



WHAT

is the
Humanitarian-
Development-
Peace Nexus?

This Action Guide is an introduction to the humanitarian-development-peace (HDP) nexus, also referred to as the **'Triple Nexus'** and a guiding framework for DCA staff and partners on how to use DCA's nexus approach in projects and programmes.

Triple Nexus defined:

Nexus refers to the strengthened coherence and interlinkages of humanitarian, development and peace actors and actions.

It is about overcoming rigidity and siloed approaches and addressing needs through a contextual and non-linear perspective. In practice, this means planning for long term solutions from the earliest stages of a crisis, or in development contexts ensure programming is adaptive to meet acute needs effectively and timely. This requires greater flexibility in addressing different needs and problems, sometimes simultaneously, while engaging multiple stakeholders, such as local communities, civil society groups, and local authorities, in identifying and responding to risks and needs.

As a multi-mandated organisation DCA is well positioned to work across the HDP-nexus

addressing complex crisis and development challenges with comprehensive solutions. In the DCA strategy 2019-2022, a joint nexus and resilience approach is defined by

taking a long-term developmental perspective from the earliest stages of crisis, which allows for more resilience in communities and a more dignified and sustainable life in the wake of a crisis

DCA aims to strengthen understanding and learning on nexus and position itself as a vehicle for operationalising the nexus agenda.

Key Stakeholders

The nexus agenda has been met with unprecedented commitment by states and donors alike. The triple nexus approach seeks to engage a wide variety of **key stakeholders** from the UN, INGOs, states, private sector, including the World Bank, local civil society groups, and local communities in the common global effort towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the principle of Leaving No One Behind

Key Characteristics and link to SDGs:

- Triple Nexus is a topic widely discussed among humanitarian and development professionals, including donors.
- The concept of triple nexus, introduced in 2016, builds on the concepts of “Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development” (LRRD) and resilience.
- The nexus agenda is strongly connected to the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF)
- Nexus has a strong focus on aligning both actors and activities more effectively around collective outcomes.

Since the triple nexus is per definition cross-cutting, DCA's nexus approach links with many SDGs:

With DCA's ambition to navigate across the triple nexus and meaningfully connect crisis response to peacebuilding especially in fragile and crisis-affected states the nexus work mainly relates to SDGs 16 and 17

DCA's nexus approach also offers a sustainable way of increasing resilience, addressing the impact of climate changes and support implementation of following SDGs, in particular SDG 2 (Food), SDG 5 (gender equality), SDG 7 (Energy) and SDG 13 (Climate action).



WHY

nexus and why do DCA and partners need to engage in this work?

Understanding and operationalising the nexus is a key priority for DCA, particularly as an increasing proportion of contexts where DCA operates is affected, or influenced by, protracted crises, global refugee and migration trends, climate changes and consequently rising needs. Traditional humanitarian tools and interventions will not do the job in addressing the magnitude and diversity of these needs, particularly as crises become protracted (lasting in average 9 years or more). There is a need for actors to engage simultaneously across sectors while investing in prevention and addressing the underlying root causes of vulnerability, fragility and conflict.

The reasons for DCA and partners to strengthen existing nexus approaches and engage in new nexus modalities are:

- To strengthen sustainable resilience of the most marginalised and vulnerable people
- To address and meet peoples' unmet needs, risks and vulnerabilities simultaneously
- To address root causes of conflict
- To build robust local actors to lead humanitarian response and development projects
- To bring faith-based and religious actors, youth groups, climate activists, private sector and human rights groups together in the pursuit of collective outcomes

Link to DCA strategy and policies

The triple nexus is reflected across DCA's strategic goals (Save, Build, Fight) and closely intertwined with other strategic priorities such as the private sector engagement. It builds linkages with DCA's strategic cross-cutting commitments, in particular on climate change, gender equality and religious & development. A strategic objective under Save (03.1.3) is dedicated to nexus but in reality, nexus could be documented across the strategic intervention areas.

HOW do we operationalise nexus?

The commitment by donors (OECD DAC recommendations) to operationalise the triple nexus is a unique opportunity for DCA to engage partners and other stakeholders towards a **common goal** that puts the experiences of people affected by crisis at the centre. Our approach supports meeting short-term humanitarian needs (ensuring that the right type of aid gets to the right people regardless of who or where they are) as well as facilitate greater consideration of strategies that address root causes of vulnerability.

Operationalising the nexus for DCA and partners goes beyond projects and requires us to rethink how we work and structure ourselves. It is in a way a whole-of-organisation approach that compel us to rethink at strategic and operational level how programme goals are articulated in certain contexts and putting more emphasis on results. It requires a consistent **cross-departmental conversation** and **space for co-creation** is needed to do this.

The nexus agenda does not 'belong' to any one discipline – an ongoing conversation that recognises the complementarities and puts everyone on an equal footing is needed.

The conversation may involve following considerations:

- Reviewing the composition of teams and job descriptions to address the nexus mindset.
- Investing more in organisations' own staff, and the capacity of local and national actors;
- Resourcing holistic analysis and adapting programming in response;
- Support a more integrated approach in programming and in team composition
- Bring teams together across country offices and HQ, and between partners, and bridge the gap between policy and practice at all levels
- Advocate with donors and governments for adapted and flexible funding streams, instruments, and mechanisms and assessing own organisational efficiency and effectivity to navigate in and respond to shifting contexts and situations, i.e. from acute crisis, sustainable development to reverse resilience.

Good quality programming and detailed planning is essential to operationalise a nexus approach. This involves how we prepare ourselves, design programmes, engage communities and commit our partners to roll out the intervention in a timely and effective way. Although the context for nexus will continuously change, there are some essential guiding principles which guide DCA's nexus approach and engagement.

These principles are:

- 1) **Interconnectedness** – DCA nexus approach aims to meet peoples' short term and long term needs simultaneously by providing humanitarian assistance and planning for/ supporting development and peace building initiatives at the same time. This requires that programme goals and outcomes are connected and complementary from the early start of the design phase. It calls for adaptive and flexible programming and to prepare partner staff and DCA staff to navigate the complexities of protracted crisis. It could also mean sharing offices, expertise and logistics, conduct joint analysis and field monitoring visits with partners or facilitate joint programming among DCA partners in order to maximise collective efforts.
- 2) **A one size fits all framework does not fit all** - DCA aims to facilitate a context specific analysis and assessment based on the perceptions and views of local actors and communities that inform and guide the nexus approach applied. It includes root cause analysis of poverty and injustice, immediate needs and a gender & conflict sensitivity analysis.
- 3) **A people-centred approach** - It builds on the premises that empowering local actors and communities to take charge of their own survival and development is one of the most impactful and effective ways of addressing crisis and communities' long-term needs. Local actors and responders, communities, civil society groups and authorities are key actors in this process and should be leading and guiding the work. Survivor and community-led crisis response (SLCR) and localisation forms an emerging basis for DCA's resilience/nexus thinking.
- 4) **A multi-stakeholder approach** DCA brings a diverse range of actors together. Local actors and responders, communities, civil society groups and authorities are key actors in this process and should be leading and guiding the work for greatest long- term impact and sustainability. It also involves advocating with donors and governments for adapted and flexible funding streams and assessing own organisational efficiency and effectivity to navigate in and respond to shifting contexts and situations, i.e. from acute crisis, sustainable development to reverse resilience.

Where to apply nexus

Applying a nexus approach does not necessarily imply humanitarian actors and development actors working under a single framework. Instead, a context-specific approach is essential. In some contexts, DCA and its partners already engage in nexus approaches, such as South Sudan, Uganda, Nepal, Myanmar and Ethiopia. Nexus approaches are primarily activated in a humanitarian crisis context, such as forced displacement, in the aftermath of a natural disaster or in conflict linking the humanitarian response effectively with resilience building and peacebuilding efforts.

Examples on how DCA operationalises a nexus approach

In **Northern Uganda** DCA supports thousands of refugees with **humanitarian assistance** and at the same time supports the communities **building back their lives** - for instance by providing necessary seeds and tools for farming, establishing farming groups and Village Loan and Saving Associations, cash for work schemes and so forth. Alongside these elements DCA promotes **community dialogue and build greater trust** and tolerance between citizens and state institutions and between or within communities.

In **Ethiopia**, DCA addresses a protracted crisis (drought, conflict and fragility) through an integrated nexus approach **linking the humanitarian response with DCA's ongoing resilience program** in the same location. By distributing NFIs and emergency seeds to internally displaced people (IDPs) while also promoting dry land farming practices, distributing drought tolerant seeds and supporting income generating activities and linkages with markets to both IDPs and host communities, DCA meets multiple needs at once. Complementarity of different sectors and partners and their comparative advantages directly impact the response and contribute to sustainability of resilience initiatives. In

addition, a pre-financed crisis modifier is incorporated into the budget that can be activated if the unforeseen crisis occurs.

In **South Sudan** and **Uganda**, DCA has trained its staff and partners in strengthening linkages between humanitarian, development and peacebuilding activities and identifying long term comprehensive solutions to emergent or protracted needs. By taking stock of current programmes and nexus approaches DCA country offices and partners are better positioned to establish a strong nexus footprint in their programming as well as engage with donors on this emergent agenda.

Contact senior humanitarian policy advisor, **Fie Lauritzen**, at flau@dca.dk for more information on any of the issues regulating to the triple-nexus approach

Resources:

The Nexus Community of Practice: <https://fabo.org/course/nexus>

OECD DAC recommendations: OECD DAC Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus, legal instrument adopted by OECD (major donors) on 2nd February 2019

Report: https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/triplenexus_southsudan.pdf