

ENSURING HUMANITARIAN DEVELOPMENT CONNECTEDNESS: Collective Outcomes, what does it mean?

Brussels – 6th May 2019

Conference Report



The event has been organized by



In partnership with



WeWorld – GVC assumes no responsibility or liability for any error or omission in the contributions of panelists. The information contained in this report is provided on an “as is” basis with no guarantees of completeness, or accuracy.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On the 6th of May, We World-GVC and NOHA, Network on Humanitarian Action, hosted a round table in Brussels gathering experts and practitioners to contribute to the dialogue around the Humanitarian-Development Nexus. The round table aimed to shed some light on the concept of Collective Outcomes. The conference provided the occasion to discuss the EU position on the Nexus thanks to VOICE – network of European NGOs – that provided the moderation of the session, and to the participation of a representative of DG DEVCO. The debate with different organizations highlighted a range of diverse experiences and perspectives on the Nexus and spurred a conversation towards a common comprehension of this framework of action.

List of Acronyms

CSO – Civil Society Organizations.

DG DEVCO – Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development.

DG ECHO – Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations.

EEAS – European External Action Service.

EUAV – European Union Aid Volunteers.

EU MS – European Union Member States.

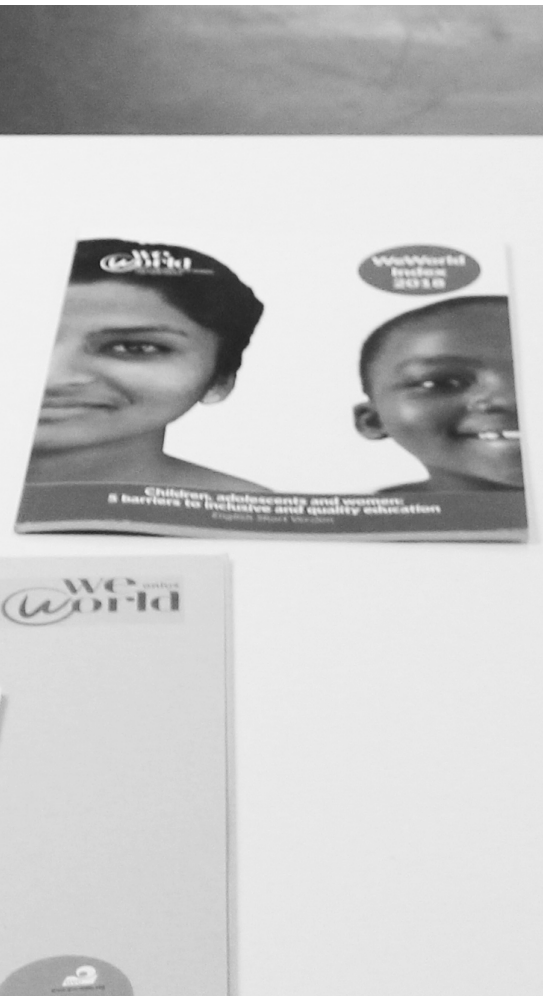
HDPN – Humanitarian, Development, Peace Nexus.

INGO – International non-governmental Organizations.

LRRD – Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development.

NOHA – Network on Humanitarian Action.

ODA – Official Development Aid.



Introductory Remarks

Stefano Piziali - We World-GVC.

We World-GVC welcomes you all to this panel co-organized by NOHA and also made possible thanks to the support that ECHO provides through the EU Aid Volunteers program. We World – GVC intends to stimulate a continuous dialogue among diverse actors on topics that can positively shape the way each one of us work. This is why we want to put the Nexus in the spotlight.

Kathrine Ebah-Moussa - Team Leader EU Aid Volunteers Initiative, DG ECHO.

The EUAV initiative is not exclusively a volunteering scheme; crucially, it is also a way to create occasions for NGOs to come together and exchange ideas on how to deliver better humanitarian aid, how to build resilience, and how to work on LRRD and engage in the Nexus.

Celia Cranfield - Voice NGO Network.

What is left of the Agenda for Humanity; the conclusions of the World Humanitarian Summit? The momentum currently surrounding the nexus might be an important political outcome of that process. VOICE sees great interest among its members concerning the Nexus and the main reason may be precisely the opportunity it provides to look at longstanding barriers within organizations and donors' practices and to challenge them to better link humanitarian and development aid. NGOs also closely follow the conversation given the apprehension regarding the possible shift from a people-centred approach that building a triple Nexus may represent, including the dimension of peace due to its clear political and security overtones. Today's roundtable will try to provoke a realistic discussion on understanding Collective Outcomes and how to work better together through the operationalization of the Nexus. Can the Nexus be the tool to break said barriers? What does it mean to define a Collective Outcome?



Cristina Churruca Muguruza, NOHA and University of Deusto, opened the panel. She introduced the Nexus framework and offered a conceptual map of the notions often associated with the term. "I experienced great confusion on how to define Collective Outcomes. The Nexus seems to be the goal to achieve, while the New Way of Working is the instrument to achieve it", she pointed out. The necessity of grounding action in new approaches stems from the disproval of our long term expectations that conflict around the globe will decrease. Recent events show that a great part of humanitarian funding is drawn by conflicts and man-made crisis.

"A big part of the problem is that the Nexus is a top-down driven agenda, developed by UN agencies and major donors, but how do we plan to include targeted local communities? How do we plan to engage CSOs in the process if prioritized contexts of interventions are the same in which Civil Rights are shrinking? Where and how do we bring them in?"

Churruca showed examples of the process of definition of Collective Outcomes led by UN agencies. From the examples, the narrative does not seem to advance a consistently new way of fixing goals. Additionally, the inclusion of local actors in the definition of outcomes established at higher levels still remains an issue.

"The whole Nexus framework seems to land on the misconception that the majority of the organizations are not multi-mandate, when in fact the opposite is true. How many organizations are only humanitarian? Most of them already have broad mandates! The reality is that nobody likes to be coordinated; on the ground, everybody will continue to look at their own priorities, project cycles and their own timeframes".

Churruca highlighted the lack of EU specific guidelines on how to work on the Nexus, calling it a deliberate choice not to be bound by specific regulations on concepts that are in fact still not clear.

The EU seems to be in the position to have a comparative advantage on the operationalization of the Nexus: it is the only actor that has every branch of the Nexus on the ground: EU diplomacy, both developmental and humanitarian departments, and its own defence and security policy.

So the question is, can the EU bring some leadership on the Nexus?



Patrick Rabe, Policy Coordinator for Resilience and the HDP Nexus in DG DEVCO illustrated the reasons for EU involvement in the Nexus. *“If we are serious about poverty eradication, we will have to work more and more in conflicts and fragile settings”*. Rabe stood by the EU commitment to the approach to Resilience and to country-led approaches to development.

He introduced some experiences from the six countries where the EU is implementing pilots of the triple Nexus. Rabe reminded that the focus has to be first and foremost on how to better understand the root causes of people’s vulnerabilities, while conferring a fundamental role to locally developed capacities .

The EU efforts started by mapping the existing initiatives thst the EU, EU Member States, UN agencies and others are proposing to identify gaps and the best complementarity. At this stage, however we should recognize that a great deal of actions will be taken individually, even if we want to identify collective outcomes.

Rabe was adamant to state the intention of EU institutions not to divert development funds *“from where development funding should go”* in any way. The boundaries set on ODA funds going to security related issues will not be touched and there is no proposal in the context of the Nexus that concern any diversion of funds at the EU level.

The EU is very clear on the adoption of a triple Nexus, including the peacebuilding component. This framework can guarantee that the political cooperation of EU and EU MSs is more informed by development cooperation and humanitarian actions. This includes for instance further endorsement of conflict sensitivity and do not harm principles by development programs.

“When we talk about peace we want to be clear that we mean the promotion of Human Security and positive peace, and that it has nothing to do with the securitization of humanitarian action or of the development agenda”.

Maybe the EU indeed has a comparative advantage, he concluded, or at least it has the potential to be a key actor He recognized however that sometimes the EU is less integrated than some bilateral actors and that that may be because the EU is generally less driven by interests of foreign policy than many EU MSs or other actors. The EU surely has leverage when it manages to strike the right line of intervention and make it count together with the UN counterparts and the EU MSs.



Enrique Eguren, lecturer at the University of Deusto and member of NOHA, introduced Protection as a framework that can help in navigating the Nexus.

His presentation revolved around the comprehension of aid interventions as complex endeavours. Aid interventions need a reality check insofar they cannot rely anymore on consequential schemes of predictions not accurately representing what is actually happening to affected populations.

The multiple chronic crises have increasingly normalized an approach focused on constant humanitarian interventions. In these contexts, however, complexity is not as much of a buzzword as it may seem. It directly shows us that some of the basic tools we have been employing, like logical frameworks, need to be revisited as they are totally inadequate to understand the reality on the ground.

Maybe it is better to talk about contributions to possible achievements rather than consequential cause-effect actions. It is useful to reason in terms of pathways of influence: how our actions can influence other actors to achieve goals.

Two fundamental directions that protection can provide in solving this problem are contextualization and narrative approaches. Theories of

changes are a good example of this, as they can be used to describe and explain how we put together humanitarian-development-peace efforts. They help in collecting evidence in a narrative way to capture the complex process that brought the affected population from one situation to another, including the intervention of humanitarian and development actors. If we apply this approach more, maybe we can manage to have more grounded information on social processes and power dynamics at a local level.

Protection also provides good instruments to analyse risk that could contribute positively to a Nexus approach. Current risk considerations are still weak tools not fully harnessing real complex processes. They should be revised, contextualized and better supported by concepts such as intersectionality; understanding how interlocking systems of power impact those who are most marginalized in society can help in operationalizing a consistent protection approach to ground common objectives.

Eguren concluded by hinting that indeed Collective Outcome may sound just like general objectives given by common sense. From its experience we should focus much more on the process of common analysis that can produce something different in terms of thinking, that is really what we need right now.



Francesco Michele, Humanitarian and Protection Policy Expert for We World-GVC, closed the round of talks presenting a practical experience of a double mandated organization. Integrated protection has been a practical framework to ensure more connectedness between development and humanitarian programming of multiple actors.

We arrived early to the realization that we could not deliver more integral interventions by ourselves. We wanted to implement integrated strategies but we were constrained by ongoing changes in donors' priorities. So we started from the collection of evidence and tried to create a system of analysis that could be beneficial to multiple actors, before trying to set objectives or outcomes that may be called common.

We must recognize that international organizations, together with their local partners, are often present in a territory for multiple years. However, the presence is bound habitually to different sectors' intervention or types of programmes bringing in specific systems or criteria to identify, monitor and analyse the context.

We asked ourselves what could be the best way to build collective strategies starting from the local level, and we considered the territorial presence of organizations as an added value and possible leverage of this process.



We then developed
a localized and
people-centred
approach to
analysis crafted
to assist multiple
actors' own
programming,
independently
from the sector
specificity of our
intervention.

Michele explained that, in 2013, WeWorld-GVC started trying to draw upon what already existed, and in the process uncovered numerous practical challenges that must be considered in the current debate on the Nexus. The first great dilemma relates to the reality of putting affected population at the centre, notwithstanding its ethicality and people's capacity to better understand how to address structural problems in their own territory.

We have to be honest and reckon with the fact that 'people at the centre' is a mantra that as international actors we do not manage to respect with the current instruments as much as we would like to. The recognition of local mechanisms does not necessarily make it easy to include those considerations in planning and strategies. In the majority of contexts of intervention nowadays populations are disenfranchised and experience assessment fatigue or dependence on external aid. Any collective outcome to work should therefore set people's inclusion and a localization strategy as a primary objective.



Michele continued to explore the challenges encountered and outlined that joined-up analysis is essential to define collective outcomes, however difficult with current instruments. System-wide assessments are mostly tailored to either humanitarian or development programming. They are mostly tailored to “project cycles” not allowing their sustainable embedding in locally-owned strategies going beyond their use by single actors.

The framework of integrated protection has proved useful because it links needs and vulnerabilities with duties and responsibilities. Needs-based interventions can be enacted while providing the capacity to act upon people's right and work for the support to rights-holders as a logical consequence.

In the experience of We World-GVC a localized joined-up system of analysis co-implemented with other INGOs and local partners supports the convening of multiple actors. This can enact strategic discussions on the structural drivers of needs and vulnerabilities and the consequent comparative advantage of each actor. Collective outcomes or common objective would probably be more concrete and realistic if grounded in territorial strategies and local programming, serving as a base for dialogue and buy-in with local institutions and actors in each country.

Outcomes of the Roundtable Debate

- The role of the Nexus in a situation of resurgence of humanitarian crises is to ensure that the humanitarian response is development-informed. Clearly, when a crisis hits the humanitarian has to move first. There are however different instruments, such as the Post Disaster Need Assessment (PDNA) with World Bank and the United Nations, that can be triggered earlier in a disaster. In Mozambique recently it almost started as soon as the humanitarian needs were discussed, and in a sense, it represents a good example of Nexus approach.
- There is often the risk of funding going only to certain areas because of political reasons. Likewise there is the risk that priority is given to the short-term humanitarian needs, making it difficult to divert them to meet more long-term needs. The Nexus can be a good opportunity to change that.
- There cannot be a divide between the role of INGOs, external actors for development and the national-driven development, nor can the Nexus be only a discussion around the need to enhance coordination. The Nexus has to be where international and national actors talk to each other and focus on how to better involve affected populations as an integral part of understanding needs and individuating response.
- At the EU level, the operational challenge of putting together ECHO, DEVCO, the EEAS and Member States' efforts is a daunting one. The pilot countries exercise, led by EEAS, started from joint analyses in contexts where the EU had already been working and aims at bringing wider information of more conflict sensitive development actions. At the same time, it is through Trust Funds that the EU is supporting the inclusion of possible new Nexus type of actions. The Nexus may be embedded in the 2021-27 multiannual budget framework. In this direction, the specific characteristics of EU mechanisms hold an advantage in delivering the Nexus.
- INGOs would probably benefit from a more precise breaking down of how the EU intends to operationalize the Nexus, through for instance the elaboration of specific guidelines. This would entail limits and risks specifically linked to prescribing a Nexus process excessively, not necessarily adaptable to all contexts. It is essential surely to have a general understanding of the objective and vision that come with the Nexus, and trigger country-led contextualization processes.



- At this stage it is important to have a clear and shared understanding of what each single element of the Nexus mean. The understanding of what is Humanitarian is set in principles and widely shared, while the Development and Peace components often hold different understandings depending on the actor.
- The Nexus elicits a different perspective on how actors should bring forward joint-learning processes. Concluding initiatives and interventions simply with policy recommendations and projects reports is just not a fruitful way to capitalize on actors' experiences. There should be a reflection on which actor could ensure the appropriate learning and capitalization process and crucially how can single actors promote the necessary engagement and dialogue to trigger further actions.



SUGGESTED READINGS

- ▶ Council of the European Union, *Operationalising the Humanitarian-Development Nexus*, Council conclusions, 19 May 2017.
- ▶ ICRC, *Recommendations from the Red Cross EU Office and the International Committee of the Red Cross: The European Union Humanitarian - Development Nexus*, December 2018.
- ▶ F. Michele for We World-GVC, *Integrated Protection to Ensure Complementarity of Sector specific Humanitarian and Development Actions in the occupied Palestinian territories*, Voice Out Loud, issue 28, November 2018, pp. 13-14.
- ▶ OCHA, *Collective Outcomes: Operationalizing the New Way of Working*, April 2018.
- ▶ VOICE Network, *Ensuring people's needs are at the heart of the Nexus approach: a humanitarian NGO perspective* VOICE policy resolution, 2018.

If you want to know more about the CPA and our work, visit

www.cpainitiative.org



Nexus Collection Vol. 1

FROM HUMANITARIAN TO DEVELOPMENT.

Ensure protection
in complex crisis

Milan – 1st April 2019



Nexus Collection Vol. 2

ENSURING HUMANITARIAN DEVELOPMENT CONNECTEDNESS:

Collective Outcomes,
what does it mean?

Brussels – 6th May 2019



Nexus Collection Vol. 3

THE HUMANITARIAN- DEVELOPMENT NEXUS. A Collective Responsibility

Rome, EXCO – 16th May 2019

Via Serio 6,
20139 Milano (IT)
T. +39 02 55231193
F. +39 02 56816484
www.weworld.it

Via Baracca 3,
40133 Bologna (IT)
T. +39 051 585604
F. +39 051 582225
www.gvc-italia.org



EU Aid Volunteers
We Care, We Act



 cpa@gvc.weworld.it

 www.cpainitiative.org