Canadian CSOs and the Triple Nexus:

A review of Canadian CSO experiences in Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus programming in fragile and conflict-affected countries

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This report is provided for informational purposes based on data available at the time of preparation for which the consultants assume full responsibility. It does not represent the policies or positions of the sponsoring organizations or members of the CSO Nexus Working Group. But we hope that the report offers an analysis of opportunities, issues and challenges that will enable a furthering of the triple nexus approach. In undertaking the research, we are convinced that this approach is an essential way forward for humanitarian and development actors in a world beset by conflict, fragility, increasing inequalities and extreme poverty.

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Highlights

In May 2024, the CSO Nexus Working Group[1] initiated a research project to document the experiences of Canadian CSOs in implementing the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus (HDP) or triple nexus. The purpose of the review was to generate an understanding of the opportunities and challenges associated with the triple nexus approach, aiming to enhance both practice and policy discussions for CSOs and government departments in Canada.

The review was based on a mixed method approach that included: 1) a literature review of more than 70 policy documents, surveys and project reports (Annex C); 2) an analysis of data in GAC's Historical Projects Data Set (Annex A); 3) an online survey gathering the views of 30 CSO representatives working in 20 Canadian humanitarian organizations (Annex E); and 4) a series of semi-structured interviews with 16 representatives in 11 organization-based conversations (Annex F). The latter included an interview with four officials from Global Affairs Canada.

The report primarily focuses on Canadian CSOs, their perceptions of the triple nexus and the related policy environment, while also touching on connections to international and local dialogue processes. The study traces the extent to which the triple nexus approach has been integrated into programming, identifies challenges and opportunities in its implementation, and highlights good practices. Special emphasis is placed on how gender, localization, and conflict sensitivity are addressed and applied.

What is the triple nexus?

Triple nexus is an overarching holistic approach to protracted humanitarian crises, which links humanitarian and development action with the inclusion of peace initiatives. There is a focus on better programming, coordination and finance along with a growing emphasis on three core concepts: gender, conflict sensitivity and localization. While the three HDP pillars can be programmed within one organization, several organizations can also just as effectively coordinate work in their respective pillars as part of a complimentary nexus approach. The rationale behind this broader scope is that the approach can more effectively address the root causes of conflict and vulnerability, while promoting long-term inclusion, resilience and stability in fragile and conflict affected countries.

There is no set recipe for effective triple nexus programming; the composition of humanitarian-development-peace programs should evolve and respond to the local context. The context in fragile and conflict affected countries is complex and evolving, program staff should promote prevention and adapt to the reality on the ground.

[1] The CSO Nexus Working Group is a self-initiated collective of CSOs within the Canadian Food Security Policy Group collaborating on HDP nexus principles and practices, in aims of advocating for its integration in the Canadian humanitarian and development ecosystem.

The boundaries between the double nexus and triple nexus are blurred. In practice the approaches often overlap as programs evolve, funds are mixed and matched with different organizations, and program staff coordinate with other actors and adapt to the context.

As an overarching approach, triple nexus overlaps with many other concepts and frameworks, such as sustainability, resiliency and vulnerabilities, anticipatory action, area-based response, and so forth. The terms illustrate how triple nexus is a wide overarching approach that require practitioners to define their pathways within.

At its core, the triple nexus approach is about systemic change in the way policymakers and practitioners work together. The combined emphasis on coordination and localization or locally lead actions, alongside external responsiveness in-country, can foster more efficient and effective collaborations among organizations, and safeguard space for local leaders to set the agenda.

What is the Canadian humanitarian context for triple nexus programming?

While some trends in Canadian humanitarian assistance are clear, ODA data does not allow for the accurate identification of triple nexus projects. However, some rough estimates based on proxy trends for humanitarian, development and peace programming are possible using OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) sector coding. This data revealed the following:

1. **Canadian humanitarian assistance has been increasing over the past five years**, by 36% in nominal volume, but only 10% when support for Ukraine is excluded. However, humanitarian assistance has declined as a share of Real ODA from 15% in 2018/19 to 12% in 2022/23 (discounting in-donor refugee costs, support for COVID-19 Control and Ukraine to allow comparisons with earlier years).
2. **The volume of humanitarian assistance delivered by CSOs has varied by year, with overall assistance averaging around $250 million, and is highly concentrated.** Only eight (8) Canadian CSOs delivered 78% of GAC CSO humanitarian assistance in 2022/23, representing 17% of total GAC humanitarian assistance.
3. **Multilateral organizations are the primary channels for delivering Canadian humanitarian assistance, but also highly concentrated among a few organizations.** Eight (8) multilateral organizations delivered 70% of Canadian humanitarian assistance in 2022/23, with the World Food Program alone accounting for 42% of this assistance.
4. **Canadian humanitarian assistance is concentrated in 20 protracted crisis countries,**[2] representing 87% of total humanitarian assistance in 2022/23. Nevertheless 48% of the flows to these countries were for development purposes, 40% humanitarian assistance and 12% peace assistance.

GAC's approach to implementing the triple nexus is largely shaped by the fact that GAC humanitarian and development assistance is mainly delivered through intermediary organizations (multilateral or CSOs). GAC's ability to affect change is derived mainly from its influence on policies and practices within relevant UN organizations, in policy discussions at the World Bank, or in other UN fora. Its impact on CSOs

[2] A protracted crisis country is a country which had had at least five consecutive Humanitarian Response Plans according to UN OCHA (Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs).

is highly dependent on policy frameworks, program modalities, and fiduciary requirements that shape and enable CSOs in implementing a triple nexus approach in their programming. Canadian CSOs have faced many challenges over the past five years in this regard.

Are Canadian CSOs using a triple nexus approach?

The research found that experience in double nexus approach (Humanitarian-Development) is more prevalent and long-standing among Canadian CSOs, but with growing implementation of the triple nexus. Most survey respondents were involved in double nexus (89%) and triple nexus (65%), although many involved in triple nexus selected "somewhat involved" (41%). The finding likely reflects the lack of clear definitions and that some organizations are moving from double to triple nexus programming. Overall, there is some experience in implementing a triple nexus approach in more than half of the 20 surveyed organizations.

On the whole, the CSOs emphasized humanitarian and development pillars with varying levels of financial support depending on the country, but with a consistently much smaller portion allocated to the peace pillar. The respondents consistently describe this pillar in terms of small 'p' peace activities such as conflict sensitivity, social cohesion and peace education as opposed to capital 'P' peace activities such as diplomatic negotiations and UN peacekeepers.

The review found that Canadian CSOs are using the triple nexus approach in fragile and conflict-affected countries as intended. There was a significant correlation between the location of Canadian CSOs nexus programs and countries with OCHA Humanitarian Response Plans. In particular, there were also high numbers of programs in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, and South Sudan.

In the immediate absence of system wide transformation, many policymakers and practitioners focus on creating smaller changes and 'administrative workarounds' within their sphere of influence to move towards a triple nexus approach. These measures tend to include a focus on developing and implementing their own programs, funding other organizations (most often local partners) and their own organizational enabling environments. Yet, the review also found that these measures could be expanded to include more policy influence and collaborations with other organizations on programs or projects, particularly in-country.

How are Canadian CSOs creating change?

The review gathered good practices and advice for implementing a triple nexus approach from the survey and interviews as well as the literature review - including internal CSO reports. The findings suggest the following observations:

- **As the triple nexus approach may be open to different interpretations, organizations require a shared understanding of triple nexus with some expertise in key areas as well as a general understanding to facilitate communication across sectors.** For multi-mandated organizations, it is also important to have mechanisms to coordinate across programs.

- **This review found that Canadian CSOs were consistently applying a gender lens in their nexus programming, even though international studies found that many triple nexus approaches lacked a gender component**. More than 70% of respondents indicated that they incorporate a gender lens in their triple nexus programming either "extremely well" or "very well." The top practices included: 1) incorporate gender analysis in project design; 2) programs aimed at reducing gender-based violence; 3) build capacity in gender analysis and awareness; and 4) support for women-led initiatives. Further, the data review found that gender and inclusion is already a major part of GAC's peace assistance. While a very positive finding, it is unclear whether the uptake is due to the triple nexus approach or, more likely, Canada's International Feminist Policy.
- **Respondents were only moderately confident in their organization's ability to integrate conflict sensitivity.** This included ensuring aid does no harm, social cohesion projects, and, to a lesser extent, providing a safe place for community dialogue. Respondents also mentioned trusted relationships and being able to anticipate and prevent crises. Further, the data showed that more emphasis should be placed on building capacity in this area, resourcing responsive and collaborative conflict-analysis process, and providing trauma and healing support.
- **The survey demonstrates that respondents have a high confidence in their ability to apply a locally lead approach in their nexus programming.** The responses reflect the values most CSOs place on their relationships with local partners. All the respondents indicated that their organization engaged local communities in decision-making processes through local CSOs, prioritized local procurement and hiring, and transferred resources and responsibilities to local actors for program implementation. This also included support for locally determined capacity building. While certainly a positive finding, power imbalances still run-through most donor-recipient partnerships. The transformative shift from top-down, which is built into most of the structures of development cooperation, to bottom-up processes, may still be a while away.
- **Many policymakers and practitioners invest extra effort in their work to find 'creative solutions' or 'workarounds' for triple nexus programs.** These can include pooled funds, decentralization or country focused integrated programs, support for local actors, informally coordinating with other CSOs, using access to unrestricted funds, mixing and matching funding sources, offering multi-year funding, or including crisis modifiers in program design.

What are some key issues for Canadian CSOs?

In addition to noting key issues throughout the study, survey respondents were asked to identify the strengths and challenges they faced as organizations in implementing the triple nexus approach. The highlights include:

- **Long-term, flexible and responsive funding is a significant challenge for organizations attempting the triple nexus approach**. While a few Canadian CSOs have access to private or membership funds that can be used to augment programs and help achieve a more fulsome triple nexus approach, many CSOs do not have this opportunity. In addition, the literature review found that there has been little to no movement on better financing modalities among almost all donors, including Canada.

- **Canadian and local CSOs frequently finance triple nexus work by mixing and matching funding from different sources** – which can push the responsibility for triple nexus downwards – leaving intermediaries and local organizations with a patchwork of programs and complicated reporting frameworks.
- **Despite significant support for adaptive management techniques, policymakers and practitioners working in centralized northern or global bureaucracies find it challenging to adapt to a changing context and be responsive to the local needs**. Organizational policies must address the need to design frameworks that can quickly distribute funds and supplies when needed and create space for local actors to work on the community priorities – even when they shift to respond to the context. Therefore, locally led nexus approaches deserves continued attention by the Nexus Working Group, alongside initiatives on localization within GAC and the wider international CSO community.
- **Several respondents noted that long-term relationships with local partners based on mutual support and trust is a central strength, while other respondents noted that local capacity and resistance or push back on principles such as gender inclusion was a challenge to localization.** This underscores the need for continued efforts in resourcing and building capacity, particularly in terms of mutual learning and creating space for local leadership.
- **The survey suggests that there is a high level of awareness among a core group of practitioners, but only a moderate understanding within many of the respondent's organizations**. In this regard, the CSO Nexus Working Group could widen their capacity building efforts and focus on practitioners outside their core network.

How do Canadian CSOs coordinate in-country?

The triple nexus approach calls on aid actors to improve coordination while moving towards localization, or responsive and locally led programs. Such an approach puts the focus on the in-country coordination / dialogue processes that often tend exclude smaller, more local actors. Drawing from the interviews and literature review, the report suggests that:

- **Coordination can vary widely from country-to-country** but tends to include a mixture of informal networks and more formal donor forums, clusters or sector working groups and regular meetings with government bodies in the capital or large centres.
- **The United Nations, or more specifically the Resident / Humanitarian Coordinator, can play a lead role in facilitating these processes in many protracted crisis countries.** However, this seems highly dependent on individuals and conditions in country.
- **Sometimes local CSOs and state institutions develop parallel processes, but overall, they lack the venues and resources to engage fully.**
- **Involvement of CSOs in the coordination and dialogue process is mixed,** with some respondents co-chairing committees and others stating the investment is not worth the return. In addition, a few respondents mentioned coordinating within ad hoc professional and social networks.
- **Overall, CSOs often focus on coordination exclusively with their local partners** rather than coordinating with other CSOs and/or stakeholders.

- **The sheer volume of organizations in the field can be challenging** with their own mandates and processes, top-down decision-making and inter-agency competition.
- **Overall, the literature review, survey, and interviews did not show any movement towards greater coordination.**

What has been GAC's experience in implementing the triple nexus approach?

Many bilateral and multilateral providers such as Canada have made clear policy commitments, but to date these commitments have not resulted in substantive changes in practice. This finding is confirmed by the DAC's five-year review of its Recommendation on the Triple Nexus.[3] While acknowledging that these are complex contexts on the ground, providers have often lacked political will, appropriate funding mechanisms and a risk appetite to invest in fragile and conflict-affected context in ways that address root causes.

In this context, Global Affairs Canada's practice is keeping pace with its peers. GAC's triple nexus engagement has been characterized by a "decentralized approach" within the ministry since later 2022. An earlier 2020 workplan to promote and implement the triple nexus has been suspended and overtaken by institution-wide processes such as the five-year Grants and Contributions Transformation Initiative (GCTI) and the reorganization of Global Affairs affecting the development, humanitarian and peacebuilding bureaus. The decentralized approach and subsequent absence of any inter-departmental coordinating body has several implications:

- **There is a knowledge gap around the implementation of the triple nexus approach.** At the time of the study, GAC does not have a designated group to gather information on its efforts to implement triple nexus and how it is expressed in partnership with UN/CSO intermediaries.
- **The Grants and Contributions Transformation Initiative, as a largely technical information management reform, does not directly consider nexus programming**. However, some loosening of current risk averse aid modalities and practices could support nexus initiatives in the future.
- **GAC reorganization is promising,** with all HDP pillars housed in the International Assistance and Partnerships Branch. Yet, it is very early days and the implications for triple nexus are months away.
- **Informal cross-department initiatives on triple nexus projects have worked in the past,** but such initiatives are not sustainable as wider GAC practice.
- **GAC has implemented some modest changes,** including crisis modifiers in some projects, a provision for a 7% overhead allocation for local partners, and a move to multi-year humanitarian funding.
- **GAC continues to be fully engaged in multilateral processes** relating to triple nexus – INCAF at DAC, World Bank fragile countries initiative, International Dialogue on Peace building – creates

[3] OECD DAC, 2024. "Report on the implementation, dissemination and continued relevance of the DAC Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus," International Network on Conflict and Fragility (INCAF), DCD/DAC/INCAF(2023)1/FINAL, accessed at https://one.oecd.org/document/DCD/DAC/INCAF(2023)1/FINAL/en/pdf.

opportunities for CSO engagement with Canadian officials involved and external CSO networks influencing the outcomes.

- **GAC has a very weak record in direct support for local CSOs**, but is slowly developing some guidance on "localization" in GAC programming and practices, which should be followed closely by Canadian CSOs.

What are the next steps for the CSO Nexus Working Group?

1) Strengthen the capacities of Canadian CSOs and other relevant stakeholders to implement the triple nexus approach.

a. **Promote membership in the CSO Nexus Working Group** and support new or interested members with mentorship and resources on the triple nexus approach.

b. **Develop a capacity building strategy** that includes the overall purpose, potential audiences, priorities, core competencies, learning outcomes, and available resources and expertise.

c. **Identify diverse audiences** outside the core nexus network and tailored outreach for organizations, professional networks, sectors, and so forth.

d. **Focus the capacity building strategy on specific topics and practical tools, with particular attention on the peace pillar**, conflict analysis, joint analysis and/or coordination.

e. **Support members of the CSO Nexus Working Group with resources and learning events** within their organizations, such as in-house workshops.

f. **Create a bank of human resources,** which could be called upon to support capacity development for organizations starting or enhancing their triple nexus approach.

2) Advocate and support the triple nexus approach by engaging relevant GAC officials and leadership. The approach with GAC should be iterative and should build on the potential of the reorganization but also take account the experience of GAC's efforts over the past few years.

a. **Build trust and understanding with GAC through joint learning and policy dialogues** on key issues of mutual concern relating to the triple nexus, such as coordination, localization, gender, conflict sensitivity analysis, and building on opportunities arising from Cooperation Canada's Futures Forum.

b. **Create joint learning opportunities building on specific country experiences**, where GAC may be more directly involved in implementing a triple nexus approach.

~~c.~~ **Over time, and with an understanding of GAC's reorganization process, develop clear proposals and practical ways forward for more flexible and integrated funding** that explicitly enables a triple nexus approach. An option for a HDP Nexus Fund, perhaps modeled after the Equality Fund, could be explored as one avenue to ensure appropriate funding modalities.

d. **Encourage transparency and dialogue as GAC implements its reorganization** in the context of advancing a triple nexus approach.

e. **Increase engagement with relevant GAC officials on GAC's work on the triple nexus with various actors, such as the UN, DAC and the World Bank.**

f. **Plan for upcoming evaluative processes** such as the DAC peer review of Canada in November 2024 and GAC evaluation of the triple nexus in 2026/27. Equally relevant may be GAC's evaluation of working in fragile contexts in 2024/25 and two evaluations in 2025/26 on the Peace and Stabilization Operations Program and on Disaster Risk and Resilience in Indo-Pacific Region.

3) Strengthen the evidence base for Canadian CSOs around the triple nexus approach.

a. **Establish a storehouse of resources**, including case studies, evaluations, literature reviews, and other organizational documents, building on the current google drive.

b. **Continue to identify and map triple nexus pathways** or catalogue the different ways in which triple nexus is being implemented.

c. **Encourage additional studies on the triple nexus approach**, particularly in terms of how it impacts program outcomes.

Section A: About the Study

1.0 Introduction

The number of protracted humanitarian crises around the world, and growing numbers of affected populations, underscores the need for more integrated and holistic approaches to address humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding challenges. The Triple Nexus approach, which seeks to simultaneously strengthen the connections between these three pillars, has gained increasing attention as a potential framework for achieving more sustainable and effective solutions to protracted crises. However, there are still many questions, in particular: Is triple nexus approach being deployed, and if so, how?

In May of 2024, the CSO Nexus Working Group commissioned this review as a starting point for building a common understanding of the opportunities and challenges in the triple nexus approach and ultimately, enrich practice and policy dialogue in Canada. In so doing, the report focuses on Canadian CSOs and the policy context, with some reference to the linkages to international and local dialogue processes. The study assesses the extent to which the triple nexus has been incorporated into programming, the challenges/opportunities during implementation, as well as good practices. Particular attention will be paid to how gender, localization and conflict sensitivity is shaped and implemented within the complex environment of a triple nexus approach.

More specifically the objectives of the review are to:

a. Map the extent to which the triple nexus framework is being implemented by Canadian ODA, supported by GAC and CSOs
b. Explore how gender, localization and conflict-sensitivity shapes programming
c. Identify organizational challenges, strengths and assets in triple nexus programming
d. Document lessons learned, best practices, and innovative approaches employed by Canadian civil society and multilateral partners in triple nexus programming
e. Develop evidence-based recommendations to bolster the efficacy of triple nexus programming

2.0 The triple nexus approach

Initiated at the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit and set out in a 2019 DAC Recommendation, the humanitarian-development-peace nexus (HDP nexus) is a holistic approach to protracted humanitarian crises, which links humanitarian and development action with the inclusion of peace initiatives. While the three HDP pillars can be programmed within one organization, several organizations can also just as effectively coordinate work in their respective pillars as part of a complimentary nexus approach. The Recommendation sets out eleven (11) key commitments in relation to three areas of Coordination, Programming and Financing within an HDP nexus approach. (**See Box One**).

Box One

The OECD DAC Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development Peace Nexus
Common Principles to Guide and Support Stakeholders

Better Coordination

1. Undertake joint risk-informed, gender-sensitive analysis of root causes and structural drivers of conflict, as well as positive factors of resilience and the identification of collective outcomes incorporating humanitarian, development and peace actions.
2. Provide appropriate resourcing to empower leadership for cost-effective coordination across the humanitarian, development and peace architecture.
3. Utilise political engagement and other tools, instruments and approaches at all levels to prevent crises, resolve conflicts and build peace.

Better Programming

4. Prioritise prevention, mediation and peacebuilding, investing in development whenever possible, while ensuring immediate humanitarian needs continue to be met.
5. Put people at the centre, tackling exclusion and promoting gender equality.
6. Ensure that activities do no harm, are conflict sensitive to avoid unintended negative consequences and maximise positive effects across humanitarian, development and peace actions.
7. Align joined-up programming with the risk environment.
8. Strengthen national and local capacities.
9. Invest in learning and evidence across humanitarian, development and peace actions.

Better Finance

10. Develop evidence-based humanitarian, development and peace financing strategies at global, regional, national and local levels, with effective layering and sequencing of the most appropriate financing flows.
11. Use predictable, flexible, multi-year financing wherever possible.
    - Identifying financing mechanisms that bring together humanitarian, development and peace stakeholders where possible and appropriate.
    - Striving to ensure that financing is informed by joint analysis and where possible and appropriate, supports greater coherence between humanitarian, development and peace actions.
    - Aligning financing with agreed collective outcomes where appropriate – while recognising that humanitarian, development and peace actions may have priorities that also fall outside of collective outcomes.
    - Seeking the availability of flexible funding in the different pillars to ensure a better use of allocated resources in response to priority needs.

Over time and in practice, there is also a growing emphasis within the triple nexus on three core concepts: gender[4], conflict sensitivity[5] and localization[6].

While the ideas and concepts in the triple nexus approach are not new, the way in which they are brought together to support fragile and conflict-affected countries is innovative, particularly in relation to locally led and responsive programming across HDP pillars. It is also an elusive concept comprised of at least four grey areas that often cause confusion in terms of policy and practice:

1. **Nexus is an approach and not a tool, a method or a project**: As a responsive approach triple nexus does not have a formula or checklist to follow. It is a 'mindset' or set of concepts that need to be applied and tailored to specific countries or local areas. This can make it difficult for organizational bureaucracies to categorize and implement.

2. **The boundaries between double and triple nexus are blurred**: On the surface the distinction is simple. Double nexus programming integrates two approaches to aid, usually development and humanitarian while triple nexus programming integrates three approaches to aid, usually humanitarian, development and peace. However, in practice the approaches often overlap as programs evolve, funds are mixed and matched with different organizations or communities, and program staff adapt to the reality on the ground and coordinate with other actors. Further, from the perspective of affected populations, they are often more concerned about their own, and their community's survival, than mandates and sector-specific goals of a particular aid program or project.

3. **As an overarching approach, triple nexus overlaps with many other concepts and frameworks**: While the triple nexus approach cannot be everything to everyone, several respondents used terms such as response and recovery, sustainability, resiliency and vulnerabilities, anticipatory action, area-based response, and so forth. The terms illustrate how triple nexus is a wide overarching approach that require practitioners to define their pathways within.

4. **At its core, the triple nexus approach is about systemic change:** Fundamentally, the triple nexus approach asks policymakers and practitioners to adopt a new mindset. The HDP nexus can

[4] Gender lens: This is the exploration of how gender and gender roles frame relationships, access to resources, opportunities and decision-making. Further, it considers how other social categories such as race, class, age, orientation, etc. intersect with gender and shape individual experiences and perceptions within society. The lens informs the designed, implementation and consequences or results of aid programming.

[5] Conflict-sensitivity: This approach recognizes that interventions occur in complex and changing environments, particularly in conflict-affected and fragile contexts. Therefore, it is important to understand this local context, be aware of intended and potential unintended consequences of an intervention and be ready to adapt a program in ways that mitigates the negative and accentuates the good.

[6] Localization: According to OECD DAC, localization prioritizes the role of local actors in leading and implementing aid efforts. It generally involves empowering local leadership, strengthening local systems, and providing responsive programming.

transform the sectors' tendency to be reactive to proactive or preventative. Coordination and collaboration, which are crucial, can transform the way organizations work with each other and form partnerships and informal collaborations. Likewise, localization or locally led actions, alongside external responsiveness, can transform the sector from a top-down deployment to bottom-up co-operation. Challenges such as these, in contexts that are fragile and protracted, often with set-backs, take time, but even small steps forward can make a significant difference.

"Prioritize prevention always, development wherever possible, humanitarian action when necessary."

3.0 Methodology

The purpose of the review was to generate an understanding of the opportunities and challenges associated with the triple nexus approach, aiming to enhance both practice and policy discussions for CSOs and government departments in Canada. Within this frame, the review examined policy analysis and lessons learned, with an overview of projects / programs funded by Canadian ODA, supported by Global Affairs Canada (GAC) and/or Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) operational within the last five years. Our entrance into the research was through the humanitarian pillar, including many CSOs having a dual mandate as humanitarian and development actors. It has also included some reflections on multilateral and donor organizations for a wider perspective. However, Canadian CSOs were the focus of the analysis.

The research began with a desk review, informed by current international assessments by CSOs, OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC), and academic / think tank literature. This literature review framed the study and, along with input from the CSO Nexus Working Group, helped identify key stakeholders, organizations, and issues to pursue. A survey, completed by 30 respondents from 20 organizations built on this knowledge by gathering information on the extent to which the triple nexus approach is being used. Finally, the study delved deeper into good practices and innovations during 11 semi-structured interviews.

Together, the three activities provided a foundation of data and qualitative information for recommendations for the CSO Triple Nexus Working Group and its members regarding the implementation of the triple nexus approach.

a. ***Desk Review***: The desk review entailed a scan of 72 relevant policy documents, surveys, and organizational grey literature such as guidance documents, project reports and evaluations. The documents were assembled through an internet search, scan of bibliographies, and an appeal to practitioners for reports and endline evaluations that are not readily available to the public. In addition, a review and analysis of GAC Historical Projects Dataset was undertaken for the period 2018/19 to 2022/23, with a focus on 20 countries designated as protracted crisis countries. While there were significant limitations in the data for the purposes of this report, some observations were identified. Overall, the Desk Review resulted in a literature review (**Annex C**), GAC projects data analysis report (**Annex A**), and a bibliography of public available data (**Annex D**).

b. ***Survey*:** An online survey was designed and administered to key CSO stakeholders, practitioners, and experts in the field. The survey contained six sections: (1) general awareness, (2) program mapping; (3) core elements in a nexus approach (gender, localization, and conflict-sensitivity); (4) strengths and challenges; (5) relationships with Global Affairs Canada; and (6) recommendations by survey respondents. (Please see **Annex E** for survey questions)

The survey was formatted in Qualtrics and circulated to practitioners. The distribution strategy included the following:

i. Direct email to about 21 people who expressed interest, including the CSO Nexus Working Group.
ii. An invitation and link shared with the following listservs: Food Security Policy Group, Humanitarian Response Network, Women Peace Security Network - Canada, and CanWaCH.
iii. An invitation link in the Canadian Cooperation Newsletter.
iv. Continued encouragement for participation among colleagues.
v. Keeping the survey open for 7 weeks (July 5 to August 22) to accommodate vacation schedules.

The strategy resulted in 30 individual responses representing 20 organizations. In terms of quantitative data, the multiple responses from the same organization were averaged in our report on the data. Of the 20 organizations, 11 were among the top 20 CSOs who received humanitarian funds from Global Affairs Canada (GAC) in 2022/23. While the qualitative data was reviewed, and key themes and outliners were identified. Both sets of data were brought together in the report.

c. ***Semi-Structured Interviews**:* A purposive sample of stakeholders from the survey respondents were interviewed. In addition, several representatives from multilateral agencies, GAC, and European CSOs were included to provide a more contextual understanding. While there was a generic set of questions based on the study's main themes, the questions were tailor to each interview. (Please see **Annex F** for the Interview Protocol)

The interviews took about 45 to 90 minutes and were designed to gain a deeper understanding of key issues; highlight unique examples or practices, and fill-in gaps in the data arising from the desk review and survey. In total, 16 people were interviewed as part of 11 conversations grouped by organizations, with some interviews including two or more respondents. Interviews were scheduled over a month (July 24 to August 20) to accommodate vacation schedules.

Given the breadth of the review and the time available, it is important to note that there were challenges in the available data and information in conducting this analysis. For example, GAC's Historical Projects Dataset and the Project Browser do not in themselves identify projects that are contributing to the triple nexus. It is a relatively new approach. The analysis also had to consider the various understanding of double and triple nexus, particularly in terms of the quantitative questions in the survey. Therefore, the assessment will also rely on the experiences and insights from practitioners, mainly from within Canadian

CSOs and Global Affairs Canada, alongside information gleaned from multilateral agencies and an interview with an implementing partner. The desk review, survey and interviews were brought together to compensate for and strengthen any one approach.

Section B: To what extent are Canadian CSOs applying the triple nexus approach?

1.0 Canadian CSOs and the triple nexus

In recent years, Canadian Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) have embraced a double nexus approach, integrating humanitarian and development work, and are now starting to purposefully include peacebuilding activities - creating a HDP or triple nexus approach. The rationale behind this broader scope is that the approach can more easily address the root causes of conflict and vulnerability, while promoting long-term resilience and stability in fragile and conflict affected countries. Section B maps the strategies and practices through which Canadian CSOs are operationalizing the triple nexus approach, highlighting good practices, innovations, strengths and challenges.

As mentioned in Section A, the study used the humanitarian sector as an entry point and identified 22 key Canadian humanitarian organizations (based on data from Global Affairs Canada). Canadian CSOs delivered a record $235 million in humanitarian assistance in 2022/23, which represented 22% of total GAC humanitarian assistance. But also, in that year, CSO humanitarian assistance was concentrated among only eight (8) out of the 22 CSOs. These eight delivered 78% of GAC CSO assistance and 17% of total GAC humanitarian assistance. Five of the eight top CSOs delivering GAC humanitarian assistance have dual humanitarian-development mandates. In addition, all the remaining 14 organizations receiving GAC humanitarian assistance in 2022/23 have dual mandates. (Please see **Annex A** for an analysis of GAC CSO humanitarian projects.)

Canadian CSOs play an important and multi-faceted role as intermediaries in the aid sector. These roles often include: 1) Development and implementers of programs; 2) Fundraisers and submitting proposals; 3) Collaborators with other organizations around particular programs or projects; 4) Donors to other organizations, most often in partner countries; and 5) Advocates or policy influencers. While all the roles and associated partnerships have the potential to hinder or facilitate the triple nexus approach, the research found that policymakers and practitioners tended to focus on areas where they could make a difference, most often as developers and implementors of programs and as donors to other organizations, most often in partner countries. In addition, several CSOs are engaged in advocacy or activities promoting triple nexus among their networks, including the Nexus Working Group and efforts to engage GAC.

With these considerations in mind, this section will now describe how and to what extent the Canadian CSOs (reviewed in the study) are implementing the triple nexus approach in their organizations, programming and advocacy work. While there is some overlap, the extent to which triple nexus is used as the basis for partnerships (coordination and collaboration) in the international and local areas is discussed further in Section D.

2.0 Are practitioners aware of triple nexus?

Given that most of the survey respondents were members of the Nexus Working Group and/or experts in the field, it is not surprizing that 93% rated their own awareness of triple nexus as 'highly aware' with only 4% indicating that they were 'somewhat aware'. However, there remains uncertainty around how other staff and volunteers in their organizations understand the triple nexus approach.

Survey respondents were asked to rate their organizations' awareness of the triple nexus approach on a scale from 1 to 5. In answering, more than 50% of respondents felt that their organization was very familiar with the triple nexus (31% selected 'a lot,' and 21% selected 'a great deal). About 44% of respondents said their organization was less familiar (10% selected 'a little,' 35% selected 'a moderate amount'). Roughly 3% of respondents selected 'not at all.' While the quantitative data showed that about half of the organizations' staff have a good working knowledge of triple nexus, the qualitative data captured more nuanced concerns. As two respondents noted:

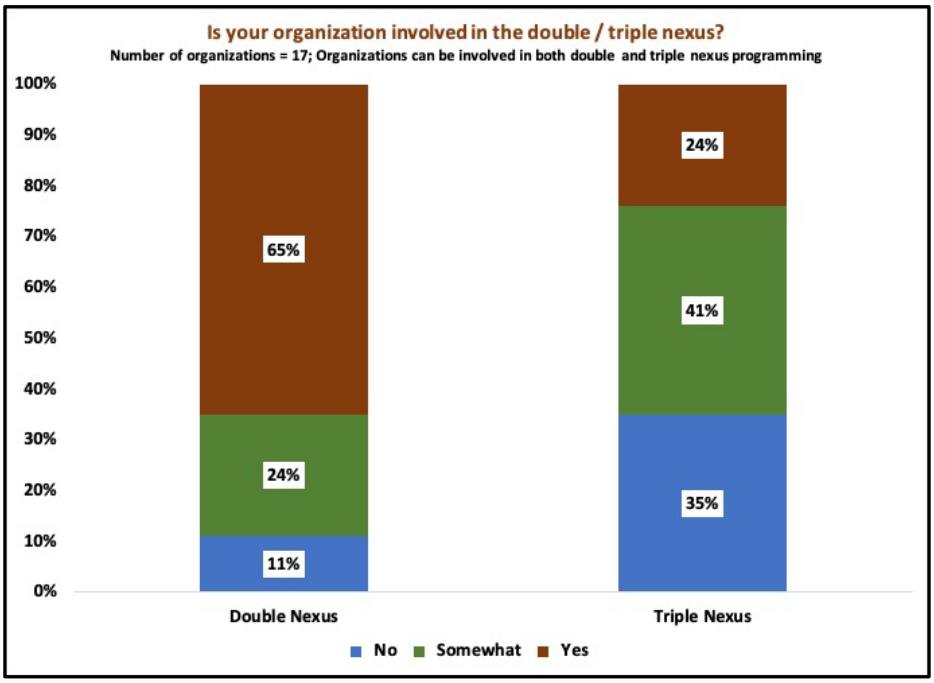
> "*While there are some key technically informed staff who are aware of these concepts and the importance of the approach, the larger group of staff responsible for more detailed program oversight and day to day activities are not as well apprised. Modalities are still siloed, and cross pollination difficult to achieve when working against the grain of decades long organizational structures and ways of working*."
>
> "*Staff turnover, as our nexus projects are generally longer in duration. At times, this may cause insufficient organizational expertise in one of the three pillars."*

The data suggests that there is a high level of awareness among a core group of practitioners, but only a moderate understanding within many of the responding CSOs. **Yet, in order to build enough support and momentum to change organizational systems – break down silos within and among stakeholders – there needs to be a wider understanding of triple nexus across the sector. In this regard, the CSO Nexus Working Group could widen their capacity building efforts, focussing on practitioners outside their core network**.

3.0 Is triple nexus being used?

In practice, there is often a great deal of confluence between double and triple nexus programming. When asked, the survey reveals that 65% of the organizations engaged in double nexus programs, 24% indicated somewhat, and 11% indicated that they did not have double nexus programs. The percentages fell significantly when the respondents were asked about engagement in triple nexus programming in their organizations. As **Chart One** illustrates, only 24% of the organizations indicated being engaged in triple nexus programs, but 41% indicated somewhat, with 35% indicating they did not have triple nexus programs to their knowledge.

Chart One: Organizational Involvement in Double and Triple Nexus Programming



Several respondents noted that they did not set out to do triple nexus, but later discovered programming that fit within the frame. These were often programs located in fragile and conflict-affected countries that instinctively included conflict-sensitivity and social cohesion activities as part of the development and humanitarian nexus. **While experience in double nexus is more prevalent and long-standing among Canadian organizations undertaking humanitarian activities, there is nevertheless movement and some core experience in moving towards a triple nexus approach in more than half of the surveyed organizations.**

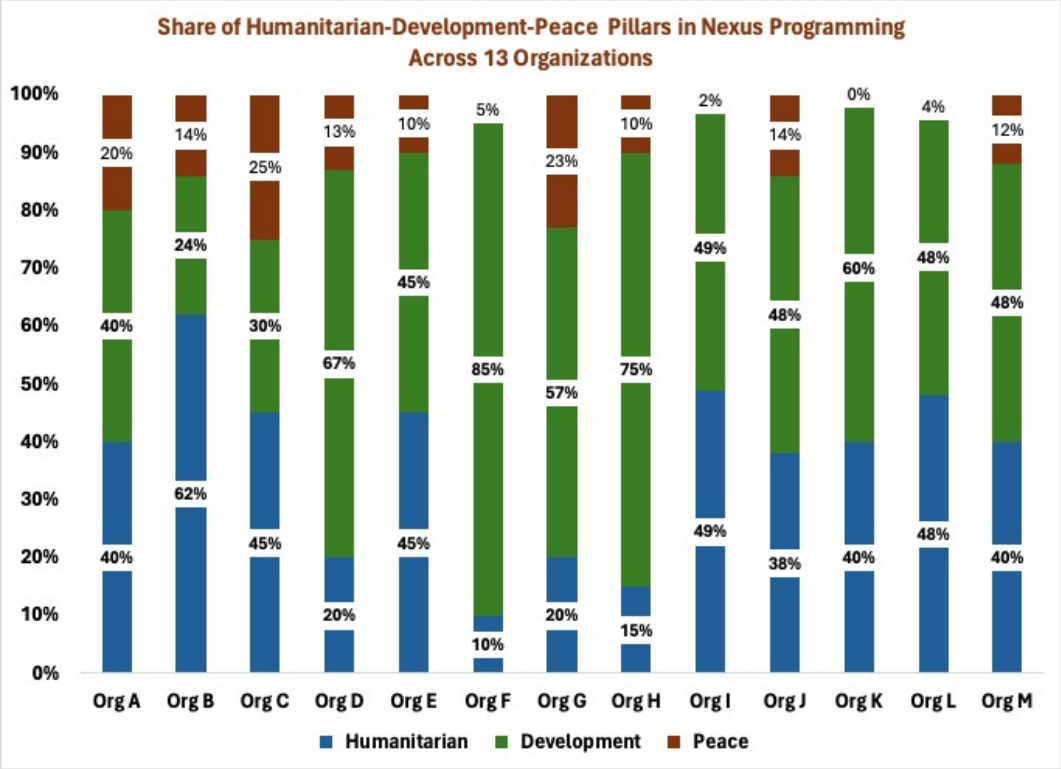
4.0 To what extent is the HDP programming integrated?

There is no set recipe or program portions for effective triple nexus programming; the composition of humanitarian-development-peace programs should evolve and respond to the local context. It may also not be an essential requirement that all three pillars be programmed within one organization. At its most meaningful expression, triple nexus is an approach, not an organizational program. It should be implemented in a local context in ways that must involve strong coordination among all actors in relation to their comparative nexus contributions in responding to these local conditions.

Nevertheless, a pattern has emerged in the survey data. On average, the survey responses emphasize humanitarian and development pillars to varying levels of support, but with a consistently smaller portion allocated to the peace pillar. The latter may be an issue for the triple nexus approach for these organizations, particularly if there is limited coordination on the ground with other actors and/or when other actors with a greater focus on the peace pillar are not engaged in the local context.

A pattern emerged when the data on organization, involvement in triple nexus, and the typical mix or percentage of humanitarian, development and peace **activities** in triple nexus programs were cross-referenced.

Chart Two: Allocation of Humanitarian – Development – Peace Activities in Triple Nexus Programs



Averaging the balance in thirteen (13) responding organizations, the triple nexus consisted of 37% humanitarian, 52% development, and 11% peace programming. (**Chart Two**)

- All thirteen (13) organizations had humanitarian programming which ranged from 10% to 60%, with an average of 37%. Of the 13, 4 organizations tended to focus 10% to 20% of programming on humanitarian efforts (note that humanitarian activity is the study's entry point for assessing the degree of triple nexus programming).
- All thirteen (13) organizations had development programming which ranged from 20-85%, with an average of 52%. Of the 13, 4 organizations tended to focus between 55% to 85% of programming on development efforts.
- Only 10 of the 13 organizations had peace programming which ranged from 2% to 20%, with an average of 11%.

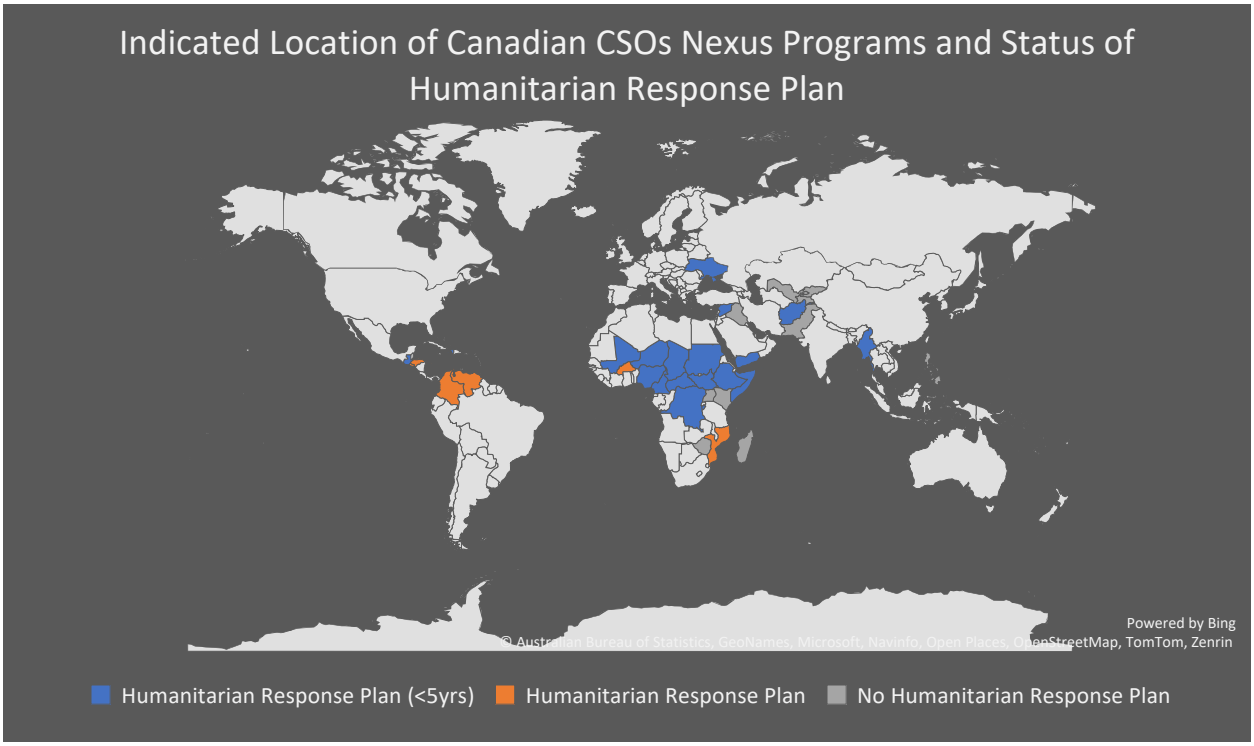
The qualitative responses also provided some context for interpreting these patterns. First, the data only represents rough estimates and as one respondent noted it "*varies by context/program – [there are] no set percentages*." Second, another respondent noted that peace activities tend to be relatively cheaper

than humanitarian and development programs and therefore consume a smaller portion of the budget. Lastly, humanitarian and development pillars represent a much wider programming area, where peace assistance tends to have a narrower definition. **As noted in an earlier section, many CSOs have experience with the double nexus approach and are now exploring how they can incorporate the third pillar, peace, but still with relatively modest resources.**

5.0 Where is triple nexus being used?

The triple nexus approach, or specifically integrating peace activities into humanitarian and development programs, was initially designed for fragile and conflict-affected countries as a means of building more sustainable outcomes. Based on 2023 data, the category of fragile and conflict affected countries, included 26 countries with Humanitarian Response Plans, 20 of which are in protracted crisis with Humanitarian Response Plans greater than 5 years. Please see **Annex G** for a full list of countries in which Canadian CSOs are engaged in nexus programs and **Chart Three** for the map.

Chart Three: Location of indicated Canadian CSO Nexus Programs



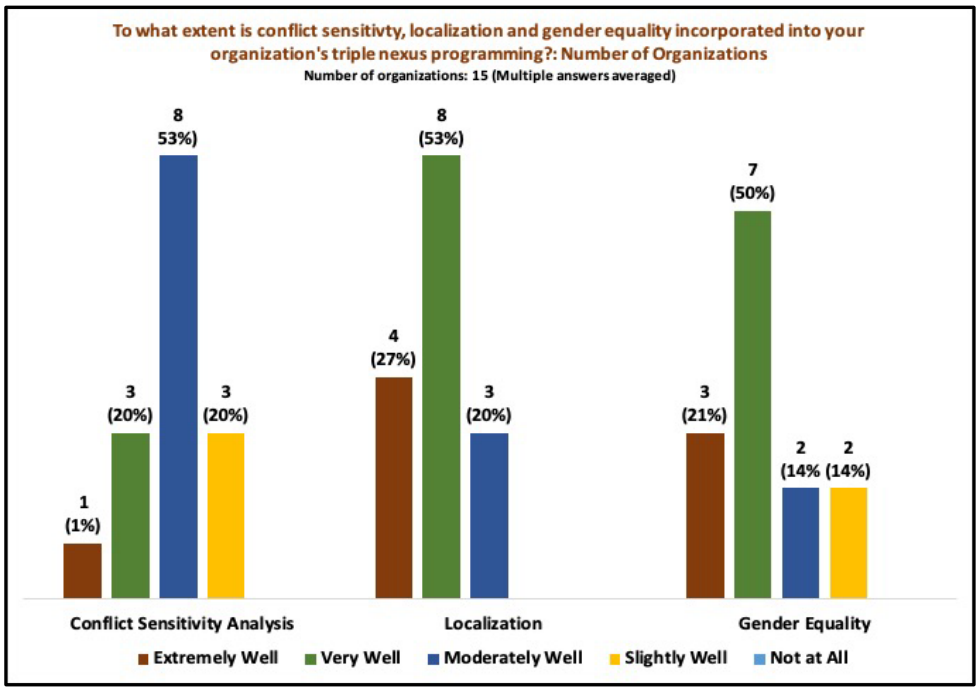
The above Map shows the country's status of Humanitarian Response Plans overlayed with countries in which the survey respondents reported nexus programming. There are several countries with protracted crisis with a high number of Canadian CSO programs - the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, and South Sudan. While there may be some confluence with double nexus programming, **the map nevertheless demonstrates a strong correlation between fragile and conflict-affected countries and innovations in nexus programs for Canadian CSOs.**

6.0 How is triple nexus being used?

As mentioned in the definition of the triple nexus approach described in Section A, the approach should be responsive to complex and evolving crises in a local area. Beyond principles and declarations, there is no universal or detailed instruction manual. Practitioners must determine the best ways to implement a triple nexus approach in their organization, with their partnerships, and in program designs for a specific context. It is with this in mind that this section will look at good practices being deployed by respondents and their advice as shared in the survey and interviews.

The respondents were asked to rate their organization on how they have integrated gender, conflict-sensitivity and localization in their triple nexus approach. While respondents' self-rated data was favourable overall, **CSOs seem most confident in integrating localization, followed by gender and then conflict-sensitivity in triple nexus programming.** It is important to note that this survey is not evaluative in interpreting the qualities of integrating these important components. It does not assess for example whether "localization" has been defined as "locally led" humanitarian, development or peace programming.

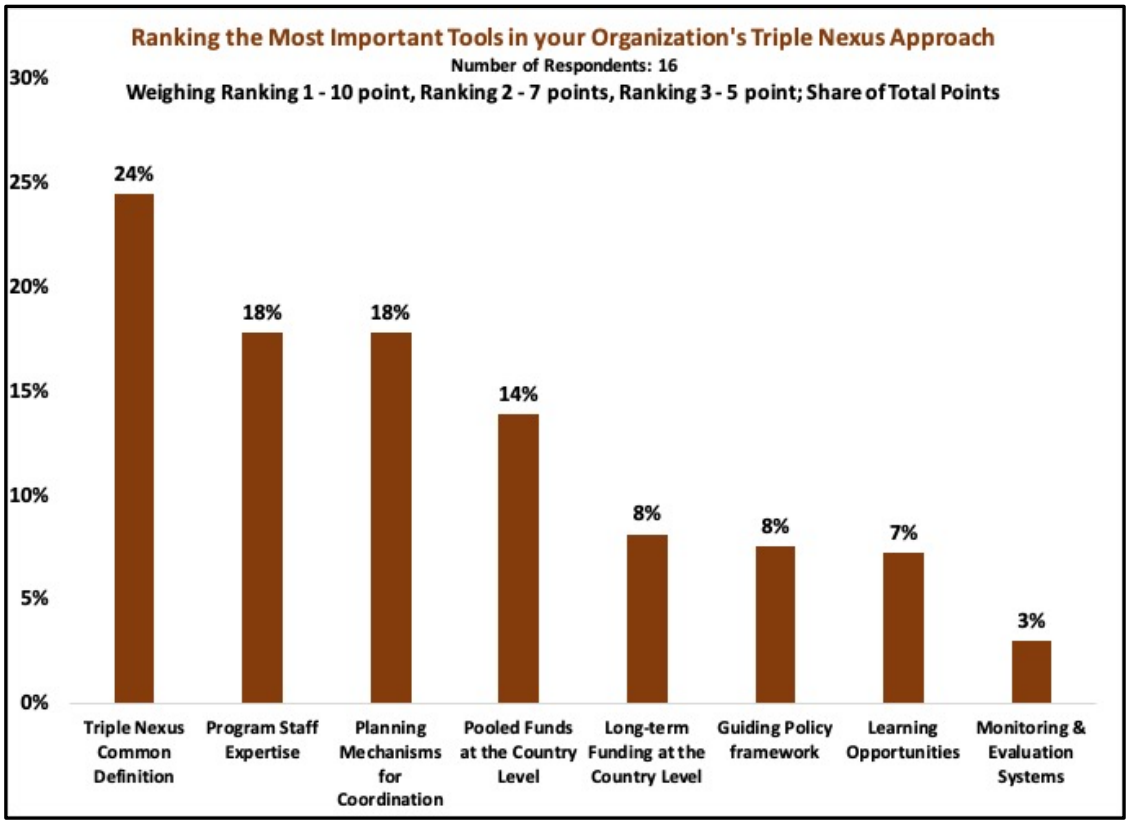
Chart Five: Integrating Conflict Sensitivity, Localization and Gender Equality in Triple Nexus Programs



6.1 Organizational tools and practices

In implementing the triple nexus approach, respondents are starting within their organizations. This includes building a common understanding and creating an enabling environment for the triple nexus approach. In this vein, the survey data included a list of common organizational triple nexus tools and practices and asked survey respondents to rank them in order of importance.[7]

Chart Six: Tools and Practices in Rank Order of Importance



The tools and practices ranked most important for the implementation of the triple nexus approach were: 1) Having an agreed and common definition of triple nexus programming (24%); 2) Program staff with expertise in humanitarian, development and peace programming (18%); and 3) Planning mechanisms/programming stream that facilitates coordination across the organization (18%). Pooled funding (within the organization) at country level for quickly responding to changing contexts (14%) was also an important attribute. CSO respondents placed much less emphasis on: mechanisms for long-term funding at the country level to address nexus programming to build resiliency (8%); policy framework guiding the organization's approach to triple nexus programming (8%); learning opportunities / professional development for Canadian staff regarding triple nexus approach (7%); and, systems to monitor and evaluate the triple nexus approach (3%).

[7] The different challenges implementing the triple nexus approach were weighted by assigning points to those ranked 1st (10 points), ranked 2cd (7 points) and ranked 3rd (5 points). The total number of responses were 16.

Additional advice from respondents:

- *"Ensuring from the design to the implementation that both teams (field and HQ) understand the triple Nexus approach and agree on how, when and where to collect and manage the knowledge."*
- *"Bringing together humanitarian, development and peacebuilding actors requires time and coordination. Each sector has its own objectives, approaches and language. Hence when the three pillars come together, there is need for understanding, learning, tolerance and patience."*
- *"Internally pooled funds that can be access in times of crisis."*
- *"[Our organization] has piloted the nexus approach using private funding as well as leveraging additional institutional funding. We are currently conducting a research piece focusing on eliciting programmatic learnings and recommendations."*
- *"Documenting lessons learned and best practices for any project that incorporates a nexus approach is very critical to tell the story."*
- "*Draft templates, practical tools and monitoring and evaluation systems."*

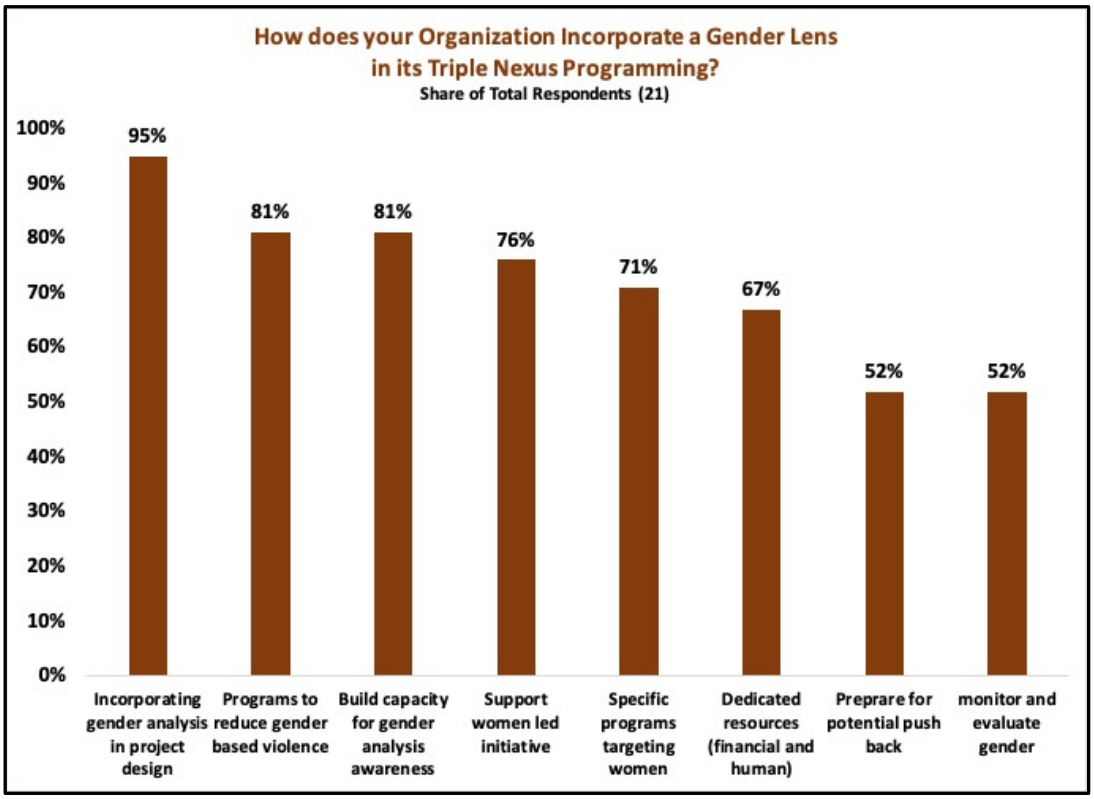
6.2 Gender equality and empowering women and girls

The first core concept underpinning the triple nexus approach is gender equality and empowerment of women and girls. As stated in the DAC Recommendation, "*putting people at the centre, tackling exclusion and promoting gender equality*." (Principle 11, OECD DAC, 2019) **The review found that Canadian CSOs were consistently applying a gender lens in their nexus programming, even though international studies found that many triple nexus approaches lacked a gender component**. **Further, the data review found that gender and inclusion is already a major part of GAC's peace assistance. (Annex A) While a very positive finding, it is unclear whether the uptake is due to the triple nexus approach or, more likely, Canada's International Feminist Policy.**

The survey self-assessment data demonstrates that respondents are confident in their organization's ability to apply a gender lens. More than 70% of respondents indicated that they incorporate a gender lens in their triple nexus programming either 'extremely well' or 'very well'. Another 24 % of respondents reported 'moderately well' and 'slightly well' while no one selected 'not at all.'

Chart Seven indicates the different means and practices by which organizations integrate a gender lens in triple nexus programming, ranked in order of importance. The respondents indicated there is a high level of engagement with all the tools and practices, ranging from 52% to 95%. The top three tools and practices included: 1) incorporate gender analysis in project design (95%); 2) programs aimed at reducing gender-based violence (81%); and 3) build capacity in gender analysis and awareness (81%). There was also substantial support for women-led initiatives (76%) and specific programs targeting women and girls (71%). While ranked the lowest, most of the respondents also reported dedicating resources (financial, human) for gender-focused initiatives (67%) and identifying and preparing for potential push-back (52%).

Chart Seven: Incorporating a Gender Lens in Triple Nexus Programming



6.3 Conflict sensitivity

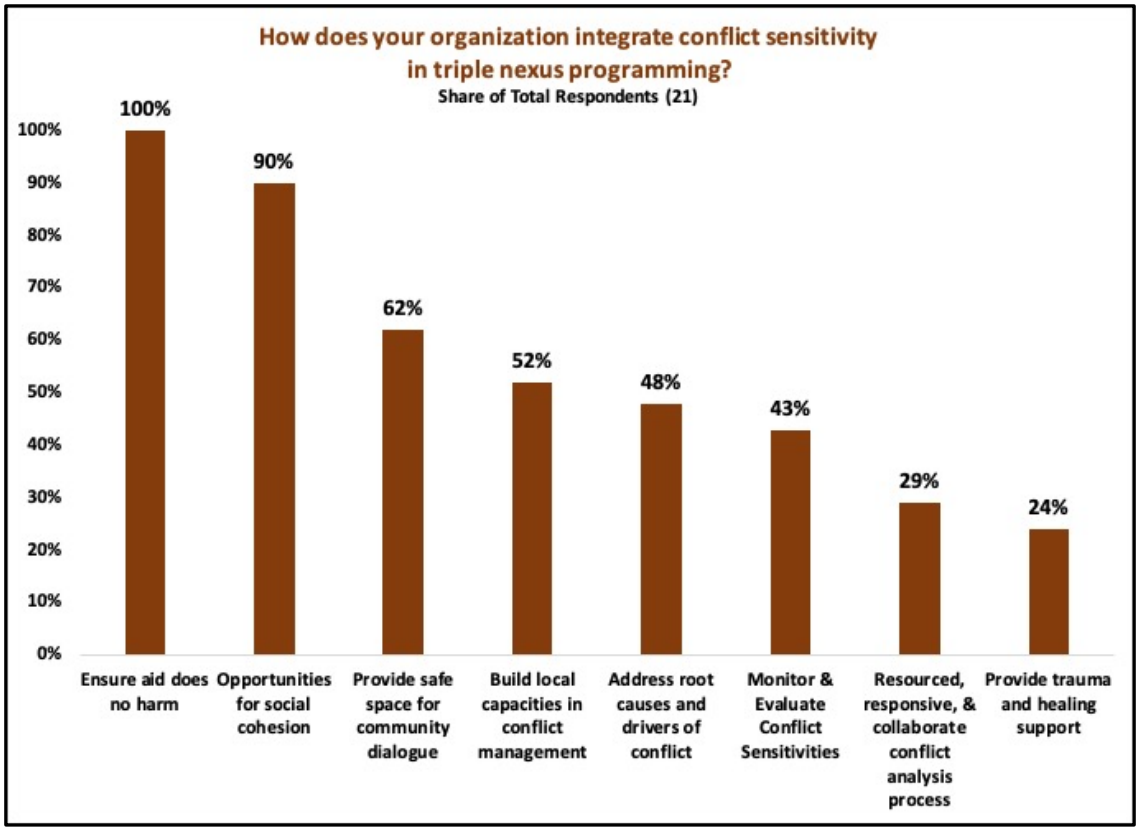
The second core concept underpinning the triple nexus approach is conflict sensitivity analysis and practice, essential for any program operating in a fragile or conflict-affected country. The term refers to a constant awareness or lens in which to examine the root causes and changing dynamics of conflict in a particular context. It is crucial that actors identify strategies and interventions that avoid aggravating existing tensions in community or in the wider area, and work to foster social cohesion. Within this frame, the context analysis is not just about the safety of staff and participants but expands to include the potential intended and unintended consequences for peace.

The survey demonstrated that respondents were only moderately confident (53%) in their organization's ability to integrate conflict sensitivity in their humanitarian development programming in protracted crisis contexts. Only 20% said 'very well' and 1%, 'extremely well', with 20% indicating 'slightly well'.

Survey respondents were asked to identify conflict-sensitivity practices that their organization had in place and rank them in order of importance (**Chart Eight**). The top tools and practices for integrating conflict sensitivity included, ensure aid does not exacerbate existing conflicts or 'do no harm' (100%) and create opportunities to build social cohesion (90%). Many respondents indicated that their organizations: provide a safe space for mediation and community dialogue (62%); build local capacities in conflict

management and resolution (52%); address root causes and drivers of the conflict (48%); and monitor and evaluate conflict-sensitivities within the nexus programming (43%). **More attention may be needed to: resource responsive and collaborative conflict-analysis process (29%) and provide trauma and healing support (24%).**

Chart Eight: Incorporating Conflict Sensitivity in Triple Nexus Programming



Additional Advice from Respondents:

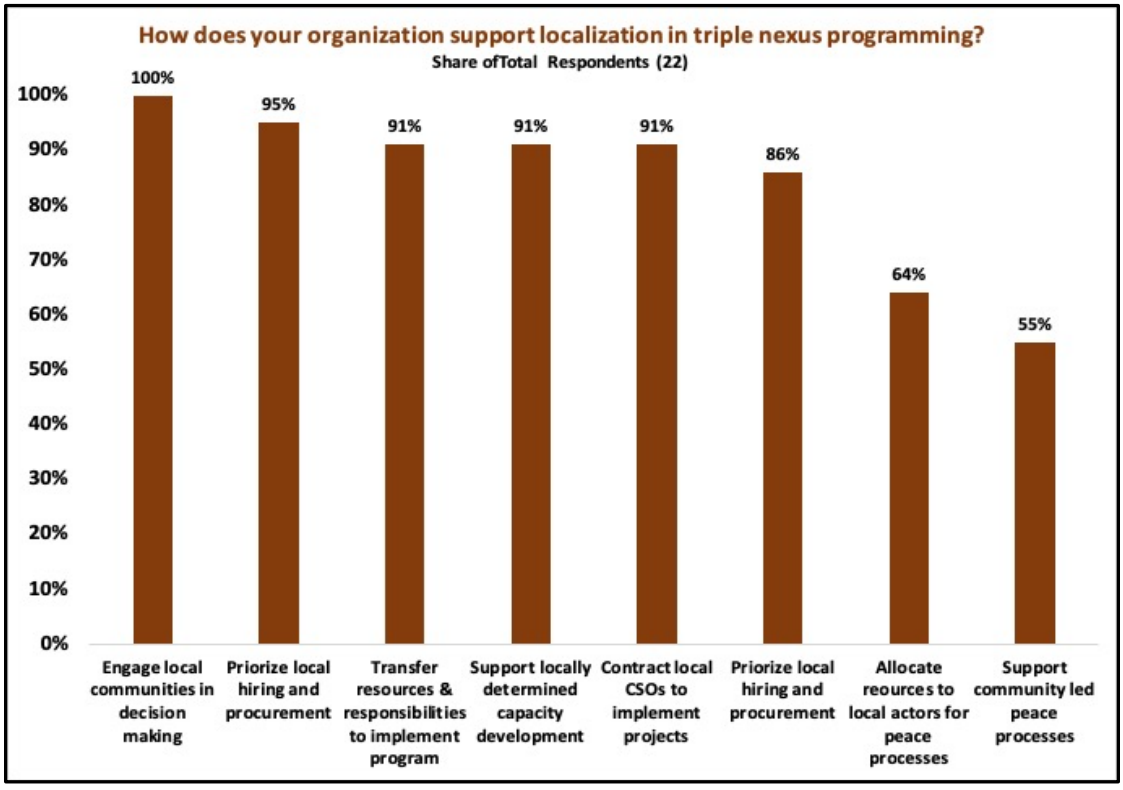
- "*Anticipate Crises: Use early warning systems and proactive measures to enhance preparedness and timely responses"*
- *"(a) [We] have credible organization working in the area since several years. This opened the door to factions and community leaders. Trust is a precondition to start discussions about the conflict. (b) [We] have a clear methodology to analyse the conflict, map actors and support negotiation. (c) As soon as team identified the conflict, immediately set conflict resolution and promotion of social cohesion as the key objectives for all activities. (d) Consider conflict as the main issue to solve in the location rather than considering the community conflict as a risk to the project. (e) All activities, to be planned, adopt a conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding approach. (f) In mediating the conflict, is it possible to implement development activities in a more sustainable way."*

6.4 Localization / locally led

As a core concept, localization underpins the triple nexus approach and can be seen as the 'nexus glue' creating opportunities for leadership by local civil society and community actors. It highlights the importance of local communities in responding to humanitarian crises in their capacities to understand and effectively prioritize needs, distribute supplies and services, promote bottom-up governance, and help people heal by contributing to the recovery efforts. For these and many more reasons, localization, often interpreted as locally lead processes, are essential to the success of a triple nexus approach. (See Literature Review, **Annex C**, pages 24 to 28)

The survey self-assessment data demonstrates that respondents have a high confidence in their ability to apply a locally led approach.[8] Eighty percent (80%) indicated that "localization" was incorporated in their organization's implementation of the triple nexus - 27% 'extremely well' and 53% 'very well'. **This result reflects the values most CSOs place on their relationship with local partners.**

Chart Nine: Incorporating Localization in Triple Nexus Programming



[8] The interpretation of localization and locally led CSO development varies on a continuum, particularly between northern-based or governed ICSOs and increasing numbers of CSOs in the global south. See Kuloba-Warria, C., with Brian Tomlinson, 2023. "International Civil Society Organizations' Development Effectiveness: Reflections on progress in equitable partnerships, solidarity, and accountability," CSO Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation, April 2023, accessed at http://aidwatchcanada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Final-CPDE_2023_Recomendation_04_05_2023.pdf. How localization is interpreted in the context of this continuum by respondents in beyond the scope of this study.

In order to provide more context, survey respondents were asked to identify localization tools and practices their organization had in place, and then rank them in order of importance (**Chart Nine**). All the respondents indicated that their organization engaged local communities in decision-making processes through local CSOs (100%). Most respondents also indicated that they: prioritized local procurement and hiring (95%); transfer resources and responsibilities to local actors to implement their programs (91%); support locally-determined capacity building (91%) and, contract local CSOs to implement projects (91%). In addition, over half the respondents indicated that they allocate specific resources to support local partners and community leadership in strengthening peace processes (64%) as well as support community-led peace initiatives (55%).

Additional Advice from Respondents:

- "*Working through local partners and focussing community organization, beyond participation, is also an important part of the development of the nexus approach."*
- *"Finding local partners with the mix of expertise in different sectors can be challenging. Encouraging work in consortiums helps."*
- "*The organization of the local community should be the purpose of all of it in order to support local initiatives and rely on local knowledge*."
- *"Strengthen local collaboration through close collaboration with local actors and institutions to reinforce national and community-level systems."*

It is important to note that while data is very positive, power imbalances still run-through most donor-recipient partnerships. The transformative shift from top-down, which is built into most of the structures of development cooperation, to bottom-up processes, may still be a while away.

7.0 What are the innovative ways of delivering triple nexus?

Many policymakers and practitioners involved in the study are often part of small networks of colleagues willing to invest a little more effort and creativity in finding better ways to design programs and achieve meaningful outcomes. But in the immediate absence of system wide transformation, they are often focused on creating smaller changes and administrative workarounds within their sphere of influence to move towards a triple nexus approach. In this regard, the study found a number of ways in which this approach is being tested in practice.

It is important to note that the list below is not comprehensive, nor are the examples a one-size-fits-all method. They are some possibilities and inspiration for further innovation. (See also the Literature Review, **Annex C**, Section 4.) Some examples include:

a) Decentralization or Country Focused Integrated Programs**:** Several CSOs in the survey have multi-mandates with a focus on area-based or select local communities. **It is essential to overcome / avoid siloed humanitarian, development and peace initiatives within organizations undertaking a triple nexus approach.** "*Internally, we try to avoid separating humanitarian and development funding*

to focus more on a country budget that will be assigned according to the on-going situation in the country. … For example, Haiti was for us a development related country till recently where the context changed but the internal funding stream has not. We just shifted the projects we support according to the local situation."

b) **Sustaining Support for Local Actors: An effective nexus approach is not possible without the involvement and leadership of local CSOs and communities (including local governments).** While they often are facing the same challenges as their community, local actors are also best placed to identify issues and reach those that need it the most. This support can come in many forms, including funding, capacity building, logistics, supplies and so forth. (See section 6.4 above) While local organizations may be implementing International CSO programming on the ground, there is often very limited resources for their overhead costs that sustain their organization. In this context, GAC now allows CSO intermediaries to cascade up to 7% of overhead costs to local actors to ensure some level of sustainability for these organizations.

c) **Coordinating Programming among Organizations: Coordination is a critical characteristic of the nexus approach.** Many CSOs are single-sector organizations and have limited room to broaden their mandate. In these cases, the organization can still work in a triple nexus approach by coordinating with other organizations, ensuring that their single sector program compliments other programming in the same location. Such coordination can occur among like-minded organizations and/or through the country dialogue process. The latter is discussed further as part of reflections on local and multilateral coordination in **Section C**.

d) **Pooled Funds: Pooled funding is an important mechanism that can overcome the current siloed approach to funding humanitarian, development and peace activities.** When asked if funding for their nexus activities was pooled, 16% of respondents indicated 'yes,' 36% indicated 'somewhat,' 36% indicated 'no,' and another 12% reported 'unknown.' Based on the interviews, some respondents identified pooled funding as private funds within their organization, or a nexus program that had two sources of funding. Other respondents identified pooled funds as a common funding mechanism where groups of official providers and CSOs can contribute to a common purpose. While most are provider-controlled, the research found an example of local-lead pooled funding in South Sudan, initiated by local CSOs in South Sudan and facilitated at the outset by Save the Children. They encourage international funders to contribute directly to the funding pool so that local organizations can decide on how to use the funds to address community needs and priorities.[9]

e) **Access to Unrestricted Funds:** Similarly, **access to an organization's unrestricted finance can be an important resource for compensating for siloed funding windows.** Several CSOs have access to private donations or membership funding that are unrestricted or can be allocated as needed. In these

[9] Save the Children US, 2023. "Local and National Actors at the Forefront of Humanitarian Responses," Localization Case Study, Local Response Pooled Fund, South Sudan, October 2023, accessed at https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/pdf/2023LRPFCaseStudyEN.pdf/. See also the Literature Review, Annex C, page 28.

cases, the CSOs may use the unrestricted funding for triple nexus programs and/or supplement either humanitarian, development, or peace components as needed. "*For nexus programming we have pooled private funding to allow for maximum flexibility and adaptability when programming across the nexus. Countries can then choose how to leverage this funding for maximum impact."*

f) Mixing Funding Sources: The GAC pilot projects and **many of the triple nexus examples have collated funds from different programming streams to achieve triple nexus**. While the most common approach in the current realities of siloed provider financing, it is also the least efficient since it requires a great deal of coordination, multiple proposals and reporting frameworks. These added burdens are often absorbed by the intermediary and local implementing organizations.

g) Matched Funding within Organizations: In this instance, the common practice of matched funding, where a donor matches or contributes funding in a set ratio for program fundraised through other means for a given humanitarian context, is redesigned to support nexus programming. In one organization, a fund was set up to provide match funding for a particular sector. For example, **a development program may dedicate a certain amount to a project and then request match funding from within the organization for humanitarian and/or peace pillar.**

h) Offer multi-year funding agreements/relationships: As noted in the above sections, Canadian CSOs value long-term and trusted relationships with local CSOs. **Long-term multi-year (3-7 years if not more) programming and processes are often needed to address complex humanitarian, development and peace dynamics in protracted crisis contexts**. It takes time to rebuild trust, and for communities to stabilize and generate resilience.

i) Project Crisis Modifiers*:* Rigid conditions for development projects in protracted crisis contexts may have limited outcomes for affected populations when the context experiences unforeseen reversals back to conflict. **The inclusion of crisis modifiers has allowed programs to better respond to the local needs and protect development gains.** In general, the modifiers are contingency funding (designated funds, pre-approved budget allocations, or fast-tracked access rules) that are included in development project contracts whereby project staff can quickly access humanitarian aid in case of unexpected shocks. It is an important tool to protect vulnerable communities in fragile and conflict affected areas and help build resilience. As one respondent noted,

> "*The inclusion of crisis modifiers in development funding is where some 'humanitarian' response can be integrated such as cash distributions to meet immediate needs. However, this has been inconsistent with different GAC operational development desks. As for peace assistance, social cohesion activities are the primary type of implementation, and often we've worked to weave in existing humanitarian or development projects."*

8.0 What are the strengths and challenges?

As with any new approach, the areas of strengths and challenges quickly become apparent in the implementation. The earlier data demonstrated that a triple nexus approach currently represents just a small slice of humanitarian work by Canadian CSOs, and for several the initiatives are relatively new. As

one respondent explained, "*We have just begun developing the framework for nexus programming*." Yet, the respondents readily identified alignments and tensions in the triple nexus approach. This next section describes the strengths and challenges as well as several discussion threads that emerged from the data.

8.1 Strengths and challenges in practice

Often seen as two sides of the same coin, many strengths and challenges are connected and imply a transition from one state to another. For example, the lack of funding and resources is a challenge for some, while others found their flexible long-term funding, while perhaps not a large enough amount, to be a strength. Survey respondents were asked to identify the strengths and challenges they faced in implementing the triple nexus approach, and then rank them in order of importance. Key themes emerged from the quantitative and qualitative data and are described below.

Table One: Ranking Strengths and Weaknesses in Implementing a Nexus Approach[10]

Ranked Strengths	Ranked Challenges
1. Long-term relationships with all relevant local partners for triple nexus programming (31%) 2. Local trust and respect for our 'neutrality' (19%) 3. Flexible and long-term funding (17%) 4. An Adaptive Management process that allows for rapid and changing responses (16%) 5. Access to solid contextual analysis that is trustworthy and regularly updated (6%) 6. Good supportive relationships with relevant GAC officials at headquarters (3%) 7. Good partnerships with local GAC representatives (2%) 8. Capacity building programs for staff on triple nexus programming (2%) 9. Dedicated staff with the right mix of expertise for triple nexus programming (1%)	1. Lack of funding and resources (34%) 2. Rigid or overly complicated funding mechanisms (22%) 3. Limited local capacities to implement a triple nexus approach (9%) 4. Resistance from stakeholders (9%) 5. Complex and changing dynamics on the ground (8%) 6. Insufficient organizational expertise in one of the three pillars (6%) 7. Multiple reporting requirements that use different monitoring and evaluation frameworks (5%) 8. Push-back on gender and inclusion (3%) 9. Lack of local knowledge to enable organizational programming (3%) 10. Inter-agency dynamics in the local context (2%)

[10] Based on relative weighting of different challenges implementing the triple nexus approach. Share of total points: Number of responses: 21, weighting based on ranked 1st: 10 points, ranked 2cd: 7 points, ranked 3rd: 5 points.

8.2 Transforming partnerships

As intermediaries, CSOs are embedded in a web of relationships with donors, program participants, each other, local partners, and so forth. At its heart, the triple nexus approach asks actors to transform their relationships, to better coordinate and collaborate with each other and for the content and processes embedded in those partnerships to be responsive and locally lead. This makes partnership both a strength and challenge in the triple nexus approach.

The data shows that respondents value their partnership by ranking long-term relationships with all relevant local partners for triple nexus programming (31%) first and local trust and respect for our 'neutrality' (19%) second in the strength's column. In the ranking of good supportive relationships with relevant GAC officials at headquarters (3%) and of good partnerships with local GAC representatives (2%) sixth and seventh, respondents may also be indicating that these are significant challenges in implementing this approach. In terms of challenges, the respondents ranked resistance from stakeholders (9%) fourth; push-back on gender and inclusion (3%) eighth; and, inter-agency dynamics in the local context (2%) tenth. The latter reinforce the strength of local partnerships for these organizations.

Please note that **Section D**, will further dive into this dynamic in terms of coordination and collaboration in the international, Canadian and local context.

8.3 Funding

Appropriate and timely funding are very significant challenges for organizations attempting a triple nexus approach. While flexible and long-term funding (17%) was ranked third in the strength's column, the lack of funding and resources (34%) and rigid or overly complicated funding mechanisms (22%) were ranked first and second among the challenges. In addition, multiple reporting requirements that use different monitoring and evaluation frameworks (5%) was ranked seventh. The qualitative data also reflects different perspectives, with one participant explaining:

> *"Our interest and commitment towards integrating a Triple Nexus approach in our work is strong. However, donors currently offer little to no opportunities to do so, as their funding schemes remain compartmentalised per axis and lack the required flexibility to shift from one axis to another within any given project."*

At the same time, the data shows that there are a few organizations that have access to different (often non-governmental) sources of flexible long-term funding. This group is more optimistic and often mixes and matches funds from different sources to fund a triple nexus approach. One respondent explained that *"We adapt and complement according to the funding stream available."* While another respondent advised colleagues to "*Be creative and persevere in seeking funds for triple nexus projects, donors will eventually adapt and find ways to support it."*

8.4 Responsiveness

The triple nexus approach was designed for fragile and conflict-affected countries, that are often enmeshed in protracted, complex, and fast-paced crises. **While having the capacity to adapt to a changing context and be responsive to the local requirements is a core part of the approach, it is**

challenging for policymakers and practitioners working in centralized northern or global bureaucracies. Single mandated programs, accountability frameworks, and organizational policy can, unintentionally, bog down administrative systems. For example, one respondent explained that they were reviewing all their organizational policies with the goal of updating the administrative processes so that they facilitate – as opposed to hinder – the triple nexus approach. **Organizational policies must address the need to design policies and frameworks that can quickly distribute funds and supplies when needed and create space for local actors to work on the community priorities – even when they shift to respond to the context.**

The necessity for these changes is demonstrated in the data where the third, fourth, and fifth ranked practices in the strength's column were: flexible and long-term funding (17%); an adaptive management process that allows for rapid and changing responses (16%); and access to solid contextual analysis that is trustworthy and regularly updated (6%). On the other hand, respondents ranked a complex and changing dynamics on the ground (8%) fifth and multiple reporting requirements that use different monitoring and evaluation frameworks (5%) seventh, demonstrating that they are able to address these challenges given the resources to do so.

8.5 Developing multiple capacities for implementing HDP Nexus

In asking policymakers and practitioners to work across sectors in a triple nexus approach, there is an assumption about a general level of knowledge and skills in implementing the different dimensions of the humanitarian-development-peace pillars. As one respondent stated:

> *"A fundamental problem is that programming in three spheres requires much more work and expertise. It makes sense on paper to de-silo and coordinate, but in practice, it's hard to find the right partners with the right expertise and willingness/ability to work together, in an extremely fragile context. Then you layer on cross-cutting themes, PSEAH, physical safety concerns...it's not for the faint of heart."*

This is often compounded by the tendency for high-staff turn-over, particularly in longer-term programs set in fragile contexts.

The survey provides mixed messages on institutional capacities. The survey respondents ranked the challenge of limited local capacities to implement a triple nexus approach (9%) in third place. But they identified insufficient organizational expertise in one of the three pillars (6%) low in sixth place, and lack of local knowledge to enable organizational programming (3%) at the bottom of the challenges, in ninth place. At the same time, capacity building programs for staff on triple nexus programming (2%) and dedicated staff with the right mix of expertise for triple nexus programming (1%) was ranked last, or eighth and ninth in the strength's column.

This suggests that there is a lack of required expertise, or even a general understanding that could facilitate communication across all three HDP pillars at the local, programming and organizational levels. While the messages above were mixed, other data and interviews confirm the importance of dedicating enough time and resources to strengthen capacity building efforts and foster more cross-disciplinary teams.

8.6 Mandates and budgets

In addition to the survey data, several interview respondents noted that there was some reluctance around budgeting for triple nexus. One respondent noted that everybody supports the triple nexus approach, but it seems that nobody wants to pay for it. This may be particularly relevant to departments or organizations that have a set mandate and limited budget.

It is important to remember that the key question here is not which sector has more or less funding to contribute – in fact one could argue that all the pillars are underfunded in light of demand – but to ask how can opportunities for the triple nexus approach be created in the current funding situation. To overcome the budget hurdle, policymakers and practitioners need to be creative. Possibilities could include: (1) lobbying for more funds, (2) each siloed pillar contributing a percentage of funds to triple nexus programming; (3) create a series of smaller pooled funds for triple nexus work; or, (4) establish a deeper more stable source of triple nexus funding through an independent organization, similar to the Equality Fund in support of women and girls rights and women's organizations.

8.6 Peace Assistance and Humanitarian Principles

The study found that some in the humanitarian sector have voiced concerns that collaboration among HDP pillar may dilute or obfuscate humanitarian principles. A key factor in these principles is 'neutrality,' both in terms or reality and perception. As one respondent noted,

> "*We are concerned that a triple nexus approach will blur the line between humanitarian action and both development and peace-building, to the detriment of the fundamental principles of neutrality and impartiality in humanitarian response. Humanitarian action cannot be made contingent on development or peace-building imperatives, and capacity for immediate and non-compromised humanitarian response activities in response to acute crises and conflicts must be maintained independent of development and peace-building objectives*."

There is a concern that involvement in community-based partnerships and peacebuilding effort could undermine some humanitarian organizations' hard-earned reputations for neutrality. If organizations located in conflict zones are perceived as being biased towards one group or another, it could have life and death consequences. The scenarios may include:

- Some local people not accepting help and discouraging others.
- Governments or ruling factions denying access to affected communities.
- Increased security risks for staff as well as local civilians and groups associated with the project. People could be targeted during and after the humanitarian project's presence in the community.
- Humanitarian aid being used as an instrument of the conflict or part of negotiation tactics.

While this may be more difficult for some, there is room for a more nuanced discussion. There are different degrees in which organizations can engage with the peace-building sector. The peacebuilding sector ranges from conflict-sensitivity analysis and local social cohesion projects to UN peacekeeping interventions and national peace negotiations. **The research found that most of the respondents are only incorporating small 'p' peacebuilding activities such as on conflict-sensitivity and building social**

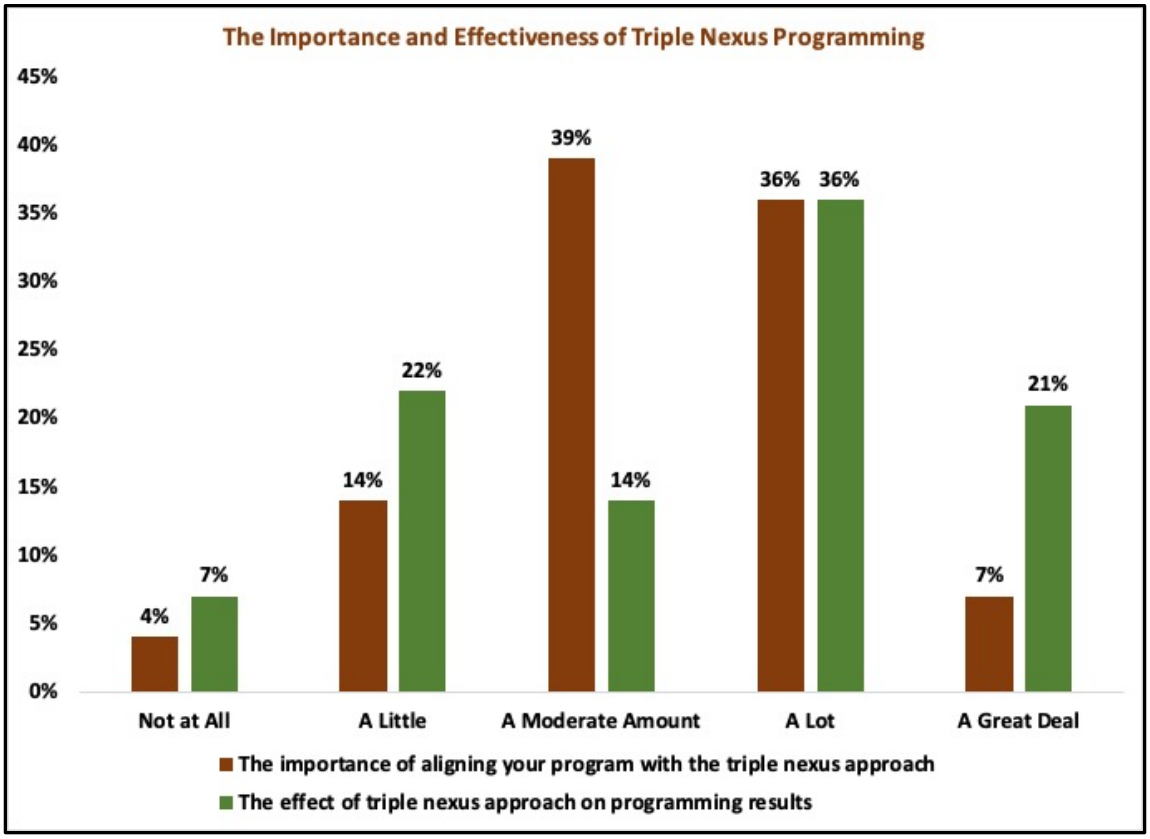
cohesion among local communities. One of the common threads is to ensure all communities have access to resources and provide a safe and neutral space for working together and resolving local conflicts.

9.0 Is triple nexus effective?

Several respondents asked for studies and evaluations that discuss the effectiveness of the triple nexus approach. As one practitioner phrased it: *"…Is there evidence that this approach is effective? How is it effective? In which scenarios?"* While there was not enough scope in this study to answer these questions, which require access to systematic evaluations, some data did emerge for consideration. Confidence in the approach, anecdotal evidence, meta reviews and case studies found in the literature provide a good starting point for understanding how the triple nexus approach can (or cannot) influence program results.

Most of the survey respondents felt that the triple nexus approach was important to their programs with 43% indicating it had 'a lot or a great deal' of importance, 39% rating it 'a moderate amount', and 18% indicating it was 'not at all' or a 'little' important. But the ratings were significantly higher when respondents were asked if triple nexus had an effect on program results, with 57% of respondents indicating that there was 'a lot' or 'a great deal' of influence, 14% rating it 'a moderate amount', but also 29% indicating it was 'a little' or 'not at all' effective on the program results. (**Chart 10**)

Chart 10: The Importance and Effectiveness of Triple Nexus Programming



The research gathered a number of case studies where the triple nexus approach had an effect on program results. (See **Table Two**) One respondent, for example, described **a project that is implemented by local partners with the common goal of improving food security for Internally Displaced Persons and local communities in DRC. Initially, the project included humanitarian food assistance and livelihood development, but organically evolved to include a Women's Situation Room (WSR) where participants could build mediation skills and resolve smaller scale conflicts in the community. Overtime, the participants helped resolve conflicts within families, between households and in the marketplace. Then the scope expanded unexpectedly, when arm-conflict broke out between two militia groups in the area, the WSR was invited to mediate between the armed groups and eventually help restore peace.** The example illustrates the value of anticipating possible crises and putting the pieces in place to address it if/when it arises.

The literature review also identified several unpublished organizational reports and case studies of the triple nexus approach in programming. One of the common findings is that the triple nexus approach can improve results, but perhaps to varying degrees depending on the context.

Table Two: CSO Country Case Studies

Organization	Case Studies
ACTED, "ACTED's Approach to Operationalizing the Humanitarian, Development, Peace Nexus," no date, unpublished	**1)** ACTED WASH Interventions in Syria; **2)** ACTED Intervention in Faryab, Afghanistan; **3)** Triple Nexus in Mindanao, Philippines; **4)** Multi-sectoral assistance in 7 displacement sites in the Diffa region, Niger; **5)** The Nexus in Iraq: The Case of Mosul City, Iraq; **6)** Facilitating the return of IDPs within Bangui, Central Africa Republic; **7)** Akobo: The nexus approach in a Hub of Resilience, South Sudan.
Alliance2015, "Advancing Alliance2015 Humanitarian, Development and Peace Nexus Agenda: A collection of best practices and recommendations for effective nexus delivery," ACTED et al, April 2024, unpublished.	**1)** Climate Smart Agriculture Kenya; **2)** Renewable Energy for Sustainable Environmental Transformation, Malawi; **3)** Sustainable Income Generation and job creation through support of irrigation and water collection infrastructure, Lebanon; **4)** Food Systems Transformation, Ethiopia - Semien Gondor Resilience Project; **5)** Chad – DIZA/RESPECCT Project; **6)** Niger - WHH Nexus Chapeau Projects - Emergency Support to Vulnerable Populations in the Sahel + NEXUS - Food Security and Adaptation to Climate Change in Niger
Canadian Foodgrains Bank, March 2024, unpublished.	**1)** Humanitarian, Early Recovery, and Development (HERD) for COVID-19 related food insecurity in Sub-Saharan Africa, Final Report.

CARE Canada and CARE Ethiopia, January 2024, unpublished	**1)** Lifesaving Health, WASH, and Protection Assistance for Crisis-affected IDPs and Host Communities in the Eastern Zone of Tigray Region (2022 – 2024).
Save the Children, no date, unpublished	**1)** Mail Case Study: Triple Nexus in Northern Mali: How targeting for cash transfer can be used to identify and resolve community conflicts

As noted above, 29% of respondents indicated that a triple nexus approach had 'a little' or 'not at all' effect on the program results. Given this result, and the aid sector's propensity for following high profile trends, **further research and evaluations on the effectiveness of the triple nexus approach is highly recommended.**

It should also be noted that there are three challenges in assessing the effectiveness of triple nexus. First, as a relatively new approach, triple nexus can take several years or more to fully realize its potential (particularly for development and peace activities) and for program results to be apparent. Second, triple nexus is a context-specific approach and can take many different shapes and modalities, making comparisons complicated. Third, it is difficult - but not impossible - to measure prevention or something that did not happen. That being said, it is important to gather evaluative information to inform better sector practice and learning for effective engagement in complex conflict and fragile environments.

Section C: Coordination and Collaboration

1.0 Coordination in the aid sector

As described in the last section, CSO respondents tend to discuss the triple nexus approach in terms of better program design, organizational policies and practices, and finances. However, the triple nexus approach also focuses on coordination as a critical element for impact on the ground. The DAC Recommendation calls on providers to coordinate their efforts to identify collective outcomes incorporating humanitarian, development and peace actions. It promotes joint risk-informed, gender-sensitive analysis of root causes and structural drivers of conflict as well as positive factors of resilience. (OECD DAC, 2019) Essentially, attempting to bring order and efficiency to an inherently messy aid sector, while respecting the different mandates of organizations.

In practice, coordination is a continuum, ranging from informal periodic contacts (most common practice), formal structured communication, or deliberate processes to ensure strategic alignment of actors across the nexus (least realized). However, each organization, including those from the UN, continues to have its own operating models and priorities, making it difficult to align processes and achieve common objectives in country contexts. This is often complicated by the sheer volume of organizations in the field, top-down decision-making and inter-agency competition. (Please see Section B, 8.0 Strengths and Challenges)

The aid sector consists of many organizations and governments – multi- and bilateral, international and local CSOs, and so forth – in sometimes overlapping and evolving networks. While some actors prefer to

work independently, others tend to congregate and engage around certain areas or venues. These are (1) International forums such as the OECD DAC, United Nations, African Union, and other multilateral efforts, (2) Capital cities in donor countries, such as Ottawa, and (3) Major cities in recipient countries or near crisis zones. Each of these areas have an informal, and sometimes formal, dialogue process with umbrella organizations, associations, clusters, and working groups which provide opportunities for coordination and collaboration. This is further evidence in the 2018 GPEDC monitoring of the implementation of development effectiveness principles in 90+ countries.

The next section will provide a brief synopsis of issues in coordination within the local context, Canadian venues and international forums, and how Canadian CSOs may, or may not, coordinate and collaborate with other actors in these areas.

2.0 Local context

The triple nexus approach calls on aid actors to improve coordination and, at the same time, move towards localization, or responsive and locally led programming. Such an approach puts the focus on the in-country dialogue process. A dialogue process can vary from country to country but tends to include a mixture of informal networks and more formal donor forums, clusters or sector working groups and regular meetings with government bodies. UN agencies tend to take the lead roles along with larger CSOs.

The development of the UN Resident Coordinator (RC) position has been to play a bridging role among UN agencies (Delivering as One), including national/local governments, and other local and international organizations within the dialogue process. In times of crisis, the RC can also become the Humanitarian Coordinator with greater authority to organize a response with more urgency. **UN Resident Coordinators are carefully chosen and receive excellent training and support in assuming their positions in difficult country contexts. However, the leadership of UN agencies have different institutional incentives that undermine the agenda of Delivering as One including effective coordination at the local level.** Several respondents confirmed these tensions from their own experiences. They expressed doubts about the UN's ability to fulfil these roles, noting that the UN system has its own limitations in terms of strong organizational mandates and cultures as well as the necessary UN relationships with the host governments.

It is also important to note, that beyond vague references to localization and responsiveness, the triple nexus approach does not define who and how the common outcomes are determined – particularly in the absence of a stable government. While there are references to documents such as Poverty Reduction Strategies or Humanitarian Response Plans, these documents do not necessarily represent local views. The academic literature contains many studies that illustrate how large international organizations use the dialogue process to influence the content of these reports.

On the whole, efforts to engage local actors and international CSOs in local dialogue processes are mixed. In some instances, the local CSOs are organized in parallel processes and able to produce response documents, however, this is not the norm particularly in fragile and conflict affected countries. **As one respondent observed "*in general, local actors are by in large excluded from the current coordination***

***system …. Local and national authorities are also by in large absent in this process*.”** The same respondent went on to explain that being concentrated in the capitals, the processes tend to focus on the national level issues, overlooking local actors and conditions in the region.

Some respondents noted that they were involved in the local dialogue process and even co-chaired working groups when the occasion arose. While other respondents felt that the investment of time and resources in the dialogue process was not worth the effort. One respondent who was involved in a joint funding program for a local CSO noted that “*the donor-grantee relationship that is established [with the local partner] and its focus on compliance requirements … and that dynamic undermined program quality significantly … it just became another layer of donor relationships.*”

Instead of deliberative and strategic alignments, many of the respondents discussed more informal connections. They tended to loosely coordinate with other CSOs outside the dialogue process, particularly in terms of negotiating geography and programs. As an example, one respondent noted that it is good practice to check the priorities in the Humanitarian Response Plans and communicate with colleagues regarding who is working in specific areas or on key issues before submitting program proposals.

Overall, CSOs often focus on coordination exclusively with their local partners rather than coordinating with other CSOs and/or stakeholders. Expanding this scope to include more coordination among CSOs remains a challenge.

3.0 Canadian engagement

Meetings in capital cities of donor countries present another opportunity for the aid sector to improve coordination and collaborations. Once again, informal networks emerge, this time around, mainly involving government departments and embassies, with periodic engagement with CSO umbrella organizations (Cooperation Canada) and informal Working Groups (Food Security Policy Group, etc.). While beyond the scope of this research, the Humanitarian Response Network (HRN) in Canada, supported by Cooperation Canada, seems to play this role. Coordination in this area tends to focus on:

- Engagement on broad policy issues and common interests, with a focus on GAC policies and practices;
- More focused discussions on funding and programming;
- Alliances around fundraising campaigns and awareness of specific humanitarian situations;
- Joint learning and knowledge exchange around common areas of interest;
- Mobilizing resources for programs and projects; and
- Raise awareness and promote sustainable development

While none of the respondents mentioned triple nexus in this context, many referenced the CSO Nexus Working Group and this report as an important resource for advancing the triple nexus approach. In addition, the survey and research has suggested recommendations for the Working Group in this regard. (Please see Section E: Recommendations)

4.0 International venues

Among the many international fora and venues, the OECD DAC and its Community of Practice, the International Network on Conflict and Fragility (INCAF) is one of the key drivers of the triple nexus approach. In February 2019, the DAC adopted the *OECD-DAC Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus*. (OECD, 2019) All 32 DAC Members, including Canada, are Adherents to the Recommendation as well as seven UN entities.[11] While not legally binding, an OECD Recommendation is the strongest level of accountability for DAC Members, to which they commit to "do their best to fully implement."[12] DAC Recommendations can be an important focus of periodic DAC peer reviews of their Members policy implementation and practices.

Unfortunately, the literature review found that many **providers (DAC and UN organizations) have made clear policy commitments,[13] but to date these commitments have not resulted in substantive change in practice.** While acknowledging that these are complex contexts on the ground, providers have often lacked political will and a risk appetite to invest in extremely fragile and conflict-affected contexts in ways that address root causes. Providers have not made available the necessary long-term, flexible and predictable financing, but rather rely on earmarked, short-term project-based humanitarian grants, with significant gaps in coordination across the pillars. (Moriniere, et. al., 2023; DAC CSO Reference Group, 2024) This finding was confirmed by several respondents who expressed frustration with rigid, short-term, funding mechanisms that can significantly impede, but does not necessarily stop, concerted efforts for triple nexus approaches at the local level.

Section D: Global Affairs Canada and the implementation of the triple nexus

1.0 Introduction

The following section provides a summary overview of GAC's approach to the Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) or Triple Nexus. For a more detailed review of GAC policies and approach relating to the triple nexus see **Annex B**. The section is based on available documentation, an interview with several GAC officials,[14] as well as other data collected during CSO surveys and interviews. Annex B includes a discussion of GAC's policy framework and implementation initiatives alongside a description of work in key areas such as finance, program integration, international collaboration, and localization. The

[11] The seven UN entities are the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Population Fund, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, and the World Food Programme

[12] See https://legalinstruments.oecd.org/en/about.

[13] See Global Affairs Canada, 2021, for their promotional video, *The Triple Nexus: What it is and why it matters at Global Affairs Canada.*

[14] The Interview was conducted under Chatham House rules, as background information with no citations. Officials were from International Assistance Operations Bureau, the Humanitarian Policy Team, the Peace and Conflict Policy Unit and the Strategic Policy Branch within GAC.

document will also highlight several contextual factors and areas of progress as well as detailed suggestions for the CSO Nexus Working Group in furthering a dialogue with relevant officials in Global Affairs.

GAC is a signatory to the DAC Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus, a landmark agreement following the 2016 Humanitarian Summit, which is now at its five-year mark.[15] As a signatory Canada is obliged to "do [its] best to fully implement" its commitments in a more holistic way of working in fragile and conflict-affected contexts. But implementation is complex and as one GAC official shared in conversation with Cooperation Canada members, GAC is continuing to determine the most effective approaches.[16] The challenges include finding appropriate balances among resources, policies, prevention and programming in short-term humanitarian emergencies and longer-term development and peace pillars. Further, the move to a more integrated approach, the reorganization of a large bureaucracy such as GAC, and shifts in work culture will take time. The current reorganization of GAC may portend the start of a much longer transition towards an integrated approach to the triple nexus.

2.0 Policy framework

International support for more integrated approaches is reflected in the 2017 Feminist International Assistance Policy (FIAP), the current overarching policy framework for GAC's international assistance. While FIAP was developed prior to the formalization of the HDP nexus approach at the DAC, it highlights aspects of this approach in its commitment to gender-sensitive and gender-transformative humanitarian action. It committed to "more flexible and predictable funding in response to humanitarian crises, including the use of unearmarked and multiyear funding for longer term crises."[17] Actions focused on support for women and girls in humanitarian contexts and include support for local and national women's organizations, greater participation of women in peace processes at all levels, and advance women's rights in post-conflict state building. Foreshadowing the nexus approach, it suggests that "comprehensive approaches that bring together development, peacebuilding and humanitarian efforts are also needed to achieve long term solutions for people affected by crises and ultimately achieve a more inclusive, peaceful and prosperous world." (FIAP and Action Area Policy: Human Dignity)

Peace and Security is another essential pillar for FIAP. Actions in this area are intended to support inclusive, gender responsive, crisis responsive, violent conflict prevention and sustainable peace. This Action Area acknowledges the triple nexus with its call for investments in gender sensitive approaches to addressing structural drivers of both conflict and peace, for support for national and local capacities for peace, and for support for initiatives that address sexual and gender-based violence in situations of violent conflict and complex crises. (Action Area Policy: Peace and Security)

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[15] See https://legalinstruments.oecd.org/public/doc/643/643.en.pdf.

[16] Briefing by GAC official with Cooperation Canada members focusing on an update on reorganization at GAC, May 30, 2024.

[17] GAC has subsequently reported that 58% of its humanitarian funding was multi-year and over 35% was in the form of flexible funding (unearmarked and softly earmarked) in 2020, exceeding the Grand Bargain target of 30%. In 2023 approximately two thirds of funding was provided through multi-year agreements.

Despite the sporadic mention in GAC reporting documents, the DAC recommendation and FIAP policy provide a framework for GAC and its efforts to work towards the Triple Nexus approach. However, it is also important to remember that GAC operates within a broader federal government regulatory framework and is obliged to follow Treasury Board policies for grants and contributions among other guidance. Depending on the issues, these can hinder or facilitate the implementation of the triple nexus approach.

3.0 Implementation

GAC's strategy for implementing the triple nexus approach has changed over time.[18] While still early days, there seems to be two phases: an initial phase led by the Nexus Core Group, that produced the GAC Nexus Workplan (2020-2022) and the *Quick Start Guide* to the Triple Nexus and then a subsequent move to a more decentralized approach post-2022. For more details on each period, please see **Annex B.**

3.1 GAC nexus core group and workplan, 2020 to 2022

The 2020 to 2022 Workplan was facilitated by a GAC cross-team Nexus Core Group consisting of three bureau leads. The plan emphasized departmental capabilities through three streams of work: 1) Focus on strategy with development of Guidelines; 2) Focus on operation with cross-team human resource assignments and skills development through training; and 3) Focus on function with integrated country strategies, conflict sensitivity analysis and finance issues. A *Quick Start Guide: Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus,*[19] was developed during this period to frame this internal implementation process. A number of pilot projects were initiated with Canadian CSOs.

In a December 2022 update to the Canadian CSO Humanitarian Response Network, a GAC official reported progress in three areas: Triple Nexus Guidelines had been developed; a toolkit for integrated country strategies was drafted; and training was provided for 19 GAC officials who were taking-up country postings. However, in tandem with this assessment, it was also noted elsewhere that the initial HDP nexus workplan overlapped with other significant ongoing and much larger processes including the GAC Transformation process and the Grants and Contributions Transformation Initiative (GCTI).

3.2 Decentralized approach post-2022

Since 2022 the department has taken a more decentralized approach that saw the discontinuation of the Nexus Core Group and Workplan. Several departmental initiatives influenced this change of approach. Key among them has been the Grants and Contributions Transformation Initiative (GCTI) and the recent reorganization of Global Affairs affecting the development, humanitarian and peacebuilding bureaus. GAC

[18] While the DAC completed a five-year review of the triple nexus Recommendation with all its members in early 2024, GAC's contribution to this review has not been provided by GAC officials. (See OECD DAC, 2024)

[19] Global Affairs Canada, "Quick Start Guide: Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus," unpublished internal document, no date.

has remained active in various international fora that focus on the triple nexus and its implementation.[20] Implementation continues in some country contexts, but usually through GAC intermediaries (multilateral and civil society organizations).

One of the limitations of this more decentralized approach has been the inability of the department to easily identify specific operational instances of implementation of triple (double) nexus approaches in different country contexts where Canada is supporting programming. The knowledge is decentralized within the geographic branches (and GAC intermediaries), with seemingly no cross-departmental processes identified for assessing lessons, challenges and opportunities in implementing complex, often country specific, approaches to nexus programming.

One of the key tenants of the triple nexus approach is to eliminate programming silos so that GAC and its partners can finance more effectively the multiple challenges presented in fragile and conflict affected countries, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa. In a discussion with Cooperation Canada members, senior GAC officials have pointed to the importance of the August 2024 reorganization of GAC. They highlight the moving of the Peace and Security Programming Bureau closer to humanitarian and development programming within one overarching Branch – helping to bridge HDP programming silos.

The Department has also been undergoing a Grants and Contributions Transformation Initiative (GCTI), a five-year process since 2022 that is reviewing GAC financing procedures. To date, the Initiative seems to have focused mainly on technical fixes, specific financing terms for current modalities, a new IT grants and management system and streamlining business practices for implementing organizations.

GAC is also looking externally to support better collaboration and coordination in international and recipient country fora. The triple nexus approach is not just about joined-up funding and projects, but an important entry point for enhancing collaboration among all stakeholders. Further, since GAC is not itself an actor on the ground it must encourage its partners, be it multilateral or civil society, to improve coordination and localization.

The more detailed review in **Annex B** highlights GAC understanding of key components of a triple nexus approach. These touch on barriers in funding triple nexus programming, the challenge in program integration to further a triple nexus approach, and GAC's approach to the nexus through key stakeholders, primarily multilateral but also CSOs.

While funding modalities strongly reinforce silos, they are by no means absolute. On the positive side, relationships across GAC branches, the close sharing of information and sustained communications can go a long way in practically bridging some of the operational barriers that seem challenging for a triple nexus approach. There has been room, however, for some creative approaches to triple nexus funding, which can be internal to GAC, through different partners, and in collaboration with other donors. Often,

[20] These fora include the International Network on Conflict and Fragility (INCAF) at the OECD DAC, the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding, and the World Bank Fragility Forum.

they involve separate projects, which can be more complex for partners, but integrated by them in a more holistic program with counterparts on the ground.

Three or four success stories, however, cannot be translated into a broader GAC framework for more GAC partners. In the context of the reorganization, critical challenges remain: How to structure more integrated funding streams, how to reduce multiple GAC reporting requirements for partners, and how to reduce the burden on the intermediate CSOs to implement nexus by "innovating" creative practices. Only the largest CSOs can meet these demands.

GAC works in collaboration with UN and other multilateral partners as well as through CSO intermediaries. Their intent is to encourage and support partners in doing much better in coordination and localization. GAC points to the increased engagement of the multilateral development banks in collaborative approaches in country. While there is a recognition that contributing to multilateral organizations helps avoid crowding-in stakeholders at the country level, there are also ongoing challenges including conceptual and different approaches/mandates of these actors, tensions in coordination within the UN system, fiduciary risks for donors, and security risks for staff, all of which limit the practical opportunities for advancing the nexus at the country level. On the other hand, GAC officials see the UN Country Based Pooled Funds (CBPFs) as a major tool for advancing localization in humanitarian assistance.

There is also evidence that the international humanitarian system is struggling to change. GAC points to OHCA's recent flagship initiative to test new approaches to coordination in the humanitarian system, which it is running in Colombia, South Sudan, Philippines and Niger, particularly encouraging closer and holistic engagement with communities.

4.0 Progress in GAC's approach to the triple nexus

While it is still early days and there are ambiguities around how GAC is implementing the triple nexus approach, there are also a number of positive steps that have been shared as part of the study. They include:

a) **Success of CSO Pilot Projects** in Ukraine, Ethiopia and Sudan.

b) **GAC Nexus Guides and Tools**, which could represent a good foundation for the next phase.

c) **Inclusion of Crisis Modifiers**, allowing programs to better respond to the local needs and protect development gains.

d) **7% overhead allocations for local partners** to ensure some level of sustainability for these partners.

e) **Move to Multi-year funding,** from one to two-year funding agreements for humanitarian aid.

f) **Capacity Building and Training**, including learning about the triple nexus approach through sharing resources and conversation.

This report makes a number of recommendations for the CSO Nexus Working Group. These recommendations are summarized in Section E on Conclusions and Recommendations. They are elaborated, along with suggested opportunities for engaging with GAC in **Annex B**, section 5.

Section E: Conclusions and Recommendations

As noted in the introduction, this review is intended to be a starting point for the next phase of the CSO Nexus Working Group. The scope of the review focusses on Canadian CSOs with some reflection on the in-country dialogue process and GAC. As such the recommendations are primarily for the CSO Nexus Working Group, and then by extension, the Working Group can present their case to other stakeholders including GAC. The intention is to help build an understanding of the opportunities and challenges in the triple nexus approach and enrich practice and policy dialogue in Canada.

To help with the recommendations, the survey respondents were asked 'how can the CSO nexus working group support your work?' Many respondents appreciated the role of the Working Group in sharing organizational experience, including support for this study. Their suggestions for next steps fell into three categories: strengthen capacity, promotion of the triple nexus approach, and strengthen the evidence base. The following recommendations are based on the report findings and analysis, as well as the suggestions from respondents.

1) Strengthen the capacities of Canadian CSOs and other relevant stakeholders to implement the triple nexus approach.

a. **Promote membership in the CSO Nexus Working Group** and support new or interested members with mentorship and resources on the triple nexus approach.

b. **Develop a capacity building strategy** that includes the overall purpose, potential audiences, priorities, core competencies, learning outcomes, and available resources and expertise.

c. **Identify diverse audiences** outside the core nexus network and tailored outreach for organizations, professional networks, sectors, and so forth.

d. **Focus the capacity building strategy on specific topics and practical tools, with particular attention on the peace pillar**, conflict analysis, joint analysis and/or coordination.

e. **Support members of the CSO Nexus Working Group with resources and learning events** within their organizations, such as in-house workshops.

f. **Create a bank of human resources,** which could be called upon to support capacity development for organizations starting or enhancing their triple nexus approach.

2) Advocate and support the triple nexus approach by engaging relevant GAC officials and leadership. The approach with GAC should be iterative and should build on the potential of the reorganization but also take account the experience of GAC's efforts over the past few years.

a. **Build trust and understanding with GAC through joint learning and policy dialogues** on key issues of mutual concern relating to the triple nexus, such as coordination, localization, gender, conflict sensitivity analysis, and building on opportunities arising from Cooperation Canada's Futures Forum.

b. **Create joint learning opportunities building on specific country experiences**, where GAC may be more directly involved in implementing a triple nexus approach.

~~c.~~ **Over time, and with an understanding of GAC's reorganization process, develop clear proposals and practical ways forward for more flexible and integrated funding** that explicitly enables a triple nexus approach. An option for a HDP Nexus Fund, perhaps modeled after the Equality Fund, could be explored as one avenue to ensure appropriate funding modalities.

d. Encourage transparency and dialogue as GAC implements its reorganization in the context of advancing a triple nexus approach.

e. Increase engagement with relevant GAC officials on GAC's work on the triple nexus with various actors, such as the UN, DAC and the World Bank.

f. Plan for upcoming evaluative processes such as the DAC peer review of Canada in November 2024 and GAC evaluation of the triple nexus in 2026/27. Equally relevant may be GAC's evaluation of working in fragile contexts in 2024/25 and two evaluations in 2025/26 on the Peace and Stabilization Operations Program and on Disaster Risk and Resilience in Indo-Pacific Region.

3) Strengthen the evidence base for Canadian CSOs around the triple nexus approach.

a. Establish a storehouse of resources, including case studies, evaluations, literature reviews, and other organizational documents, building on the current google drive.

b. Continue to identify and map triple nexus pathways or catalogue the different ways in which triple nexus is being implemented.

c. Encourage additional studies on the triple nexus approach, particularly in terms of how it impacts program outcomes.

Annex A
A Data Review of Humanitarian, Development and Peace Allocations in Canadian ODA for Protracted Crisis Countries

Highlights

What does aid data reveal about the Canadian experience with the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Triple Nexus? While trends in humanitarian assistance disbursements are clear, unfortunately, current ODA datasets do not allow for accurate identification of triple nexus projects or programming. Proxy trends based on DAC sector codes are required, which are very broad, and only partially indicative of potential triple nexus efforts. This data review covers the period 2018/19 to 2022/23, the last year for which data is available. The main focus is on 20 countries designated as protracted crisis countries. (See **Data, Annex A.1** for the criteria and a list of countries and **Data, Annex A.2** for the DAC sector codes.)

1. **Humanitarian assistance has been increasing over the past five years**, by 36% in nominal volume, but only 10% when support for Ukraine is excluded. Nevertheless, humanitarian assistance has declined as a share of Real ODA from 15% in 2018/19 to 12% in 2022/23 (discounting in-donor refugee costs, support for COVID-19 Control and Ukraine to allow comparisons with earlier years).

2. **The volume of humanitarian assistance delivered by CSOs has varied by year, with overall assistance averaging around $250 million, but highly concentrated.** This assistance has been delivered by both Canadian and Foreign CSOs. Canadian CSOs delivered a record $235 million in humanitarian assistance in 2022/23, which represented 22% of total humanitarian assistance. In that year, CSO humanitarian assistance is concentrated among only eight (8) Canadian CSOs, which delivered 78% of GAC CSO assistance and 17% of total GAC humanitarian assistance.

3. **Multilateral organizations remain the primary channels for delivering Canadian humanitarian assistance and is also highly concentrated among a few organizations.** The share of multilateral organizations in Canadian humanitarian assistance ranged from 62% to 79% over the five years. Eight (8) multilateral organizations delivered 70% of total Canadian humanitarian assistance in 2022/23, with the World Food Program alone accounting for 42% of this assistance.

4. **Canadian humanitarian assistance is increasing concentrated in protracted crisis countries**. In 2022/23, 87% of humanitarian assistance was allocated to the 20 protracted crisis countries. But at 48%, development assistance was still the largest share of total flows to these countries over the five years. Humanitarian assistance was 40% of total flows with peace assistance at 12%. Total assistance is concentrated, with the top 10 countries receiving more than 80% of flows for each pillar.

5. **While support for the three pillars is present in all 20 protracted crisis countries, no conclusions can be drawn about the degree of triple nexus programming.** Peace assistance overall was limited, but strongly supportive of activities relating to gender equality, consistent with the Feminist International Assistance Policy. But peace assistance is more than 20% of country allocations in only five countries (Central Africa Republic, Guatemala, Mali, Myanmar and Ukraine). While CSOs provided 27% of total flows to these countries, they were responsible for a larger share of peace assistance (39%).

6. **Based on project coding, eight CSO had the potential for triple nexus programming, while many more had the potential for double nexus programming in protracted crisis countries.** But coding is no indication that these organizations were implementing a triple nexus approach.

1. Introduction

What does aid data reveal about the Canadian experience in the implementation of the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Triple Nexus? Unfortunately, current ODA datasets do not allow for accurate identification of triple nexus projects or programming.[21] Proxy trends are required, which are very broad, and only partially indicative of potential triple nexus efforts. The review covers the period 2018/19 to 2022/23, the last year for which data is available.

An emphasis on the triple nexus approach is particularly important for countries that are experiencing protracted crises. These countries will be the primary focus for this data analysis. Protracted crisis countries are those that have had a Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) under the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) for a minimum of five years. (See the list in **Data, A.1**)

The definition of triple nexus programming in the data follows the methodological approach developed by Development Initiatives based on DAC sector codes (see **Data, Annex A.2** for the relevant codes):[22]

- Humanitarian assistance in the 20 protracted crises countries is the starting point in identifying triple nexus programming.
- Simultaneous programming identified as peace assistance and development in these same 20 protracted crises countries. Peace assistance sector codes are defined in **Data, Annex A.2**. They include codes that relate to "soft peace" such as social inclusion (e.g. support for gender equality). Development assistance is any DAC sector code not included in humanitarian or peace assistance.

This data review looks at

1. The overall trends in Canadian humanitarian assistance, including disbursements by CSOs;
2. The extent of potential programming with respect to the three triple nexus pillars in 20 countries with protracted crises; and
3. An analysis of Canadian CSO programming in the 20 protracted crisis countries.

[21] The main databases consulted are the *Statistical Reports on International Assistance* and the GAC Historical Projects Dataset (https://www.international.gc.ca/transparency-transparence/international-assistance-report-stat-rapport-aide-internationale/index.aspx?lang=eng) and the GAC Project Browser (https://w05.international.gc.ca/projectbrowser-banqueprojets/Error?errorCode=8) for summary descriptions of projects.

[22] These codes are derived from Development Initiatives & Sida, 2023. "Leaving no crisis behind with assistance for the triple nexus: Humanitarian, development and peace funding in crisis contexts," accessed at https://devinit.org/resources/leaving-no-crisis-behind-assistance-triple-nexus-humanitarian-development-peace-funding/ See the methodological annex for this Development Initiatives report.

This identification also relies on the accuracy of project coding, which is often provided by the implementing organization. It can be subjective and may not fully identify all relevant codes for potential nexus programming. Nexus programming may also be implemented in other fragile and conflict-affected context, which are not included in the 20 protracted crisis countries.

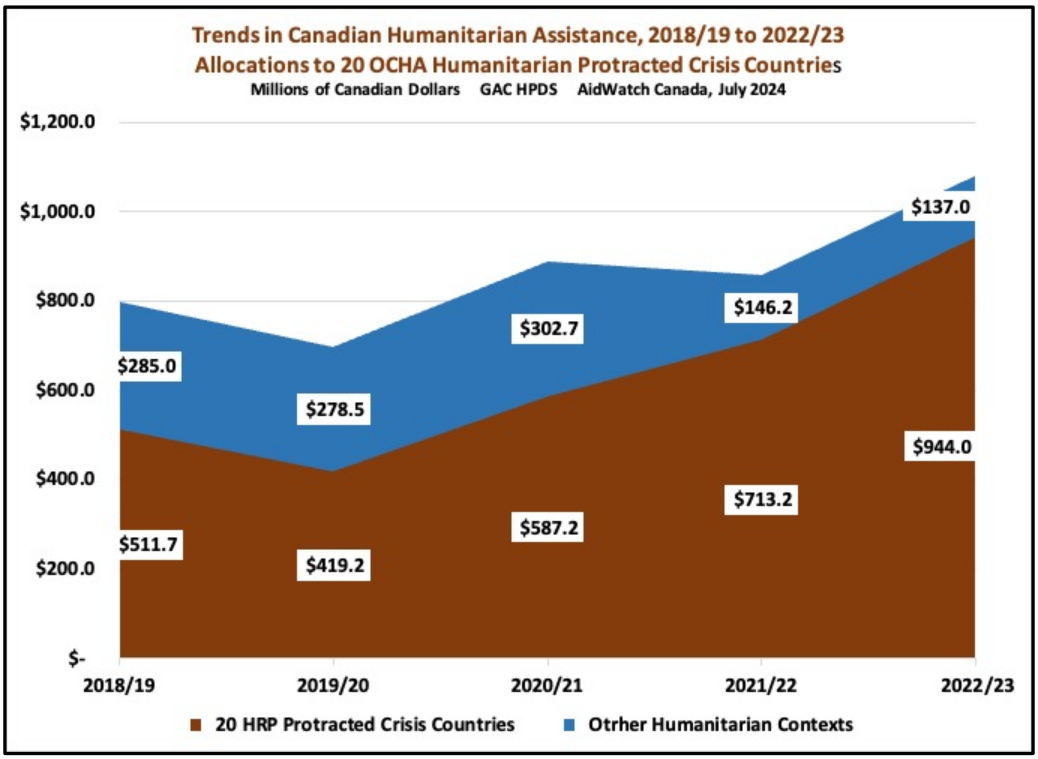
2. Overall trends in Humanitarian Assistance

2.1 The dollar value of humanitarian assistance has been increasing since 2018/19 from $797 million in that year to $1,081 million in 2022/23. Canadian humanitarian assistance has increased by 36% over these five years. (See **Chart One**) Much of this increase, however, is accounted for by large allocations of humanitarian assistance in 2022/23 for Ukraine ($222 million). Discounting support for Ukraine each year, humanitarian assistance increased by a much more modest 10% over the five years.

As a share of Real ODA,[23] humanitarian assistance, however, has been declining each year from 15% in 2018/19 to 12% in 2022/23. ODA for other purposes (excluding COVID-19 Control) has increased more rapidly than humanitarian assistance.

Canada's humanitarian assistance has been increasingly concentrated in the 20 protracted crisis countries. The share of these countries has increased over the five years from 64% in 2018/19 to 87% in 2022/23.[24] (**Chart One**)

Chart One: Trends in Channels for Canadian Humanitarian Assistance, 2018/19 to 2022/23



[23] Real ODA is Total ODA less in-donor refugee costs. Allocations for COVID-19 Control and support for Ukraine have been discounted in 2020/21 to 2022/23 to allow more accurate comparisons with earlier years.

[24] These 20 countries are Afghanistan, Burundi, Cameroon, Central Africa Republic, Chad, DRC, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Haiti, Mali, Myanmar, Niger, Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, Ukraine, West Bank and Gaza, and Yemen.

2.2 The volume of humanitarian assistance delivered by CSOs has varied by year, but overall has averaged around $250 million per year. This assistance has been delivered by both Canadian and Foreign CSOs. (**Chart Two**) As a share of total humanitarian assistance, CSOs' share has declined from 38% in 2018/19 to 27% in 2022/23. Canadian CSOs delivered a record $235 million in humanitarian assistance in 2022/23, which represented 22% of total humanitarian assistance. Foreign CSOs have also played a significant role in the delivery of Canadian humanitarian assistance,[25] ranging from $132 million in 2018/19 to $55.2 million in 2022/23. There is significant variability in delivery channels between years, and between Canadian and Foreign CSOs. (See **Table One**)

Chart Two: Channels for Canadian Humanitarian Assistance, 2018/19 to 2022/23

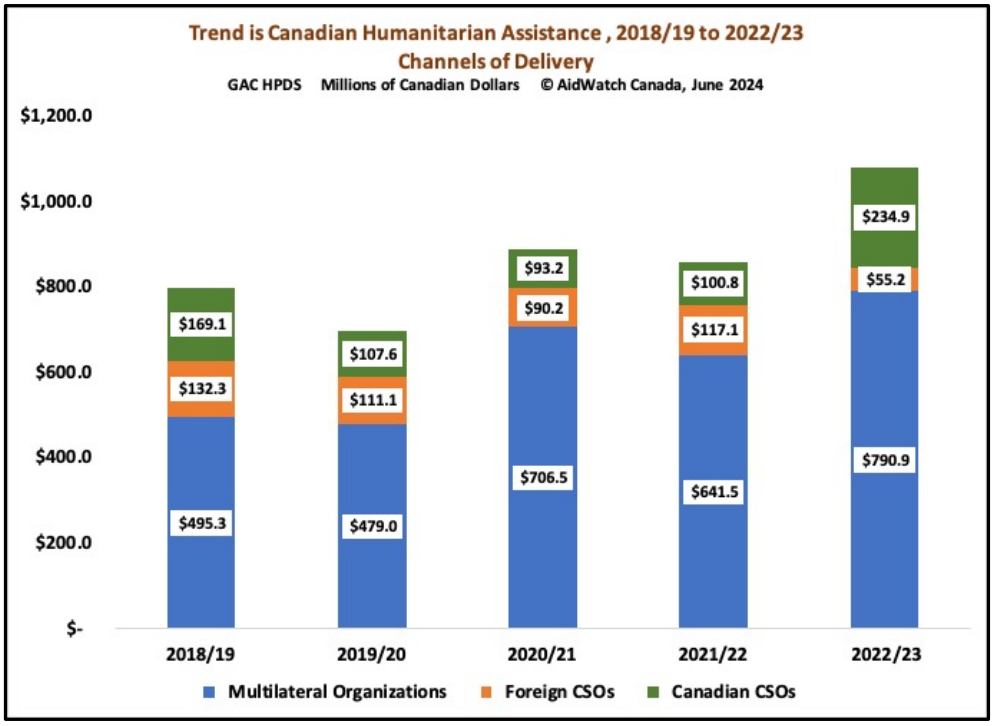


Table One: Humanitarian Assistance Delivery Channels
Share of Total Humanitarian Assistance

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Multilateral Organizations	62%	69%	79%	75%	73%
Canadian CSOs	21%	15%	10%	12%	22%
Foreign CSOs	17%	16%	10%	14%	5%
All CSOs	38%	31%	21%	25%	27%

[25] Examples of foreign CSOs in Canadian humanitarian delivery include the International Rescue Committee, International Committee of the Red Cross, Mercy Corp, International Medical Corp UK, Norwegian Refugee Council, Action Against Hunger, among others.

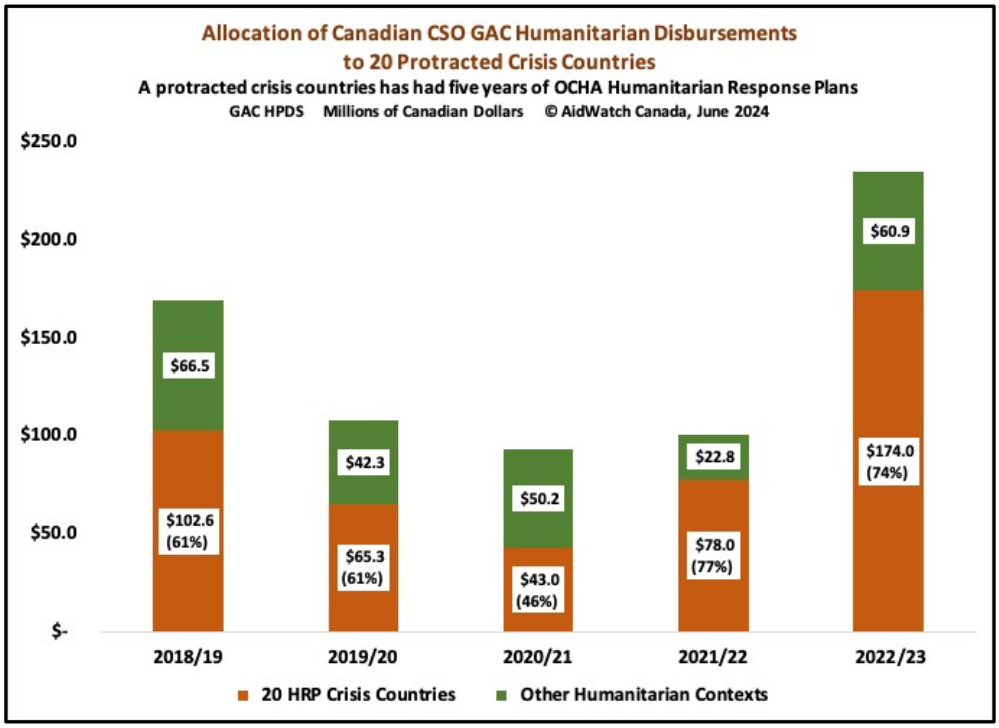
GAC has reported that its humanitarian financing has become more flexible and multi-year. In 2020, 58% of its humanitarian funding was multi-year, and over 35% was in the form of flexible funding (unearmarked and softly earmarked), exceeding the Grand Bargain target of 30%. In 2023 approximately two-thirds of funding was provided through multi-year agreements. It was also indicated that recent agreements include provisions to directly support overhead costs of local implementing partners (up to 7%). (Private communication from GAC)

Among Canadian CSOs, the delivery of humanitarian assistance is concentrated among a few large organizations. In 2022/23 these were

Canadian Foodgrains Bank – 4% of total humanitarian assistance
Save the Children Canada – 2%
CARE Canada – 2%
Canadian Red Cross – 2%
Action Against Hunger – 2%
World Vision Canada – 2%
Humanitarian Coalition – 2%
Doctors without Borders – 1%

Together these eight organizations delivered 78% of Canadian CSO humanitarian assistance and 17% of total humanitarian assistance. See **Data, Annex A.3** for a complete list of 22 Canadian civil society humanitarian actors in 2022/23.

Chart Four: Allocation of Canadian CSOs' Humanitarian Assistance to Protracted Crisis Countries



Canadian CSOs demonstrate a similar pattern of increasing allocations of humanitarian assistance to the 20 protracted crisis countries over the five years. In 2022/23 Canadian CSOs delivered 74% of their humanitarian assistance to the 20 protracted crisis countries, up from 61% in 2018/19. (See **Chart Four**)

2.3 Multilateral **organizations remain the primary channels for delivering Canadian humanitarian assistance and is highly concentrated among a few organizations.** Their share in humanitarian assistance varies by year, but ranges from 79% in 2020/21 to a low of 62% in 2018.

In 2022/23, the following multilateral organization delivered the largest share of Canadian humanitarian assistance:

World Food Program (WFP) – 42% of total humanitarian assistance
United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) – 7%
UNICEF – 7%
United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) – 5%
International Organization for Migration (IOM) – 3%
Central Emergency Response Fund – 3%
UNDP – 3%
United Nations Population Fund (UNPF) – 2%

Together these eight organizations deliver about 70% of Canada's humanitarian assistance.

3. Canadian Assistance to Countries with Protracted Crises

Data, Annex A.5 and **Data, Annex A.6** provide detailed allocations for humanitarian assistance, peace assistance and development assistance, to the 20 countries with protracted crises according to OCHA, cumulative for the period 2018/19 to 2020/21. See **Data, Annex A.1** and **Data, Annex A.2** for the list of countries and the definitions of the three nexus pillars by DAC sector codes.

There is no easy correlation to determine the degree of actual nexus programming in this period. But the data suggests some potential for such programming in each country context.

- **Development assistance was the predominate flow for protracted crisis countries at 48% of total flows.** There has been an approximate balance between development and humanitarian assistance. Humanitarian assistance was 40% of total flows, with peace assistance at 12%. (**Data, Annex A.6**)
- **Canadian ODA flows have been highly concentrated in the top ten countries**. The top ten humanitarian countries receiving 80% of these humanitarian flows, the top ten peace assistance countries receive 82% of peace assistance, and the top ten development assistance countries receive 83% of development assistance.
    - There were variations, however, in the top 10 countries for each pillar. Four countries (Afghanistan, South Sudan, Ukraine and Ethiopian) were among the top 10 of each pillar. But nine countries (Ukraine, Mali, Afghanistan, South Sudan, Myanmar, DRC, Haiti,

Ethiopia, and the West Bank and Gaza) were among the top 10 for the humanitarian and development pillar (potential for double nexus). (**Data, Annex A.6**)

- **CSOs provided 27% of total assistance to protracted crisis countries, but were responsible for a significantly larger share of peace assistance.** Multilateral organizations implemented 62% of total flows to protracted crisis countries, CSOs at 27%, and other channels were responsible for the balance. But CSOs were responsible for 39% of peace support activities in these country contexts, with multilateral organizations responsible for only 45%. Private sector actors and governments made up the remaining share. (**Data, Annex A.5**)
- **Limited overlap in high levels of support for pillars among the top 10 for each pillar.** Among the top ten humanitarian recipients only five are among the top ten for peace assistance and development assistance (Ukraine, Afghanistan, South Sudan, Ethiopia and the DRC). (**Data, Annex A.5**)
- **Peace assistance is limited in most protracted crisis countries.** Peace assistance is more than 20% of country allocations in only five countries (Central Africa Republic, Guatemala, Mali, Myanmar and Ukraine). In eight countries (8) peace assistance is less than 11% of total country allocations. (**Data, Annex A.6**)
- **A major part of Canada's peace assistance is related to gender equality and inclusion.** In the last two years (2021/22 and 2022/23), these purposes were 36% of peace assistance in countries with protracted crises. Civilian peacekeeping, conflict prevention, peacekeeping operations and removal of landmines made up 42%.

4. Canadian CSOs working with the three pillars of a triple nexus approach in protracted crises countries

4.1 Broad Identification of Canadian CSOs with programming in the three pillars of the triple nexus

This identification of Canadian CSOs working with the three pillars of the triple nexus in the same country is not necessarily an indication that the organization is working in a triple nexus approach, but may some demonstrate the potential to do so.

The following analysis is based on GAC's HPDS disbursements for 2021/22 and 2022/23 (the last year for data) based on the following criteria, all of which must be met:

- GAC CSO country disbursements for 20 Protracted Crises Countries. See **Data, Annex A.1**.
- CSO humanitarian assistance is the starting point in identifying triple nexus programming. See the relevant DAC sector codes in **Data, Annex A.2**.
- Simultaneous CSO programming identified through DAC sector coding as peace assistance and development in the same protracted crises country.

Eight (8) Canadian CSOs have programming in protracted crisis countries with the potential for a triple nexus approach based on the above criteria. There is no information on whether a triple nexus approach has actually been implemented by any of these CSOs. They were working in 11 of the 20 protracted crisis countries.

These ten CSOs were the following:

Organization	Protracted Crisis Countries
Action Against Hunger	Mali
Canadian Red Cross	Mali
CARE Canada	Ethiopia Somalia
Oxfam Canada	Myanmar
Oxfam Quebec	West Bank & Gaza
Plan International	Cameroon Niger Nigeria
Save the Children Canada	DRC Ethiopia Somalia
World Vision	South Sudan

4.2 Organizations working in at least two nexus pillars in the same country

In addition to the Canadian CSOs above with programming in all three pillars in the 20 protracted crisis countries, the following CSO have programming in two of the three pillars.

Humanitarian / Development Programming (7)

ADRA
Amref Health Africa in Canada
Canadian Foodgrains Bank
Canadian Lutheran World Relief
Farm Radio International
L'Oeuvre Leger
Primates World Relief & Development

Peace Assistance / Development Programming (27) *

Aga Khan Foundation Canada
Alliance Agricole international (UPA-DI, CECI, SOCODEVI)
Avocats Sans Frontieres Canada
Canadian Cooperative Association
Canadian Crossroads International
Carrefeour de solidarite Internationale
CCISD (Center for International Cooperation in Health
Canadian Executive Services Organization
Consortium of CARE Canada & Oxfam Canada
CUSO International
IDE Canada
IMPACT
Inter Pares
International Bureau
Journalists for Human Rights
Mennonite Economic Development Associates of Canada
Parliamentary Center
Partners in Health Canada
SeedsChange
SOCIDEVI
St Francis Xavier / Coady International Institute
SUCO
Susila Dhama Association Canada
The Humber College Institute of Technology
University of Montreal – CHUM
UPA Development International
WUSC

* **Note** that Peace Assistance includes programming in women's rights and empowerment. See **Data, Annex A.2**. Based on GAC disbursement data, these organizations would not qualify for inclusion in the study since there is no humanitarian assistance.

Data Annex A.1
Twenty (20) Protracted Crisis Countries

Countries with a UN Humanitarian Assistance Plan in each of the five years, 2018 to 2022.

Afghanistan
Burundi
Cameroon
Central African Republic
Chad
Democratic Republic of the Congo
Ethiopia
Guatemala
Haiti
Mali
Myanmar
Niger
Nigeria
Occupied Palestinian Territory
Somalia
South Sudan
Sudan
Syrian Arab Republic
Ukraine
Yemen

Data Annex A.2

DAC Sector Codes for Humanitarian Assistance and Peace Assistance

These codes are derived from Development Initiatives & Sida, 2023, Leaving no crisis behind with assistance for the triple nexus: Humanitarian, development and peace funding in crisis contexts, accessed at https://devinit.org/resources/leaving-no-crisis-behind-assistance-triple-nexus-humanitarian-development-peace-funding/ See the methodological annex for this report.

A. Humanitarian Assistance

DAC Code	Sector Name
12264	COVID-19 Control*
72010	Material Relief Assistance
72011	Basic Health Care in Emergencies
72012	Education in Emergencies
72040	Emergency Food Aid
72050	Relief Coord, Protection & Support
73010	Reconstruction and Rehabilitation
74010	Disaster Prevention and Preparedness
74020	Multi-hazard Response Preparedness

* In protracted crises countries COVID-19 Control is linked to Basic Health Care in Emergencies

B. Peace Assistance

Conflict, Peace & Security

DAC Code	Sector Name
15210	Security Systems Mgm & Reform
15220	Civilian Peacebuilding, Conflict Prevention
15230	Participation in Int Peacekeeping Operations
15240	Reintegration and SALW Control
15250	Removal of Landmines
15261	Child Soldiers Prevention

Social Cohesion and/or Peace

DAC Code	Sector Name
15113	Anti-Corruption Organizations
15130	Legal and Judicial Development
15150	Democratic Participation & Civil Society
15151	Elections
15152	Legislatures & Political Parties
15153	Media & Free Flow of Information
15160	Human Rights
15170	Women's rights Organizations
15180	Ending Violence against Women & Girls
15190	Facilitating Responsible Migration & Mobility

C. Development

All DAC Sector Codes not allocated to Humanitarian (A above) or Peace Assistance (B above).

Data Annex A.3
Canadian CSO Delivering Humanitarian Assistance in 2022/23

Millions of Canadian Dollars

Canadian Foodgrains Bank	$ 39.0
Save the Children Canada	$ 25.9
CARE Canada	$ 23.6
Canadian Red Cross	$ 23.3
Action Against Hunger	$ 23.0
World Vision Canada	$ 18.8
Humanitarian Coalition	$ 17.5
Doctors Without Borders	$ 13.2
ADRA - Adventist Development and Relief Agency Canada	$ 10.6
Oxfam-Québec	$ 8.8
Classified	$ 7.8
CLWR - Canadian Lutheran World Relief	$ 4.1
Humanity & Inclusion Canada	$ 3.8
Development and Peace	$ 3.6
Oxfam Canada	$ 3.0
Islamic Relief Canada	$ 2.8
Doctors of the World Canada	$ 2.5
CANADEM	$ 1.1
L'Oeuvre Léger	$ 1.0
SOS Children's Villages Canada	$ 1.0
Plan International Canada	$ 0.5
CECI - Centre for International Studies and Cooperation	$ 0.1

Data Annex A.4
Canadian ODA to Protracted Crisis Countries

A. Humanitarian Assistance

Millions of Cnd $	2018/19 to 2022/23			2022/23		
Country	**CSO**	**Multilateral**	**Total**	**CSOs**	**Multilateral**	**Total**
1. Syria	$ 160.7	$ 310.0	$ 470.8	$ 41.7	$ 68.2	$ 109.9
2. Yemen	$ 92.2	$ 238.8	$ 331.0	$ 21.5	$ 66.1	$ 87.6
3. Ukraine	$ 54.1	$ 189.0	$ 313.1	$ 45.4	$ 176.2	$ 221.6
4. Afghanistan	$ 23.4	$ 109.4	$ 282.1	$ -	$ 60.3	$ 60.3
5. South Sudan	$ 65.9	$ 135.0	$ 205.4	$ 18.1	$ 23.8	$ 41.9
6. Ethiopia	$ 60.0	$ 132.5	$ 192.6	$ 19.7	$ 22.9	$ 42.6
7. Somalia	$ 56.0	$ 114.7	$ 170.9	$ 20.0	$ 16.7	$ 36.7
8. Nigeria	$ 49.0	$ 112.5	$ 161.5	$ 5.4	$ 21.8	$ 27.2
9. DRC	$ 35.6	$ 122.9	$ 158.5	$ 12.6	$ 25.3	$ 37.9
10. Sudan	$ 36.2	$ 118.6	$ 155.2	$ 11.9	$ 24.0	$ 35.9
11. West Bank and Gaza	$ 40.5	$ 66.4	$ 106.9	$ 4.0	$ 10.0	$ 14.0
12. Haiti	$ 7.6	$ 83.0	$ 91.2	$ 0.1	$ 39.1	$ 39.2
13. Central Africa Republic	$ 26.8	$ 52.0	$ 79.1	$ 3.2	$ 10.0	$ 13.2
14. Mali	$ 18.2	$ 60.3	$ 78.5	$ 0.3	$ 9.9	$ 10.2
15. Chad	$ 16.2	$ 53.2	$ 69.7	$ 5.2	$ 8.5	$ 13.7
16. Niger	$ 8.3	$ 60.4	$ 68.9	$ 1.3	$ 10.2	$ 11.5
17. Myanmar	$ 23.3	$ 23.1	$ 46.4	$ 2.1	$ 4.4	$ 6.5
18. Cameroon	$ 18.4	$ 23.1	$ 42.6	$ 2.4	$ 3.9	$ 6.2
19. Burundi	$ 5.9	$ 13.7	$ 19.8	$ -	$ 0.8	$ 0.8
20. Guatemala	$ 1.3	$ 12.7	$ 14.0	$ -	$ 5.5	$ 5.5
Total	**$ 799.6**	**$ 2,031.3**	**$ 3,058.2**	**$ 214.9**	**$ 607.6**	**$ 822.4**

See the list of relevant DAC Codes in **Data, Annex A.2**.

B. Peace Assistance

Millions of Cnd $	2018/19 to 2022/23			2022/23		
Country	**CSO**	**Multilateral**	**Total**	**CSOs**	**Multilateral**	**Total**
1. Ukraine	$ 58.7	$ 32.2	$ 183.2	$ 13.1	$ 7.5	$ 55.6
2. Mali	$ 53.7	$ 55.7	$ 125.9	$ 7.7	$ 7.5	$ 16.1
3. Afghanistan	$ 29.4	$ 48.8	$ 81.5	$ 2.3	$ -	$ 2.3
4. South Sudan	$ 23.8	$ 48.8	$ 79.9	$ 2.2	$ 7.3	$ 9.6
5. Myanmar	$ 28.1	$ 29.7	$ 64.4	$ 6.6	$ 1.6	$ 9.6
6. DRC	$ 22.5	$ 25.1	$ 52.0	$ 3.9	$ 5.5	$ 10.6
7. Haiti	$ 30.9	$ 15.2	$ 50.5	$ 3.6	$ 1.8	$ 5.5
8. Ethiopia	$ 17.4	$ 19.6	$ 37.0	$ 3.2	$ 0.3	$ 3.5
9. Central Africa Republic	$ 0.1	$ 31.7	$ 32.0	$ -	$ 5.9	$ 5.9
10. West Bank and Gaza	$ 4.9	$ 25.7	$ 31.7	$ 0.9	$ 0.7	$ 2.5
11. Sudan	$ 3.3	$ 23.4	$ 26.8	$ 0.6	$ 1.5	$ 2.2
12. Yemen	$ 10.4	$ 16.1	$ 26.8	$ -	$ -	$ -
13. Guatemala	$ 16.6	$ 7.3	$ 24.5	$ 1.4	$ -	$ 1.6
14. Syria	$ 18.3	$ 1.6	$ 24.3	$ 5.0	$ -	$ 5.0
15. Nigeria	$ 12.7	$ 9.0	$ 23.4	$ 0.6	$ 2.7	$ 3.5
16. Niger	$ 3.2	$ 7.2	$ 10.4	$ 0.5	$ 0.2	$ 0.7
17. Somalia	$ 6.5	$ 3.9	$ 10.4	$ -	$ 0.5	$ 0.5
18. Cameroon	$ 6.8	$ 0.6	$ 8.1	$ 1.6	$ 0.1	$ 1.7
19. Burundi	$ 2.1	$ 2.8	$ 4.9	$ -	$ 0.3	$ 0.3
20 Chad	$ 0.1	$ 3.6	$ 3.7	$ -	$ 1.6	$ 1.6
Total	**$ 349.5**	**$ 408.0**	**$ 901.4**	**$ 53.2**	**$ 45.0**	**$ 138.3**

See the list of relevant DAC Codes in **Data, Annex A.2**.

C. Development Assistance

Millions of Cnd $	2018/19 to 2022/23			2022/23		
Country	**CSO**	**Multilateral**	**Total**	**CSOs**	**Multilateral**	**Total**
1. Ethiopia	$ 152.0	$ 377.6	$ 551.8	$ 37.9	$ 80.2	$ 121.2
2. Afghanistan	$ 56.4	$ 382.3	$ 462.2	$ 4.9	$ 58.8	$ 63.7
3. Mali	$ 146.2	$ 121.1	$ 381.5	$ 38.0	$ 24.6	$ 85.9
4. Haiti	$ 115.8	$ 188.4	$ 335.2	$ 26.0	$ 52.7	$ 85.8
5. Nigeria	$ 94.9	$ 185.9	$ 287.0	$ 12.7	$ 76.7	$ 90.5
6. South Sudan	$ 50.8	$ 108.2	$ 284.8	$ 19.3	$ 30.9	$ 73.2
7. Ukraine	$ 32.4	$ 118.3	$ 211.7	$ 12.3	$ 107.5	$ 133.9
8. DRC	$ 53.4	$ 132.6	$ 187.2	$ 21.1	$ 73.1	$ 95.0
9. West Bank and Gaza	$ 45.2	$ 86.5	$ 145.1	$ 11.3	$ 23.1	$ 36.9
10. Myanmar	$ 38.8	$ 99.6	$ 145.0	$ 10.9	$ 21.2	$ 33.6
11. Niger	$ 16.7	$ 86.2	$ 110.2	$ 5.3	$ 25.9	$ 36.1
12. Sudan	$ 4.0	$ 92.1	$ 96.5	$ 2.0	$ 22.7	$ 24.7
13. Cameroon	$ 16.6	$ 70.4	$ 90.5	$ 1.9	$ 23.6	$ 27.3
14. Somalia	$ 14.3	$ 62.4	$ 77.2	$ 6.2	$ 14.8	$ 21.0
15. Guatemala	$ 36.7	$ 21.4	$ 63.6	$ 6.5	$ 5.4	$ 16.7
16. Burundi	$ 11.5	$ 42.4	$ 54.4	$ 2.8	$ 12.8	$ 15.6
17. Chad	$ 2.1	$ 45.9	$ 49.7	$ 2.3	$ 12.5	$ 15.0
18. Central Africa Republic	$ 0.9	$ 28.0	$ 29.2	$ 0.1	$ 5.8	$ 6.0
19. Syria	$ 8.6	$ 8.7	$ 26.0	$ 1.4	$ 5.7	$ 9.7
20. Yemen	$ -	$ 13.0	$ 13.0	$ -	$ 5.6	$ 5.6
Total	**$ 897.3**	**$ 2,271.0**	**$ 3,601.8**	**$ 222.9**	**$ 683.6**	**$ 997.4**

See the list of relevant DAC Codes in **Data, Annex A.2**.

D. Total Country Assistance

	2018/19 to 2022/23			2022/23		
Country	**CSO**	**Multilateral**	**Total**	**CSOs**	**Multilateral**	**Total**
1. Afghanistan	$ 109.2	$ 540.5	$ 825.8	$ 7.2	$ 119.1	$ 126.3
2. Ethiopia	$ 229.4	$ 529.7	$ 781.4	$ 60.8	$ 103.4	$ 167.3
3. Ukraine	$ 145.2	$ 339.5	$ 708.0	$ 70.8	$ 291.2	$ 411.1
4. Mali	$ 218.1	$ 237.1	$ 585.9	$ 46.0	$ 42.0	$ 112.2
5. South Sudan	$ 140.5	$ 292.0	$ 570.1	$ 39.6	$ 62.0	$ 124.7
6. Syria	$ 187.6	$ 320.3	$ 521.1	$ 48.1	$ 73.9	$ 124.6
7. Haiti	$ 154.3	$ 286.6	$ 476.9	$ 29.7	$ 93.6	$ 130.5
8. Nigeria	$ 156.6	$ 307.4	$ 471.9	$ 18.7	$ 101.2	$ 121.2
9. DRC	$ 111.5	$ 280.6	$ 397.7	$ 37.6	$ 103.9	$ 143.5
10. Yemen	$ 102.6	$ 267.9	$ 370.8	$ 21.5	$ 71.7	$ 93.2
11. West Bank and Gaza	$ 90.6	$ 178.6	$ 283.7	$ 16.2	$ 33.8	$ 53.4
12. Sudan	$ 43.5	$ 234.1	$ 278.5	$ 14.5	$ 48.2	$ 62.8
13. Somalia	$ 76.8	$ 181.0	$ 258.5	$ 26.2	$ 32.0	$ 58.2
14. Myanmar	$ 90.2	$ 152.4	$ 255.8	$ 19.6	$ 27.2	$ 49.7
15. Niger	$ 28.2	$ 153.8	$ 189.5	$ 7.1	$ 36.3	$ 48.3
16. Cameroon	$ 41.8	$ 94.1	$ 141.2	$ 5.9	$ 27.6	$ 35.2
17. Central Africa Republic	$ 27.8	$ 111.7	$ 140.3	$ 3.3	$ 21.70	$ 25.1
18. Chad	$ 18.4	$ 102.7	$ 123.1	$ 7.5	$ 22.6	$ 30.3
19. Guatemala	$ 54.6	$ 41.4	$ 102.1	$ 7.9	$ 10.9	$ 23.8
20. Burundi	$ 19.5	$ 58.9	$ 79.1	$ 2.8	$ 13.9	$ 16.7
Total	**$ 2,046.4**	**$ 4,710.3**	**$ 7,561.4**	**$ 491.0**	**$ 1,336.2**	**$ 1,958.1**

Data Annex A.5
Protracted Crisis Countries
Relative Share of Humanitarian, Peace and Development Assistance

	2018/19 to 2022/23		
	CSO	Multilateral	Total
Afghanistan			
Humanitarian	21%	20%	34%
Peace Assistance	27%	9%	10%
Development	52%	71%	56%
Burundi			
Humanitarian	30%	23%	25%
Peace Assistance	11%	5%	6%
Development	59%	72%	69%
Cameroon			
Humanitarian	44%	25%	30%
Peace Assistance	16%	1%	6%
Development	40%	75%	64%
Central Africa Republic			
Humanitarian	96%	47%	56%
Peace Assistance	0%	28%	23%
Development	3%	25%	21%
Chad			
Humanitarian	88%	52%	57%
Peace Assistance	1%	4%	3%
Development	11%	45%	40%
DRC			
Humanitarian	32%	44%	40%
Peace Assistance	20%	9%	13%
Development	48%	47%	47%
Ethiopia			
Humanitarian	26%	25%	25%
Peace Assistance	8%	4%	5%
Development	66%	71%	71%

	2018/19 to 2022/23		
	CSO	Multilateral	Total
Guatemala			
Humanitarian	2%	31%	14%
Peace Assistance	30%	18%	24%
Development	67%	52%	62%
Haiti			
Humanitarian	5%	29%	19%
Peace Assistance	20%	5%	11%
Development	75%	66%	70%
Mali			
Humanitarian	8%	25%	13%
Peace Assistance	25%	23%	21%
Development	67%	51%	65%
Myanmar			
Humanitarian	26%	15%	18%
Peace Assistance	31%	19%	25%
Development	43%	65%	57%
Niger			
Humanitarian	29%	39%	36%
Peace Assistance	11%	5%	5%
Development	59%	56%	58%
Nigeria			
Humanitarian	31%	37%	34%
Peace Assistance	8%	3%	5%
Development	61%	60%	61%
West Bank and Gaza			
Humanitarian	45%	37%	38%
Peace Assistance	5%	14%	11%
Development	50%	48%	51%

	2018/19 to 2022/23		
	CSO	Multilateral	Total
Somalia			
Humanitarian	73%	63%	66%
Peace Assistance	8%	2%	4%
Development	19%	34%	30%
South Sudan			
Humanitarian	47%	46%	36%
Peace Assistance	17%	17%	14%
Development	36%	37%	50%
Sudan			
Humanitarian	83%	51%	56%
Peace Assistance	8%	10%	10%
Development	9%	39%	35%
Syria			
Humanitarian	86%	97%	90%
Peace Assistance	10%	0%	5%
Development	5%	3%	5%
Ukraine			
Humanitarian	37%	56%	44%
Peace Assistance	40%	9%	26%
Development	22%	35%	30%
Yemen			
Humanitarian	90%	89%	89%
Peace Assistance	10%	6%	7%
Development	0%	5%	4%
Total			
Humanitarian	**39%**	**43%**	**40%**
Peace Assistance	**17%**	**9%**	**12%**
Development	**44%**	**48%**	**48%**

Annex B

Global Affairs Canada and the Implementation of the Triple Nexus

Highlights

1. GAC has been fully engaging with the triple nexus in multilateral policy discussions, contributing to the Grand Bargain outcome at the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit, the subsequent development of the 2019 DAC Recommendation on the humanitarian-development-peace (HDP) nexus (through INCAF), the UN DAC Dialogue on the triple nexus and the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and State Building, which Canada has co-chaired until recently. The Recommendation requires Canada "to do [its] best to fully implement" its commitments.

2. The FIAP highlights the importance of gender sensitive and gender transformative humanitarian action, foreshadowing the nexus approach in the action plans that have accompanied the FIAP.

3. In 2020 GAC endorsed the HDP Recommendation and approved a workplan for its implementation, which was facilitated by an internal Nexus Core Group. It developed strategies for implementation (*Quick-Start Guide*), initiated a number of pilot projects with Canadian CSOs, introduced project crisis modifier clauses, and created opportunities for training for GAC staff. No progress however was made up to December 2022 on breaking down GAC silos.

4. A post-2022 decentralized approach saw the discontinuation of the Nexus Working Group and Workplan, superseded by the process for reorganization of GAC and the five-year Grants and Transformation Initiative. GAC has remained active in various international fora on the triple nexus. Implementation continues in some country contexts, but there is no central cross-departmental process for assessing lesson and challenges for GAC in implementation. A series of upcoming evaluations over the next three years may be an opportunity to coalesce and review this practice.

5. Reorganization of GAC is bringing together seven Bureaus under a new International Assistance Partnerships and Programming Branch, including International Assistance Partnerships, Humanitarian Assistance and Peace and Security Programming. By bringing the three pillars of the HDP nexus under one Branch may create new opportunities for addressing the rigid silos in GAC's previous structure. GAC official note that these opportunities will build on existing informal sharing information and communications across the operational barriers.

6. It seems unlikely that the Grants and Contributions Transformation Initiative will contribute to reforms relevant to the triple nexus as it is focused mainly on IT management systems, although it has also brought attention to the tensions between risk aversion and effective programming (in fragile contexts).

7. While some informal innovation in overcoming the funding silos for the triple nexus has been possible, there is no evidence that GAC is considering major initiatives to break down these silos and/or create special funding mechanisms for financing triple nexus programming. Silos are challenging for the

rules and regulations governing different proposals as well as reporting and accountability attached to different pots of money. Informal pilot efforts for nexus programming are not scalable without changes in policy and regulations.

8. GAC support for collaboration and locally-led humanitarian action on the ground is mediated through multilateral and civil society partnerships. Multilateral organizations are the primary channels for delivery of Canadian humanitarian assistance (approximately 75% on average). The UN Country Based Pooled Funds are the major channel for advancing GAC's interest in localization of humanitarian assistance. Nearly 40% of CBFP's funds went to local organizations in 2023. The direct support of pooled funding mechanisms at country level was not seen to be an option for GAC. However, the Peace and Security Program has supported local grassroots women peacebuilders.

9. Surveyed CSOs stressed the importance of flexible multi-year funding, integrated programs and engagement in policy dialogue in their recommendations for GAC's efforts to promote triple nexus programming. There were suggestions for a dedicated fund for triple nexus programming in fragile contexts. They observed that calls-for-proposals limit the potential focus on relevant responsive programming on the ground. There was also a call to ensure that humanitarian principles are maintained in further GAC integration. Responding CSOs emphasized the importance of transparency in the evolving changes in GAC and sustained policy dialogue.

10. A strategy for advancing a triple nexus agenda with GAC by the CSO Nexus Working Group should take account the current GAC organizational dynamics and the experience within GAC over the past two years.

a) **An approach that emphasizes learning and dialogue over the next year**, feeding GAC CSO expectations for the new Branch with respect to advancing the triple nexus. There should be a stress on transparency as the (long) process of reduction of barriers is likely to remain internal as GAC explores different options.

b) **Changes will likely be iterative, but the Working Group should have clear practical goals in its policy proposals for GAC**, including the difficult area of funding modalities.

c) **Creating mutual learning opportunities might consider focusing on country examples where both GAC and CSOs have triple nexus experience.** This focus may be challenging given GAC reliance on intermediaries. The degree to which officials from Embassies are involved in triple nexus engagements at country level is unknown.

d) **A watching brief on the Grants and Contributions Transformation Initiative** should include implications for the triple nexus approach, but the likely area for progress will be in relation to assessing risk and not overcoming the structural barriers to supporting triple nexus programming.

e) **Take advantage of a series of upcoming evaluations relevant to the triple nexus** including lessons from fragile contexts (2024/25), Peace and Stabilization Operations Program and Disaster Risk and Resilience in the Indo-Pacific Region (2025/26), and an evaluation of the HDP nexus in 2026/27.

Global Affairs Canada and the Implementation of the Triple Nexus

The following review provides a broad overview of GAC's approach to the Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) or Triple Nexus. It includes the policy framework and implementation initiatives alongside a description of work in key areas such as finance, program integration, international collaboration, and localization. The document will also highlight several contextual factors and areas of progress. The descriptions are based on available documentation, an interview with several GAC officials,[26] as well as other data collected during CSO surveys and interviews.

As a caveat, it should be noted we are only at the 5-year mark for the DAC Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus, a landmark agreement following the 2016 Humanitarian Summit.[27] Implementation is complex and as one GAC official shared in conversation with Cooperation Canada members, GAC is continuing to determine the most effective approaches.[28] The challenges include finding appropriate balances among resources, policies, prevention and programming in short-term humanitarian emergencies and longer-term development and peace pillars. Further, the move to a more integrated approach, the reorganization of a large bureaucracy such as GAC, and shifts in work culture will take time. The results will be the product of a much longer transition.

1.0 Policy Framework

As a signatory to the 2019 OECD DAC Recommendation on the Triple Nexus, Canada is obliged to "do [its] best to fully implement" its commitments in a more holistic way of working in fragile and conflict-affected contexts. In so doing, Canada is actively engaged in the international dialogue which brings together countries emerging from conflict, donor partners and civil society actors, to discuss integrated approaches. GAC engages through the DAC with the International Network on Conflict and Fragility (INCAF), a community of practice responsible for promoting and monitoring the implementation of the DAC Recommendation.[29] Canada also engages on the triple nexus in the UN-DAC Dialogue, created in 2020 to foster more joined-up implementation of the Recommendation and its challenges,[30] as well as the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and State Building, which Canada has co-chaired until recently.[31]

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[26] The Interview was conducted under Chatham House rules, as background information with no citations. Officials were from International Assistance Operations Bureau, the Humanitarian Policy Team, the Peace and Conflict Policy Unit and the Strategic Policy Branch within GAC.

[27] See https://legalinstruments.oecd.org/public/doc/643/643.en.pdf.

[28] Briefing by GAC official with Cooperation Canada members focusing on an update on reorganization at GAC, May 30, 2024.

[29] See https://www.oecd.org/en/networks/dac-international-network-on-conflict-and-fragility.html

[30] See INCAF, The Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus Interim Progress Report, May 2022, page 20, accessed at https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/2f620ca5-en.pdf?expires=1723654988&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=8B633B5B9A4099E33D4F4E5F1E1A8640

[31] The International Dialogue is composed of members of the International Network on Conflict and Fragility, the g7+ group of fragile and conflict-affected states (https://www.g7plus.org/) , and member organisations of the Civil Society Platform for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (https://www.cspps.org/). Hosted by the UNDP, the Dialogue

International support for more integrated approaches is reflected in the 2017 Feminist International Assistance Policy (FIAP), the current overarching policy framework for GAC's international assistance. While FIAP was developed prior to the formalization of the HDP nexus approach at the DAC, it highlights aspects of this approach in its commitment to gender-sensitive and gender-transformative humanitarian action. It committed to "more flexible and predictable funding in response to humanitarian crises, including the use of unearmarked and multiyear funding for longer term crises."[32] Actions focused on support for women and girls in humanitarian contexts and include support for local and national women's organizations, greater participation of women in peace processes at all levels, and advance women's rights in post-conflict state building. Foreshadowing the nexus approach, it suggests that "comprehensive approaches that bring together development, peacebuilding and humanitarian efforts are also needed to achieve long term solutions for people affected by crises and ultimately achieve a more inclusive, peaceful and prosperous world." (FIAP and Action Area Policy: Human Dignity)

Peace and Security is another essential pillar for FIAP. Actions in this area are intended to support inclusive, gender responsive, crisis responsive, violent conflict prevention and sustainable peace. This Action Area acknowledges the Triple Nexus with its call for investments in gender sensitive approaches to addressing structural drivers of both conflict and peace, for support for national and local capacities for peace, and for support for initiatives that address sexual and gender-based violence in situations of violent conflict and complex crises. (Action Area Policy: Peace and Security)

Reporting progress has been limited. The annual Plans and Priorities for GAC and its Reports to Parliament on Canada's international assistance contain intermittent reflection on the Triple Nexus initiatives. The 2020/21 Report to Parliament only noted support for humanitarian reform but did not elaborate, while the 2021/22 Report contained some actions relating to the Triple Nexus. It acknowledged Canada's adherence to the DAC Recommendation and set out several financial commitments in support of the Nexus.[33] However, in the latest 2022/23 Report to Parliament there is no mention of Triple Nexus.[34]

Despite the sporadic mention in reporting documents, the DAC recommendation and FIAP policy provide a framework for GAC and its efforts to work towards the Triple Nexus approach. However, it is also

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intents to bring together conflict affected countries, development partners, and civil society, to seek to transform the way national and international partners work together to promote peacebuilding and statebuilding and work towards country led pathways out of fragility. See https://www.pbsbdialogue.org/

[32] GAC has subsequently reported that 58% of its humanitarian funding was multi-year and over 35% was in the form of flexible funding (unearmarked and softly earmarked) in 2020, exceeding the Grand Bargain target of 30%. In 2023 approximately two thirds of funding was provided through multi-year agreements.

[33] These included $115 million over two years responding to the mass displacement of Venezuelans; $20 million over three years for a project by the Canadian Foodgrains Bank in eight countries; $10 million for the UN Peacebuilding Fund to enable the Humanitarian Development Peace and Partnerships Facility, and $10 million to the UN Peacebuilding Fund for urgent peacebuilding needs addressing gender and youth inclusion.

[34] See https://www.international.gc.ca/transparency-transparence/international-assistance-report-rapport-aide-internationale/index.aspx?lang=eng

important to remember that GAC operates within a broader federal government regulatory framework and is obliged to follow Treasury Board policies for grants and contributions among other guidance. Depending on the issues, these can hinder or facilitate the implementation of the triple nexus approach.

2.0 Implementation

Since the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit and the 2019 DAC Recommendation, GAC has remained committed to the triple nexus as a valuable approach to working in protracted crises contexts, and to the transformations needed for its effective implementation. However, the strategy for implementing the triple nexus approach has changed over time.[35] While still early days, there seems to be two phases: an initial phase lead by the Nexus Core Group, that produced the GAC Nexus Workplan (2020-2022) and the *Quick Start Guide* to the Triple Nexus and then a subsequent move to a more decentralized approach post-2022. These are broadly described below.

2.1 GAC Nexus Core Group and Workplan, 2020 to 2022

In October 2020 GAC Deputy Ministers endorsed the HDP Nexus Recommendation and approved a workplan for its implementation. The desired outcome for this workplan was to "enhance strategic, operational and functional capabilities that allow GAC to effectively integrate a comprehensive Triple Nexus approach, building coherence and allowing for the delivery of more effective interventions and more effective international assistance." (GAC, nd, *Quick Start Guide*, 1) The workplan envisaged its full implementation over 3 to 4 years. In keeping with the DAC Recommendation, the focus was 'internal,' bridging programming silos, highlighting prevention and peacebuilding, and promoting flexible multi-year funding.

The Workplan was facilitated by the Nexus Core Group consisting of three bureau leads. A key focus of the multi-year workplan was to break down the Humanitarian-Development-Peace operational silos, which has been identified as a key barrier in achieving the triple nexus. It focused on departmental capabilities through three streams of work: 1) Focus on strategy with development of Guidelines; 2) Focus on operation with cross-team human resource assignments and skills development through training; and 3) Focus on function with integrated country strategies, conflict sensitivity analysis and finance issues.

A *Quick Start Guide: Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus,*[36] was also developed to frame this internal implementation process. It provided definitions, direction and prescribed the triple nexus approach for fragile and conflict-countries or areas. The *Guide* specifies that a triple nexus approach could be considered in several contexts: 1) high level of fragility due to protracted or intermittent crisis; 2) the presence of refugees or internally displaced people; 3) chronic injustice; and 4) environmental degradation affecting community dynamics, such as desertification (page 3).

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[35] While the DAC completed a five-year review of the triple nexus Recommendation with all its members in early 2024, GAC's contribution to this review has not been provided by GAC officials. (See OECD DAC, 2024)

[36] Global Affairs Canada, "Quick Start Guide: Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus," unpublished internal document, no date.

A number of pilot projects were initiated with Canadian CSOs. A 2023 review of these CSO nexus projects in Africa focused mainly on the humanitarian / development nexus and the degree to which they addressed root causes of conflict and poverty. Lessons from these projects stressed an enhancement of the humanitarian response in ways that promoted more durable solutions. It found, for example, that "people will not be able to fully benefit from livelihood and agricultural support unless they also receive immediate humanitarian aid either before or simultaneously." (page 13) It stressed the importance of built-in project crisis modifiers in the transition from humanitarian aid to recovery and development. Integration and close coordination were key, particularly in the early stages of implementation, where participants may face various security threats. However, it noted that the focus of these projects is intensive but narrow, working with limited resources, with the result that the beneficiaries may be few.[37]

In an update to the Canadian CSO Humanitarian Response Network in December 2022, a GAC official reported progress in three areas: Triple Nexus Guidelines had been developed; a toolkit for integrated country strategies was drafted; and training was provided for 19 GAC officials who were taking-up country postings. The Official also suggested that there was successful triple nexus implementation of projects in Ukraine, Ethiopia and Sudan. While broadly on track, the presenter noted that there were still siloed work and "achieving full integration" required more sustained engagement and leadership from the senior level. (Presentation to HRN Thematic Event, December 2, 2022) In tandem with this assessment, it was also noted elsewhere that the initial HDP nexus workplan overlapped with significant portions of other ongoing and much larger processes including the GAC Transformation process and the Grants and Contributions Transformation Initiative (GCTI).

2.2 Decentralized Approach Post-2022

Since 2022 the department has taken a more decentralized approach that saw the discontinuation of the Nexus Core Group and Workplan. Several departmental initiatives influenced this change of approach. Key among them has been the Grants and Contributions Transformation Initiative (GCTI) and the recent reorganization of Global Affairs affecting the development, humanitarian and peacebuilding bureaus. GAC has remained active in various international fora that focus on the triple nexus and its implementation. Implementation continues in some country contexts, but usually through GAC intermediaries (multilateral and civil society organization).

One of the limitations of this more decentralized approach has been the inability of the department to easily identify specific operational instances of implementation of triple (double) nexus approaches in different country contexts where Canada is supporting programming. The knowledge is decentralized within the geographic branches (and GAC intermediaries), with seemingly no cross-departmental processes identified for assessing lessons, challenges and opportunities in implementing complex, often country specific, approaches to nexus programming. So far, this has resulted in little or sporadic data regarding how the triple nexus is being implemented or facilitated in country missions. A series of

[37] Nexus Platform Meeting Report, Lutheran World Federation, CARE, Oxfam, World Vision, Save the Children, Global Affairs, Canadian Lutheran World Relief, November 18, 2023, Zemarias Hotel, Ethiopia, Unpublished.

upcoming evaluations over the next three years, however, may be an opportunity to coalesce and review this practice. (See page 9.)

One of the key tenants of the triple nexus approach is to eliminate programming silos so that GAC and its partners can finance more effectively the multiple challenges presented in fragile and conflict affected countries, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa. In a discussion with Cooperation Canada members, senior GAC officials have pointed to the importance of the August 2024 reorganization of GAC. They highlight the moving of the Peace and Security Programming Bureau closer to humanitarian and development programming within one overarching Branch – helping to bridge HDP programming silos.

This reorganization brings together seven Bureaus under the International Assistance Partnerships and Programming Branch: 1) International Assistance Partnerships and Strategic Coordination; 2) International Assistance Operations; 3) Development Finance; 4) Humanitarian Assistance; 5) Peace and Security Programming; 6) Social and Economic Development; and 7) Global Health and Food Security. By including the three pillars of triple nexus in one Branch, GAC will be in a better position to address issues of nexus programming.

The Department has also been undergoing a Grants and Contributions Transformation Initiative (GCTI), a five-year process since 2022 that is reviewing GAC financing procedures. To date, the Initiative seems to have focused mainly on technical fixes, specific financing terms for current modalities, a new IT grants and management system and streamlining business practices for implementing organizations. In June 2023 a Risk Appetite Hackathon brought together Canadian and international CSOs, and participants were encouraged to address the tension between risk aversion and humanitarian/development effectiveness, although it is unclear how the outcomes will result in transforming GAC's current practices.

GAC is also looking externally to support better collaboration and coordination in international and recipient country fora. The triple nexus approach is not just about joined-up funding and projects, but an important entry point for enhancing collaboration among all stakeholders. Further, since GAC it is not itself an actor on the ground it must encourage its partners, be it multilateral or civil society, to improve coordination and localization.

3.0 Highlights of a Nexus Approach

While there is not enough data for a detailed description or assessment of how GAC is implementing the Triple Nexus approach, the conversations did provide further understanding of key components. This next section will provide some framing for finance, program integration, collaboration and localization.

3.1 Finance

Different terms and conditions for the various types of GAC funding in each program pillar – humanitarian, development, peace – create significant barriers in funding a triple nexus program that might be proposed by a GAC partner. While the outcomes of the GCTI Initiative discussed above will be universally applicable, there is no evidence yet that this Initiative will address GAC funding silos or create specific funding

mechanisms for triple nexus programming in fragile and conflict-affected countries. Often the fiduciary terms and conditions are set by central agencies in the Government over which GAC has little influence.

In fact, the 2022 *Quick Start Guide,* states that GAC does not have dedicated funding mechanisms, and none were planned at the time of the report. The document does list a range of current financing tools and mechanisms available for funding programming in the nexus pillars. (*Guide*, Annex C)

These financial limitations were recently demonstrated by the conditions for concept notes and proposals for the two-year $350 million additional humanitarian assistance recently announced in Budget 2024. It states that all proposed projects must "fall within the boundaries of humanitarian assistance as framed by the [UN Central Emergence Response Fund] CERF life-saving criteria."[38] There was no option or wiggle room for a nexus approach in this two-year funding window.

3.2 Program Integration

The 2019 evaluation of the International Humanitarian Assistance Program, 2011/12 to 2017/18, highlighted significant departmental barriers inhibiting the HDP Nexus approach.[39] At the time, the evaluation pointed to informal cooperation within GAC reflecting nexus thinking, but it demonstrated deeply siloed approaches to protracted crises, each with their own objectives, little shared vision, and little joined up planning, reporting and monitoring. It seems that, funding and approval mechanisms often discouraged cross-over activities.

According to the evaluation, development programs were locked into host government priorities and too inflexible to move into the humanitarian space. "Collaboration between program streams was dependant on the availability of development resources, individuals' willingness to cooperate, and contextual knowledge of the operating environment of a given crisis. … In most cases, experienced and long-standing staff members with deep knowledge of the countries and crises in question facilitated the discovery of cooperation opportunities between program streams." (GAC, IHA Evaluation, page 29)

On integrating the peace pillar into triple nexus programming, it is important to acknowledge that a key challenge is that peace initiatives sit in different departments across donors. Canada's initiatives are through its Peace and Stabilization Operations Program (PSOP), which tries to build in a conflict sensitivity lens to advance peace positive initiatives. They bring lessons from engagements in conflict affected contexts to other actors in Global Affairs. Looking at soft peace processes by CSOs and other actors, GAC strongly supports advancing localization in humanitarian contexts, acknowledging some challenges. By bringing PSOP into the same branch as humanitarian and development programming, the GAC transformation process has created the potential space and opportunity for more collaboration across the programs.

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[38] International Assistance Bureau, "Budget 2024 Funding Process for Canadian Partners: Q & A," July 5, 2024, unpublished.

[39] GAC, 2019. the International Humanitarian Assistance Program, 2011/12 to 2017/18, December 2019, accessed at https://www.international.gc.ca/gac-amc/assets/pdfs/publications/evaluation/2020/iha-evaluation-ahi-eng.pdf

While funding modalities strongly reinforce silos, they are by no means absolute. On the positive side, relationships across GAC branches, the close sharing of information and sustained communications can go a long way in practically bridging some of the operational barriers that seem challenging for a triple nexus approach. Where good relationships and networks exist, there can be sustained coordination and communication across programming modalities within GAC, and often in high profile country contexts. Where the silos become challenging is the rules and regulations governing proposals as well as different reporting and accountability obligations attached to various pots of money.

There has been room, however, for some creative approaches to triple nexus funding, which can be internal to GAC, through different partners, and in collaboration with other donors. Often, they involve separate projects, which can be more complex for partners, but integrated by them in a more holistic program with counterparts on the ground.

Individual efforts are important in pushing for and coordinating these creative approaches to financing a triple or double nexus program for an interested GAC partner. An initiative that comes from a CSO can be successful with good leadership from that CSO, with strong understanding of GAC systemic limitations, and strong partnerships on the ground, all of which creates good will to work together for innovative solutions. The problem is scalability beyond individual initiatives in the current system at GAC.

Three or four success stories cannot be translated into a broader GAC framework for more GAC partners. In the context of the reorganization, critical challenges remain: How to structure more integrated funding streams, how to reduce multiple GAC reporting requirements for partners, and how to reduce the burden on the intermediate CSOs to implement nexus by "innovating" creative practices. Only the largest CSOs can meet these demands.

3.3 Collaboration and Localization

Collaboration and localization are important priorities for Canada's humanitarian assistance. However, structurally GAC is very centralized in its humanitarian funding, which makes coordinating on the ground and working directly with local actors very difficult. Instead, GAC is working in collaboration with UN and other multilateral partners as well as through CSO intermediaries. The intent is to encourage and support partners in doing much better in coordination and localization. In the context of the current IDA replenishment, for example, there are relevant windows within IDA that can advance nexus programming and to encourage IDA to be more engaged in fragile and conflict affected states.

Multilateral actors are important for GAC in the advancing and shifting approaches consistent with the triple nexus. GAC points to the increased engagement of the multilateral development banks in collaborative approaches in country. OECD DAC data demonstrate that multilateral organizations remain the primary channels for delivering Canadian humanitarian assistance, which is also highly concentrated among a few organizations. The share of multilateral organizations in Canadian humanitarian assistance ranged from 62% to 79% over the five years (2018-2023). Eight (8) multilateral organizations delivered

70% of total Canadian humanitarian assistance in 2022/23, with the World Food Program alone accounting for 42% of this assistance.

While there is a recognition that contributing to multilateral organizations helps avoid crowding-in stakeholders at the country level, there are also ongoing challenges including conceptual and different approaches/mandates of these actors, tensions in coordination within the US system, fiduciary risks for donors, and security risks for staff, all of which limit the practical opportunities for advancing the nexus at the country level.

In this regard, GAC sees the UN Country Based Pooled Funds (CBPFs) as a major tool for advancing localization in humanitarian assistance. Canada has provided increased support to 17 UN CBPFs and in 2023 was a top-10 donor to CBPFs. The CBPFs have strict rules about the make-up of their advisory boards, which include CSO representation and increasingly targets for local CSOs. It is estimated that 39% of all CBPF funding was channeled to local organizations (US$432 million) in 2023. As one respondent noted, Canada is providing leadership in developing CBPF guidelines to advance localization. It is part of a broader initiative within GAC to focus on developing guidelines for GAC on localization, which will include reflection on experiences relating to inclusion and community peace processes.

It is also important to note the financing local pooled funding mechanisms was not seen to be an option for GAC. However, the Project Browser does describe a "pooled fund for localising the Rohingya response" created in 2022 with BRAC in Bangladesh. It is described as a "first-of-its-kind" for localizing humanitarian responses with local Bangladeshi CSOs.[40] In general, centralized nature of GAC humanitarian financing precludes the capacity to do the required due diligence. However, the Peace and Stabilization Operations may sometimes fund local CSOs that have had a track record with GAC's Local Initiatives Fund, managed at Canada's various missions. In 2020, Peace and Security programs also devoted $5 million to new funding to specifically support grassroots women peacebuilders as well as an additional $9.9 million in new investments to support women peacebuilders globally.[41]

While recognizing the importance of collaboration, the triple nexus approach is not just about joined up funding and projects, but an important entry point for enhancing collaboration among all stakeholders. The *Quick Start Guide* strongly endorses the coordination role of the UN Resident Coordinator and/or Humanitarian Coordinator and suggests that "leading INGOs also co-chair coordination mechanisms, especially at the levels where they are operational, along with their local CSO counterparts." (page 4) However, the experience is likely very mixed in this regard.

There is also evidence that the international humanitarian system is struggling to change. GAC points to OHCA's recent flagship initiative to test new approaches to coordination in the humanitarian system,

[40] See "Project profile — Pooled Fund for Localizing the Rohingya Response," GAC Project Browser, accessed August 29, 2024 at https://w05.international.gc.ca/projectbrowser-banqueprojets/project-projet/details/p010753001?wbdisable=true.

[41] See Backgrounder at https://www.canada.ca/en/global-affairs/news/2020/10/backgrounder---canadas-support-for-the-women-peace-and-security-agenda.html.

which it is running in Colombia, South Sudan, Philippines and Niger, particularly encouraging closer and holistic engagement with communities. There are challenges arising from these pilots in the resources required as well as concern for scalability of these approaches.

GAC also points to the renewed attention by the World Bank. The World Bank's February 2024 Fragility Forum provided an opportunity for those working in and on fragility, conflict and violence, including those in the development, humanitarian, government, civil society, private sector, research, and security communities, to exchange experiences, and examine the success and failures of developmental interventions in countries affected by fragility, conflict and violence.[42]

4.0 Concrete Steps Forward

While it is still early days and there are ambiguities around how GAC is implementing the triple nexus approach, there are also a number of positive steps that have been shared as part of the study. They are highlighted below:

Success of Pilot Projects: CSO and GAC respondents suggested that three triple nexus projects were successfully implemented in Ukraine, Ethiopia and Sudan. We noted above the review of CSO pilots supported by GAC in 2023.

Nexus Guides and Tools: While the overall Nexus Workplan has been superseded, there were frameworks and tools produced that are available for reference. These products represent a good foundation for the next phase.

Inclusion of Crisis Modifiers: The inclusion of crisis modifiers has allowed programs to better respond to the local needs and protect development gains. In general, the modifiers are contingency funding (designated funds, pre-approved budget allocations, or fast-tracked access rules) that are included in development programs whereby project staff can quickly access humanitarian aid in case of unexpected shocks. It is an important tool to protect vulnerable communities in fragile and conflict affected areas and help build resilience. It may be important to assess recent experience to improve this mechanism in the context of development programming in areas of protracted crisis that are emerging out of conflict.

7% allocation for local partners: An important advancement in localization for CSO intermediaries is the recent change in GAC that allows CSO partners to cascade up to 7% of overhead costs to local actors to ensure some level of sustainability for these partners. They are also encouraging UN partners to implement similar policies.

Move to Multi-year funding: The study found several examples of GAC moving from one to two-year funding agreements for humanitarian aid. While not yet sufficient to address complex development and peace dynamics in protected crisis contexts, it is a small but important step in allowing time for humanitarian, development and peace projects to take hold in these contexts.

[42] See Fragility Forum 2024 at https://www.worldbank.org/en/events/2024/02/27/fragility-forum-2024.

Capacity Building and Training – In addition to some field officers' training at headquarters, many other officials are learning about the triple nexus approach for fragile and conflict-affected countries through sharing resources and conversation. The interviews indicate that most of training and skills development work, envisaged in the original nexus workplan, has shifted to other bureaus and processes in the department with a commitment to continue.

5.0 CSO Perspectives/Recommendations for GAC from the Survey

Based on GAC and CSO interviews, double and triple nexus programs seem to occur along four paths.

- First, it seems that double nexus (humanitarian and development) is a more common and easier combination. If not specifically excluded, the humanitarian and development activities can be included in each other's proposals to a certain extent.
- Second, there was several triple nexus pilot projects, in which GAC officials used their personal networks within the organization to facilitate projects across program and funding silos. These are described above.
- Third, as intermediaries some CSOs receive separate funding from each of the HDP pillars and then integrated them in the field – making sure they are coordinated or complement each other. As one respondent noted, their programs were "*more double nexus but with some aspects of triple nexus*" and later explaining that they included some activities designed to build social cohesion across the community. While progressive, these paths also consume a lot of administrative resources since CSOs still must comply with reporting requirements from multiple programs.
- Fourth, in some cases GAC provides support to multilaterals or other CSOs who, in turn partner with other CSOs to deliver triple nexus projects.

The four general paths to double and triple nexus programming identified in the study have one common denominator. They are all informal and vague processes. This, and the changing and complicated nature of aid modalities, the influence of foreign policy priorities, and complex realities on the ground, may contribute to the continued uncertainty that surrounding current discourse on the triple nexus approach.

As part of the CSO survey, respondents were asked if they had any recommendations for GAC. The results reflected the CSO perspective as well as the Triple Nexus approach. Of the 22 respondents who provided suggestions, there was a relatively equal emphasis on flexible funding, integrated programs and engagement in the dialogue process. The recommendations did, of course, include increase funding for CSOs alongside flexible, multi-year funding that is responsive to the changing and complex nature of fragile and conflict-affected countries. This included developing a dedicated fund for triple nexus programming in fragile contexts. Some respondents also noted that the current funding mechanisms often re-enforce the existing program silos.

Nearly half the respondents suggested bridging siloes or working towards greater program integration of the humanitarian, development and peace pillars. While many recognized the progress made with double

nexus approaches, there is an interest in going further. They suggest that GAC should avoid call-for-proposals that limit applications to a narrow focus – to allow applications for programs to incorporate prevention and response to local conditions. As one respondent noted, "*a lot of the HDP conversation is geared towards governments, demanding them to be less siloed… There is good data that adding social cohesion (i.e. peace) components to development programming improves results*." However, it should also be noted that one respondent was concerned about the integration and wanted to ensure that GAC, "*Uphold the principle of independent, neutral and impartial humanitarian action as a necessary component of crisis response.*"

The third theme emerging from the survey data was transparency and engagement with CSOs in the dialogue process. Some respondents wondered what happen to the Nexus Workplan and GAC Transformation process, including a request for a more explicit statement regarding the current plans for Triple Nexus. Still other respondents focussed on the dialogue process, tool kits and capacity building. The latter referring to capacity building and training for both GAC officials and CSOs. The recommendations also included some mention of localization, joint-up analysis, collaboration in country and crisis modifiers. Interestingly, there is significant overlap between the DAC recommendation, CSO suggestions for GAC, and efforts within GAC in terms of aspirations and content.

In mapping a way forward for the Nexus Working Group and its members with GAC, it will be crucial to situate these CSO concerns and recommendations within the current GAC organizational dynamics and its history with the triple nexus over the past two years, as highlighted in the previous section. It is likely that an approach over the next year that emphasizes learning and dialogue, feeding into GAC expectations for the new Branch with respect to the triple nexus approach, would be most productive. It is apparent that change will be slow, and demanding new funding modalities consistent with the triple nexus at the front end may not open the door for dialogue and influencing change in GAC in these next months.

6.0 Reflections on future opportunities with GAC

a) While some progress within GAC has been made in setting out an understanding of the Triple Nexus (Quick Start Guide, etc.), including some well-informed officials, the degree to which GAC has been implementing the HDP Nexus approach (or the Double Nexus) is largely unknown. In the post-2022 "decentralized approach" a centralized capacity to bring together country experiences and learn from them is absent. This reality is strongly influenced by the fact that GAC programs primarily through intermediaries, be they UN or CSOs. How to capture this experience is therefore challenging, but also an opportunity for dialogue.

b) The silos remain strong. Humanitarian action is centralized in GAC with a clear mandate relating to strict humanitarian principles; development programs are a main focus for GAC across many countries, with much longer time frames, terms and conditions, than humanitarian activities; Operations relating to peace and peacebuilding have had their own trajectory, some of which have supported Canadian and local peace actors, but without limited reference to the triple nexus and other pillars in the Department; and humanitarian and development programs remain highly risk adverse.

There are stated high expectations for the current reorganization of GAC, which is bringing these three pillars together within the same Bureau, to begin to address the many challenges for implementing triple nexus programming. However, any processes that reduce the barriers / silos is likely to remain internal to GAC for some time, given that it will take months for the new Bureau to find its footing and for new ways of working to be developed. The Nexus Working Group need to find ways to influence that process, while not expecting much reciprocity in its earliest stages.

c) In terms of nexus capacity building opportunities, GAC officials have maintained an active and strong engagement with various UN and DAC instances for learning and advancing the triple nexus at the international level. But GAC at the HQ level is currently in no position to engage in-depth on country experiences in triple nexus programming (see point one above). It may be possible to approach particular country programs where there is some evidence of triple nexus at play with GAC funded intermediaries, to suggest joint learning from this experience, but these will require proactive organizing by Canadian CSOs involved to bring these different actors together.

   Joint learning exercises at the institutional level are likely some months down the road taking advantage of opportunities created by the reorganization. To advance joint learning, it might be advisable to invite maximum GAC participation in CSO-organized learning events on their own triple/double nexus programming.

d) Any changes in terms and conditions that might enable triple nexus programming have been overwhelmed by the Grants and Contributions Transformation Initiative over the next two years. But this Initiative to date, and likely in its final outcomes, is exclusively focused on technical aspects of the financing and reporting management systems within GAC, in consultation with CSO partners. There is little evidence that they are considering changes in these modalities to enable different types of programming. The exception might be on-going considerations of ways to loosen risk aversion in GAC due diligence and procedures. Nevertheless, it is important to continue to highlight the importance of considering whether current modalities are 'fit-for-purpose' in the context of "transformation." The GCTI was certainly profiled internationally (at the DAC 2023 Civil Society Days) as an all-encompassing exercise along these lines.

e) A number of very relevant GAC evaluations are forthcoming over the next three years. In 2024/25, GAC is implementing an evaluation on Lessons from Programming in Fragile States (Mali, South Sudan, Burkina Faso). In 2025/26, there will be an evaluation of the Peace and Stabilization Operations Program and Disaster Risk and Resilience in the Indo-Pacific Region. In 2026/27, the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus will be the focus for an evaluation. In that year, GAC will also evaluate Canada's engagement in UN Peace Operations and Peacebuilding and Canada's National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security.[43]

[43] Five-Year Departmental Evaluation Plan, 2023/24 to 2027/28, June 6, 2024, accessed at https://www.international.gc.ca/transparency-transparence/audit-evaluation-verification/2023/2023-06-06-dp-pq.aspx?lang=eng

f) It is also important to note that Canada's ODA policies and practices will be subject to its regular DAC peer review in November 2024 and early 2025, in which the DAC peers seek views of Canadian CSOs. These reviews cover humanitarian assistance and often reference key DAC Recommendations and their implementation.

Annex C
Implementing the Triple Nexus: Opportunities and Challenges, An Overview of Current Literature

Summary highlights

In May 2024, the Canadian CSO Nexus Working Group commissioned a review of the Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) or Triple Nexus approach in conflict-affected and fragile contexts. Its purpose is to assess how and to what extent Canadian CSOs are implementing the HDP approach. Specifically, focussing on how gender, localization, and conflict sensitivity intersect within this approach, and to identify strengths, challenges, and best practices.

This literature review provides background on a range of HDP nexus issues for the study. It brings together findings from more than 70 documents with 55% from CSOs and other from providers and academic sources. (**Literature Review, Annex C.4**) The focus is on key concepts relating to the triple nexus, issues in its implementation, and proposals for ways forward. In doing so, this review flags key issues for consideration in both policy and practice.

This wide scope of literature highlights some key findings (references can be found in the body of this review):

1. **The triple nexus approach has a number of advantages that create potential for transformational change in conflict-affected and fragile contexts:** 1) A sustainable reduction in humanitarian needs and risks for people affected by crises, focusing on the most vulnerable; 2) An integrated approach addressing a spectrum of root causes of fragility, including inequalities and social exclusion, through development and peace assistance; and 3) Motivating political will and organizational changes that strengthen collaboration, coherence and complementarity between humanitarian, development and peace actors. But at the same time, it is vital for actors, intending to implement the nexus, to approach each context with singularity, realism and pragmatism.

2. **The triple nexus approach has been contested and progress towards implementation is uneven at best.** Despite more than three decades experience in initiatives attempting to bridge the humanitarian-development gap, the dichotomy between immediate relief and development has endured with many unresolved challenges. Organizational silos (humanitarian, development, peace operations) remain resistant to change in the face of increasingly complex realities on the ground. The result has been continued aid fragmentation and limited effectiveness in countries with protracted crises.

3. **The full potential of the triple nexus will not be achieved without fundamental change in the current siloed project-oriented top-down crisis response models and architecture.** A nexus approach requires a focus on internal and external coordination, coherence and complementarity, building on a shared understanding of the root causes of crises, and working with organizational comparative advantages within agreed targets and goals, and prioritize actions. There continues, however, to be

a lack of shared understanding of the three pillars, and the extent to which humanitarian assistance should be linked in practice to development cooperation and peacebuilding. While much has been written and discussed regarding the triple nexus, the reality is often a substantial disconnect between theory and actual practice, with the triple nexus facing significant structural and behavioral barriers in its implementation. It requires a "nexus mindset," one that informs organizational change and incentivizes synergies and collaboration for joint analysis and action with partners and other actors tackling the underlying drivers of crisis and vulnerability

Coordination and Common Outcomes

4. **Coordination is a key pillar of the HDP nexus.** While there is evidence that internal coordination and coherence have started to improve, with some internal reorganization for some providers, coordination across the nexus at country level continues to remain very challenging. In practice, coordination is a continuum, ranging from informal periodic contacts (most common practice), formal structured communication, or deliberate processes to ensure strategic alignment of actors across the nexus (least realized). Each organization, including those from the UN, continues to have its own operating models and priorities, making it difficult to align processes and achieve common objectives in country contexts.

5. **Joint gender and conflict sensitivity analysis is essential to ensure that activities do no harm and avoid unintended negative consequences, while providing the foundation for a context-specific balance in nexus actions.** A crisis context should be analyzed in its broadest sense including experience and perspectives from the various groups affected on the ground (host communities, internally displaced persons, refugees, returnees, vulnerable groups, women and children). Trust among affected populations and with providers is a key ingredient for coordination and collaboration, which takes time and sustained presence to consolidate. Joint conflict analysis is often limited by a lack of common understanding or operationalization of the "do no harm" principle in country contexts. Providers and INGOs, however, have been developing guidance on conflict and gender sensitivity analysis.

6. **A key framework for triple nexus effectiveness is a common context-specific agreement on collective outcomes.** But moving from joint analysis to collective outcomes has also been very challenging. Common outcomes do not assume common actions by organizations; for example, all actors must respect the particular requirements for organizations guided by humanitarian principles. Coordinated actions for common outcomes should be derived from organizational comparative advantages, particularly taking account the capacities of local actors on the ground. Effective implementation requires localizing decision-making, building sustained and trust-based relationships, adaptive management, which in turn may require change at the organizational and systemic level.

Better programming

7. **Providers, including INGOs, have undertaken numerous pilot programs related to the HDP nexus, but many of these initiatives have different understandings of and ways of engaging the nexus approach.** In practice, organizations can face difficult decisions about when to transition from humanitarian to development programming, trying to read the conflict-sensitive implications for this transition. Each situation is unique. The triple nexus approach may not be appropriate in all circumstances. Humanitarian assistance alone may be the most important way to stay engaged in difficult highly-conflictive contexts. Not all organizations are equally ready or mandated to engage in all aspects of the triple nexus. Humanitarian organizations can be highly effective in meeting immediate needs and in the aftermath of conflicts, but some may not be suitable for sustained long-term interventions in protracted crises.

   Dual-mandated humanitarian/development organizations, however, have increasing entered "grey zones," expanding activities that combine humanitarian responses with longer-term actions for durable solutions. The triple nexus is not a fixed model or blueprint, but rather it should be seen as an adaptable coordinated approach driven by the unique dynamics and challenges of each local context and the needs and priorities of local actors.

8. **The peace dimension within the triple nexus approach is a crucial element, but remains the most problematic, and its inclusion is sometimes contested by humanitarian actors**. For most triple nexus actors, the integration of the peace pillar is still at an early stage. Yet building conditions for peace should be an integral part of sustainably "ending need" and "leaving no one behind" in fragile and conflict affected contexts. Nexus experience to date suggests that it may be helpful to approach peace support as a continuum. This continuum can encompass actions ranging from undertaking conflict sensitivity with partners, improving local capacities for peace and social cohesion, to engaging in political diplomacy and peacekeeping missions.

   Some distinguish between large-scale peace negotiations and soft peace actions, with CSOs oriented to the latter. CSOs involved in triple nexus programming also stress non-traditional, community-oriented approaches to peace, in particular the participation of women in local peace processes. But others in the humanitarian sector still worry that tackling peace in a holistic triple nexus approach might (inadvertently) jeopardize their impartiality and access to vulnerable people and communities, while putting others, including staff, at risk. It may lead to unintended instrumentalization of aid by parties to the conflict.

   Nevertheless, for many, ignoring peace is also not an option. The triple nexus is not an all-encompassing individual project, but rather an approach involving multiple actors. Building bridges involving all actors, in ways that respect their comparative advantages and distinctive mandates, is essential. Yet it is usually a difficult practical challenge in each fragile and conflict affected context. Challenges in practice in defining effective contributions to peace outcomes, distinct from security agendas, respecting the rights of the most vulnerable, are discussed at length in the literature.

9. **Community resilience is a common theme across nexus approaches, but no consensus exists on how the nexus and resilience overlap.** Strengthening community-rooted resilience can be a useful frame for the HDP nexus. But the nexus approach potentially includes a broader set of coordinated actions,

from humanitarian support to peacebuilding, with each pillar having different points of entry. Some argue that a resilience frame for nexus may shift excessive responsibilities for recovery onto communities, ignoring wider power and conflict dynamics. But in practice resilience is often conflated and/or used inter-changeably with the nexus approach.

10. **The inclusion of gender equality, women's voices, participation and leadership across all HDP nexus pillars is essential for progress in fragile and conflict-affected contexts.** But many providers, including those with feminist policies, have had little guidance for a gender lens on humanitarian action. Some humanitarian actors suggest that feminist approaches are inherently political and therefore in tension with humanitarian principles. While all aspects of the triple nexus should be gender sensitive and responsive, there is a debate, even among feminists, about the degree to which humanitarian action can be gender transformative (i.e. addressing root causes and structural dimension of gender inequalities in humanitarian contexts).

11. **Strategic long-term partnerships with local actors, including locally-led programming in humanitarian, development and peacebuilding, are imperative to the success of the HDP nexus.** A bottom-up inclusive approach is essential for triple nexus progress. Leadership by local civil society and community actors is seen by many as a "nexus glue" to better manage conflict, strengthen community agency and resilience, build social cohesion and reduce violence.

    While such support for local actors has increased somewhat, only half of DAC providers and multilateral respondents reported in a recent survey that they have somewhat increased support to national and local capacities in their nexus efforts. Direct support to local and national actors has actually declined from 3.4% of humanitarian assistance to 1.8% in 2022.

    There are strong views in the global south that current northern partnerships with local organizations are largely based on project deliverables, mainly determined by the financing organization. The tendency has been to transfer responsibilities and risks to local actors to implement complex nexus programming. But many providers do so without reforming their own funding mechanisms and requirements to ensure programming is feasible and locally-led.

    The nexus will require a transformation of intermediary roles and structures (for UN bodies and INGOs), reframed within a spirit of trust, equity, solidarity and complementarity with local actors. Intermediaries must work in ways that complement the strengths, not replace existing capacities of national and local actors, enabling local and national organizations and affected communities to take the lead.

12. **Shrinking civic space, restrictive measures for counter-terrorism, and financial obstacles expose CSOs to considerable risk and can limit their access to crisis-affected populations.** Addressing these issues by providers is often a pre-condition for effective implementation of the HDP nexus in challenging contexts for CSOs. ICSO intermediaries can play crucial roles where local actors are constrained by shrinking civic space or needing protection, but always complementing where possible local actors and communities.

Financing

13. **Funding mechanisms are still largely fragmented, short-term, and earmarked, and counterproductive in further a nexus approach.** There exist large imbalances between volumes of humanitarian and development finance, with declining support for strategic peace actions in conflict affected and fragile contexts. Most nexus financing is very much insufficient and comes mainly from humanitarian sources, with development projects often unconnected in the same country.

    Provider rigidity in funding priorities and regulations between the nexus pillars is a key issue, linked to siloed organizational structures. While some DAC providers and multilateral organizations are taking steps to adjust their financing practices to support a nexus approach (more flexible, multi-year and softly earmarked), in general, these are stand-alone pilots. Some examples stand out – Irish Aid has established a five-year funding stream for Irish CSOs, moving funds from humanitarian budgets into civil society budgets, enabling CSOs to move funds across development and/or humanitarian/chronic crisis funding streams when needed. Germany's BMZ has an innovative "chapeau approach" that allows joint financing for German CSOs to implement several humanitarian / development projects with a shared objective in a fragile or protracted crisis country context. There is limited discussion in the literature about how ICSOs might reform their own funding practices in the context of a commitment to locally-led nexus programming.

14. **Financing must incentivize the nexus approach.** Reforms should aim for 1) direct, unearmarked, flexible, multi-year quality financing from one source; 2) utilizing pooled funding (locally controlled) and multi-provider consortium where feasible; 3) enabling collaborative planning with long term commitments; 4) avoiding competitive project-oriented models that disadvantage local CSO relationships and local leadership; and 5) a focus on strengthening sustainability for grassroots, local women's rights organizations, youth and Indigenous Peoples' organizations.

See also the synthesis of literature recommendations in **Section 6** below.

1.0 Introduction

Initiated at the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit and set out in a 2019 DAC Recommendation, the humanitarian-development-peace nexus (HDP nexus) is a holistic approach to protracted humanitarian crises, which links humanitarian and development action with the inclusion of peace initiatives. The goal is to improved aid effectiveness and coherence for sustainable outcomes for affected populations.

The Recommendation sets out eleven (11) critical commitments in relation to three key areas of Coordination, Programming and Financing within an HDP nexus approach. (See **Box One**, next page and **Literature Review, Annex C1.** for graphic representations of the HDP nexus.) The past eight years has seen the elaboration of the main dimensions of the triple nexus approach, and its implications for aid actors at all levels. There have been some initiatives in its implementation on the part of DAC providers,[44] UN organizations, International CSOs (ICSOs) and national/local actors in affected countries.

As part of a research project on the Canadian nexus experience commissioned by the Canadian CSO Nexus Working Group, this literature review provides some background context. It brings together findings from more than 70 documents by providers, academic and CSO sources on key concepts relating to the triple nexus, issues in its implementation, and proposals for ways forward. This review also draws on the recent assessment by the DAC's International Network on Conflict and Fragility (INCAF) of the implementation of the Recommendation over the past five years.[45] (OECD DAC, 2024) Please see **Literature Review, C.4** for the bibliography of documents included in the analysis.

This literature review identifies key issues that have shaped the research's approach to assessing current Canadian experience in implementing the nexus approach. It does so mindful of the framework set out in the Nexus Working Group's September 2023 Draft Statement on the *Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus: Approach, definition and messages*. (Working Group Statement, See **Literature Review, Annex C.5) The** latter is highly consistent with the main messages from the literature review.

A separate statistical analysis of existing aid datasets is also included in the research project. It provides the statistical context for identifying trends and potential aid flows relating to a triple nexus approach. The limitations of these datasets, unfortunately, do not allow for the tracking of triple nexus investments. The statistical analysis can only suggest possible trends that must be verified through more in-depth study. This gap is partly related to a lack of common understanding about what it means to fund across the triple nexus.

[44] The use of the term "provider" is more neutral than the long-standing term "donor" and has been increasingly adopted by actors in development cooperation.

[45] The International Network on Conflict and Fragility (INCAF) is a unique network of OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) members and key multilateral agencies working in fragile and conflict-affected contexts. It is composed of senior officials. See https://www.oecd.org/dac/conflict-fragility-resilience/incaf-network.htm.

Box One

The OECD DAC Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development Peace Nexus
Common Principles to Guide and Support Stakeholders

Better Coordination

1. Undertake joint risk-informed, gender-sensitive analysis of root causes and structural drivers of conflict, as well as positive factors of resilience and the identification of collective outcomes incorporating humanitarian, development and peace actions.
2. Provide appropriate resourcing to empower leadership for cost-effective coordination across the humanitarian, development and peace architecture.
3. Utilise political engagement and other tools, instruments and approaches at all levels to prevent crises, resolve conflicts and build peace.

Better Programming

4. Prioritise prevention, mediation and peacebuilding, investing in development whenever possible, while ensuring immediate humanitarian needs continue to be met.
5. Put people at the centre, tackling exclusion and promoting gender equality.
6. Ensure that activities do no harm, are conflict sensitive to avoid unintended negative consequences and maximise positive effects across humanitarian, development and peace actions.
7. Align joined-up programming with the risk environment.
8. Strengthen national and local capacities.
9. Invest in learning and evidence across humanitarian, development and peace actions.

Better Finance

10. Develop evidence-based humanitarian, development and peace financing strategies at global, regional, national and local levels, with effective layering and sequencing of the most appropriate financing flows.
11. Use predictable, flexible, multi-year financing wherever possible.
    - Identifying financing mechanisms that bring together humanitarian, development and peace stakeholders where possible and appropriate.
    - Striving to ensure that financing is informed by joint analysis and where possible and appropriate, supports greater coherence between humanitarian, development and peace actions.
    - Aligning financing with agreed collective outcomes where appropriate – while recognising that humanitarian, development and peace actions may have priorities that also fall outside of collective outcomes.
    - Seeking the availability of flexible funding in the different pillars to ensure a better use of allocated resources in response to priority needs.

2. Background and origins of the triple nexus

The international development field has a long history of discussions and initiatives calling for more aid coordination, less fragmentation and locally led development. In Canada it dates as far back as the 1968 Pearson Commission on International Development. The report called for more coordination and recommends the formation of country level groups with a mandate to disburse aid and conduct annual reviews. (Pearson, 1969) Later initiatives included the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, the Sustainable Development Goals, and the Grand Bargain. Each iteration tends to push the international development field slowly towards more coordinated and equitable development cooperation. (CARE, 2018, Annex One) It is within this context that the Triple Nexus approach has been shaped at an international level with influence over policy and practice in the Canadian aid ecosystem. The next sections will explore how the triple nexus approach is framed at the international level and the evolution of policy and practice in Canada.

2.1 International Origins

In February 2019, a Senior Level Meeting of the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) adopted the *OECD-DAC Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus* (henceforth the Recommendation). (OECD, 2019) All 32 DAC Members, including Canada, are Adherents to the Recommendation as well as seven UN entities.[46] While not legally binding, an OECD Recommendation is the strongest level of accountability for DAC Members, to which they commit to "do their best to fully implement".[47] The implementation of this Recommendation is promoted and monitored by the DAC's INCAF, which in 2023 and 2024 completed a five-year review of the Recommendation's implementation, documenting progress as well as challenges. (OECD DAC 2024)

The adoption of this Recommendation was a milestone in the evolution of humanitarian policies and practices that brought together thinking on how to improve outcomes for affected populations. A rapid increase in humanitarian crises has been accompanied by their growing complexity and time scale, alongside violent conflict, increased displacement. The context is often affected by the rise of authoritarian governments, climate change and epidemics/pandemics. More than 80% of affected populations live in countries experiencing chronic crises, which are defined as those that have had a UN Coordinated Appeal for five or more consecutive years. (Development Initiatives, 2023b)

This humanitarian context was the backdrop for the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit, which promoted a holistic "new way of working." It was to be an approach that linked humanitarian and development action with inclusion of peace initiatives to improve aid effectiveness and coherence. (Brown and Mena,

[46] The seven UN entities are the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Population Fund, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, and the World Food Programme

[47] See https://legalinstruments.oecd.org/en/about.

2021; Moriniere et al, 2023; German Federal Ministry, 2021) A humanitarian-development-peace (HDP) nexus approach sought more sustainable outcomes by engaging a greater diversity of partners and encouraging greater collaboration between bilateral and multilateral organizations involved in crisis contexts, as well as joined-up approaches within these organizations. (Changamire et al., 2024)

The road towards a triple nexus approach, however, has been very uneven and often contested. In this regard, Cochrane and Wilson have pointed to four generations in its evolution, some which we explore in latter sections of this review (Cochrane and Wilson, 2023):

First Generation: Bridging the humanitarian development divide as a linear process;

Second Generation: Responding to (political / military initiatives) in complex crises characterized by recurring violent events;

Third Generation: Focusing on increasing resilience and localization for vulnerable populations; and

Fourth Generation: Increasing coordination, programmatic coherence and finance across the triple nexus.

2.2 Canadian Origins

Initiatives in the 1980s and early 1990s focused on linking First Generation humanitarian and development-related activities, reflected in Canada by the CIDA-delegated Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Fund (R & R Fund). The R & R Fund operated between 1981 and 1995. It was a Fund managed by Canadian CSOs through the Canadian Council for International Cooperation (CCIC). It focused on reducing vulnerability, increasing prevention and preparedness, and promoting sustainable development through individual and joint projects undertaken by Canadian CSOs. In 1993/94 it provided $4.8 million (in 2023 dollars) for post-emergency reconstruction, based on a 3 to 1 match ratio in finance from the Fund. Projects undertaken jointly by more than one CSO received a higher matching ratio.[48]

This early humanitarian-development approach has been critiqued for its linear thinking (reconstruction/development follows humanitarian response), implementing a top-down northern perspective, and not taking account the complexities and protractedness for many humanitarian crises. (Brown and Mena, 2021; CARE, 2018, Annex One) Despite this early experience in attempting to bridge the humanitarian-development gap, the dichotomy between immediate relief and development has persistently faced challenges with different organizational silos and priorities and increasingly complex realities on the ground, resulting in continued fragmentation and an undermining of effectiveness of aid efforts. (Changamire et. al, 2024)

[48] See https://mapcan.org/partnerships.php. See also CCIC, "Evaluation of the Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Fund - Key Issues and Recommendations" 1995, CCIC Policy Archives, Box 7, Carleton University; Greg Hansen, "Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Projects and the Peacebuilding Agenda," paper for the Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Fund, 1994, CCIC Policy Archive, Box 7, Carleton University; and CCIC, "From the Ground Up - Sustainable development in the face of disaster," Reflections on the approach and experience of the CCIC Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Fund, 1995, CCIC Policy Archives, Box 7, Carleton University.

Throughout the 1990s, Canadian CSOs and Government officials came together in the Policy Action Group on Emergency Response (PAGER). Among other priorities, this body reflected on the roles of military and humanitarian actors in complex emergencies and on the "transition gap" for funding humanitarian aid through to stabilization and long-term development activities. (Foxall, 2003) In 1999, the CSO Humanitarian Response Network (HRN), which continues to this day, was created out of PAGER.

In the early 2000s the CCIC Policy Team, working with some members, embarked on a policy and learning exercise over several years focusing on the humanitarian-peace nexus. (Foxall, 2003) This initiative picked up lessons from the R & R Fund in conflict resolution, humanitarian aid and long-term development and peacebuilding. Following the R & R Fund in the 1990s, these concerns led to the creation of the Canadian Peacebuilding Coordinating Committee, which was a network of Canadian CSOs and academics focusing on development and peacebuilding issues and their policy implications.[49] By the early 2000s Canadian CSOs could also engage with the Canadian Peacebuilding Initiative of the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFAIT) and CIDA.

In this period, there was a convergence of interest among Canadian CSOs with the DFAIT's definition of the goal of peacebuilding as "building human security, a concept which includes democratic governance, human rights, rule of law, sustainable development, equitable access to resources, and environmental security." (Quoted in Foxall, 2003) The CCIC learning process at that time focused on clarifying CSO roles in humanitarian assistance, conflict resolution, peacebuilding and reconstruction as well as the distinctions between peacebuilding and long-term development.

Over the next two decades many of these issues have informed ongoing debates on humanitarian assistance, development and peace processes in countries with protracted humanitarian crises. Internationally, at the inter-governmental level, they culminated in the adoption of the DAC Recommendation in 2019, in which Canada was an active participant.

With this background, the next two sections set out overall reflections from the literature on progress to date. They interrogate each of the three areas in the Recommendation - coordination, programming and financing within an HDP nexus approach. Each section will focus on progress to date, current issues and challenges as well as ways forward. Together they provide the background for situating an understanding of issues facing Canadian CSOs and Global Affairs Canada (GAC) in their implementation of the triple nexus.

3. Strengths, opportunities and reflections on progress

According to the literature, the promotion and implementation of the Humanitarian, Development and Peace Nexus, including the DAC Recommendation, makes possible,

- **A sustainable reduction of needs and risks for people affected by crises**, based on the principle of prioritizing "prevention always, development whenever possible, humanitarian action when

[49] Out of 93 members of CCIC, 42 indicated that they conducted humanitarian assistance programming and 51 had peacebuilding programs.

necessary" for extremely vulnerable populations and local structures. (German Federal Ministry, 2021; ACTEDa, no date).

- **An integrated approach addressing a spectrum of root causes of fragility**, including inequalities and social exclusion, focusing particularly on those who will be left behind in extreme poverty and vulnerability (OECD DAC, 2024 and Development Initiatives, 2019; CARE 2018).
- **The strengthening of political will to invest complementary development funds,** addressing the structural dimensions driving humanitarian need, improving the cost efficiency of humanitarian interventions (Norwegian Refugee Council, 2023; ALNAP, 2023).
- **The strengthening of collaboration, coherence and complementarity between humanitarian, development and peace actors**, capitalizing on the comparative advantage of each pillar, not integrating them, to the extent of their relevance to each context (ECDPM, 2021; Thomas, 2019; ACTEDb, no date).
- **The deepening of the value and operationalization of humanitarian principles**, particularly the principle of humanity, based on human dignity and human rights, which is central to development and peace efforts (German Federal Ministry, 2021; Daigle, 2024).

While there is substantial momentum and strong agreement for the potential of the HDP nexus, in part due to the DAC Recommendation, there is equal agreement in the literature that there has been a substantial disconnect between theory and actual practice, with the triple nexus facing significant barriers in its implementation. (CARE Canada, 2019; DAC CSO Reference Group, 2024; Lilly, 2024 Changamire et. al, 2024) Some of this unease revolves around confusion and lack of a shared definition and understanding of the peace category, particularly by the humanitarian sector, which will be elaborated further in section 3 below. (Brown and Mena, 2021; Jancke, 2023)

The DAC INCAF five-year review of progress in implementing the Recommendation concluded that

> "**Progress on implementing the DAC Recommendation remains uneven** – both between provisions and across Adherents. In particular coordination challenges remain, not least in relation to joined-up efforts (i.e. analysis, programming, financing, evaluation etc.), as well as several core obstacles to enhancing programming and financing across the HDP nexus."
>
> "**The full potential of the DAC Recommendation will not be achieved without fundamental change in the current crisis response models and architecture**. … However, by and large, the international community's current crisis response model broadly maintains programming and financing as separate segmented – rather than complementary – processes." [emphasis added] (OECD DAC, 2024)

There is broad consensus on this diagnosis across commentaries by government officials, International CSOs, and thinktanks:

- **Many providers have made clear policy commitments,[50] but to date these commitments have not resulted in substantive change in practice.** They often lacked political will and a risk appetite to invest in extremely fragile context in ways that address root causes of conflict and fragility. Providers have not made available long-term, flexible and predictable financing, but rather rely on earmarked, short-term project-based humanitarian grants. (Moriniere, et. al., 2023; DAC CSO Reference Group, 2024)
- **There is a lack of shared understanding of the three pillars** and the extent to which humanitarian assistance should be linked to development cooperation and peacebuilding in practice. (German Federal Ministry, 2021; CARE, 2018; Development Initiatives, 2019; Lilly, 2024)
- **Investing in development remains most visible in stable contexts, as well as some fragile contexts**, with limited investments in peacebuilding. Development programs are often taking place in geographically separate areas in the same country. There also can be a large imbalance between the volume of humanitarian support compared to development funding (OECD DAC, 2024; Moriniere et. al., 2023).
- **Collective outcome processes often tend to be too theoretical, parallel to other planning processes**, and despite this focus on collective outcomes, there appears to be no substantive, internationally agreed collective monitoring or accountability framework. (Moriniere, et. al., 2023; DAC CSO Reference Group, 2024; OCHA, 2019)
- **Shrinking civic space, restrictive measures for counter-terrorism, and financial obstacles expose CSOs to considerable risk** and limit their access to crisis-affected populations. Addressing these issues is a pre-condition for effective implementation of the HDP nexus. (Thomas, 2019)

According to Development Initiatives, quoting the UN Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), Results Group 5, "at the policy level there is a lack of common understanding of what it means to fund 'across the nexus' and no commonly agreed definition of scope of nexus programming/approaches, making it impossible to identify or track the volume of funding going to nexus approaches." (Development Initiatives, 2023b; Norwegian Refugee Council, 2023) The IASC is the longest-standing and highest-level humanitarian coordination forum of the United Nations system.

Top level policies on the triple nexus tend to focus on distinct roles for humanitarian, development and peace support, but leave much latitude for interpretation, leading often to uncertainty and confusion among practitioners. (Development Initiatives, 2019; Moriniere et. al, 2023; Lilly, 2024) Divergencies in conceptualizations and definitions can result in the application of the double or triple nexus in contexts where they may not be appropriate. Commentators have also suggested that imposing the nexus on CSOs can lead to inefficiencies in their responses. (Cochrane and Wilson, 2023; ECDPM, 2021) CARE Canada confirmed that a lack of clear definitions and goals around nexus approaches creates not only conceptual confusion, but also uncertainty in determining what CARE Canada's role might be. (CARE Canada, 2019) Islamic Relief calls for CSOs to have a clearly articulated strategy on how they envision complementarity

[50] See Global Affairs Canada, 2021, for their promotional video, *The Triple Nexus: What it is and why it matters at Global Affairs Canada.*

between humanitarian, development and peace initiatives.[51]

Commentators also point to situations of active conflict or ones in which government is completely absent or party to the conflict, where humanitarian aid may be the best and only option. (ECDPM, 2021; OECD DAC, 2024; Atakpu, 2020; Cochrane and Wilson, 2023; CARE Canada, 2019) The authors of the ECDPM study suggest that it is vital for actors involved in implementing the nexus to approach each context with realism and pragmatism, where conflicts can quickly erupt again, requiring a refocus on humanitarian aid. (ECDPM, 2021)

On the other hand, Moriniere and Morrison-Metois point to signs of progress in recent efforts to clarify peace linkages (more below), improved shifts in policy and discourse, and in the work of the IASC to develop guidance on collective outcomes and collect good practice in coordination at the country level.[52] (Moriniere, et. al., 2023; ALNAP, 2023)

How has the HDP nexus affected change in operational policies and practices of official providers and International CSO in the core areas of Coordination, Programming and Financing? The following section analyzes different trends, challenges, and opportunities and draws lessons to foster better coordination, programming and financing in protracted crises and fragile contexts.

4. Issues, challenges and opportunities in implementing the HDP nexus

4.1 Better Coordination

Coordination is a key pillar of the HDP nexus. The triple nexus is not its own sector but rather an enhanced form of collaboration. (Swithern et al, 2023) The DAC Recommendation calls on providers to coordinate their efforts to identify collective outcomes incorporating humanitarian, development and peace actions. It promotes joint risk-informed, gender-sensitive analysis of root causes and structural drivers of conflict as well as positive factors of resilience. (OECD DAC, 2019) INCAF's five-year review of implementation progress concludes that coordination across the nexus remains "uneven". While there is evidence that

[51] For an excellent example, see Canadian Foodgrains Bank, *Nexus Framework*, unpublished. See also CSO Nexus Working Group, "Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus: Approaches, statement, definition and messages," Working Draft, September 28, 2023, unpublished and CARE's Guiding Principles derived from evidence on the ground in CARE, 2018.

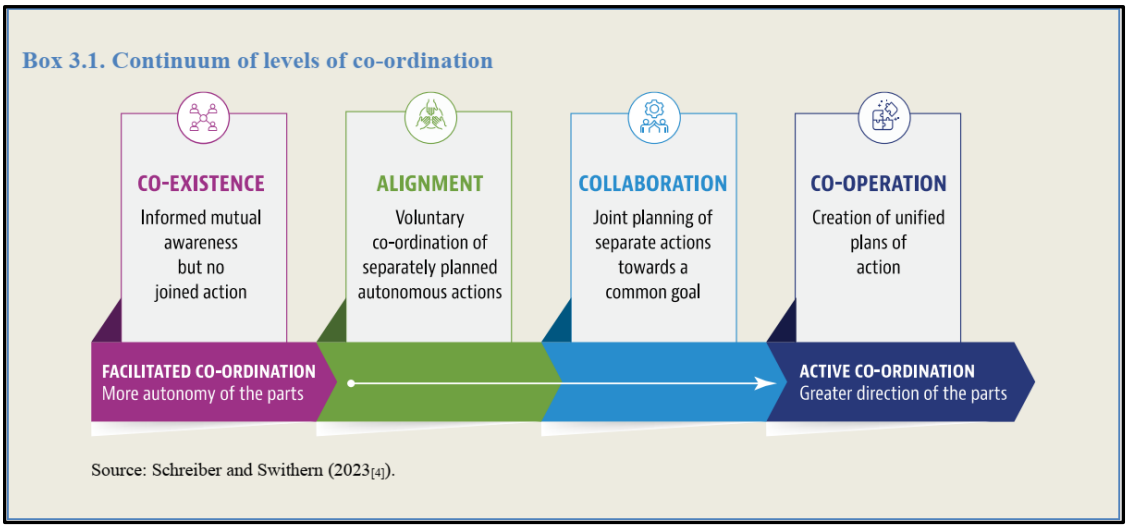
[52] See https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/the-inter-agency-standing-committee. See "IASC Mapping of Good Practice in the Implementation of Humanitarian-Development Peace Nexus Approaches, Synthesis Report," 2021, accessed at https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/iasc-mapping-good-practice-implementation-humanitarian-development-peace-nexus-approaches-synthesis; "UN-IASC Light Guidance on Collective Outcomes," 2020, accessed at https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/inter-agency-standing-committee/un-iasc-light-guidance-collective-outcomes; and "Issue paper: Exploring peace within the Humanitarian-Development- Peace Nexus (HDPN)," 2020, accessed at https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/humanitarian-development-collaboration/issue-paper-exploring-peace-within-humanitarian-development-peace-nexus-hdpn.

internal coordination and coherence have started to improve, with some internal reorganization for some providers, coordination across the nexus continues to remain very challenging. (OECD DAC, 2024)

A major factor in limiting coordination is the observation by the INCAF study that providers rarely have a combination of all three components – humanitarian, development, peace – in the countries where they are programming. As well, each organization continues to have their own operating models, making it difficult to align processes and achieve common objectives. The INCAF report suggests that organizational change and political will are fundamental to moving away from organization-centric models of operation, towards more collective systems at the country level. (OECD DAC, 2024; United Nations, 2020)

In practice, INCAF suggests that coordination is a continuum, which can involve informal contact, more formal communication, or strategic alignment. See **Chart One**.

Chart One



Source: OECD DAC, 2024, 21.

A 2023 DAC review of coordination across the triple nexus pointed out that approximately 76% of development and peace fund in fragile context comes from DAC donors, not multilaterals and CSOs, while 52% of all humanitarian assistance in these contexts is channeled through multilateral organizations and INGOs. (Swithern et al, 2023, 14) While few providers are involved, this different development/humanitarian profiles as well as the non-alignment of systems and structures limits coordination. This study concluded that

- Coordination solutions must be tailored to each country context and take advantage of the resources available in each context for "situationally-informed solutions".
- Clear goals are essential for effective coordination.
- Coordination is an opportunity to review ways of working that no longer make sense in a given context and to make space for new ways of working. (Swithern et al, 2023)

ACTED promotes Area Based Coordination (ABC) models for coordination that push decision making away from central bodies at national level towards local communities, strengthening the roles of local humanitarian actors. ABC platforms are "able to coordinate the assessment of local needs and delivery of aid locally, … [and] refer back to national-level [UN] Cluster architecture for technical support, quality control and harmonization of standards." (ACTED, 2024, 5)

UN leadership and collective outcomes

INCAF observes that provider efforts to agree on collective outcomes, appropriate to the specific country situation, is for the most part led by UN organizations. However, they also point out that humanitarian needs are mainly defined by coordinated UN appeals, and actual responses are shaped more by access to finance by different UN agencies than by the UN Resident Coordinator/ Humanitarian Coordinator in the respective country. The UN operations at the country level are multi-faceted and complex, creating significant challenges for coordination and common priorities. However, the UN system provides robust training relating to coordination and the triple nexus for Resident Coordinators and they have access to experienced RCs in other contexts to facilitate their efforts (United Nations Development Group, 2020). See **Annex C.2** for a diagrammatic representation the UN development and humanitarian coordination structure.

Coordination in protracted crises is disparate. An INCAF survey of DAC providers and multilateral organizations found mixed assessments of progress in UN leadership, with 50% of multilateral organizations and 38% of DAC providers saying "to some extent only." The same survey disclosed that more than 50% of multilateral respondents identify clear UN leadership (regional and headquarters) as a key enabler for effective coordination. (OECD DAC, 2024, 28)

The UN can play a strong role in coordinated funding. A 2023 Report by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) on country based pooled funds found that they allocated US$1.1 billion in that year. It suggests that these Funds "were instrumental in enabling multisectoral, coherent and coordinated responses" and that they could "swiftly adapt and scale up operations to meet emerging needs and tackle evolving and complex situations." (United Nations, 2023, 26) While important, these Funds, however, are of course only one source of financing for countries facing protracted crises.

The Norwegian Refugee Council has called for UN leadership in clarifying the peace pillar in each country context and for greater inclusion of national CSOs in meaningful consultation and strategic discussions at the country level. (Norwegian Refugee Council, 2023) Another study pointed out that while the UN Humanitarian Coordinator is empowered to overcome systemic divisions in the UN responses, no similar position exists among large DAC providers in country embassies. This makes it challenging to come together as multiple providers in agreement on priorities and in negotiations with the national government. (Brown and Mena, 2021)

Joint conflict sensitivity analysis and collective outcomes

A major provision of the DAC Recommendation is joint conflict sensitivity analysis. Such analysis ensures that activities in their conception and implementation do no harm and are conflict sensitive to avoid unintended negative consequences. Conflict sensitivity starts with a context-specific conflict analysis and should include a specific analysis of the actions and potential roles of various actors in country. While there is a wide acknowledgement of the need to ensure nexus actions are conflict sensitive, an important finding of the INCAF assessment of progress is that there is no common understanding or operationalization of the "do no harm" principle in country contexts. The focus has been mainly on potential financial and reputational risks for providers. (OECD DAC, 2024)

The INCAF survey of DAC providers and multilateral organizations identified several barriers to strengthening joint risk informed gender-sensitive analysis:

- Limited capacity;
- Obstacles to knowledge sharing, inter-agency competition;
- Need for structural organizational reform (particularly from multilateral respondents); and
- Global push-back on gender-related rights. (OECD DAC, 2024, 24)

Sudhoff and colleague's survey of multi-mandated organizations found that most respondents thought the integration of conflict analysis and sensitivity had "substantial room for improvement." More than 70% of respondents saw limited knowledge about what the triple nexus might mean in practice as the most important challenge in its implementation of coordinated conflict sensitivity analysis. (Sudhoff et al, 2020, 23)

Some DAC providers have developed have developed training resources for implementing conflict sensitivity analysis. The Government of Canada's "Tip Sheet" for organizations implementing GAC projects covers areas that should be considered in undertaking a conflict sensitivity analysis and links this process to gender sensitive conflict analysis. (Government of Canada, 2021)

Save the Children, among other ICSOs, have developed detailed guidance materials for their offices on integrating (child-centred) conflict sensitivity analysis into their nexus programming. (Save the Children, 2021 and Save the Children, no date) In rolling out the guide, Save noted that there was mixed understanding of conflict sensitivity as a process in country offices, but often these same offices have a vast amount of relevant information relating to the conflict situation. (Save the Children, no date)

Cochrane and Wilson emphasize the importance of engaging local actors. (Cochrane, 2023) In the case of the Lake Chad region, a CSO study suggested that to ensure no harm, a crisis must be analyzed in its broadest sense, including experience and perspectives from the various groups affected on the ground (host communities, internally displaced persons, refugees, returnees, vulnerable groups, women and children). (Atakpu, 2020; Save the Children, 2021) Interestingly, the INCAF survey found that 50% of DAC donors and more than 80% of multilateral respondents said that the triple nexus has enhanced work with civil society as well as with partner country authorities. (OECD DAC, 2024, 27)

Joint conflict sensitivity analysis informs the context-specific agreement on common collective outcomes. The latter promotes measurable results and impacts enhanced by the combined efforts of different actors. Common outcomes do not assume common actions. They are intended to take account of and coordinate actions based on the comparative advantages of each actor within its respective mandate. (Care, 2019) There is consensus, however, in the literature that moving from joint analysis to collective outcomes has been very challenging. (German Federal Ministry, 2021; Development Initiatives, 2019; OECD DAC, 2024)

Trust among affected populations and with providers is a key ingredient for coordination and collaboration on the ground, which takes time and sustained presence to consolidate. World Vision points to a context for a nexus project in Ethiopia where the complexities of cross sector (humanitarian and development) made common priorities challenging.[53] These challenges are compounded by the dynamics of power and decision making, particularly involving government and large providers. (Changamire et al, 2024)

As concluded by the INCAF review of progress, organizational change is an essential ingredient for progress in provider coordination and reaching collective outcomes in highly fragile contexts and persistent crises. Better internal intra-governmental collaboration across ministries, departments and divisions is a starting point for meaningful progress for sustained coordination in country. (Daigle, 2024) This may be true for large ICSO as well. It requires localizing decision-making, building sustained and trust-based relationships, adaptive management, which in turn require change at the organizational and systemic level. (Changamire et al, 2024; OECD DAC 2024, 29)

4.2 Better Programming

Programming and interventions by providers in countries experiencing protracted crises and fragile contexts is fraught with many challenges that limit the advantages of a HDP nexus approach. While INCAF assesses the Recommendation's six main proposals for better programming through the triple nexus, the literature reflecting on these challenges is also extensive and substantial.

The INCAF review of progress for the DAC Recommendation concluded that providers have undertaken numerous pilot projects that implement programs related to the HDP nexus, but with different understandings of what the concept means. The majority of literature interrogates these different approaches and perspectives, intending to inform learning and extend stakeholder buy-in on the HDP nexus approach.

[53] This analysis points to an example in Tigray where "there existed a platform where GAC-nexus implementation partners convened to share experiences and updates. However, these meetings were planned on an ad hoc basis and had minimum impact on project operations. While the platform existed, its effectiveness was compromised due to the priority given to execution over discussion. … [It] underscores the need to strengthen such platforms to foster constructive discussions and improvements and have measurable impact on operations and learning." (Changamire et al, 2024, 10)

This literature review focuses on several key issues from these analyses:

1. Clarifying the role of peace objectives within a triple nexus approach;
2. Clarifying the challenges in support of development in conflict-affected and fragile environments;
3. Focusing on resilience within the context of the triple nexus;
4. Promoting gender equality and feminist approaches in the triple nexus; and
5. A priority for locally-led programming in the triple nexus.

4.2.1 Clarifying the role of peace objectives

As already noted, the peace objective within the triple nexus approach remains problematic both conceptually and in practice and is contested by humanitarian actors and also among peace actors. According to the INCAF assessment of progress,

> "The integration of the peace pillar is still at a very early stage, partly because support to the peace objectives include a broad range of significantly different activities and mandates than that of the traditional humanitarian and development actors, and due to sometimes diverging understandings of what contributes to peace, including on security operations." (OECD DAC, 2024, 35)

The INCAF survey of DAC providers and multilateral organizations identified several perceived obstacles to strengthening the focus on conflict prevention and peacebuilding in the triple nexus:

- Rigid and unclear funding mechanisms;
- Insufficient staffing, expertise and resources;
- Limited field presence and fragility-focused analysis;
- Inter-agency dynamics (competing HDP priorities); and
- Weak HDP nexus coherence and coordination.

DAC providers emphasized rigid funding mechanisms in particular, while multilateral respondents highlighted insufficient staffing expertise and resources, inter-agency dynamics, and weak HDP nexus cohesion. (OECD DAC, 2024, 35)

Yet the peace dimension is a key element, reducing humanitarian need and necessary to promoting development sustainability in fragile contexts. (Norwegian Refugee Council, 2023) But what actions are consistent with the triple nexus? Some have found it helpful to approach peace support as a continuum ranging from conflict sensitivity, improving local capacities for peace and social cohesion, political diplomacy, to peacekeeping missions. (Oxfam, 2019, German Federal Ministry, 2021) While many International CSOs stress an orientation towards conflict sensitivity and social cohesion, others in the humanitarian sector still worry that tackling peace processes in a triple nexus approach might jeopardize their impartiality and access to vulnerable people, while putting others, including staff, at risk.[54] (Oxfam,

[54] The survey by Sudhoff and colleagues found that 46% were worried that humanitarian principles were potentially at risk, but only 11% saw the triple nexus as a "threat." More than 50% saw the triple nexus as a chance and a vision and would encourage their organization to expand efforts in the peace area. (Sudhoff, et al., 2020, 23)

2019; Save the Children, 2021; Moriniere, et al, 2023; Sudhoff et al, 2020) On the other hand, many peacebuilders also can misunderstand the many challenges of delivering humanitarian assistance.

Bridges must be built involving all actors, while not compromising international humanitarian law. The Norwegian Refugee Council notes that understanding obstacles for peace can help identify humanitarian needs and priorities for development actors. Complementary synergies are essential. (Norwegian Refugee Council, 2023)

Reflecting the possibility of various peace actions, VOICE and Oxfam promote a bottom-up community-based approach that implements a "positive peace," focusing on local root causes and systems. (Oxfam, 2019; VOICE, 2019; Germany Federal Ministry, 2021; DAC CSO Reference Group, 2024) A clear definition along these lines has contributed to buy-in from humanitarian actors, particularly among CSOs. (Norwegian Refugee Council, 2023; ECDPM, 2021) Distinguishing between "Peace" involving diplomacy and political dialogue with parties to the conflict, and "soft peace" involving strengthening local resilience and capacities for peace at the community level, can mark a way forward.[55] (Norwegian Refugee Council, 2023)

The DAC CSO Reference Group's *Spotlight Report on the Nexus in Practice*, reflecting many southern civil society voices, goes a bit further. It calls for consideration of political dialogue, which should encompass a broader societal dialogue to "restore a functioning social contract, allowing for civic space and healthy state-society relations for discussing and addressing manifestations of fragility, conflict and violence." (DAC CSO Reference Group, 2024, 14) There is not much guidance, however, on how such an inclusive social dialogue should be advanced in polarized political contexts in fragile and conflict-affected settings.

In a study of the nexus in the Chad Region, Atakpu has drawn attention to the importance of non-traditional approaches to peace, in particular promoting the participation of women in peace negotiations and rebuilding processes that capitalize on their nonalignment in conflict situations. (Atakpu, 2021 and see also Equity Fund, 2024)

Financial support for peace action is also an issue. (Jancke, 2023) The OECD DAC has noted that DAC providers' peace support through ODA has been decreasing in recent years, reaching a fifteen year low in 2021, at a time with a record number of violent conflicts. They observed that

> "The reliance on a small number of donors to fund the bulk of peacebuilding activities makes global peacebuilding vulnerable to political volatility and attendant shifts in policy priorities and budgets. Peacebuilding financing is heavily dependent on the United States, the European Union and Germany. Together, these three donors provided almost 60% of DAC members' total peace

[55] Canadian CSOs, particularly the Churches, have been involved in "track two" diplomatic efforts in Africa, particularly in the Sudan and the Horn of Africa in the 1990s. See the reference to track-two diplomacy in Betty Plewes and Brian Tomlinson, "Canadian CSOs and Africa: The end of an era," in Medhora, R., and Yiagadeesen Samy, *Canada-Africa Relations: Looking Back, Looking Ahead,* McGill-Queen's University Press, 2013. See also R. Rempel, "Conversations about Peacemaking: The Horn of Africa Project and the challenges of innovation in Mennonite Central Committee," The Canadian Journal of Peace and Conflict Studies, Volume 52, No. 1 and 2 (2020): 113-159 accessed at https://www.peaceresearch.ca/pdf/52/PRJ-52-1-2-2020-Rempel-Full.pdf.

spending in 2021." (OECD DAC, 2023, 8; See also Jancke, 2023 and Development Initiatives, 2023b)

The United Nations IASC Group 4 on Humanitarian-Development Collaboration has explored the peace dimension of the HDP nexus. They suggest 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."" (Quoted in Brown and Mena, 2021, 14)

Islamic Relief concludes that "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." They suggest that ignoring peace is not an option. (Brown and Mena, 2021, 14 and 17) ALNAP observes that CSOs without peacebuilding experience can partner with peace-focused CSOs which can complement knowledge and skills in triple nexus programming. (ALNAP, 2023)

The INCAF review of progress observes that the integration of the peace dimension by DAC providers and multilateral organizations is at a very early stage in the implementation of the DAC Recommendation due differing understandings on many of the above issues. But the literature and CSO case studies demonstrate that people-centred, context- and conflict-sensitive efforts in 'soft peace' processes contributes to more effective outcomes. (CARE, 2018; Canadian Foodgrains Bank, 2024; ACTEDa, no date; Alliance2015, 2024)

4.2.2 Supporting development in conflict-affected and fragile environments

The INCAF review of progress takes note not just of the difficulties in integrating the peace dimension, both also clear challenges in supporting development in fragile and conflict-affected contexts:

> "In many such contexts, economic or political sanction regimes apply, and no common vision of development outcomes can meaningfully be discussed between DAC members and relevant governments. Humanitarian assistance is often simply the most actionable way to stay engaged in such contexts." (OECD DAC, 2024, 6)

Cochrane and Wilson point out that organizations in practice face difficult decisions about when to transition from humanitarian to development programming and the conflict-sensitive implications for this transition. (Cochrane et al, 2023) The Norwegian Refugee Council suggests that on the ground there can be a "grey zone" between humanitarian and development interventions in protracted crisis contexts. Humanitarian organizations in such contexts may be effective in immediate relief and the aftermath of conflicts, but are often not appropriate for sustained interventions in protracted crises.

Dual-mandated humanitarian organizations, however, have increasingly expanded operations in this "grey zone" towards activities often combining humanitarian responses with longer-term actions for durable solutions. (Norwegian Refugee Council, 2023) Others point to the importance of understanding the non-linearity of changing peoples' needs and development opportunities in contexts of shifting dynamics of conflict in the crisis. (Canadian Foodgrains Bank, 2024; CARE, 2018) According to CARE Canada, nexus programming "is about focusing on context and being able to use the right tool in the right place at the right time, based on existing and shifting needs and available resources." (CARE Canada, 2019)

Financing is also an obstacle. Humanitarian and development providers usually work in rigid silos implementing different organizational requirements. (OECD DAC, 2024) Challenging these silos, the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) has innovated a "chapeau approach" allowing joint financing of humanitarian and development project components with a shared objective. Under the chapeau approach BMZ has created opportunities for German CSOs to implement several projects with a common objective or common outcome. (German Federal Ministry, 2021, 14, 19)

In 2022, the Swiss government implemented a reorganization merging the departments for humanitarian assistance and development aid within the Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). Swiss aid for protracted crisis countries will be managed under one country desk at HQ and the allocation of funds in country offices on the ground. (Bondolfi, 2022; Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, 2022a and 2022b)

An overview of the triple nexus by CARE Canada raises a contrary example. They highlight an evaluation of a Global Affairs Canada (GAC) humanitarian programs, which pointed out that multi-year humanitarian funded projects were often designed to tackle humanitarian needs with activities that sometimes address root causes, while GAC development projects rarely included the potential to respond to crisis and meet immediate needs. (Moriniere et.al, 2023, 57) Much more thinking is needed to bridge these silos if the HDP nexus is to realize its potential

In August 2024 Global Affairs also reorganized moving its humanitarian bureau and peace operations bureau into a common Branch, the International Assistance Partnerships and Programming Branch, which also includes development cooperation. The expectation is this reorganization will improve the prospects for GAC support for triple nexus programming, which is implemented through multilateral and CSO intermediaries.[56]

[56] For an overview of GAC's approach to the triple nexus, see "Global Affairs Canada and the Implementation of the Triple Nexus" in this Report for the Nexus Working Group.

4.2.3 Focusing on resilience within the context of the triple nexus

The DAC Recommendation calls on providers "to take account the positive factors encouraging resilience in conflict-affected and fragile contexts." (OECD DAC, 2019) The OECD DAC has defined resilience as "the ability of households, communities and nations to absorb and recover from shocks, while positively adapting and transforming their structures and means for living in the face of long-term stresses, change and uncertainty. Resilience is about addressing the root causes of crises while strengthening the capacities and resources of a system in order to cope with risks, stresses and shocks."[57] Some providers, such as Sweden have aligned themselves with this definition, which has resulted in the development of analytical and programmatic tools to implement resilience in humanitarian and development actions. (Development Initiatives, 2019)

Resilience is a common theme in across nexus approaches, but no consensus exists on how the nexus and resilience overlap. In a review of evaluations, Moriniere and Morrison-Metois have identified four different ways actors have conceptualized the relationship between resilience and the HDP nexus:

a) "Where resilience objectives are seen as critical to achieving nexus outcomes/objectives;
b) "Where nexus objectives and activities are seen as critical to achieving resilience outcomes/objectives;
c) "Where they are treated as inter-changeable concepts;
d) "Where nexus and resilience are seen as distinct concepts or areas of practice that are still poorly defined in relation to one another." (Moriniere, et. al, 2023, 21)

From the case of Sweden, Development Initiatives argued that providers need to more clearly distinguish between resilience and the triple nexus, while bringing lessons from experience with the former to the latter. Resilience can be a useful frame for the HDP nexus, but the nexus approach includes a potentially broader set of actions, ranging from humanitarian support to peacebuilding, responding to the complexities of protracted crises, with each pillar having different points of departure. (Development Initiatives, 2019, 12, 16-17)

More often the two notions are conflated. The Netherlands CSO, Cordaid, suggests that resilience refers to the capacity to deal with hazard events and minimize disaster impacts and, along with several other CSOs such as Islamic Relief, Cordaid, ActionAid, and Mercy Corp, uses it as a lens for triple nexus approaches. (Cordaid, nd; Brown and Mena, 2021)

Positively, the resilience approach in fragile and protracted crises requires a clear analysis of the drivers of change towards promoting human development, social cohesion and local resilience to shocks. In this regard, is shares much with the triple nexus foundation in adaptive conflict-sensitive analysis and may resonate with CSOs leading local processes. (see Atakpu, 2021) On the other hand, a resilience frame may shift excessive responsibilities for recovery onto communities, ignoring wider power and conflict dynamics. (Brown and Mena, 2021) Reflections on resilience suggests that each organization should

[57] See OECD DAC, Risk and Resilience, http://www.oecd.org/dac/conflict-fragility-resilience/risk-resilience/.

elaborate their understanding of resilience in the context of policies guiding the implementation of their triple nexus approach.[58]

4.2.4 Promoting gender equality and feminist approaches in the triple nexus

The DAC Recommendation calls for "putting people at the centre, tackling exclusion and promoting gender equality" in nexus programming. (OECD DAC, 2019) The INCAF review of progress points to several providers where the nexus approach is embedded in their women, peace and security actions, which are "contributing to increasing the understanding of conflict contexts as well as the role that women, peace and security play in conflict prevention and resolution." (OECD DAC, 2024, 44) Among multilateral actors, there is also some alignment with the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund and the Compact on Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action.[59]

A wide consensus exists for the inclusion of gender equality, women's voices and participation across the HDP nexus as essential to addressing the mix of humanitarian, development and peace dimensions in fragile and conflict-affected contexts. However, the INCAF review of progress also sets out some elements that prevent programming being more gender-sensitive, according to the survey DAC providers and multilateral respondents. These include:

- Lack of institutional guidance (high for multilaterals);
- Lack of capacity building expertise (high for multilaterals);
- Lack of female representation from diverse backgrounds in nexus approaches (high for multilaterals);
- Poor coordination across stakeholders (high in multilaterals);
- Lack of gender sensitive analysis (identified only by DAC donors); and
- Need for resources and flexible funding (identified only by multilaterals).

Some DAC providers also identified political instability in partner countries and political sensitivity of gender issues as barriers. (OECD DAC, 2024, 44-45)

In May 2024, ODI published an important paper on "Where next for feminist foreign policy on humanitarian response?". (Daigle, 2024) This analysis points to a focus on gender responsiveness and gender transformative actions by provider countries with feminist international policies such as Canada

[58] Save the Children's position statement on the triple nexus seems to include resilience in their nexus approach without defining any differences. Save commits to "building on a shared understanding of the root causes of crises, agree shared targets and goals, and prioritise actions that reduce needs, vulnerability and risks through resilience, prevention, anticipatory action, preparedness, and early action." (Save the Children, 2021, 2) Resilience is also central to the Canadian Foodgrains Bank's Nexus Framework: "Building resilience may require strategies to mitigate risk, prevent crises, or contribute to early recovery that may differ from strategies in traditional development context." (Canadian Foodgrains Bank, nd, 7)

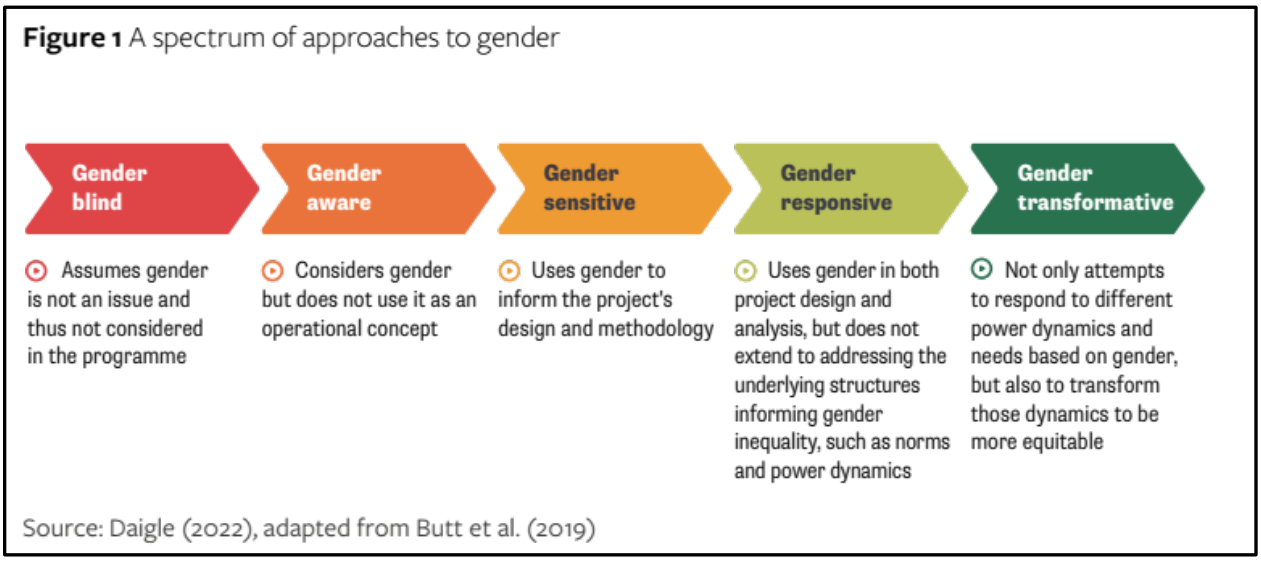
[59] See https://wphfund.org/ and https://wpshacompact.org/.

and Sweden (up to 2023). But Daigle observes that there is little from these providers on the relationship of these policies to humanitarianism.[60] She goes on to suggest the need for humanitarian reform in which

> "Gender-responsive humanitarian action is … needed to move away from shorter-term relief of the symptoms of crises and towards investment for community resilience against future crises, involving people of all genders in response planning, and better accounting for and even addressing root causes." (Daigle, 2024, 3)

Daigle highlights the convergence of this call for a more comprehensive feminist approach to humanitarian action with the nexus focus on root causes of crises, inequalities and fragility.[61] But she also calls attention to the push back from humanitarian actors that suggest that feminist approaches are inherently political and therefore in tension with humanitarian principles. (See **Chart Two** for a representation of the spectrum of gender approaches.) She cites research that demonstrates conclusively that gender inclusion and diversity are crucial for delivering a meaningful impartial approach. (Daigle, 2024, 8; for an example, see Agirregomezkorta, 2020)

Chart Two



Source: Daigle, 2024

In Canada, the Equality Fund recently reviewed feminist responses to crises based on the experience of feminist movements and actors and their mobilization for change. (Equality Fund, 2024) The authors observe that

> "Crises do not materialize in isolation but are intricately woven into the fabric of structural vulnerabilities. … Crises exacerbate existing inequalities. … Crises are lived experiences. … The

[60] For an overview of GAC's Feminist International Assistance Policy and the triple nexus, see "Global Affairs Canada and the Implementation of the Triple Nexus" in this Report for the Nexus Working Group.

[61] See also Gender Action for Peace and Security (GAPS), "The humanitarian-peace-development nexus," Beyond Feminist Foreign Policy Series Briefing 4. 2023, accessed at https://gaps-uk.org/beyond-feminist-foreign-policy-briefing-series/. GAPS is a UK based civil society network.

> research advocates for an expanded definition of 'crisis' that is firmly rooted in local contexts and considers the local axes of oppression, exploitation, and marginalization." (Equality Fund, 2024, 8, 10, 11)

Their Report focuses on elaborating nuanced feminist approaches to crises, often from the perspective of southern feminists,[62] and seeks to go beyond narrow humanitarian responses. But it inexplicably makes no reference to the HDP nexus approach. The authors make a strong case for channeling resources to feminist grassroots movements and first responders in crisis context in collaborative approaches. Such funds offer "crucial support to sustain livelihoods and protect human rights defenders, often neglected in crisis discourse and under-resourced."[63] (Equality Fund, 2024, 35-36)

Daigle makes a similar plea for reform, noting that "the international humanitarian system is notably behind sectors like development, peacebuilding and human rights when it comes to understanding, embracing and implementing a gender lens, much less a feminist foreign policy or feminist approaches that call for much wider and deeper change." (Daigle, 2024, 10) She notes the debate, however, even among feminists, about the degree to which humanitarian action can be gender transformative (addressing root causes and structural dimension of gender inequalities). Making numerous recommendations for governments and other humanitarian actors, consistent with the triple nexus, she suggests that feminist foreign policies offer an entry point for an inclusive gender-sensitive response requiring all actors to break out of their silos, including those involved with the Women's Peace and Security Agenda.

These conclusions are shared by CARE in its learning review that the nexus approach benefits from a feminist approach, which allows local communities to define needs in a holistic way, not confined to development and humanitarian silos. However, achieving results can be undermined by the absence of a gender analysis and limited timeframes. (CARE, 2019)

4.2.5 A priority for locally led programming in the triple nexus

The DAC Recommendation recognizes "the role of affected societies and local communities in achieving collective outcomes" and calls for programming that "strengthens national and local capacities." It commits providers to

> "Supporting local and national authorities, including legitimate non-state authorities, wherever possible and appropriate and in accordance with international law, so as to provide leadership of coherent humanitarian, development and peace actions, while ensuring that humanitarian principles are respected and upheld and development cooperation objectives are maintained.
>
> and

[62] See also the CSO Feminist Humanitarian Network at https://www.feministhumanitariannetwork.org/.

[63] The Equality Fund recently launched a new funding window, "Prepare," to support grassroots feminist movements in crisis preparation and response. It will focus on visionary capacity, warning systems, enhancing advocacy and strategy, and narrative change (shifting public attitudes towards feminist responses). See https://equalityfund.ca/grantmaking/equality-fund-launches-prepare-funding-call/.

"Investing in partners' capacity to stay and deliver, to better analyse the context and manage risks, including where appropriate:

i. "Prioritising funding to local organisations that are already present when crises occur; which are usually first responders and have specialised knowledge and skills; and

ii." Incentivising international actors, particularly those with capabilities across humanitarian, development and peace actions, to also invest in local capacities and ensure that, wherever possible, local actors are an integral part of their response with the ultimate goal to gradually end dependence on humanitarian assistance by fostering self-reliance and resilience;"[64] (OECD DAC, 2019, 8 and 11)

According to the INCAF review of progress, only 50% of DAC providers and multilateral respondents reported that they have increased their support to national and local capacities, with about a third reporting "not noticeably". Others suggest this support has increased to some extent. Among the most important factors preventing increasing local capacities are:

- Local resistance and political instability (DAC providers and multilaterals);
- Bureaucratic constraints and bottlenecks (DAC providers only);
- Capacity building constraints for local actors (DAC providers and multilaterals);
- Need for meaningful partnerships (long term funding) (particularly multilaterals); and
- Lack of risk appetite-monitoring challenges (significant for multilaterals but surprisingly small for DAC providers). (OECD DAC, 2024, 56)

The Grand Bargain,[65] launched during the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016, is a unique agreement between official providers and humanitarian organisations to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of humanitarian assistance. Part of this commitment was a pledge in 2016 to provide 25% of humanitarian funding to local/national actors "as directly as possible," originally by 2020.[66] While several providers and

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[64] See also the more recent *DAC Recommendation on Enabling Civil Society in Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Assistance,* 2021, at file:///Users/Brian/Downloads/OECD-LEGAL-5021-en-10.pdf.
This Recommendation committed all DAC Members to
"Promote and invest in the leadership of local civil society actors in partner countries or territories by, where appropriate and feasible:
a. "increasing the availability and accessibility of direct, flexible, and predictable support including core and/or programme-based support, to enhance their financial independence, sustainability, and local ownership;
b. "supporting civil society strategic alliances, networks, platforms and resource centres at regional, national, and sub-national levels …
c. "ensuring local civil society actors are involved in decision-making based on equal power relations with supported civil society strategic alliances, networks, platforms and resource centres, in the design, budgets, and implementation of their programming." (Pillar Two, §4)

[65] See https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/grand-bargain.

[66] The definition of a local organization is contested. For the purposes of the Grand Bargain, "a local actor is not considered to be affiliated [to an international NGO] merely because it is part of a network, confederation, or alliance wherein it maintains independent fundraising and governance systems" (CARITAS Europa and CHA, 2023, 22. For southern CSOs, a more common definition is one used by Chilande Kuloba-Warria and Brian Tomlinson in a study of locally led development: "A national or local CSO is a CSO exclusively headquartered, governed and

organizations claim to have met the target (Canada was not among them), data from OCHA's Financial Tracking System suggests that direct humanitarian funding to local and national actors as a share of humanitarian assistance has actually declined in recent years, from 3.4% in 2020, to 2.3% in 2021 and 1.8% in 2022. (Metcalfe-Hough et al, 2023, 68) (See **Literature Review, C.3.** for charts representing these trends.) In this context, Daigle argues for much stronger accountability for DAC providers, INGOs and UN agencies on how they allocate their funding, including how much goes directly to local organizations. (Daigle, 2024)

Most commentators are clear that strategic partnerships with local actors in humanitarian, development and peacebuilding, coordinating complementary skills, are essential to the success of a bottom-up inclusive approach to the HDP nexus. (German Federal Ministry, 2021; Moriniere, et al, 2023; Norwegian Refugee Council, 2023; Development Initiatives, 2023a; ECDPM, 2021; ALNAP, 2023; ACTED, 2024) Strategic partnerships must be long-term, while focusing on both short-term needs and longer-term change. (Brown and Mena, 2021)

Among the key elements of strategic importance, partnerships are essential for:

- Conflict/context analysis, preventing unintended consequences in exacerbating tensions between communities; (ECDPM, 2021)
- Strengthening the voice and participation of local actors in nexus planning and monitoring of collective outcomes, including accessing non-traditional forms and sources of expertise at community level; (Moriniere, et al, 2021; Daigle, 2024)
- Putting agency and self-reliance of local communities at the center of responses and decision making, where locally-led humanitarian responses are primary; (Albashir Ibrahim, Nexus Consortium, Somalia, quoted in Development Initiatives, 2023a)
- Building local capacities as a core element of community resilience and accountability, particularly where government structures are weak or unresponsive to local populations. (CARE Canada, 2019; Development Initiatives, 2021) But an important question is who is/should be defining capacities needs and priorities.

Faith based organizations, such as Islamic Relief, have strong capacities to reach and build trust among faith communities to further grassroots social cohesion, conflict prevention and reconciliation, based on cultural affinities. (Brown and Mena, 2021) BMZ points to faith-based organizations in South Sudan, where they help tackle "operational fragmentation between the three pillars of the HDP nexus." (German Federal Ministry, 2021, 11).

The INCAF assessment also acknowledges the importance of intermediaries in a context where local actors are constrained by shrinking civic space, destroyed infrastructure, or needing protection. Daigle proposes shifting funding to feminist intermediary structures such as the Global Fund for Women or the Equality

carrying out activities in a country in the global south," distinguishable from an International Civil Society Organizations, which "is a CSO that headquartered /governed in whole or in part in the global north with activities supported and/or carried out in the global south." (Kuloba-Warria, 2023, 47)

Fund, which are pioneering flexible feminist funding mechanisms for local actors. (OECD DAC, 2024, 54 and Daigle, 2024, 14) Women's organizations are often the first responders in their own communities.

Many CSOs in the global south perceive "localization" as largely theoretical and not enabling change.[67] Several commentators warn that governments and INGOs must address current exclusionary and gatekeeping effects of their processes and practices on local actors (e.g. by reducing barriers for bids, improving risk tolerance, streamlining terms for proposals and innovative reporting). There remain strong views in the global south that current partnerships with local organizations are based on project deliverables, largely determined by the financing organization. (Brown and Mena, 2021) Islamic Relief points out that

> "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." (Brown and Mena, 2021, 23)

Changing partnerships requires a shift not only in their operational dimensions, but also a shift in power dynamics "to create more space for grassroots and local actors and implementing teams to make decisions based on the situation without having to go through bureaucratic and centralized pre-authorization processes." (Changamire et al, 2024, 9) Locally led nexus approaches recognizes the unique capacities of local organizations by focusing on behavioural and structural changes that emphasize equal and equitable partnerships. (Kuloba-Warria, 2023)

The CSO Spotlight Report notes that providers (both official and ICSOs) tend to transfer responsibilities and risks to local actors to implement complex nexus programming, but without reforming their own funding mechanisms and requirements to ensure implementation is feasible. (DAC CSO Reference Group, 2024, 10) In shaping their overall triple nexus approaches, providers need to work in ways that reduce risks that local actors may face in difficult environments, including often threats against human rights defenders or advocates for women and girls.

NEAR is a movement of local and national civil society organisations from the global south with the ambition to reshape the top-down humanitarian and development aid system to one that is locally driven and owned.[68] Within this paradigm NEAR addresses the importance of changing roles for northern intermediary organizations:

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[67] For an overview of different conceptualizations of "localization" and "locally led development," including implications for CSO intermediaries, see Kuloba-Warria, 2023. See also CARITAS Europa and CHA, 2023, for a detailed assessment of select DAC providers, including Canada, UN agencies and INGOs against a localization index that attempts to assess with respect to their localization commitments, based on provider self-perception, factual information, and perceptions by local organizations. In terms of self-perception, Canada ranked 1st among 8 DAC providers, while it ranked 7th in relation perceptions by local organizations.

[68] See https://www.near.ngo/

> "Localization does not mean international actors have no role to play in preventing, preparing for and responding to crises. Increasing needs and more complex crises require all actors to work better together. We believe that international actors have a role to play in supporting communities and local actors. However, this role should be framed within a spirit of trust, equity, solidarity, and complementarity – complementing and supporting communities and local actors in what they are already doing.
>
> "We welcome international solidarity. NEAR is at the same time concerned by the instrumentalization of localization by some international actors. Some international actors use the term localization to refer to the nationalization of their country offices or the decentralization of power from their headquarters to their country offices." (NEAR Localization Policy, nd, 6)

NEAR calls for a new system of international solidarity based on these principles. Peace Direct, a UK humanitarian and peacebuilding organization, responding to the call from southern CSOs for direct funding relationships with official providers, has set out nine transformative roles for northern intermediaries in humanitarian and development cooperation, consistent with NEAR's call for solidarity relationships.[69] (Peace Direct, 2023)

A recent example of transformative roles for INGOs in protracted crises is the Local Response Pooled Fund in South Sudan. Launched by local CSO leaders in 2021, this Fund focuses on local humanitarian responses. While now exclusively locally-led by South Sudan CSOs, Save the Children facilitated its development with technical support, financial resources and links to international donors. The Fund responds to the difficult reality for smaller local organizations to access funding due to their size and capacities compared to larger INGO counterparts. The goals of the LRPF are "to build the capacity of [local organizations] to where they can access donor funding, offer a funding modality that centres on the needs of the local people, and push the Grand Bargain agenda forward in South Sudan." (Save the Children US, 2023; Relief Web, 2023, 1; Miolene, 2024)

Evaluations reviewed by Moriniere and Morrison-Metois highlight that "localization should be seen as a 'nexus glue'" creating opportunities for leadership by local civil society and community actors. But to attain a sustainable nexus approach, actors must also transform their relationships and practices, building

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[69] These roles are 1) Interpreter, making more accessible provider policies for southern CSOs; 2) Knowledge broker and producer, sensitive to current power relations in framing and carrying out research; 3) Trainer or Coach when requested and Co-Learner with southern colleagues; 4) Convenor in providing spaces for local groups to reflect, plan and learn together, either in-country or outside; 5) Connector and Eco-System Builder particularly in highly fragmented and exclusionary aid systems; 6) Advocate and Amplifier, create space for local actors to advocate directly; 7) Watchdogs, monitoring trends in the policies and practices of repressive and democratic states; 8) Critical Friend, providing advice and guidance when asked and offer themselves as a sounding board for ideas, challenges and opportunities faced by the local partner, not as sub-contractors; and 9) Sidekick or Support Team, one that supports the local organisation in whatever it needs, but doesn't overstep the support role.

See also Peace Direct, 2023. "Transforming Partnerships in International Cooperation," A practical resource for civil society, donors, INGOs and intermediaries, based on an online consultation with more than 200 participants from 70 countries, September 2023, accessed at https://www.peacedirect.org/transforming-partnerships/.

trust and changing individual and collective behaviour. Deeper engagement with local actors would "better manage conflict, build social cohesion and reduce violence." (Moriniere, et al, 10)

5. Better Finance

The DAC Recommendation calls for better financing across the nexus, "with effective layering and sequencing of the most appropriate financing flows," and using "flexible, multi-year financing wherever possible." (OECD DAC, 2019, §10 and §11) With respect to civil society organizations, the 2021 DAC Recommendation on Enabling Civil Society goes further in its commitment by DAC providers to

> "Provide financial support to diverse civil society actors as independent development and humanitarian actors in their own right as well as to civil society actors as implementing partners, particularly those representing persons in the most vulnerable or marginalised positions, by, where appropriate and feasible, increasing the availability of flexible and predictable support, core support, and/or programme- based support. (OECD DAC, 2021, Pillar Two, §4, emphasis added)

The INCAF progress report concludes that some DAC providers and multilateral organizations "are taking steps to adjust their financing practices to better support HDP nexus approaches, but in general, these remain stand-alone, unsystematized processes. The collective financing strategies envisaged by the DAC Recommendation are largely missing …" (OECD DAC, 2024, 66)

About 50% of multilateral respondents to the INCAF survey reported that they have developed financing strategies that span the HDP nexus, jointly with others at the country level, while about a third of DAC providers report similar financing strategies. For the latter, about 50% reported that they have developed HDP nexus financing strategies within their own organization. (OECD DAC, 2024, 63) The main obstacles reported were coordination challenges across stakeholders, internal co-ordination between divisions and with headquarter and country offices, and limited capacity and expertise. (OECD DAC, 2024, 64)

In relation to more flexible, multi-year funding, most respondents reported progress, mostly associated with unearmarked (or softly earmarked) contributions and multi-year funding. But interestingly, the INCAF survey also points to only about half of multilateral respondents where this is the case. (OECD DAC, 2024, 67) The report points positively to an example with Irish Aid, which has established a five-year funding stream for Irish CSOs, which "enables partners work across the nexus and to move funds across development and/or humanitarian/chronic crisis funding streams when needed." To implement this approach, they moved funds from the Humanitarian Unit budget to the Civil Society Unit budget. (OECD DAC, 2024, 68)

An important finding in the literature is the lack of tracking of nexus financing, even in partner countries participating in agreed collective outcomes. (Development Initiatives, 2023b) As noted above, DAC member peace finance has been declining in recent years, reaching a 15 year low in 2021. (OECD DAC, 2023) Moriniere and Morrison-Metois found that for Syria, despite a UNDP collaboration plan, funding mechanisms were still fragmented, with a very large imbalance between volumes of humanitarian aid

compared to development finance. (Moriniere et al, 2023) This finding is confirmed by Development Initiatives, which demonstrated an overall decline in funding for countries facing long-term crises (2020 to 2021), while the volume of humanitarian assistance received by these countries increased. Development assistance to these countries decreased. (Development Initiatives, 2023a, 89) Close to half of multilateral assistance to 21 countries with a Humanitarian Response Program in 2021 was in the form of loans, raising serious questions about the nexus and debt sustainability. (Development Initiatives, 2023b)

A review of the literature suggests that finance remains a major barrier that undermines progress in the nexus approach. (CARE Canada, 2019)

- The CSO study of the nexus in the Lake Chad region found that funding was short term, fragmented, unpredictable and earmarked, limiting its capacities to achieve strategic objectives for peace. (Atakpu, 2020)
- Most nexus financing is still very much insufficient and comes from humanitarian sources. Financing modalities by both official and ICSOs were insufficient to address holistic nexus approaches, resulting in silo-determined different levels of humanitarian or development funding, with peace funding lagging behind. (Moriniere et al, 2023) An evaluation of Global Affairs Canada's humanitarian assistance found that humanitarian cross-over finance for development goals was discouraged. (Global Affairs Canada, 2019)
- For UN agencies financing agreements with providers are often annual, while planning requirements multi-year. Furthermore, it was noted that UN agencies with multi-year financing often failed to pass this advantage to CSO partners. (Moriniere et al, 2023; DAC CSO Reference Group, 2024)
- The rigidity of funding allocations, between the nexus pillars is a key issue, linked to silo financing, with World Vision reporting that sector-based programming artificially segregating sectors in a context that is characterized by changing needs and priorities. (Changamire, et al, 2024; ALNAP, 2023) The Canadian Foodgrains Bank also found that funding structure for their food security program in Sub-Saharan Africa (half for humanitarian and half for development activities) limited the flexibility for partners implementing the program. (Canadian Foodgrains Bank, 2024)
- CARE Canada points to rigid provider priorities, risk adverse compliance requirements, lack of appreciation of costs working in complex fragile contexts, and project-based funding undermine a holistic nexus approach in practice. (CARE Canada, 2019)
- Both local and intermediary CSOs face lack of coordination between different funding providers with different modalities and timescales, substantial earmarking, and different requirements for proposals and reporting. (CARE Canada, 2019)

A range of suggestions have been made for financing to incentivize the nexus approach:

- Direct, unearmarked, flexible, multiyear quality financing, with conflict modifiers in development projects, are key conditions to allow adaptive management of programming that is responsive to

the changing dynamics of country contexts for protracted crises and fragility. (Save the Children, 2021; Moriniere et al, 2023; Brown and Mena, 2021)

- Utilizing pooled funding and multi-provider consortium can result in flexible modalities that encourage collaboration, but with strong nexus capacities and expertise. These should also consider intermediate funding mechanisms for local civil society, which include ample provisions for core support. (Moriniere et al, 2023; Norwegian Refugee Council, 2023; Development Initiatives, 2021; Save the Children US, 2023) OCHA's Country Based Pooled Funds is one example. (United Nations, 2023) The ECDPM study suggests extending the role of the European Union's Team Europe approach in the operationalization of the nexus. (ECDPM, 2021)
- Achieving sustainable nexus results requires long term financing commitments to enable collaborative planning. Providers should consider the "chapeau" approach pioneered by BMZ (allowing joint financing of humanitarian and development components). (German Federal Ministry, 2021) or the Irish pilot finance for nexus programming with Irish CSOs noted above.
- Nexus funding must ensure a larger proportion in support of women's, girls' and gender diverse people's rights, with long-term flexible funding for grassroots and local women's rights organizations, In-country consultations should determine which mechanisms might work best. (Daigle, 2024) It is critical for funding for local civil society to include commiserate levels for local CSO core costs and financing required for systematic coordination. (Atakpu, 2020; Moriniere, et al, 2023))
- Sustained reliable funding for women, youth and Indigenous Peoples' organizations, which avoids competitive models that affect local CSO relationships, is essential for collaboration in locally led nexus approaches. (DAC CSO Reference Group, 2024)

The INCAF report concluded that DAC providers

> "Can certainly do more to improve the design of their financing instruments. This includes adjusting existing financial instruments to better respond to the needs and priorities across the HDP nexus – i.e. enhancing flexibility within existing regulations, increasing fungibility between different financing streams and increasing the potential for mixing funding streams. It also includes exploring the opportunities that can come with multi-purpose country-based pooled funds or multi-partner trust funds; area-based approaches; regional funding mechanisms; contingent financing; …" (OECD DAC, 2024, 68)

6. A synthesis of recommendations

Several recommendations are made in the literature that address the challenges in coordination, programming and financing, some of which have already been identified in the section above. The Norwegian Council of Refugees has made some specific recommendations for UN bodies. (Norwegian Council of Refugees, 2023, 11-14)

Daigle's review of feminist policies on humanitarian response sets out a range of important ways forward in embedding feminist principles and orientations in triple nexus approaches. (Daigle, 2024) A feminist approach is one that attends to the rights and protection of women, girls and the gender diverse through

gender-sensitive, gender-responsive and gender-transformative (where possible) actions. It supports women-led nexus responses, especially those led by local and grassroots organizations in the identification of priorities, the design and delivery of interventions. (Daigle, 2024, 10)

Among the recommendations in the literature, there are several of particular relevance for civil society organizations in implementing the triple nexus.

a) **All stakeholders at country level, including CSOs, should agree on common goals with nexus financing and implementation strategies** for humanitarian and development priorities, and thereby set a context-specific funding targets between humanitarian, development and peace activities. This architecture should include strengthening local CSO fora to enable strategic CSO engagement with other nexus actors as well as empower local CSO intermediaries with leading roles in these contexts. Providers should create modalities that shift funding and decision-making power to place-based CSOs. (Development Initiatives, 2023; Norwegian Council of Refugees, 2023; Daigle, 2024; ACTED, 2023)

b) **Actors should agree on a common approach to the peace pillar, with commiserate resources, in each specific country context**, to ensure an effective balance in triple nexus support and humanitarian commitments to neutrality and impartiality. (Norwegian Refugee Council, 2023)

c) **All providers should increase their risk tolerance for development and peace support** in fragile contexts, targeting the same geographic areas and population groups as humanitarian interventions. (Norwegian Refugee Council, 2023)

d) **Providers should create a nexus architecture within organizations and at country level, with sufficient resources, to ensure leadership and efficient coordination** and enable all actors from all pillars of the HDP nexus to cooperate from an institutional footing. Meaningful external consultations and coordination require active engagement of civil society actors, local, national and international CSOs, including those representing women, girls and other vulnerable populations. (German Federal Ministry, 2021; OECD DAC, 2024; Norwegian Council of Refugees, 2023; Daigle, 2024)

e) **Joint contextual and conflict-sensitive analysis should take account of all actors, including civil society**, reflecting on issues of governance, power structure, power dynamics, and the risks, needs and resilience of affected groups and populations. (German Federal Ministry, 2021; Save the Children, 2021)

f) **Providers, including ICSOs, should assess their comparative advantages relevant to particular country contexts** and rely on each other and local actors to complement an appropriate triple nexus approach. Nexus actors should strengthen complementary capacities through peer learning and knowledge sharing initiatives. (Norwegian Refugee Council, 2023; DAC CSO Reference Group, 2024)

g) **Nexus actors should ensure robust mechanisms for accountability,** including for UN leadership, other providers and ICSOs at the country level, with accessible fora for accountability and redress. These mechanisms should include accountability to women, girls and gender-diverse people living in humanitarian and conflict-affected contexts. (Daigle, 2024; Norwegian Refugee Council, 2023)

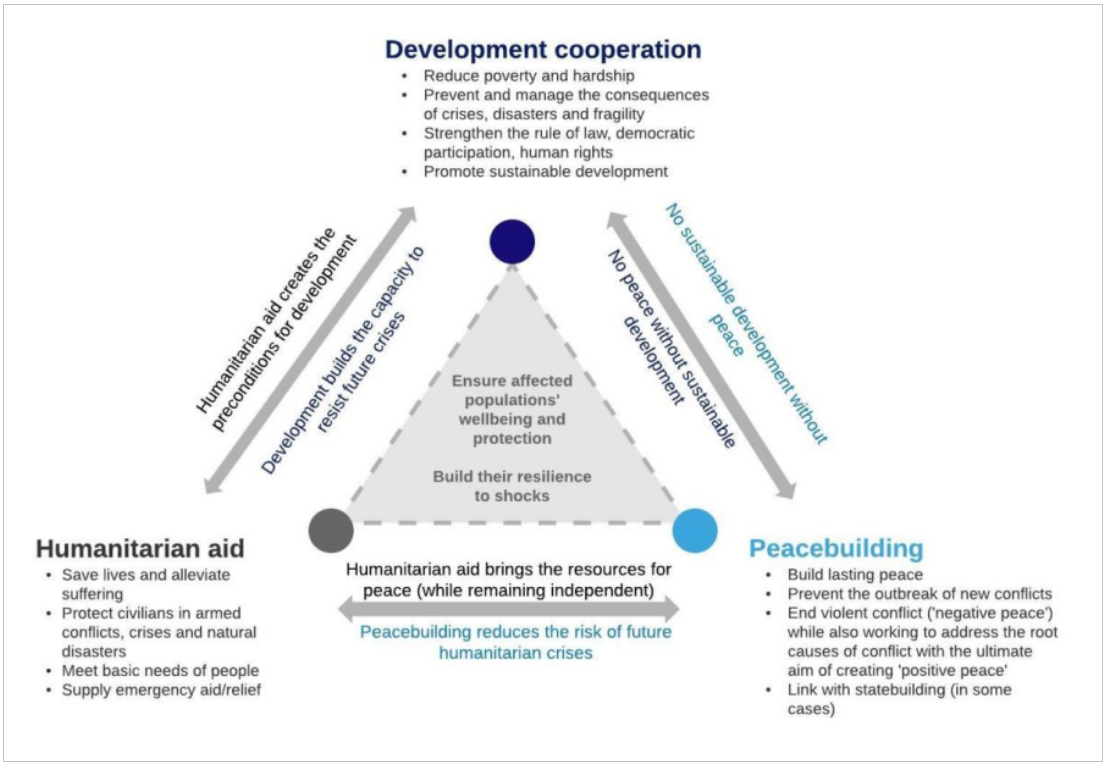
h) **Providers should require detailed accessible reporting of their allocation of funds,** including funds directed to local CSOs, funds for gender responsiveness and change, how much is allocated through

flexible funding modalities, with finance that is long-term, predictable, adaptive, and set according to local organizations' self-determined priorities. (Daigle, 2024; Norwegian Refugee Council, 2023)

i) **All providers should invest in making triple nexus work safe for all actors,** including elevated risks for women and girls, vulnerable populations, human rights and environmental defenders, advocating for open political and civic space, and eradicating all forms of sexual exploitation and abuse inside and outside organizations. (Daigle, 2024)

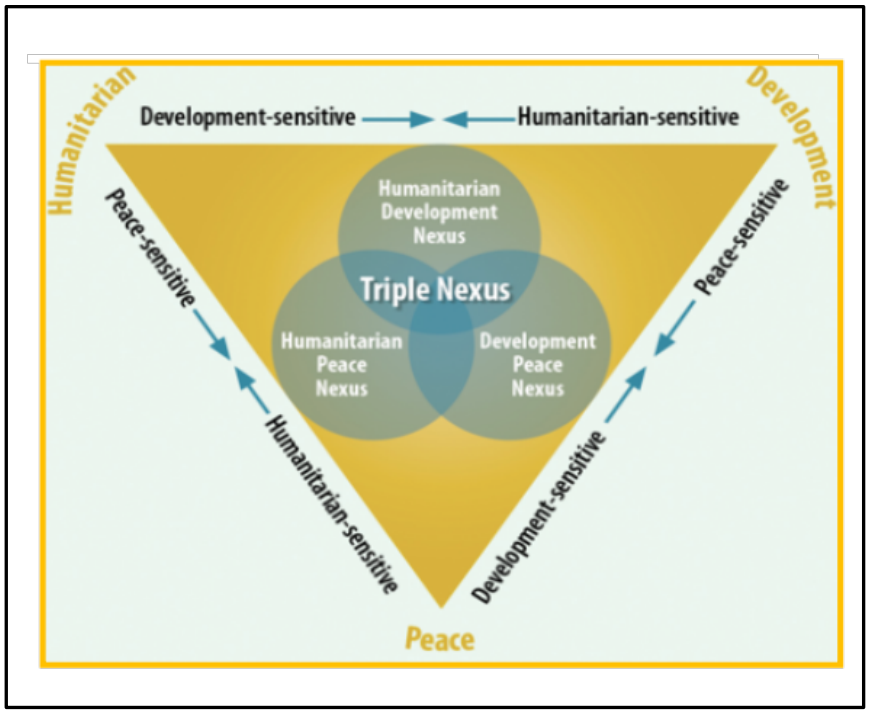
Literature Review Annex C.1
Graphic Representations of the Triple Nexus

Figure 1: Linkages between development cooperation, humanitarian aid and peacebuilding



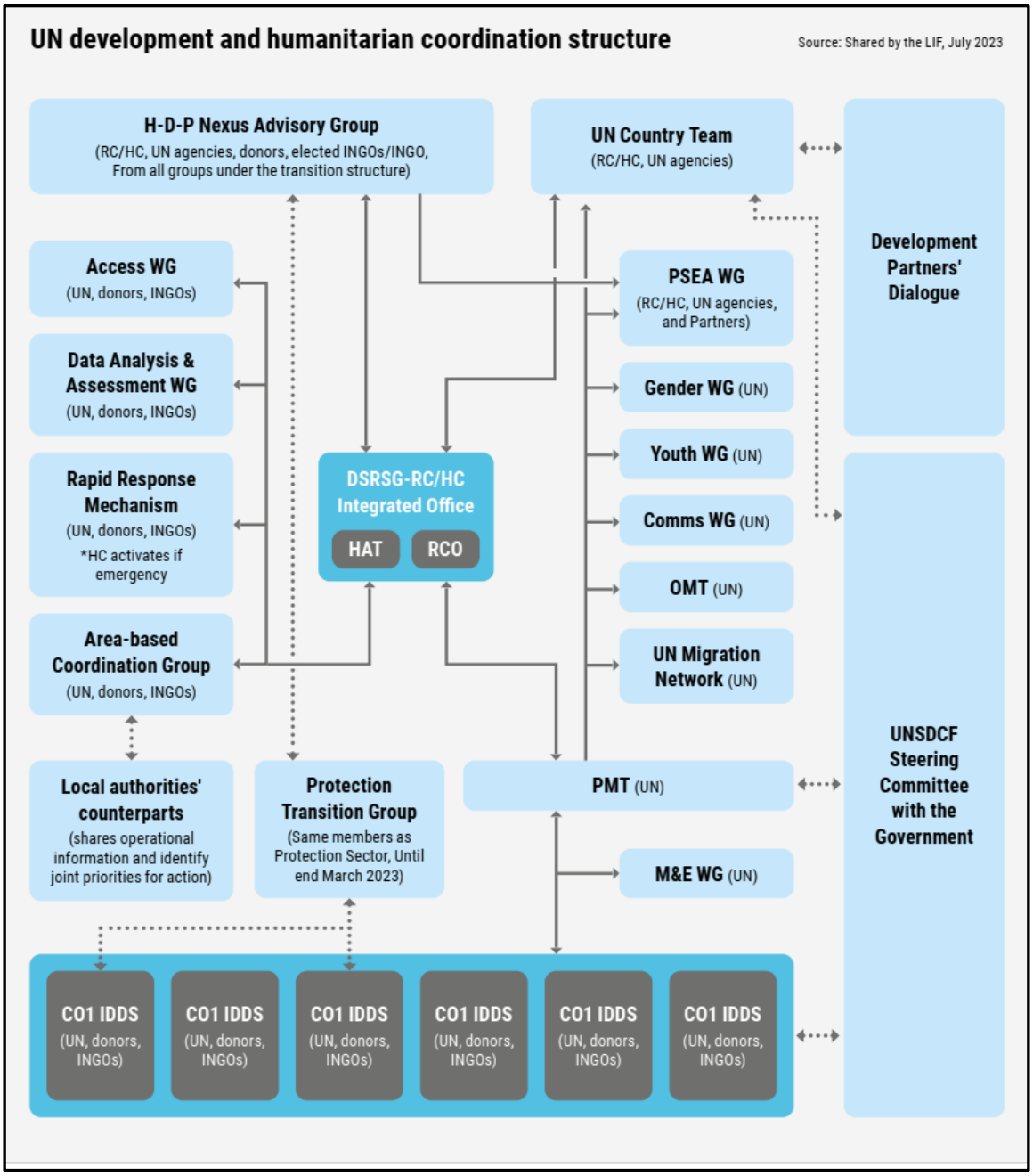
Source: Adapted from Medinilla et al. 2019.

Source: ECDM, 2021



Source: Brown and Mena, 2021.

Literature Review Annex C.2
Graphic Representation of the UN Development and Humanitarian Coordination Structure at Country Level



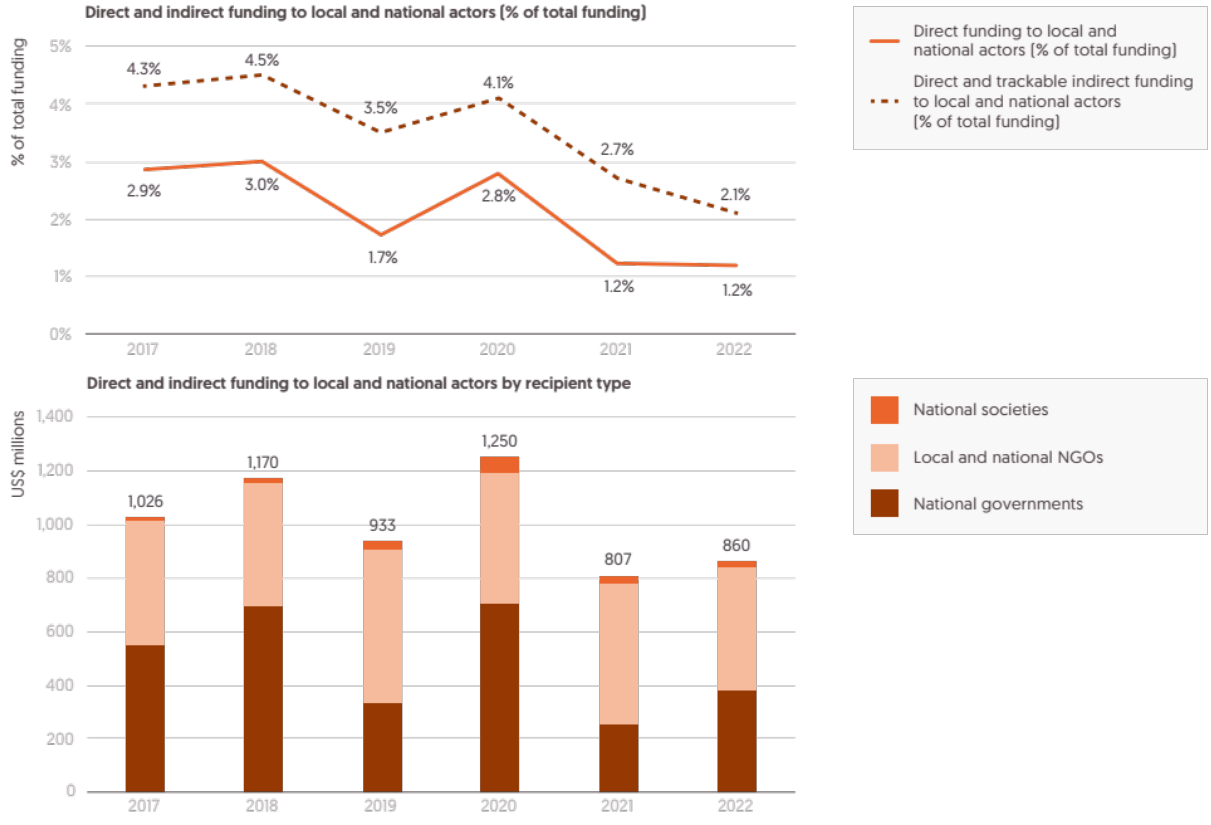
Source: Norwegian Refugee Council, 2023

Literature Review Annex C.3
Direct Funding to Local and National Actors

Figure 3.2

Funding to local and national actors as a share of total humanitarian assistance remained very small in 2022

Proportion and total volumes of direct and indirect funding to local and national actors, 2017–2022



Source: Development Initiatives based on UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) Financial Tracking Service (FTS) and UN country based pooled funds (CBPFs).

Notes: Local and national actors include all local, national or local/national NGOs, determined by internal organisation coding. Southern international NGOs, which receive funding to operate within the country they are headquartered in, are included as national actors. Red Cross Red Crescent (RCRC) national societies that received international humanitarian assistance to respond to domestic crises are included in local and national actors. Similarly, international funding to national governments is considered as funding to national actors only when contributing to the domestic crisis response. Funding is shown only for flows that reported with information on the recipient organisation. Data is in constant 2021 prices.

Source: Development Initiatives, 2023, 73.

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Literature Review Annex C.5
HUMANITARIAN-DEVELOPMENT-PEACE NEXUS
Approach, definition and messages

Multisectoral CSO Nexus Working Group
WORKING DRAFT September 28, 2023

SECTION 1: PURPOSE

This document outlines the Canadian Civil-Society approach to the humanitarian-development-peace nexus. It is relevant to all contexts and aims to inform our collective understanding of the nexus approach, guide its implementation, and hold us accountable.

First proposed in 2016 by the UN and the World Bank, and later developed by donors and aid agencies, the humanitarian-development-peace nexus has become an overarching agenda that calls for strengthening the collaboration, coherence, and complementarity of the three domains to capitalize on their comparative advantage and work towards collective outcomes.

In recent years, there have been demands for aid organizations to make their nexus position explicit, including changes required to overcome external and internal obstacles to operationalize the approach. For multi-mandate NGOs an added challenge has been to understand the implications of the peace pillar of the nexus for their operations and programmes, from safeguarding humanitarian principles, International Humanitarian Law and humanitarian access, to defining their contribution to peace outcomes.

This document is embedded in the commitment made by organizations as per the Grand Bargain to enhancing engagement between humanitarian, development and peace actors. It is also informed by many of our internal initiatives on the nexus agenda as well as continued engagement in global, regional, and national policy processes and fora.

This document takes the point of departure in the scope and definitions contained in the **OECD-DAC Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus,**[70] a key reference for the implementation of the nexus approach.

SECTION 2: MULTISECTORAL CSO STATEMENT

1. Greater coherence between humanitarian, development and peace actors can have a positive impact in meeting people's needs and fulfilling their rights, but it requires a commitment to transform our ways of working

As multi-mandate organizations, we have years of history providing humanitarian and development aid, protection, and upholding human, women and children's rights across the world, our experience tells us that when humanitarian, development and peace actors work towards commonly agreed outcomes, this results in more timely, appropriate, and effective results for the most deprived, vulnerable, and marginalized children, their families, and communities. Similarly, we know that the failure of humanitarian, development, and peace actors to join-up efforts in a principled and meaningful manner

[70] https://legalinstruments.oecd.org/public/doc/643/643.en.pdf

often do more harm than good to crisis-affected people. An effective nexus approach requires that all actors commit to improving internal and external coordination, coherence and complementarity, building on a shared understanding of the root causes of crises, agree shared targets and goals, and prioritize actions that reduce needs, vulnerability and risks through resilience, prevention, anticipatory action, preparedness, and early action.

2. The nexus approach as an enabler of our programming.

This also means that the key elements of our respective programming (participation, non-discrimination and inclusion, strengthening of civil society, and demanding accountability from duty-bearers) must be central to our nexus approach. We must take steps to ensure that Nexus programming is given priority in all contexts, in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all our programmes, as well as in our participation in coordination mechanisms, engagement with other actors, and in our advocacy.

3. Responding to multidimensional protracted crises requires a nexus mindset.

The most vulnerable and most at risk of being left behind in protracted contexts, where climate-induced disasters, conflict, human rights violations, the COVID-19 pandemic and other health emergencies, food insecurity or forced displacement compound. The nexus approach provides a framework for our CSOs to maximize the synergies between our humanitarian and development teams, and with our partners and other actors (including those working on peace related activities). An effective nexus approach relies on joint, risk-informed gender and conflict sensitive analysis of underlying drivers of crisis and vulnerability, building on local knowledge and capacities. It helps identify the most effective interventions in protracted crises considering their complexity: addressing humanitarian needs and prioritizing joined-up actions to implement recovery activities to re-establish people lives with dignity, while tackling the root causes of risk and vulnerability for those marginalized due to conflict, ethnicity, gender, poverty, geography, and disability.

4. Our nexus approach is aligned with our commitment to safeguarding principled humanitarian action, the centrality of protection, and humanitarian access.

Adopting a nexus approach based on the principles and practices outlined in this document should not undermine our commitment to safeguarding humanitarian principles, the centrality of protection, and humanitarian access to affected populations. Providing principled needs-based humanitarian assistance and protection to those in the most vulnerable situations in hard-to-access areas remains at the core of what our organizations stands for and should remain a shared priority for donors and implementing agencies. We will continue working in coordination with other actors to ensure that the needs of the most vulnerable are met, their rights are upheld, and their protection is prioritized. No matter the programmatic focus in a specific context is, we will continue to speak out about the issues that affect the most vulnerable and marginalized.

When accessing funding for nexus programmes, we will always make sure that our donors and partners put the needs of the most marginalized at the center, safeguard humanitarian principles and respect our respective mandates.

5. Nexus programming is good programming.

The nexus approach builds on decades of experience in the aid sector around what good programming looks like. It is a key framework to help the civil society organizations design and implement integrated and holistic interventions in protracted contexts building on conflict sensitivity, joint multi-sectoral needs analysis, local knowledge and capacities, have long-term timeframes and objectives, and do no harm. This requires anchoring our programmes and advocacy on evidence and analysis, managing resources effectively and sustainably, streamlining our strategies and programme implementation, and making the best use of the expertise we, our partners and communities have in the humanitarian, development, and peace spheres. We should use the nexus approach as an enabler of more flexible, agile, sustainable and effective operating model, never as a donor compliance exercise or for funding purposes.

6. The nexus approach must support and enable the leading role of communities affected by crisis, national and local actors.

The endorsement of the humanitarian-development-peace approach should accelerate the implementation of our localisation and accountability commitments, in line with the Grand Bargain and the Core Humanitarian Standards.

This the relevant framework to genuinely increase our support to and strategic partnerships with local and national actors (including women-led, human rights, and peacebuilding organizations, children and affected communities, as well as national and local authorities), including those contributing to social cohesion, conflict resolution and conflict prevention. Our commitment to reinforce, not replace, the existing capacities of national and local actors is particularly important to drive the implementation of the nexus approach. Identifying our comparative advantage in each context would allow us to focus on those areas where CSOs can make a meaningful contribution, while enabling better placed actors (often local and national organizations), affected communities take the lead, including in the identification and formulation of collective outcomes. In that sense, our nexus approach should build on our commitment to demonstrate continuous accountability to communities with whom we work through consultation and participation, consistent with practice standards.

7. Our organizations contribute to and advocates for peace outcomes for the communities we support.

The nexus approach offers an opportunity to reflect on and define our contribution to peace outcomes for and with women, children, their families, and communities without compromising our values, mission, and commitment to humanitarian principles. We seek to approaches peace within a rights-based paradigm, putting the most vulnerable at the center, irrespective of security, military, or government-led stabilization agendas. It is imperative that women, children, their families, and communities have ownership of the processes towards achieving peace and reconciliation, and that their capacity to participate in and contribute to those processes is both recognized and supported. We must prioritize our contribution to social cohesion, uphold child rights, help reduce poverty, and strengthen the provision of basic services. Direct or indirect involvement in peacebuilding activities (often a political endeavour) might lead to risks of aid instrumentalization, loss of acceptance and access to affected communities, and security risks for them and our staff. This requires careful consideration by decision-makers at all levels. All our engagement with state and non-state armed actors must prioritize humanitarian access, and respect for International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights Law.

8. The humanitarian-development-peace nexus approach must be contextualized to maximize its potential and mitigate risks.

While we call for greater coherence between programmes respectively aiming at humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding outcomes, we recognize that every context presents unique challenges and opportunities. Systematic risk and conflict-sensitive analyses, centred on child rights, need to be conducted to determine the extent to which the humanitarian-development-peace nexus approach can safely and successfully be implemented, ensuring access and acceptance. This analysis shall inform strategic objectives, operational modalities, and stakeholder engagement to ensure that our actions and presence not only do no harm, but also drive lasting, positive change for the communities we support. A triple nexus approach requires a critical examination of the short to long-term impact of our interventions, a sound understanding of the social and institutional systems in place (including of local conflict mediation mechanisms), and a commitment to adapt our programmes to the specific situations putting women, children and their rights at risk, and to the anticipated evolution of these situations, be it in deteriorating or improving contexts.

9. The nexus approach requires quality financing.

We support calls to tackle the inefficiencies and rigidities of the aid system. There is a clear demand for more flexibility and adaptability of ways of working, operations, and programmes. Area-based approaches, anticipatory action, conflict sensitivity or joint analysis are examples of what aid actors could do to be more agile, collaborative, forward looking, and effective. However, all that requires sustained and consistent donor support, as well as adequate financing mechanisms and strategies. In sum, a shift to quality financing is needed to enable aid actors and communities implement the nexus approach. Quality financing (direct, unearmarked or softly earmarked, flexible, and multi-year) is a key condition for aid agencies to adapt their programmes in response to changes in the context and based on evidence from the ground, meeting urgent needs while keeping the focus on long-term outcomes. For that, shared analysis and mapping of existing financing mechanisms for agreed priorities, as well as monitoring systems to identify and fill critical funding gaps are required. It is only with access to sufficient quality financing, that we will be able to learn and adapt, prioritize resilience, prevention, preparedness, anticipation, social cohesion, and strengthen local capacities and systems.

SECTION 3: DEFINITIONS

Collective outcome refers to a commonly agreed measurable result or impact enhanced by the combined effort of different actors, within their respective mandates, to address and reduce people's unmet needs, risks and vulnerabilities, increasing their resilience and addressing the root causes of conflict.

Comparative advantage refers to the demonstrated capacity and expertise (not limited solely to a mandate) of one individual, group or institution to meet needs.

Conflict sensitivity is the ability of an organization to understand the context it operates in, the interaction between its intervention and that context, and act upon this understanding in order to minimize negative impacts and maximize positive impacts on conflict.

Grand Bargain is an agreement between donors and aid providers, which aims to get more means into the hands of people in need and ultimately leads to a shift of power. It includes a series of changes in the working practices of donors and aid organizations that could deliver an extra billion dollars over five years for people in need of humanitarian aid. These changes include gearing up cash programming, greater funding for national and local responders and cutting bureaucracy through harmonized reporting requirements.

Nexus refers to the interlinkages between humanitarian, development and peace actions.

Nexus approach refers to the aim of strengthening collaboration, coherence and complementarity. The approach seeks to capitalize on the comparative advantages of each pillar – to the extent of their relevance in the specific context – in order to reduce overall vulnerability and the number of unmet needs, strengthen risk management capacities and address root causes of conflict.
Peace (with a capital P) can be understood as 'negative peace', the absence of direct violence when, for example, a ceasefire has been enacted.

peace (with a little p) Alternatively, it can refer to 'positive peace', when there has been a constructive resolution to the conflict, positive relationships have been restored and a social system that serves the needs of the entire population has been (re-)established.

Protracted crisis typically refers to environments in which a considerable proportion of the population is vulnerable to death, disease or livelihood disruption over a prolonged period of time.
Protracted crises are often driven by conflict and recurrent natural hazards, but they are also characterized by a combination of acute and long-term issues or needs such as crisis longevity, weak or a breakdown in governance, malnutrition and food insecurity, disease, unsustainable livelihood systems and chronic poverty.

Quality financing refers to predictable, timely, multi-year, unearmarked (or as flexible as possible), direct and sufficient funding to implementing agencies.

SECTION 4: MESSAGES TO THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT

1. Ensure **greater coherence** between humanitarian, development and peacebuilding **workstreams and department**, while abiding by Humanitarian Principles, International Humanitarian Law and International Human Rights Law, including the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, at all times. This includes, where needed, the transformation of their own departments.

2. Ensure **compatibility of different funding instruments** within the same country, including clauses on beneficiary and partner vetting, response requirements and red lines. A failure to do this creates siloes between humanitarian, development and peacebuilding programming and risks bringing unnecessary tension in and between communities.

3. **Engage in solution-oriented dialogue** with organizations delivering humanitarian, development and peacebuilding assistance, including local organizations, as equal partners, **around context specific bottlenecks to effective nexus programming** and related Grand Bargain commitments. The nexus needs solutions beyond individual projects and financial instruments, as well as flexibility on all sides to go beyond business as usual.

4. **Prioritize** actions that combine **humanitarian responses with a tackling of the root causes** of crisis, including conflict dynamics, to the extent possible within humanitarian principles.

5. Stimulate, and engage in, a **collaborative approach between humanitarian, development and peace actors**, including local actors, from joint context analysis and design phase onwards. A collaborative approach as well as joint context analysis and planning should be properly funded.

6. **Accelerate the implementation of localisation and accountability commitments**, in line with the Grand Bargain and the Core Humanitarian Standards. A nexus approach must support and enable the leading role of communities affected by crisis, including women and children who are the most vulnerable group in most fragile contexts. Therefore, women-child-centered approaches in line with the UN Conventions and principles.
7. **Shift to quality financing** (unearmarked or softly earmarked, flexible and multi-year) with sufficient integrated humanitarian, development and peacebuilding actions. This should include flexibility for quick programmatic shifts when needed, parallel humanitarian, development, and where relevant peacebuilding funding to be in place

    • For humanitarian interventions, this requires the provision of long-term funding and the willingness to remain active in protracted crises also when development and peacebuilding actors start getting engaged.

    • For development and peacebuilding interventions, this requires getting involved as early as possible or stay involved when crisis occur, and to explore developmental and peacebuilding opportunities benefiting crisis-affected populations. An important instrument can be the inclusion of crisis modifiers.

8. **Invest in systems and make use of them, even in fragile contexts.** The Grand Bargain requires a focus on strengthening rather than side-lining existing systems wherever this is possible in line with humanitarian principles.

    • Humanitarian funding therefore needs to be flexible enough to strengthen existing local service providers (e.g. sufficient funds for capacity building; flexibility to support local health posts to hire temporary staff rather than setting up parallel structures).

    • For development donors, it is necessary to design their investments in health, education, protection (including child protection), and other systems including safety nets in a shock responsive way with strong enough partners.

9. **Engage in transparent, solution-oriented discussion** with organizations delivering humanitarian, development and peacebuilding assistance on **risks and potential competing interests.**

    • Risks include financial, security, and public opinion risks, including due diligence to local partners, particularly those front-line responders in high-risk areas. Carefully weigh, share, and when required, provide sufficient budget for involved risk.

    • This includes competing interests of diplomatic, stabilization and civilian security interventions on the one hand and triple nexus outcomes on the other hand.

10. Increase and link **social protection and cash-based interventions**. While responding to shocks, humanitarian actors should link with and -where possible- strengthen social protection systems to smoothen the transition to development to ensure continuity and consistency of benefits and services.

Annex D
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Annex E
Survey Questions

Triple Nexus Survey

Welcome!
The survey is part of a wider review commissioned by the CSO Nexus Working Group, a sub-committee of the Food Security Working Group. The study will include a literature review, survey and semi-structured interviews that will assess how and to what extent Canadian CSOs are implementing the Humanitarian-Development-Peace or Triple Nexus approach in conflict-affected and fragile contexts. It will also focus on the extent to which triple nexus was incorporated into programming, challenges, strengths and assets as well as best practices. Particular attention will be paid to how gender, localization and conflict sensitivity is shaped and implemented within the complex environment of triple nexus work.

While many organizations have already combined humanitarian and development aid in a double Nexus approach, less is known about the extent to which organizations are adopting a triple nexus approach. The review will help the CSO Nexus Working Group and others:

- Build a common understanding of triple nexus within the Canadian CSO community and among its partners.
- Enrich the policy dialogue on Canada's efforts in triple nexus programming Explore opportunities to strengthen collaboration, coordination, and coherence among stakeholders engaged in nexus programming
- Improve triple nexus programs and projects currently being implemented and into the future

By sharing your experiences and perspectives, you will contribute to the collective understanding of the triple nexus approach and help identify ways to achieve better and longer-lasting outcomes.

Your participation is highly valuable. Please take a few moments to complete the Triple Nexus Survey. It will take approximately 20-30 minutes to complete, and all responses will be confidential. Personal contact information will only be used to filter bot responses, ask follow-up questions and/or share findings. While we will have organizational identifiers in the survey, these will be removed during the analysis and report writing process. The report will be submitted to the CSO Nexus Working Group and shared with the wider community.

The study is funded by contributions from Acted Canada, Care Canada and Cooperation Canada.

1. Please share your contact information. The information will be confidential. We will only use your contact information to filter bot responses, ask follow-up questions and/or share the results.
- o Organization: _____
- o First Name: _____
- o Last Name: _____
- o Position / Title: _____
- o email: _____

2. How do you describe yourself? [dropdown]
- o Female
- o Male
- o Non-binary
- o Prefer not to say
- o Self-describe: _____

3. Are you familiar with the Humanitarian-Development-Peace or Triple Nexus approach?
- o Yes
- o Somewhat, please explain: _____
- o No

4. Is your engaged in Humanitarian-Development-Peace or triple nexus programming? For more information, please see definitions at the bottom of the page.

	Yes	Somewhat	No
Double nexus	○	○	○
Triple nexus	○	○	○

Double Nexus: Programming that integrates two approaches to aid, usually development and humanitarian. This often means that humanitarian aid is complemented by projects/elements that will build social and economic growth over the long-term. The focus is placed on building the communities resiliency to withstand crises and shocks.
Humanitarian-Development-Peace or Triple Nexus: Programming that integrates development, humanitarian and peace assistance. This promotes prevention, pooled funding, and coordination among donors and CSOs that is responsive to local concerns and contexts. It is summed up as "prioritize prevention always, development wherever possible, humanitarian

action when necessary." It can be achieved through a mix of coordinated country-based interventions, context-specific programming, and emphasizing the three pillars.

5. Please rate the following variables on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being 'not at all' and 5 being 'a great deal.'

Your organization's understanding of the triple nexus approach	○ None at all	○ A little	○ A moderate amount	○ A lot	○ A great deal
The importance of aligning your programming with the triple nexus approach	○ None at all	○ A little	○ A moderate amount	○ A lot	○ A great deal
The effects of the triple nexus approach on program results	○ None at all	○ A little	○ A moderate amount	○ A lot	○ A great deal

6. With regards to question 5, why have you rated the triple nexus approach in this way?

_____

_____

7. To the best of your knowledge, what percentage of your Canadian organization's overall programs and projects currently incorporate the triple nexus approach?

o 0-25%
o 26-50%
o 51-75%
o 76-100%
o Not sure

8. Within your organization's triple nexus programs, what is the typical mix or percentage of humanitarian, development and peace **work** in the programs? Please record a proximate percentage in the box. For more information, please see the definitions at the bottom of the page.

_____ Humanitarian
_____ Development
_____ Peace Assistance
_____ Other: _____

9. Within your organization's triple nexus programs, what is the typical mix or percentage of humanitarian, development and peace **funding** in the programs? Please record a proximate percentage in the box.

_____ Humanitarian
_____ Development
_____ Peace
_____ Other: _____

10a. Is the funding for your triple nexus programming pooled together?

o Yes
o Somewhat, please explain: _____
o No
o Unknown

10b. If funding is pooled, where is the funding typically mixed or is earmarked for triple nexus programming.

o Funder - Multilateral or Donor
o Funder - Global Affairs Canada
o Funder - Private Foundation
o Funder - CSOs
o Within your organization
o Among program staff
o In country
o By local CSOs
o Other: _____

Comment Box:

_____

_____

Humanitarian: Immediate and short-term assistance with water, food, shelter, and medical provisions to people in crises such as a natural disaster, conflict, mass migration event, etc.
Development: Financial and technical support design to promote sustained improvement in economic and social conditions most often between 'developed' and 'developing' countries.
Peace Assistance: Support provided to countries and communities to establish a sustain peace, particularly in post-conflict settings. This includes activities such as building social cohesion, monitoring early warning indicators, building capacity for conflict resolution, and so forth.

11. In the last five years, has your Canadian organization used the triple nexus approach in the following countries:

- ☐ Afghanistan
- ☐ Burkina Faso
- ☐ Burundi
- ☐ Cameroon
- ☐ Central African Republic
- ☐ Chad
- ☐ Colombia
- ☐ Congo, Republic of the...
- ☐ Democratic Republic of the Congo
- ☐ El Salvador
- ☐ Ethiopia
- ☐ Guatemala
- ☐ Haiti
- ☐ Honduras
- ☐ Mali
- ☐ Mozambique
- ☐ Myanmar
- ☐ Niger
- ☐ Nigeria
- ☐ Occupied Palestine Territory
- ☐ Somalia
- ☐ South Sudan
- ☐ Sudan
- ☐ Syrian Arab Republic
- ☐ Ukraine
- ☐ Venezuela, Bolivarian Republic of...
- ☐ Yemen

12. Please list the other countries in which your Canadian organization has used the triple nexus approach in the last five years.

_____

_____

_____

13. Please indicate if your organization has the following items in place. Check all boxes that apply to your programming.

☐ Common definition of the triple nexus programming

☐ Policy framework guiding your approach to triple nexus programming

☐ Planning mechanisms/programming stream that facilitate coordination across your organization

☐ Program staff includes expertise in humanitarian, development, and peace programming

☐ Learning opportunities / professional development for Canadian staff regarding the triple nexus approach and the unique aspects of humanitarian, development, and peace programming

☐ Pooled funds at the country level for quickly responding to changing contexts, opportunities for prevention, and/or crisis

☐ Long-term funding at the country level to address nexus programming (particularly development and peace assistance) to build resiliency

☐ Systems to monitor and evaluate the triple nexus approach

☐ Other: _____

☐ Other: _____

14. Based on your answers in the previous question, please rank most important tools in your organization's triple nexus approach by dragging and dropping them in order of priority.

_____ Common definition of the triple nexus programming

_____ Policy framework guiding your approach to triple nexus programming

_____ Planning mechanisms/programming stream that facilitate coordination across your organization

_____ Program staff includes expertise in humanitarian, development, and peace programming

_____ Learning opportunities / professional development for Canadian staff regarding the triple nexus approach and the unique aspects of humanitarian, development, and peace programming

_____ Pooled funds at the country level for quickly responding to changing contexts, opportunities for prevention, and/or crisis

_____ Long-term funding at the country level to address nexus programming (particularly development and peace assistance) to build resiliency

_____ Systems to monitor and evaluate the triple nexus approach

_____ Other:

_____ Other:

Comment Box:

_____

_____

15. How does your organization incorporate a **gender lens** in its triple nexus programming? Please check all boxes that apply to your programming. For more information, please see a definition at the bottom of the page.

- ☐ Specific programs targeting women and girls
- ☐ Incorporate gender analysis in project design
- ☐ Dedicate resources (financial, human) for gender-focused initiatives
- ☐ Implement programs aimed at reducing gender-based violence
- ☐ Support women-led initiatives
- ☐ Identify and prepare for potential push-back
- ☐ Monitor and evaluate gender as part of triple nexus programming
- ☐ Build capacity in gender analysis and awareness
- ☐ Other: _____
- ☐ Other: _____

Gender Lens: Using a gender lens refers to exploring how gender and gender roles frame relationships, access to resources, opportunities and decision-making. Further, it considers how other social categories such as race, class, age, orientation, etc. intersect with gender and shape individual experiences and perceptions within society. This informs the designed, implementation and consequences or results of aid programming.

16. How does your organization integrate **conflict-sensitivity** in its triple nexus programming? Please check all boxes that apply to your programming. For more information, please see a definition at the bottom of the page.

- ☐ Ensure aid does not exacerbate existing conflicts or 'do no harm'
- ☐ Monitor and evaluate conflict-sensitivities within the nexus programming
- ☐ Resourced, responsive and collaborate conflict-analysis process
- ☐ Build local capacities in conflict management and resolution
- ☐ Address root causes and drivers of the conflict
- ☐ Provide a safe space for mediation and community dialogue
- ☐ Provide trauma and healing support
- ☐ Create opportunities to build social cohesion
- ☐ Other: _____
- ☐ Other: _____

Conflict-sensitivity: This approach recognizes that interventions occur in complex and changing environments, particularly in conflict-affected and fragile contexts. Therefore, it is important to understand the local context, be aware of intended and potential unintended consequences of an intervention and be ready to adapt your program in a way that mitigates the negative and accentuates positive impacts.

17. How does your organization support localization in triple nexus programming? Please check all boxes that apply to your programming. For more information, please see a definition at the bottom of the page.

- ☐ Engage local communities in decision-making
- ☐ Transfer resources and responsibilities to local actors to implement their programs
- ☐ Prioritize local hiring and procurement
- ☐ Conduct participatory planning sessions with local CSOs / representatives
- ☐ Support locally determined capacity building
- ☐ Allocate specific resources to support local partners and community leadership in strengthening peace processes
- ☐ Support community-led peace initiatives
- ☐ Contract local CSOs to implement projects
- ☐ Other:
- ☐ Other:

Localization: According to OECD DAC, localization prioritizes the role of local actors in leading and implementing aid efforts. It generally involves empowering local leadership, strengthening local systems, and providing responsive programming.

18. To what extent are the following program elements incorporated into your organization's triple nexus programming? Please rate them on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being 'not well at all,' and 5 being 'extremely well.'

Gender	○ Not well at all	○ Slightly well	○ Moderately	○ Very well	○ Extremely well
Localization	○ Not well at all	○ Slightly well	○ Moderately well	○ Very well	○ Extremely well
Conflict-Sensitivity	○ Not well at all	○ Slightly well	○ Moderately well	○ Very well	○ Extremely well
Other: (23)	○ Not well at all	○ Slightly well	○ Moderately well	○ Very well	○ Extremely well

Comment Box:

_____

_____

19. Has your organization experienced any of the following challenges when implementing the triple nexus approach? Please check all boxes that apply to your programming.

- ☐ Lack of funding and resources
- ☐ Resistance from stakeholders
- ☐ Rigid or overly complicated funding mechanisms
- ☐ Limited local capacities to implement a triple nexus approach
- ☐ Insufficient organizational expertise in one of the three pillars
- ☐ Inter-agency dynamics in the local context
- ☐ Multiple reporting, monitoring and evaluation
- ☐ Lack of local knowledge to enable organizational programming
- ☐ Complex and changing dynamics on the ground
- ☐ Push-back on gender and inclusion
- ☐ Other: _____
- ☐ Other: _____

20. Based on your answers in the previous question, please rank the most pressing challenges by dragging and dropping them in order of priority.

_____ Lack of funding and resources
_____ Resistance from stakeholders
_____ Rigid or overly complicated funding mechanisms
_____ Limited local capacities to implement a triple nexus approach
_____ Insufficient organizational expertise in one of the three pillars
_____ Inter-agency dynamics in the local context
_____ Multiple reporting, monitoring and evaluation
_____ Lack of local knowledge to enable organizational programming
_____ Complex and changing dynamics on the ground
_____ Push-back on gender and inclusion
_____ Other:
_____ Other:

21. Has your organization been able to use the following strengths or assets to implement triple nexus programs? Please check all boxes that apply to your programming.

- ☐ Good relationships with local partners
- ☐ Local trust and respect for our 'neutrality'
- ☐ Flexible and long-term funding
- ☐ Good relationship with other international CSOs in the local context
- ☐ Good relationships with other CSO in Canada
- ☐ Good relationships with local GAC representatives
- ☐ Good relationships with relevant GAC officials at headquarters

- ▢ An Adaptive Management process that allows for rapid and changing responses
- ▢ Access to solid contextual analysis that is trustworthy and regularly updated
- ▢ Staff with the right mix of expertise for triple nexus programming
- ▢ Capacity building programs for staff on triple nexus programming
- ▢ Flexible monitoring and evaluation systems that support learning
- ▢ Other: _____
- ▢ Other: _____

22. Based on your answers to the previous questions, please select the most important strengths or assets in your organization's triple nexus approach by dragging and dropping them in order of priority.

_____ Good relationships with local partners
_____ Local trust and respect for our 'neutrality'
_____ Flexible and long-term funding
_____ Good relationship with other international CSOs in the local context
_____ Good relationships with other CSO in Canada
_____ Good relationships with local GAC representatives
_____ Good relationships with relevant GAC officials at headquarters
_____ An Adaptive Management process that allows for rapid and changing responses
_____ Access to solid contextual analysis that is trustworthy and regularly updated
_____ Staff with the right mix of expertise for triple nexus programming
_____ Capacity building programs for staff on triple nexus programming
_____ Flexible monitoring and evaluation systems that support learning
_____ Other:
_____ Other:

23. Do you have any advice or good practices to share with other practitioners?

_____

_____

24. Has your organization partnered with GAC on projects that use a triple nexus? Please select one of the following options.

- o Yes
- o Somewhat, please explain: _____
- o No

25. Did your partnership with Global Affairs include any of the following items. Please select all that apply.

- ▢ Funding

- ☐ Joint context analysis
- ☐ Capacity building
- ☐ Coordination in the local context
- ☐ Consular assistance
- ☐ Policy dialogue in Canada
- ☐ Other: _____
- ☐ Other: _____

25b. If your Canadian organization received funding from Global Affairs for triple nexus programming, please indicate what percentage was earmarked for the below funding streams. Please record the proximate percentage in the box.

_____ Development
_____ Humanitarian
_____ Peace
_____ Development and Humanitarian
_____ Development and Peace
_____ Humanitarian, Development and Peace
_____ unknown
_____ Other:

26. What recommendations would you make with regards to improving GAC's support for triple nexus work?

_____

_____

27. How can the CSO Nexus Working Group support your work?

_____

_____

28. Do you have any additional comments or suggestions?

_____

_____

Annex F
Interview Protocol

Interview Protocol: Triple Nexus Review
July 16, 2024

The purpose of the interviews is to assess how and to what extent Canadian organizations are implementing the Humanitarian-Development-Peace or Triple Nexus approach in conflict-affected and fragile contexts. Specifically, we aim to explore how gender, localization, and conflict sensitivity intersect within this approach, and to identify strengths, challenges, and best practices.

The respondents are mostly policy analysts and practitioners in the international development field. The selection will include experts from the Canadian aid community and members of the CSOs Nexus Working Group. Additionally, efforts will be made to include representatives from UN organizations and Global Affairs Canada.
The interviews are expected to take approximately 60 to 90 minutes over Zoom. The responses will be kept strictly confidential and used solely for the purposes of this project. If the respondent permits, the interviews will be recorded for note-taking purposes only. The recording will be deleted after the notes are complete.

The following questions will provide an overall guide for the interviews; however, they may vary depending on the respondent's background and experiences.
Questions:

1. What has the triple nexus approach meant for your organization? Has the triple nexus provoked any changes in organizational structures and ways of working?
2. Is there a project or initiative that you could briefly describe where your organization applied the triple nexus approach in a conflict-affected or fragile context? What made it a nexus approach in your view?
3. How does your organization engage with other state and non-state actors in fragile and conflict-affected countries where you are implementing programs? Do you coordinate your organization's efforts with these actors (beyond your immediate partners)? Through what mechanisms? What are the main challenges in this regard?
4. In the context of the nexus approach, what have been the roles for local counterparts in fragile and conflict-affected contexts? Who determined the objectives and the approach of the project described above (your organization here or in the country concerned), direct counterparts in the country concerned, other local actors)?
5. Does your organization incorporate conflict-sensitivity into its program design and implementation? If so, what is the scope? With whom do you normally engage in conflict sensitivity analysis?
6. Does your organization conduct gender impact analysis in programming for fragile and conflict-affected contexts? Briefly describe this process and its impact on programming?
7. How have funding streams (government and organizational) affected your triple nexus approach? Is funding siloed in your organization? Have you engaged in coordinated or pooled

funding in a country context? Can you provide flexible, core and long-term funding for partners in a changing and complex environment?

8. What have been the main benefits for your organization from a triple nexus approach? What have been the most important challenges? Are there fragile and conflict affected contexts where the nexus approach works best? Why?
9. What are your organizational priorities moving forward with regards to the triple nexus approach? What are the most important capacity needs?

Annex G
Countries in which Survey Respondents are Engaged in Double or Triple Nexus

Afghanistan
Burkina Faso
Republic of Burundi
Cameroon
Central African Republic
Chad
Colombia
Democratic Republic of Congo
El Salvador
Ethiopia
Guatemala
Haiti
Honduras
Iraq
Kenya
Kyrgyzstan
Madagascar
Venezuela
Yemen
Republic of Zimbabwe
Mali
Mozambique
Myanmar
Niger
Nigeria
State of Palestine
Islamic Republic of Pakistan
Philippines
Somalia
South Sudan
Sudan
Syrian Arab Republic
Tajikistan
Uganda
Republic of Uzbekistan
Ukraine