

FROM HUMANITARIAN TO DEVELOPMENT.

Ensure protection
in complex crisis

Milan – 1st April 2019

Conference Report



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On the 1st of April 2019 researchers, academics and NGO experts participated in an international seminar co-organized by UNICATT and WeWorld-GVC in Milan to discuss the dimension of protection when combining humanitarian and development actions and policies. The seminar offered the opportunity to discuss the recent debate on the Humanitarian-Development Nexus, and reflect on challenges and opportunities to better protect individuals and communities. The event is the first of a series of initiatives to stimulate joint learning efforts on the subject, and promote approaches based on the practical experience of NGO, academics, researchers and institutions.

Experts agreed on the opportunities offered by the Humanitarian and Development Nexus to better respond to the growing complexity of crises.



Professor Maria Sassi, University of Pavia, EADI-CICOPS, introduced recent trends of the humanitarian action and showed how 86% of humanitarian funding in recent years is invested in long-term crises. This data alone shows the inherent necessity of offsetting the instruments of humanitarian aid in contexts where needs are recurrent and caused by multiple root causes and structural drivers:

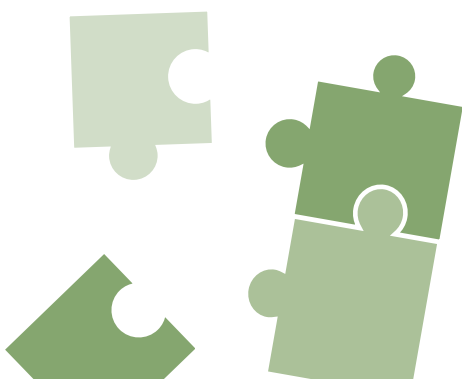
“During these kinds of crises, people migrate and search for places to find security, finding themselves completely dependent on humanitarian assistance. What the Nexus is trying to do is to move from a sprint alone, only humanitarian, only development or only security-focused actions to a joint marathon”.

She provided clear insights and lessons learned on 3 main pillars of the Nexus: Collaboration, Coherence and Complementarity: Predictability and flexibility in humanitarian financing enables early response and improves the efficiency and effectiveness of actions. However, the current collective system is not yet engineered to deliver multi-year approaches and this is still a constraint to consider.

“The critical areas we need to invest in are the engagement of people and the investment in people”. concluded Sassi: “This means a commitment to increasing joint efforts to reach collective outcomes, and bring capacity and training to the countries in crisis to guarantee choices and opportunities to participate in and benefit from development opportunities”.



“Planning for collective outcomes offers new longer term opportunities but currently it represents a challenge. As long as the financing architecture at country level does not meet the aspiration towards collective outcomes, humanitarian and development actors will lag behind.”



Enrique Eguren, Guest Lecturer at IDH – University of DEUSTO and member of NOHA-Network on Humanitarian Action, emphasized how protection can provide an entry point to build the link between humanitarian and development actions. “In protection it is difficult to identify clear cause-effect relationships. There is no linearity reflecting the reality of the context of interventions”. The reality is about complexity and the protection framework and the Nexus can be instrumental to overcome the excessive use of “linear” instruments, as the *Logical Frameworks* still heavily used in humanitarian interventions.

The question at this stage is: “How to understand and evaluate this complexity? How to link this complexity with the Nexus approach?”

He emphasized the need to elaborate concrete evidence from the contribution of NGOs to the protection of population in different contexts. This would reinforce the elaboration of pathways of influence to engage stakeholders and duty bearers and draw better stra-

tegic approaches on contextualized theories of change. The humanitarian narratives about ‘emergencies’ and ‘saving lives’ become patchy when you look at the complexities of different realities in different contexts.

Embracing complexity means giving a new drive to change organizational management. Protection provides an illustration of the challenges in elaborating the Nexus, such as the non-static nature of the phenomena or the clear understanding that impact can be achieved only by common efforts.



The debate followed with a presentation of lessons learned and challenges in elaborating an Integrated Protection Approach to deliver the Nexus in protracted crisis. **Francesco Michele**, Humanitarian Protection Policy Expert for We World-GVC, delved into the practical complexity of an international NGO to deliver more solid support when the structural drivers of the crisis are complex. Putting people at the centre is paramount, yet the reality of programming is seldom enacting real processes of ownership by the affected population. The centrality of the people needs to be structurally designed from the onset, in a framework of multi-sector analysis not designed specifically and only for either humanitarian or development strategies. This is currently an overwhelming challenge given that the majority of multi-sector or system-wide exercises are designed to inform either humanitarian or development mechanisms”.

He presented the process of research and the resulting Community Protection Approach (CPA), a people-centred system of analysis, programming and monitoring of causal factors of people’s needs and problems to enact humanitarian and development interventions in an integrated protection strategy. “Today we put the Community Protection Approach on the table to show all the lessons learned and challenges we found so someone can pick them up and do better”. He continued:

“We cannot wait until we have flexible and long-term financing mechanisms. In the meantime what we have tried to do with the CPA is to provide a system where any actor can use their own instruments and expertise, within a unique framework of analysis and monitoring”.



Michele highlighted how localization has been impactful to achieve results, along with the application of a multi-sector programmatic approach, even when activities are carried out within sector-specific projects. The essential aspect has been however assuming that other actors can be better placed to intervene, and provide them with analysis, evidence-based data and information. “Can we really speak about a Nexus before having a common commitment of sharing knowledge, information and data?”.

The event provided an opportunity for diverse experts from academia and civil society to openly discuss the Humanitarian-Development Nexus drawing upon practices. The experts agreed that the mixture of research practice and field-based practice is essential in their combination to find operational approaches of the Nexus. They also welcomed the event as an interesting first step in a continuous process of action-research, which WeWorld-GVC will continue promoting on the basis of the wins and failures of the presented Community Protection Approach.



SUGGESTED READING

- ▶ F. Michele and D. R. D'Ambrosio, *The Challenge of Long-Term Development in the Occupied West Bank: Voices from the Field*, IAI Commentaries 17|17, October 2017.
- ▶ CARE, *Doing Nexus Differently: How can Humanitarian and Development Actors link or integrate humanitarian action, development, and peace?*, September 2018.
- ▶ ICVA Briefing Paper, *Localization Examined*, September 2018.
- ▶ OECD, *DAC Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus*, OECD/LEGAL/5019; 2019.
- ▶ Cooperatives Europe, *Cooperatives and Peace: Strengthening Democracy, Participation and Trust. A Case Study Approach*, March 2019, pp. 122-126.

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