.” (Academic Interviewee)



A youth group leader speaking at a youth peace camp organised by Islamic Relief in the Philippines [Photo: Islamic Relief, 2021]

Finding: Peace programmes that integrate a triple nexus approach need to have a strong focus on ensuring those engaged in implementation understand how the components fit together to achieve the programme's goals.

Country teams saw the learning component of the programme as extremely important – learning from one another and sharing with other teams implementing the programme – but it was felt that more opportunities could have been created to share and learn from one another. To quote one interviewee:

“It is important that we are continuously learning and improving to understand the impact of the triple nexus to ensure that we are coordinated and complementary. We are working on the problem as a whole and looking at the bigger picture through this approach and with the community”.

Many interviewees stated that because of the complexity of IR's triple nexus programme, there should have been more focus at the beginning on ensuring understanding of the conflict prevention and peace nature of the programme, as well as how each component would contribute to the overarching peace goal. Furthermore, because the majority of staff did not have formal conflict prevention and peacebuilding training, it was unclear to them how the project was to be implemented at first. Country teams would have valued longer and more frequent discussions at the beginning of the programme to agree on how the programme was to be implemented as a whole and to feel more connected to the other country teams involved. As one interview put it, *“The most challenging thing is how to prepare the team. We need to blend activities and relate those to the budget. We need to understand this from the start. We now have the modality – we are working with the community. We are now making great progress.”*

Part of the problem was that before IR rolled out the use of Microsoft Teams in 2020, it did not have a secure system for remote team discussions and sharing of resources. Email, Skype and WhatsApp were used to some extent, but security concerns prevented open dialogue among team members. Another limitation was that face-to-face exchanges and mid-term in-person meetings were not included in the budget. Many thought that more in-person visits from headquarters' staff would have been valuable, but the COVID-19 outbreak put a stop to international travel halfway through the programme.

Finding: Community trust in IR's work is especially important to being able to engage in community peace activities (i.e. non-tangible elements).

In communities where the level of trust in IR's work was high, it was seen as a real asset to the implementation of a triple nexus approach. Interviewees referenced numerous times the benefits of the IR brand, name and faith foundation. While some stated that these created a degree of 'automatic' trust in the work of IR, others had a more mixed view. As one interviewee noted:

“A critical learning from the project is that whilst our faith based values often open doors to Muslim communities who perceive us to be culturally closer to them than secular organisations, there are also critical challenges, particularly in peacebuilding. Our involvement in peacebuilding work was initially viewed with some wariness both by communities and some government stakeholders. In all four countries the communities with whom we are working have experienced conflicts with Muslim armed opposition groups. Therefore, there was initially extreme wariness of an Islamic organisation coming to their area to talk about 'peace'. With careful outreach, based on our pre-existing relationships, our history in the local area, clarification of the mandate of the organisation and communication of the goals of the project and the way it intends to work, the project was eventually able to overcome these initial misgivings.”

The challenges associated with working on peace and conflict issues creates additional risks for any organisation, but in contexts of heightened scrutiny of Muslim faith based organisations, IR faces particular risks. In some contexts, while the IR brand puts the organisation in a privileged space with hard to reach Muslim communities, this unique position of trust and access also creates a heightened profile, requiring greater caution and attention to the areas of neutrality and impartiality. For these reasons, risk management, tracking, mitigation and preparedness, as well as staff safety and security training and planning were seen as critically important.

Whether or not IR can do peace programming in an apolitical way is something that interviewees thought important to discuss. As one interview explained, *“The most important thing for IR is that we keep discussing these big dilemmas and questions and try to improve and support communities in the most effective way that we can”.* This is an important reflection for all INGOs operating in fragile contexts.

Finding: Having management and technical staff fully dedicated to the programme at all levels was seen as a necessity for peace and/or triple nexus programmes.

Given the sensitivities and the complexities of delivering a multi-country, three-year conflict prevention and peace programme with peace, development and humanitarian components, interviewees agreed that ensuring successful implementation requires full-time technical specialists in each element of the triple nexus in implementing countries. Country teams advocated for this for all future nexus projects because they found that when one person tries to manage two components, they became overstretched. Additionally, the in-country project leader needs to be able to ensure there is the right balance across the components and that they are meeting the needs of the community(ies), having a positive impact and making sustainable change. This is an extremely challenging and important role.

“It is hard to find a person who can successfully do all three components (or even two) when implementing a programme. So then we have to bring in different types of people and they then need to see the value of each other to work together.” (Academic Interviewee)

The overarching support that was provided by the Conflict Adviser and Programme Manager who are based in IR headquarters were key to the programme’s technical strength in peacebuilding, and to ensuring conflict sensitivity was integrated across country projects and the three components. These positions are key for drawing lessons together from different country specific projects and supporting evolving technical needs. It was felt that when this overarching support fell short because of other commitments and multiple priorities, the Programme suffered. Many interviewees advocated for future programmes to have this technical support for each component of the triple nexus.



Training on peacebuilding, gender sensitivity and human rights as part of Islamic Relief’s triple nexus programme in Indonesia [Photo: Islamic Relief, 2018]

Lesson Learnt: Gender and Inclusion, the Philippines

During the early stages of project implementation, it was noticed that most of the attendees from the community were men. Women had less interest because they thought that this project was mainly focused on men. Additionally, indigenous peoples (IP) were hesitant to participate because they had a low level of trust in organisations because of past experiences. Once these issues were noticed, the team conducted a gender and inclusion analysis which identified specific marginalised groups and some of their needs. After the analysis, engagement strategies and current activity plans were adjusted to be more inclusive in addressing the needs of women, IPs, and people with disabilities. Working through the Peace and Development Facilitators (PDFs), community volunteers who play a key role in coordinating and mobilising local communities, the team made conscious efforts to increase participation of marginalised people.

Since the initial stages of the project and the efforts to improve participation, there has been increased engagement of IPs, women and people with disabilities. This increased diversity and participation in discussions, trainings and workshops has led to more information being shared and discussed because each group and individual brings their unique perspective and concerns. Both the project team as well as the local government work together to address these concerns. This inclusive approach is seen as a better way to build a community.

Lessons Learnt: Through strong engagement with local partners, in this case, PDFs, the team identified a gap in its approach – which was that some groups felt excluded from the project. With this knowledge, the team took steps to increase inclusion in project activities starting with a gender analysis. Then, they worked to design activities that met the needs of those groups and made efforts to include topics on gender and inclusion in workshops and trainings. - Adapted from the Philippines Learning Report, 2019 Annual Progress Report, and interviews



Village youth groups collaborating to erect disaster signage as part of Islamic Relief's triple nexus approach to conflict prevention in Indonesia [Photo: Islamic Relief, 2019]

Finding: Humanitarian and development activities provide tangible, quick wins and an 'in' for the social cohesion/peace work, making the triple nexus approach one that country teams plan to continue using.

Being able to implement all three components in the same communities was seen as one of the biggest assets of the triple nexus approach. Peace programming is often slow to gain momentum because it lacks the quick, tangible outcomes that emergency relief offers, such as access to water, or a livelihood project that offers training and micro loans. When the three components work together, however, country teams saw the value in being able to engage with communities on both short-term needs and long-term objectives. Interviewees and programme documents stated that establishing early wins was important in enabling them to move towards facilitating dialogue sessions and other peace activities that may be more sensitive and require greater trust. To quote one IR staff member, "Peacebuilding does not offer direct or tangible benefits in the short term and authorities and community members are looking for and expecting them. [Triple nexus] allows us to offer quick benefits and still work on social cohesion which is important."

The IR staff who worked on the Programme said that, while it has been time consuming and a steep learning curve, they definitely see the benefit of the triple nexus approach. They are beginning to see results in communities and the complementarity of the humanitarian and development activities make delivering on some of the dialogue activities easier. There have also been synergies created when community members are engaged in more than one component. In short, although IR staff experienced challenges both in implementing a peace project and using a triple nexus approach, they stated that they would use this type of approach again in the future.

Finding: It is unclear whether the disaster risk reduction (DRR) component is truly a humanitarian component or another development activity.

Some interviewees questioned the DRR component of the Programme from both the practical and theoretical perspectives. From a practical point of view, some respondents said that there were other, more pressing issues than DRR in certain communities, such as access to water, which would have been identified had a needs assessment/context analysis been done before the proposal was written. From a theoretical point of view, some thought that DRR was really just another development activity. The [PreventionWeb](#), which is the knowledge platform for DRR, describes DRR as:

*"...a part of sustainable development, so it must involve every part of society, government, non-governmental organizations and the professional and private sector. It therefore requires a people-centred and multi-sector approach, building resilience to multiple, cascading and interacting hazards and creating a culture of prevention and resilience."*⁸⁵

The role and fit of DRR depends on how IR is defining humanitarian and development activities. If it defines it as the Dunantist classical humanitarian aid of emergency relief, then DRR does not fit in this component of the triple nexus.⁸⁶ On the other hand, if a more liberal view of DRR is taken, such as a resilience humanitarian framework (which ECHO adopts), then DRR and related training and preparedness efforts fit in the humanitarian component.⁸⁷ IR's current mission statement fits within a more liberal view of DRR.

Finding: Flexibility and adaptability are crucial for successful implementation of a triple nexus project.

Triple nexus programming requires more of an adaptive approach than single component programming to be able to deliver on both short- and long-term objectives. Regular monitoring of the evolving context through analysis and community engagement brings to light changing needs which should then prompt adjustments to the programme. The Programme's donor, Sida, was seen by interviewees to be supportive of adjustments when the context required them, which enabled a somewhat adaptive approach to be adopted, however, the programme remained constrained by its logframe and theory of change. IR staff felt, similar to others implementing triple nexus programmes,⁸⁸ that current programming tools, such as the theory of change and the logframe, need a rethink to deal more appropriately with the varying timeframes within a triple nexus programme and the different programming goals, from more easily measurable emergency relief and livelihood interventions to societal change. In seeking a way to measure the notoriously nebulous concept of 'peace', IR is trialling the use of Everyday Peace Indicators⁸⁹ to evaluate project level outcomes, which may be a helpful methodology to use in future programmes with a peace component.⁹⁰



Aqueduct constructed by Islamic Relief in collaboration with community organisations and local government to resolve low water supply problems among downstream tribes in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, Pakistan [Photo: Islamic Relief, 2020]

Addressing water issues in Pakistan with a triple nexus approach

Since 2005, multiple communities in a northern area of Pakistan have had issues with access to water due to underground water supply pipelines being blocked. The situation worsened when people that had to flee in the past due to conflict returned to their communities creating extra need. This was seen as a humanitarian reconstruction effort. At first, the government built a small dam with an underground siphon to supply water for irrigation, but it was often blocked due to muddy water from flash rains. The IR Pakistan team identified the need to create an open channel for the pipelines, repair them, and build the infrastructure to sustain the water supply. This development-related solution had to consider the needs of all communities along the water supply network and how each would benefit. Therefore, the project involved important conflict-sensitive approaches, but the team also took this a step further by incorporating peacebuilding strategies to help communities manage local disputes (whether these were over water, land or another issue) and foster collaboration.

The main challenge was that at first some communities rejected the project because they did not see its benefits. Other people criticised the project's design, particularly the use of stones in the infrastructure instead of concrete. To overcome these challenges, the team established a dialogue between different parties including communities, engineers and local government officers working to improve the pipelines. These dialogues allowed people to express their doubts and the project team to explain the reasons behind each decision. Thus, this process helped to build confidence in the project as well as demonstrate the importance of dialogue between groups when community concerns and issues arise. It also brought different communities together to be united in the objectives of the project.

Lessons learnt: Engaging honestly with diverse groups brings people together in their commitment to the project. It allows the project team to see where adjustments to implementation might be needed to address specific concerns of community members. Lastly, the dialogues and early involvement of communities in the project makes it more likely that they will be invested in the solution long-term to keep it going.

- Adapted from Pakistan Learning Report, 2019 Annual Progress Report, and interviews

In summary, IR's vision, mission and mandate are well aligned with a triple nexus approach to programming. While there are some genuine concerns around the politicisation of aid, most saw how the approach could work and add value in an appropriate context and with a clear articulation of peace activities. There is a strong awareness of the limitations of singularly focused, responsive humanitarian action working against the desire to end need. In the appropriate contexts, and as long as the risks are deemed manageable, IR should continue with a triple nexus approach to support resilient communities. Furthermore, in many hard-to-reach areas, IR may be the organisation best-placed to support the peace needs of communities. Adopting a framework, such as resilience, for the triple nexus within IR's strategy would help to set the agenda across the organisation.

There is much that IR staff have learnt from the Programme which should be utilised in future programmes, however, there are some organisational issues which this more complex programming approach has accentuated, many of which are common to other organisations and indeed the wider humanitarian/development aid architecture. First, an integrated approach to community resilience will unavoidably entail a far greater shift to localisation. IR's community engagement should have a foundation in long-term partnership models including, when possible, with governments, local organisations, faith leaders, women and youth. Second, project design, management and accountability tools will need a re-think to move away from theories of change and logframes to something that more easily supports adaptive programming in fragile contexts. Third, IR's risk management systems need to be strengthened across the board to better manage more complex programming and heightened risks in fragile and dynamic contexts. Context and gender sensitivity are important elements of this which need to be more firmly embedded in all programmes.

Lesson learnt: The importance of context analysis and adaptation, Indonesia

At the start of the project, the Indonesia team conducted a context analysis involving stakeholders from all project areas. This analysis gave the team a stronger understanding of the needs of the communities and how the project might address them.

After the project started, there was an unforeseen outbreak of rabies. This outbreak meant that the team had to adjust where and when they could work. Partly as a result of the information generated from the analysis and the engagement with communities, the team had a strong understanding of who to coordinate with to continue to deliver activities. They also were able to discuss the potential risks and how these might be mitigated. These adjustments were discussed as a team and then Sida was brought in to ensure agreement on the approach.

Three key lessons learnt include (1) in fragile contexts, there will always be some unplanned challenges that arise. Nevertheless, the more up to date the context analysis is, the more agile the team is to handle disruptions; (2) adaptation is key to overcoming challenges and finding ways forward to support the evolving needs of the community; and (3) ensuring donors are on board when major adjustments are needed is important.

- Adapted from Indonesia Learning Report, 2019 Annual Progress Report, and interviews



*Psychosocial training for health workers in Indonesia to support community mental health in the event of conflict and natural disasters
[Photo: Islamic Relief, 2019]*

Recommendations for triple nexus programming

While the following recommendations are focused specifically on IR's strategic, operational and programming levels, many may offer points of reflection for other organisations who are considering or implementing triple nexus approaches. These recommendations specifically address where the triple nexus discussions, learning across the sector and internal learnings are today, and how IR should move forward in the future with programming that uses triple nexus approaches. Some of the recommendations could also apply to double nexus and single component projects because they make up aspects of good programming. However, in triple nexus projects the issues and risks are more pronounced making the need to address them more necessary.

A. Strategic recommendations

1. Clearly articulate in IR's new strategy how it envisions humanitarian, development and peacebuilding initiatives complementing each other to achieve its vision. Some of this work is already done, however, more strategic guidance is needed in terms of how humanitarian, development and peace components work together (and when they do not) to contribute to achieving IR's overarching goals. An overarching framing, such as resilience, should be considered which would help align triple nexus and other potential components to international agendas.

1.1 Clarify IR's vision of its humanitarian goal. IR should consider if it primarily sees itself as delivering short-term "traditional" emergency relief or engaging in more "modern" approaches such as resilience humanitarianism, including disaster and conflict prevention and humanitarian protection in conflict contexts. This will influence the triple nexus approach.

1.1 Define what peace programming is for IR. This includes what IR does and does not work on in terms of programming and advocacy targets.

1.2 Articulate how other issues fit into the triple nexus approach for IR such as DRR, climate adaptation or protection to ensure that understanding is clear for staff and those implementing different projects, including double and triple nexus projects.

1.3 Outline what principled aid is for IR. Given the dilemmas and tensions that came up around the core humanitarian principles, IR should clarify how it sees these in light of a triple nexus approach. It should also clarify how other principles fit with its work including 'do no harm' and accountability principles.

1.4 Outline what principled aid is for IR. Given the dilemmas and tensions that came up around the core humanitarian principles, IR should clarify how it sees these in light of a triple nexus approach. It should also clarify how other principles fit with its work including 'do no harm' and accountability principles.

2. Continue to engage in sector-wide discussions and debates on the triple nexus. IR's experiences and learning on the HDP nexus as a multi-mandated and faith based organisation offers a valuable contribution on the approach, both from organisational and country specific perspectives. IR should embrace opportunities to further share learning and innovation. Specifically, IR should contribute to the ongoing debate on the peace component of the triple nexus.

B. Operational recommendations

3. Ensure systems are fit for purpose to manage an array of project and security risks. The IR brand (name and logo) was seen as both an asset and a threat. Because it is sometimes a threat and also because the areas where IR works can be extremely insecure, strong risk management systems need to be in place. Insecurity can be more pronounced in both short-term delivery of aid and when working on issues connected to peace and reconciliation. Regular context analysis as part of IR's triple nexus programme has brought to light these tensions and security issues. Now is the time to strengthen risk management in order to not only implement triple nexus projects, but more generally work safely in protracted crises.

4. Continue to operationalise conflict and gender sensitivity throughout the organisation ensuring that different areas of work from humanitarian to development to peacebuilding are clear on the guidelines on how often and how deep conflict/context analysis needs to be. For triple nexus projects, this is essential given the protracted contexts where projects are being implemented and the number of stakeholders engaged in activities. This includes promoting all three areas of conflict sensitivity a) understanding the context through conflict/context analysis; b) understanding the two-way interaction between the project and the context and c) acting on this knowledge to do-no-harm and promote positive outcomes.

5. Continue to disseminate the “Introduction to Peacebuilding: An Islamic Relief Practitioners’ Guide” and engage internal stakeholders in discussions on what conflict prevention and peace programming look like in practice for IR. Also, it would be helpful if IR developed guidelines on the ‘peace’ activities it would and would not work on.

6. Review localisation and partnership models with the intention to increase commitments to communities and local partners beyond the whims of funding cycles, toward longer-term partnerships and mutually beneficial collaboration. If IR is committed to a holistic approach to community resilience, then long-term partnership models and long-term commitments to communities in protracted crisis will be essential to the implementation of the triple nexus approach.

7. Review funding structures to identify ways that funding streams can be brought together to support triple nexus approaches. While there are some exceptions, such as Sida, it is clear that it will take some time before donor governments are able to adjust financial mechanisms to support triple nexus programming. IR is in an advantageous position because it has access to some flexible funding sources which would allow it to adapt activities, with some level of independence, to the needs of the contexts and in support of both triple nexus approaches and long-term partnerships.



Opening ceremony for a new community drinking water structure in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, Pakistan
[Photo: Islamic Relief, 2019]



Water conservation community training to support social cohesion in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, Pakistan [Photo: Islamic Relief, 2020]

C. Programmatic recommendations

8. In many cases, IR's faith foundation can provide openings for peace and conflict resolution initiatives to complement humanitarian and development efforts. IR's connection to Muslim communities because of its faith puts it in a unique position in many contexts. This strong trust gives the organisation an opportunity to engage grassroots communities using an approach which integrates faith into its peace and reconciliation initiatives to promote stability and development.

9. Invest in staffing

9.1 Ensure each component of the nexus has a technical specialist at the project level. Using a triple nexus approach is complex and requires technical specialists who are strong in at least one of three components. Each triple nexus project should include a designated person on each component and those specialists should understand the importance of the other components and how they work together to deliver a cohesive project.

9.2 Hire managers who are adept at managing complexity and high-level relationships. Managing a triple nexus project requires a unique set of skills. Specifically, the manager needs to understand the importance of how each component of the nexus is driving community-led change. S/he needs to be able to manage change processes in complex and often insecure environments with clashing priorities from within the community and the government.

9.3 Ensure triple nexus programmes have dedicated staff supporting them from headquarters. Because of their complexity, triple nexus projects require specialists who are able to fully support implementing teams who may be challenged with the best way to adapt the project activities to meet the evolving needs of the community. Technical specialists can draw from global expertise to support project adjustments and be indispensable for sharing learning between projects.

10. Invest in learning. The success of a triple nexus project should include a focus on learning and understanding from the outset of the project, because staff need to understand how each component fits together to meet the overarching goal of the programme. If there are multiple country teams involved, they need to have time to discuss together the various contextual needs and agree together how they will deliver on it, how they will manage risk and the systems and support that are needed to do so. The learning approach that IR took to the Programme was strong overall; however, there should be more opportunities dedicated to learning throughout the duration of future projects from the initial inception phase to the close-out. IT systems should be reviewed to ensure that they are conducive to learning and sharing and budgets should include specific allocations for learning especially bi-lateral country to country exchanges.



Women supported to establish mushroom farms in Indonesia as part of the livelihoods component of Islamic Relief's triple nexus approach to conflict prevention and peacebuilding [Photo: Islamic Relief, 2020]

Conclusions

This review has highlighted many of the main challenges and opportunities that international actors face when engaging in triple nexus approaches to programming. It has also outlined some of the lessons learnt to date around what the triple nexus looks like in practice. Learnings that were repeatedly raised by numerous interviewees both within IR and other organisations include: the need for clarity on terminology of various components of the nexus, particularly the peace component; the need to be able to adapt activities and adjust funding modalities; the need for systems and programming to meet the needs of communities; and the importance of understanding the contexts where projects are being implemented. All of these become heightened issues when working in environments of protracted conflict on multi-component projects.

Many of those who were actively engaged in triple nexus approaches said that they would continue to use the approach when it made sense in a specific context, because they have seen positive, significant change happen in communities as a result. One of the final interview questions that was asked was, “is the triple nexus here to stay?” Respondents unanimously agreed that the concepts within the triple nexus, such as better coordination, cooperation and cohesion are here to stay. The name ‘triple nexus’ or ‘HDP nexus’ will probably change in a few years and as one interviewee stated, “that is OK, sometimes we need to dress things up again to make them attractive, but they remain important”.

The HDP nexus is pushing aid actors to reassess, again, whether the humanitarian/development/peace architecture is fit for purpose. This question is difficult and uncomfortable, but that does not mean it should be avoided - courage is required to challenge the status quo and its underpinning assumptions. The triple nexus forces the aid sector to do just this and the organisations piloting triple nexus programmes are leading the way through the debate to solutions.



Women learning new baking skills in the Philippines as part of the livelihoods component of Islamic Relief's triple nexus approach to conflict prevention and peacebuilding [Photo: Islamic Relief, 2021]

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Annex A: Notes and Resources

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Annex C: Interviewees

Islamic Relief Staff Interviews	
Name	
Mohammed Afsar	Islamic Relief Worldwide
Waseem Ahmad	Islamic Relief Worldwide
Mark Allen	Islamic Relief Worldwide
Najah Almugahed	Islamic Relief Worldwide
Haroon Altaf	Islamic Relief Worldwide
Hussain Awan	Islamic Relief Worldwide
Jules Benitez	Islamic Relief the Philippines
Dr Sylvia Brown	Islamic Relief Worldwide
Affan Cheema	Islamic Relief Worldwide
Joy Daman	Islamic Relief the Philippines
Kadidja Bedoui	Islamic Relief Sweden
Nanang Dirja	Islamic Relief Indonesia
Shabel Firuz	Islamic Relief Worldwide
Jama Hanshi	Islamic Relief Worldwide
Noor Ismail	Islamic Relief Worldwide
Saba Mahmood	Islamic Relief Worldwide
Dario Marlovic	Islamic Relief Sweden
Wisal Muhammad	Islamic Relief Pakistan
Hannah Mutawi	Islamic Relief Worldwide
Leo Nalugon	Islamic Relief Worldwide
Raza Narejo	Islamic Relief Pakistan
Dr Ahmed Nasr	Islamic Relief Worldwide
Yusuf Roble	Islamic Relief Worldwide
Ridwan Rochman	Islamic Relief Indonesia
Mousumi Saikia	Islamic Relief Worldwide
Kate Wiggans	Islamic Relief Worldwide
Jamie Williams	Islamic Relief Worldwide

Interviewee Name	Organisation
Bernard Balibuno	Catholic Agency for Overseas Development
Laura Payne	Coventry University's Centre for Trust, Peace and Social Relations
Amjad Mohamed-Saleem	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
Wale Osofisan	International Rescue Committee
Heather Pagano	Médecins Sans Frontières
Charles "Ted" Holmquist	Mercy Corps
Leah Zamore, JD	New York University, Center on International Cooperation
Julia Codinasariols	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)
Cushla Thompson	OECD
Dan Schreiber	OECD
Jessica Fullwood-Thomas	Oxfam, Great Britain
Massimo Alone	Plan International
Louis Le Masne	Search for Common Ground
Caroline Delgado	Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
Jannie Lilja	Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
Romano Lasker	United Nations Development Programme
Andrew Harper	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
Saskia Carusi	United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, Latin American
Gabriella McMichael, PhD	United Nations World Food Programme

Number of representatives*	Donor Agency
1	European Commission, DG International Cooperation and Development, DEVCO
1	German Corporation for International Cooperation, GIZ
5	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, Sida
2	UK's Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, FCDO

*A number of donor representatives wished to remain anonymous.

Thus, the team decided to keep all donor interviews anonymous.

Annex D: Profile of the team members

Summer Brown – Lead Consultant

Summer Brown is currently pursuing her PhD at the International Institute for Social Studies, Erasmus University Rotterdam. Her research focuses on how humanitarian and peacebuilding interventions work together – an area that she believes to be one of the crucial components to understanding the ‘triple nexus.’ She continues to work taking on research projects, evaluations and advisory roles in organisations such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Mott MacDonald’s Girls Education in South Sudan programme, and International Alert (Alert).

Prior to beginning her PhD, from 2013 until 2019, Summer was Alert’s Director of the Peacebuilding Advisor Unit. In this role, she managed a number of thematic teams who conducted research on and advocated for specific issues in peacebuilding and how to improve effectiveness and efficiency in the aid sector more broadly. Summer was often deployed as an expert adviser on peacebuilding and the links to humanitarian and development interventions including assignments in South Sudan (2015-16) for the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs to provide conflict sensitivity training and strategic support to the embassy and their implementing partners including development and humanitarian partners.

Summer’s country experience includes working with or on projects across the globe which include in Africa (Nigeria, South Sudan, Kenya, Uganda, Chad, Central African Republic, Rwanda, Mali, Niger), Asia (Nepal, Philippines, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Indonesia), Middle East (Afghanistan) Eurasia (Ukraine, Russia, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan).

Rodrigo Mena – Thematic Specialist

Rodrigo (Rod) Mena is assistant professor of humanitarian aid and disaster governance at the International Institute of Social Studies of Erasmus University Rotterdam. Rod has over 15 years of experience as a researcher, consultant, and practitioner in Latin America, Asia, Middle East, Africa, and Europe. His work and interests are understanding how humanitarian, development and peacebuilding play out in areas of high intensity conflict, how decisions are made about how and where to work and what leads to effective aid programming and ultimately positive peace. Contributing to this, his PhD focused on disasters in conflict in three countries including Afghanistan, Yemen, and South Sudan.

Highlights from Rod’s recent experience include developing a manual on conflict-analysis for the development of humanitarian aid and disaster response strategies in places affected by conflict which he used to train non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in Afghanistan. He has worked with AfghanAid as an advisor on how to conduct conflict-analysis in order to build strong programming in the areas of conflict risk reduction in how they respond to disaster. Additionally, he worked as a research consultant on a project titled, ‘Strengthening Community Resilience in Conflict: Learnings from Practice’ for Partners for Resilience (PfR). PfR is an alliance of NGOs (including Cordaid, CARE Netherlands, Wetlands International, The Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre and the Netherlands Red Cross) and 50 local civil society organisations worldwide. Rod’s experience includes the coordination of disaster responses, research, and management of programmes at the regional level. He is also Board member of the International Humanitarian Studies Association (IHSA) and visiting professor at the United Nations University for Peace on humanitarian aid action.

Annex E: Islamic Relief Worldwide's Terms of Reference (Summary version)

The 'Triple Nexus': Linking, humanitarian, development and peace. Where is the sector going and what are the implications for Islamic Relief?

CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

The 'double nexus' of humanitarian and development is a concept that has a long history in resilience thinking, early warning/action interventions and long-term sustainable development. It was given fresh impetus at the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016 with the 'New Way of Working' in crises towards collective outcomes between humanitarian and development actors. Since then UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has placed sustainable peace at the top of his agenda, which effectively brought the 'peace' pillar into the humanitarian-development nexus.

The 'triple nexus' of humanitarian-development-peace has been much talked about in recent years and a number of UN agencies, INGOs and donors have piloted triple nexus projects. Islamic Relief itself received funding from Sida to pilot a three-year triple nexus project in four countries and generate learning, which will conclude in 2021.

As the debate continues about how, where and with whom the triple nexus should be applied, Islamic Relief would like to take stock of where the debate is heading, the extent to which structural shifts in the aid system required to operationalise the triple nexus have been applied, the barriers and challenges which remain and the opportunities that this approach provides to the organisation. It would also like to assess the results of triple nexus pilot projects, including Islamic Relief's own project, to determine best practice. Finally, Islamic Relief would like to understand how well it is currently placed to design and implement triple nexus programmes and the structural and operational changes that may be needed. These should be presented alongside as assessment of the contradictions and dilemmas presented by the triple nexus to a multi-mandate organisation.

OBJECTIVES

This consultancy seeks to scan the international development, humanitarian aid and peacebuilding sectors to understand where the debate on the 'triple nexus' is heading in theory and practice, what best practice looks like and where future funding opportunities lie. It also seeks to draw out learning from Islamic Relief's Sida-funded triple nexus programme. The findings of the study will inform the sector about the current direction of triple nexus theory and practice and inform Islamic Relief's long-term programming.

The consultancy will focus on the following objectives:

- Summarise the learning that has been generated by triple nexus pilot projects (e.g. IRW, EU, UN, IRC, NRC, Oxfam, World Vision etc.) and identify current best practice.
- Provide a snapshot of where the sector currently stands in theory and practice of triple nexus programming
- Map out how donor funding (e.g. EU, UN, USAID, Sida, FCDO, Canada, and other European donors) has realigned (or not) to support triple nexus programming (in terms of funding frameworks/pots, programming flexibility, programming duration and recognition of higher risk and complexity).
- Draw out detailed learning from Islamic Relief's triple nexus pilot project in Pakistan, Kenya, the Philippines and Indonesia, using OECD-DAC evaluation criteria to assess the relevance, effectiveness, coherence, efficiency, impact and sustainability of a triple nexus approach to programming in fragile contexts.
- Analyse the challenges, barriers, contradictions and opportunities presented by the triple nexus to Islamic Relief, such as to its humanitarian principles, to tackling complex ground realities in fragile contexts, to developing a systems approach and to facilitating greater incorporation of climate and human-made risks in disaster planning.
- Assess any particular advantages or disadvantages presented to triple nexus programming by the faith-based nature of IRW, its multi-mandate nature or its status as a INGO.
- Analyse the adaptability of IRW's triple nexus pilot project to changing ground realities (e.g. Covid19, changes in the political or security context).
- Identify the organisational capacity to implement a triple nexus approach and the structural/operational changes needed within Islamic Relief.



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