



THE HUMANITARIAN DEVELOPMENT AND PEACEBUILDING NEXUS

LESSONS FROM UGANDA.



OXFAM

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	IV
ABBREVIATIONS	V
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	VIII
INTRODUCTION	1
THE TRIPLE NEXUS APPROACH	5
BACKGROUND	5
DEFINING THE TRIPLE NEXUS	6
KEY COMPONENTS OF THE TRIPLE NEXUS APPROACH	7
TRIPLE NEXUS AND OXFAM’S TRIPLE R APPROACH	11
SUCCESS OF THE TRIPLE NEXUS	12
CRITIQUE OF THE TRIPLE NEXUS	13
TRIPLE NEXUS AND LOCALISATION AGENDA FOR OXFAM AND PARTNERS IN UGANDA	14
APPLICATIONS OF THE TRIPLE NEXUS IN OXFAM’S AND PARTNERS’ PROGRAMS	16
HOW OXFAM AND PARTNERS APPLIED TRIPLE NEXUS IN IMPLEMENTATION OF ICSP RISE-K, POWER OF VOICES AND DANIDA SP II PROJECTS	16
<i>Power of Voice Project</i>	16
<i>The DANIDA SP II Project</i>	18
<i>ICSP RISE-K Project</i>	21
HOW OXFAM APPLIED TRIPLE NEXUS IN OTHER PROJECTS	22
<i>Knowledge and practice gaps in applying HDP nexus</i>	24
REFLECTION ON HOW OXFAM AND PARTNERS APPLY TRIPLE NEXUS IN DIFFERENT PROJECT MANAGEMENT STAGES	27
<i>Project Initiation/Donor Requests for Proposal</i>	29
<i>Programme/Project Design</i>	29
<i>Programme/Project Implementation Stage</i>	30
<i>Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning and Adaptive Management</i>	30
<i>Reporting and Closure</i>	31
EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY OF TRIPLE NEXUS APPROACH	33
EFFECTIVENESS OF THE TRIPLE NEXUS APPROACH	33
EFFICIENCY OF THE TRIPLE NEXUS APPROACH	36
SUCCESS STORIES AND IMPLICATIONS	38
<i>Success Story 1: Empowered locals engendering community transformation</i>	38
<i>Success Story 2: Strengthened Community structures and coexistence</i>	40
<i>Success story 3: Effectiveness of multi-actors’ interventions in the same community</i>	40
<i>Implications - what the cases are telling us</i>	41
ADDED VALUE OF OXFAM IN THE TRIPLE NEXUS APPROACH ECOSYSTEM IN UGANDA	43
CONSTRAINTS AND FUTURE OUTLOOK	46
CONSTRAINT FOR TRIPLE NEXUS IN OXFAM AND PARTNERS	46
LESSONS LEARNED	47
<i>Best practices - what went well</i>	47
<i>Lessons on what could be done differently</i>	48
RECOMMENDATIONS	49
<i>Policy and Management Recommendations</i>	50
<i>Recommendations on practical ways of applying triple nexus approach</i>	52

REFERENCES _____ 55

ANNEX 1 TRIPLE NEXUS CHECKLIST AND ASSESSMENT BY OXFAM AND PARTNERS IN UGANDA

_____ 57

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Definition of score for triple nexus assessment	28
Table 2 Triple nexus performance threshold	28

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ABBREVIATIONS

AFCE	Agency for Community Empowerment
ALEAP	Advancing Leadership, Empowerment, Access and Protection of Women and Girls
CARITAS	Catholic Agency for Relief and Development in Moroto
CECI	Community Empowerment for Creative Innovation
CRED	Civic Response on Environment and Development
CSBAG	Civil Society Budget Advocacy Group
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
EACOP	East African Crude Oil Pipeline
ESSAF	Eastern and Southern Africa Small Scale Farmers' Forum
FDG	Focus Group Discussion
GALS	Gender Action Learning Systems
HDP	Humanitarian Development and Peace
ICSP RISE-K	Irish Aid's Resilience, Inclusiveness, Stability, and Empowerment of Communities in Karamoja
MEAL	Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning
NAWOU	National Association of Women of Uganda
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PvP	Power of Voices Partnership
RRA	Resource Rights Africa
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SEATINI	Southern and Eastern African Trade and Information Negotiations Institute
SP	Strategic Partnership
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
URDMC	Uganda Refugee Disaster Management Council
YETA	Youth Empowerment to Act
YSAT	Youth Social Advocacy Team

FOREWORD



In a time when humanitarian crises are becoming increasingly protracted and complex, there is growing recognition that responding effectively requires stronger collaboration and shared goals across short-term emergency response, long-term development processes, and peacebuilding efforts. This is what is known as the Humanitarian Development Peace (HDP) Nexus.

I must clarify that the HDP Nexus is not solely an approach of the UN or other international organisations. Rather, it is a practical way of working that can be used by governments, local NGOs, and civil society actors. More than just an approach, the HDP Nexus is a call to action to break down silos, adopt new ways of working, and prioritise people over sectors.

This review and learning report reflects Oxfam in Uganda's deliberate journey to operationalise the nexus approach across our programmes, drawing on our experiences in the West Nile and Karamoja regions. As highlighted in this report, the nexus approach enables us to respond to immediate humanitarian needs while also addressing the structural drivers of vulnerability and conflict, and investing in long-term resilience and peace.

What stands out most from this learning is that the nexus is about working more effectively, more coherently, and more sustainably. It challenges us to move beyond fragmented funding and disconnected interventions, and instead pursue collective outcomes that reduce vulnerability, strengthen local capacities, and promote peaceful coexistence.

At the same time, this report does not shy away from the realities we face. The nexus approach is resource-intensive, requires strong coordination, and demands a shift in mindset within our organisation, among partners, and across the broader development ecosystem. The persistence of silos, limitations in funding structures, and varying levels of understanding of the nexus continue to constrain its full realisation. Yet these challenges also create opportunities for learning and innovation.

One of the most encouraging insights from this report is the crucial role of local actors. Local organisations are increasingly taking ownership and driving solutions. This is not only vital to the success of the nexus approach, but also fundamental to advancing the localisation agenda and ensuring sustainability. Equally important have been flexible funding mechanisms and adaptive programme designs.

To keep the nexus practical, we need to be more deliberate in integrating it into programme design and implementation and in building a common understanding of the HDP Nexus. We must also continue to promote flexible, multi-year funding that supports this approach. Importantly, applying the Triple Nexus effectively requires strong leadership.

I would like to conclude by thanking the team that took the time to conduct this study, the Nexus Working Group that continues to guide the nexus programmes and internal reflections, and our affiliates and donors who have supported these various nexus initiatives.

I hope the insights in this report will help inform programming in different contexts, both within and beyond Oxfam.

Francis Shanty Odokorach.
Country Director.
Oxfam in Uganda.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

This report reviews Oxfam in Uganda's application of the Humanitarian, Development, and Peacebuilding (HDP) Nexus, assessing its effectiveness, efficiency, and relevance. The review aims to provide organizational learning and actionable recommendations for improving the nexus approach in project design, implementation, and advocacy. The findings primarily draw from three projects - Power of Voices (PvP), DANIDA SP II, and ICSP RISE-K and include input from Oxfam staff, partners, local governments, and beneficiaries across Uganda.

The HDP Nexus integrates short-term humanitarian responses, long-term development strategies, and peacebuilding processes. While the concept emphasizes coherence and synergy among these pillars, its implementation faces challenges such as insufficiently defined peacebuilding components and donor reluctance to adopt comprehensive nexus frameworks. Despite these obstacles, the approach enables holistic and sustainable interventions by addressing root causes of vulnerability and conflict.

Objectives and Scope

The objectives are to:

- 1) Evaluate the implementation and outcomes of the Triple Nexus approach across Oxfam's programs in Uganda.
- 2) Identify lessons learned, challenges, and best practices to inform future programming.
- 3) Develop evidence-based recommendations to enhance the approach's effectiveness, scalability, and sustainability.

The scope included an in-depth examination of Oxfam's initiatives in the West Nile and Karamoja regions, drawing on diverse stakeholder perspectives, including Oxfam staff, local partners, government representatives, and community beneficiaries. Additionally, Oxfam and partners in Kampala, Oxfam Affiliates and Confederation were also consulted.

Methodology

The review adopted a participatory and learning-oriented approach, grounded in feminist monitoring, evaluation, accountability, and learning principles. Before interviews, desk review was conducted to examine relevant literature on triple nexus. A total of 94 (67 female and 27 male) participants were consulted. This include 36 interviews conducted

with staff of Oxfam, partners, key stakeholders and Focus Group Discussion 58 project participants (beneficiaries). A workshop was conducted with Oxfam and partners' staff to assess the nexus approach across project management stages.

Application of triple nexus

The review offers insights into the operationalization of the Triple Nexus, highlighting the application in three projects. The Power of Voice Project (PvP) leveraged the nexus approach to empower smallholder farmers in the West Nile region through inclusive and sustainable agribusiness initiatives. All partners working with the same farmer groups, linking short-term needs with long-term development, fostering resilience among farmers in West Nile. The DANIDA SP II project target refugees and host communities in West Nile, integrating humanitarian assistance, livelihood development, and peacebuilding, with activities such as greening agriculture, resolving land disputes, and promoting coexistence. The RISE-K project implemented in Karamoja region and addresses extreme poverty through food security, disaster preparedness, and gender relations for peacebuilding. All three nexus pillars are implemented collaboratively in the same communities, ensuring synergy. Collaborative planning and monitoring among partners enhanced the project's coherence and impact.

Effectiveness and Efficiency

The effectiveness of triple nexus approach lies in fostering collaboration and coordination among partners, creating synergies within projects to address immediate needs and long-term challenges. By integrating humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding efforts, it tackles the root causes of conflict and crisis while ensuring cohesive interventions. Examples like RISE-K and PvP demonstrate how aligned efforts enhance outcomes for the same groups, while green initiatives under DANIDA SP II, such as clean cooking stoves, mitigate environmental degradation and reduce conflicts between host and refugee communities, arising from tree cutting. What holds the effectiveness of the triple nexus approach are the constraints it faces.

The triple nexus approach has proven to be an efficient strategy for program delivery by fostering linkages between activities, optimizing resource utilization, and enhancing value for money across its three pillars. Improved coordination and reduced duplication of services, as seen in Oxfam's collaboration with partners in nexus projects, further demonstrate its efficiency. However, the approach faces challenges in Oxfam's operations in Uganda, primarily due to its resource-intensive nature. The reliance on a large team for

implementation increases operational costs, undermining overall efficiency and the potential to maximize impact.

Constraints

The major constraints include the lack of understanding of the concept of the Humanitarian-Development-Peacebuilding (HDP) nexus and the frameworks for its implementation, a silo mentality that hinders nexus application and funding streams have not opened barriers to integrated programming. Additionally, Internal teams struggle to align their efforts and identify opportunities to integrate nexus into programming. On the other hand, coordinating externally among diverse stakeholders with varying mandates, funding structures, and timelines is equally complex. These leads to fragmented initiatives

Recommendations

Key recommendations include:

- Fostering joint planning and collaboration
- Optimizing resources and streamlining teams
- Strengthening institutional arrangements for coordination
- Aligning fundraising and program management
- Building local capacity for sustainability
- Enhancing coordination at all levels
- Establishing a learning framework for the nexus
- Creating spaces for engagement and reflection

While Oxfam has made significant strides in applying the HDP Nexus, addressing existing gaps is crucial for scaling the approach and achieving sustainable outcomes. The report calls for enhanced collaboration, capacity building, and donor engagement to realize the full potential of nexus programming.

INTRODUCTION

Oxfam in Uganda conducted a review and learning on the Humanitarian, Development and Peacebuilding (HDP) nexus approach employed in their program design and implementation. The review and learning draws from the experiences of Oxfam and partners, local government and project participants in Uganda. It also draws from the experiences of Oxfam Affiliates supporting projects in Uganda, the Oxfam Confederation, and as well as the perspectives of other institutions and organizations on how Oxfam has contributed to the application of the HDP nexus, also known as the triple nexus approach, in Uganda.

The overall purpose of the triple nexus review and learning was to rigorously assess and document the effectiveness, efficiency and relevance and impact of Oxfam in Uganda's nexus approach with the aim of generating organizational learning on how Oxfam can improve the operationalization of the nexus. The Power of Voices, RISE-K and DANIDA SP II projects were used to draw examples.

The objectives were:

- 1) Evaluate the implementation and outcomes of the Triple Nexus approach across Oxfam's programs in Uganda.
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The triple nexus review and learning initiative aimed to assess the implementation of Oxfam in Uganda's approach to bridging the humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding nexus; assess how effectively this approach enhances programming and contributes to project outcomes; document lessons learned, best practices, challenges, and successful strategies from three key projects, as examples. This is to support organizational learning within Oxfam in Uganda and the broader Oxfam confederation, and provide evidence-based, actionable recommendations to improve and scale the nexus approach for effective program design, implementation, documentation, advocacy, and adoption by other stakeholders and institutions.

This report adopts a learning-oriented perspective, documenting and critiquing Oxfam in Uganda's nexus approach to inform future program adaptations. It highlights the outcomes, results, and changes resulting from the application of the Triple Nexus

approach. Additionally, it integrates insights from anecdotal evidence and existing literature on the theory, policy, and practice of triple nexus approach.

The review process involved assessment of the effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, and impact of the nexus approach implemented by Oxfam based on data obtained from the Power of Voices Project, the DANIDA SP II Project, and the ICSP RISE K Project, based on secondary information and primary data obtained from in-depth interviews. The evaluation was undertaken in Uganda, particularly in the West Nile – Nebbi and Zombo districts for the Power of Voices Project, and Arua City as well as Yumbe, and Terego districts for DANIDA SP II Project and Karamoja sub-region - Amudat, Moroto, Nakapiripirit districts for RISE-K Project.

The evaluation was conducted in areas where Oxfam in Uganda has been piloting the nexus approach, ensuring representation from diverse geographic locations to capture contextual variations and nuances. However, only two districts were selected from each project site to ensure effectiveness in information generation. Furthermore, a range of stakeholders involved in the review process included Oxfam staff, local partners, project beneficiaries (host and refugee communities for DANIDA SP), community representatives, Local Governments and other organisations that have adopted a nexus approach in their programming. These categories of stakeholders are based on the list Oxfam provided.

The methodology and approaches used in the review including the sampling procedures, methods of data collection, analysis, quality assurance and reporting, pursuant to the set objectives of the assignment, was participatory in nature and guided by the principles of Feminist Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning. This approach facilitated inclusive stakeholder engagement to foster collective learning on the nexus approach. The participatory approach laid the groundwork by establishing the review's guiding philosophy, design, study population, and data collection techniques.

A five-phase process was therefore undertaken to conduct the review, namely inception and preparation; data collection; data processing and analysis; reporting; and validation. The review adopted qualitative research design. Key informant interviews were conducted with a wide range of stakeholders, including Oxfam staff, local partners, government officials, project beneficiaries (host and refugee communities for DANIDA SP), and community representatives. Additional data was generated using a nexus

checklist to assess how the nexus has been applied across Oxfam (See the checklist in Annex 1).

Purposive sampling was used in selecting the review participants. They included Oxfam, partners and beneficiaries, and representatives of organisations involved in the nexus landscape. The broad sampling strategy was stratified according to projects and regions. For each project, two districts were selected in consultation with Oxfam Program Quality and Learning and Project Coordinators. The sample size was not applicable since it was primarily a qualitative process. While indicative number of respondents was suggested for each data collection method used, the reviewers applied the principle of data saturation through continuous selection and engagements of more participants until very minimal new information was generated.

The reviewers used three comprehensive data collection processes: literature review and content analysis; key informant interviews, in-depth interviews and focused group discussions; and workshop. Desk review of relevant literature encompassed scholarly work, Oxfam strategy and nexus policy and practice documents. Other documents reviewed was Oxfam nexus guide and checklist, among others.

A total of 94 (67 female and 27 male) participants were consulted. This include 36 interviews conducted with staff of Oxfam, partners, key stakeholders and selected project participants (beneficiaries) in strategic positions to apply, lead and or experience the strength and gaps in the nexus. These include in-depth interviews with Oxfam Managers and Project Coordinators, and key partners staff involved in the projects. This was complemented by key informant interviews conducted with staff of Oxfam Affiliates, confederation and other organisations applying the triple nexus approach within and outside the selected regions.

Six Focus Group Discussions (FDG) comprised of 58 participants were conducted with project beneficiaries across the West Nile and Karamoja sub-regions. The Consultants facilitated the participatory discussions and explored their perspectives, experiences, and the impact of the nexus application to projects on their lives. The focus was on the project results across the three pillars of humanitarian response, development and peacebuilding.

In addition, one workshop with implementing staff was conducted to assess the quality of the nexus approach implemented in different interventions. The nexus guide, which Oxfam in the Hone East and central Africa and others developed provides for five

critical stages in programme management through which the nexus can be incorporated, applied and assessed. The stages are programme initiation - Request for Proposal (RFP), design of programme or project, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and reporting and closure. The nexus checklist comprising of indicators (see annex 1) was structured around the guidelines' key elements. The checklist covered the performance indicators at each stage of the programme and project management cycle and the scoring system. The workshop assessed the nexus by scoring and agreeing on them and for validating preliminary findings. The scores were aggregated and agreed upon during the workshop. The level of performance in applying the triple nexus was based on threshold provided in table 2.

The reviewers used qualitative data analysis method to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the findings through data transcription and coding of key informant interviews. The FGD data was imported into NVivo, a qualitative data analysis software, for coding. The coded data was organized thematically to align with the assessment objectives, and performance assessment criteria. Also, content and discourse analysis were conducted on all themes and sub-themes to identify patterns, emerging issues, and relationships. Findings from different data sources were then compared to validate results and provide valid evidence. Verbatim quotes from interviews and discussions have been used to substantiate the findings while ensuring confidentiality and ethical standards are maintained. The final step of data analysis involved interpreting the findings to answer the survey questions and discuss emergent issues.

Finally, to ensure the highest quality of data collection and analysis, quality assurance and control measures implemented throughout the nexus learning review process included training of Research Assistants, peer review of data collection tools, supervision of daily debriefs, peer-reviewed of the reports by consultants, validation of the report in a workshop before final submission. The reviewers were cognizant of ethical considerations built around social justice and awareness of deep power differentials throughout the learning review process and therefore sought participants' informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity before involving them in the review activity.

The rest of the report sections provides the background information about Triple Nexus approach based on literature written by various scholars, including those prepared in Oxfam. The report also covers findings on the application of HDP nexus by Oxfam and partners, its effectiveness and efficiency, constraints in this approach and the outlook.

THE TRIPLE NEXUS APPROACH

Background

In recent years, the global community has increasingly recognized the need to address conflicts around the globe with a combination of short-term humanitarian assistance, long-term development interventions, and political processes that support peace efforts, a triad often referred to as the triple nexus — or humanitarian development-peace nexus. Despite this recognition, it is unclear whether the Triple Nexus has led to an increased ability among scholars and policymakers to address the key issues that arise when addressing development, conflict, and humanitarian situations simultaneously. Whereas the concept of the ‘nexus’ is not new because it has been proposed severally under various names, the triple nexus approach is relatively a new concept which has continued to evolve over recent years. Since the “nexus” concept was proposed, the international community has been struggling with how to operationalize the concept.

In 1990s, contemporary debates emerged among the aid donors regarding the need to pursue coherence between the humanitarian and development sectors in order to address the disconnect between short-term relief intervention and long-term desired social change. It was at this time that the relief to development continuum model was at main focus of reform efforts, with nexus being proposed using different names, including Linking Relief Rehabilitation and Development (United Nations, 2022) and humanitarian development nexus, among others. Other elements such as migration, human rights, security, and stabilization, among others.

Nearly a decade later, in the 2000s, the concept of fragility emerged, triggering yet another desire to integrate approaches to address conflict. More recently, a concept of resilience emerged and has played a significant role in influencing debates on how approaches to conflict, humanitarian crisis and disaster risk reduction can be linked to localization (Barakat & Milton, 2020).

In 2016, the Double Nexus – or humanitarian development nexus – proposed as part of the Grand Bargain, was launched at the World Humanitarian Summit. In the latest attempt to reconcile emerging tension within the assistance community and against the backdrop of an increase in conflicts across the globe, Antonio Guterres, UN Secretary General’s proposal of the Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) Nexus approach in 2017 became instructive. The approach was further elaborated by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD/DAC) in 2019 in which it advocates

prioritising prevention, investing in development and responding to humanitarian needs, putting people at the centre of the response, developing local and national capacities, and ensuring foreseeable, flexible and multi-year financing.

Since then, both the United Nations (UN) and the European Union (EU) have taken important steps towards implementing the triple nexus. The United Nations, for example, describes the Triple Nexus as the interlinkages between humanitarian, development and peace actors (United Nations, 2022) – an understanding which informs the UN’s “New Way of Working (NWoW). It is in the UN’s expectations that under this approach would enable actors to synergize and deliver outcomes over multiple years.

Defining the Triple Nexus

According to Tufts University, the Triple Nexus approach is concept which describes:

“A way of working with populations affected by or at risk of crisis, to ensure the immediate needs of that population are met, while simultaneously promoting enduring solutions and addressing root causes that create continuing risk to lives, livelihoods, and security, and which builds in protection against all risks (natural, economic and political) as an integral goal.”¹

Oxfam’s understanding of a “nexus approach”, “nexus programming” or “the nexus” is framed as “means of creating synergies and common goals across short-term emergency response programmes and longer-term social change processes in development, as well as enhancing opportunities for peace so that individuals can enjoy the full spectrum of human rights”. It also opines that other definition further incorporates “a full range of diplomatic and security measures (Fanning & Fullwood-Thomas, 2019).

The available literature suggests that most actors have adopted the understanding of the Triple Nexus approach from the OEDC, which describes its focus in terms of strengthening collaboration, coherence and complementarity as follows:

¹ The definition is contained in Tufts University’s report titled, “*Making the Nexus Real: Moving from Policy to Practice*”, available at: <https://www.resiliencelinks.org/resources/reports/making-nexus-real-moving-policy-practice>.

"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."

The aforementioned definitions reveal a lack of a common understanding of the triple nexus approach but one whose descriptions underscores non-linearity of interconnectedness between humanitarian, peacebuilding and development efforts, and how they integrate and mutually reinforce each other. It is further observed that the emergence of the concept of the triple nexus approach points to a recognition that the three sectors should never been seen in isolation but rather as interdependent sectors. Similarly, it is argued that this holistic understanding is critical for yielding more sustainable impacts that can reduce vulnerabilities and prevent future crises. As a new approach, therefore, the Triple Nexus signals a paradigm shift from traditional humanitarian aid to the promotion of an integrated strategy that addresses immediate needs and simultaneously working gradually towards long-term solutions in development and peacebuilding.

Oxfam Confederation's understanding of the triple nexus approach is contained in its Discussion Paper of 2019 in which it underscores the core element of the triple nexus approach to include creation of synergies and common goals across the three different pillars of humanitarian response, development, and peacebuilding efforts with a focus on moving from short-term emergency intervention to longer-term development (Fanning & Fullwood-Thomas, 2019).

Key Components of the Triple Nexus Approach

The triple nexus is the latest attempt which seeks greater coherence between the humanitarian and development sectors. In that regard, an interplay of three central observations to be made about this connection include, first, a broad consensus that peace and development are mutually reinforcing, which corresponds entirely with the basic concept of the development-peace nexus. Second, scholars such as Wolff and others have argued for inclusion as one of the key ingredients of linking development and peace pursuant to the Pathways for Peace report and, third, that development and peace processes do interact in complex, nonlinear ways and may be at odds with each other under certain contexts (Wolff et al., 2020).

The key elements of the triple nexus approach include an integrated, internationally coordinated approach to crisis response that links humanitarian, developmental, and peace efforts. This "integrated approach" aims to foster coherence in programming through alignment of objectives, resources, methodologies, and robust monitoring and evaluation frameworks across the three sectors. The idea is to recognize that respective mandates and areas of expertise can be synergized based on comparative advantage of each sector rather than being siloed (Tufts University, n.d.; Uvin, 2002).

The second element pertains to strengthening collaboration with a focus on achieving collective outcomes that benefit affected populations by integrating efforts across the humanitarian, development, and peace sectors. This element necessitates shared learning, including analysis of needs and risks to inform coordinated actions.

Further, there is a pressing need to enhance the way incapacity and vulnerabilities are addressed. This involves proactive measures in both prevention and preparedness, even before conflicts arise or escalate. By investing in pre-emptive actions, societies can mitigate the risks associated with crises and avoid further exacerbating existing challenges. Additionally, it necessitates a comprehensive response that addresses vulnerabilities and empowers affected communities to overcome adversity effectively. This element therefore underscores the agency of holistic approach in ensuring that interventions address immediate needs while also tackling underlying causes of conflict and vulnerability.

The triple nexus approach also recognizes the importance of engaging and aligning with local actors. It emphasizes the inclusion of local communities, civil society organizations, and authorities in decision-making processes and implementation efforts (Njeri & Daigle, 2022). This localized approach ensures that interventions are responsive to the specific needs and contexts of the affected populations. It is through genuine partnership and active participation that sustainable change and progress can be achieved. The emphasis on localization is based on assumption that when empowered, local actors and organizations, they are better placed to play a crucial role in enhancing relevance, effectiveness, and sustainability of interventions.

Furthermore, the Triple Nexus approach relies on its ability to be flexible and to adapt to the changing contextual realities and needs. Flexibility allows for timely responses to emerging challenges while maintaining a long-term vision for stability and resilience. In addition, the importance of multi-year planning and financing to ensure that interventions are sustained over time, rather than relying on short-term funding

cycles typical in humanitarian responses cannot be over emphasized in the Triple Nexus approach (Tschunkert & Delgado, 2022).

Last but not least, the triple nexus approach underscores the significance of data and evidence-driven interventions (Fanning & Fullwood-Thomas, 2019). To effectively address crises, it is imperative to have accurate information and analysis. This enables decision-makers to make informed choices, allocate resources efficiently, and identify emerging trends. By adopting a data-driven approach, the humanitarian, peace, and development sectors can further enhance their response capabilities and adapt strategies as situations evolve, ultimately delivering more impactful outcomes.

In terms of the interlinkages between development and peace, scholars note that there is a broad consensus that the two pillars need each other and that they are mutually reinforcing and interdependent, corresponding entirely with the basic concept of the development-peace nexus. The argument that inclusion is one of the key means of linking development and peace is challenged by notion that their interactions are complex, may be at odds under certain circumstances, and do not necessarily follow a linear logic. It is therefore vital to note that peace and development are not understood and promoted as if they were elements in a linear sequence.

Oxfam underscores the significance of inclusion of peace pillar in the nexus particularly how conflict resolution and prevention are critical in ending humanitarian need, reducing poverty and ensuring sustainable development. In addition, it points to the need for addressing human-made barriers to such goals. Moreover, it acknowledges the historical gaps in the integration of peace component into sector-wide humanitarian and development activities, making consensus around what 'peace' means and its implications much more challenging. Oxfam also raises concerns regarding the risk of engaging in peace processes in compromising humanitarian principles of independence and impartiality by appearing to support or align with a particular group or solution. At the same time, development projects need to be supported and integrated in peace negotiations. Oxfam therefore outlines the understanding of peace interventions along a spectrum of conflict sensitivity; enhancing local capacities for peace; peacebuilding; peace processes and high-level political diplomacy; and preserving peace through peacekeeping missions.

To illustrate how peace and development pillars are interlinked, development processes can generate conflict, yet progress made in peace processes is stabilized by means of socio-economic development. Moreover, development is a prerequisite for sustainable

reliable peaceful relations. Studies have shown that countries with higher levels of socioeconomic development tend to experience lower levels of conflict. Economic stability provides resources that can be redirected towards education, healthcare, and infrastructure, which further contribute to societal stability. Furthermore, development initiatives need to be sensitive to existing social structures and cultural contexts. Sudden or disruptive changes can lead to instability, as people may resist changes that threaten their livelihoods or cultural practices.

Conversely, socio-economic growth does not automatically translate into peace. If growth is not managed inclusively, it can exacerbate inequalities, leading to dissatisfaction and potential conflict. For example, large-scale projects might benefit a few, yet displacing others, creating tension within communities. Moreover, there is a reverse interplay of the relationship between development and peace in relation to the negative effects of violent conflict on development. Whereas socioeconomic development benefits from the security and calculability of peacetime, it suffers terribly in times of violent conflict as it destroys the incentives for domestic investments.

In terms of position and guidelines on a more coherence implementation of the nexus approach in protracted crises and fragile context, Oxfam offers a framework which outlines how actors could address people's needs and vulnerabilities before, during and after crises. The framework further includes modalities of addressing structural and systemic root causes of crises, conflict and fragility. It underlines the interplay between the humanitarian, development and peace pillars in dealing with not only the symptoms in the short-term but also the root causes of risks, crises vulnerabilities and disasters in the long-term (Oxfam, 2021). In this regard, Oxfam's theory of change is centered on how the three pillars of the nexus could interact and contribute towards desired transformation of system in specific conflict contexts.

Scholars contend that one major challenge facing the Triple Nexus approach is that its peace component is the least clearly defined and understood, in particular by the humanitarian sector, particularly due to the diffuse and often ambiguous nature of the peace component (Howard et al., 2019; Strouboulis et al., 2023; Uvin, 2002; Wolff et al., 2020). This leads to confusion and inconsistent implementation. Peace encompasses a wide range of activities, from conflict resolution and diplomacy to security and stabilization efforts, complicating its integration into humanitarian responses. It also involves a multitude of international, regional, and local actors, each with different mandates, objectives, and methods. This diversity can hinder coordinated efforts and

create tensions between humanitarian principles and political agendas associated with peacebuilding.

However, from the humanitarian lens, peace is viewed primarily through the lens of stability and security necessary for delivering aid. More so, humanitarian actors increasingly recognize the need for conflict-sensitive approaches and programming that do not exacerbate existing tensions (Winterford & Gero, 2018). From development lens, they perceive peace in terms of sustainable development and structural stability. They focus on addressing the root causes of conflict through initiatives that promote economic opportunities. In South Sudan, for example, where the application of the triple nexus approach is being implemented, the humanitarian and development efforts emphasize the peacebuilding component as a critical element, thereby illustrating how context plays a significant role in shaping the application of the Triple Nexus. In order to respond to such contextual realities, however, Oxfam developed its policies which are aimed at addressing tensions within the nexus framework with a focus on creating common goals across emergency response and long-term development initiatives.

Triple Nexus and Oxfam's Triple R Approach

In the contemporary world, Oxfam notes how most people who live in the toughest and most fragile contexts continue to be disproportionately affected due to their levels and nature of vulnerabilities. Some of the triggers and drivers of such vulnerabilities include, inter alia, unstable governance, scarcity of socio-economic life essentials, rapidly changing climatic conditions, global shocks, oppression, entrenched inequalities, identity-related discrimination. These factors combine in creating and exacerbating the condition of extreme vulnerability of the population already at risk, particularly in protracted crises and fragile contexts.

In terms of response to such vulnerabilities, Oxfam has developed the rights, resilience and response (Triple R) approach. This approach is informed by the understanding that in fragile states and during protracted crises, human rights are often at risk and governments may lack the capacity or willingness to protect the rights of their citizens, leading to violations such as arbitrary detention, violence, and discrimination. Also, Oxfam is cognizant of the need of the affected communities to adapt to and recover from crises in fragile states, noting the forms in which resilience can manifest, including social networks, local governance systems, and community-based initiatives that support livelihoods and well-being. Moreover, timely and effective humanitarian

responses are vital in protracted crises both in the short-term and long-term where development strategies address the root causes of fragility.

In its position and guidelines on a more coherence implementation of the nexus approach in protracted crises and fragile context, the Oxfam triple R framework therefore outlines how actors could address people's needs and vulnerabilities before, during and after crises. This framework includes modalities of addressing structural and systemic root causes of crises, conflict and fragility. It underlines the interplay between the humanitarian, development and peace pillars in dealing with not only the symptoms in the short-term (through humanitarian relief) but also the root causes of risks, crises vulnerabilities and disasters in the long-term (peacebuilding and long-term development) (Oxfam, 2021). The Triple R therefore underscores the centrality of Oxfam's theory of change underpinning how the three pillars of the nexus can interact and contribute towards desired transformation of system in specific protracted crises and fragile contexts.

Success of the Triple Nexus

The triple nexus approach has succeeded in a number of contexts, including in Latin America, Somalia, Middle East and North Africa (MENA), among others. Proponents of the Triple Nexus hold that it has the potential of enabling the breaking down of "silos" of the humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding sectors. In Latin America, an example of a successful triple nexus process concerns the settlement of the border dispute between Ecuador and Peru. This is a case of a peace process with a positive influence on the implementation of joint development projects, resulting in desired collective outcomes for both peace and socio-economic situation of the local population along the border. This reinforces the assertion that "peace is a constant necessary precondition for lasting and sustainable development, because civil war almost always goes hand in hand with economic collapse" (Wolff et al., 2020).

In Somalia, the Triple Nexus approach has been applied to bridge the gap between humanitarian aid and development. In spite of the challenges in fully integrating these three sectors, actors have made efforts to connect short-term humanitarian responses to long-term development goals. This includes initiatives aimed at enhancing community resilience and addressing root causes of conflict through collaborative planning and joint analysis among various stakeholders.

In the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, CARE implemented the triple nexus through focusing on local contexts and partnerships with emphasis laid on

bottom-up processes that integrate development and peace initiatives with humanitarian efforts. Accordingly, improved resource pooling and more effective responses to community needs resulted, demonstrating how local engagements can enhance the effectiveness of nexus programming.

Moreover, countries such as Iraq and Colombia have initiated the integration of the triple nexus into their strategies for addressing internal displacement. These nations have adopted durable solutions, encompassing humanitarian assistance, development support, and peacebuilding efforts for internally displaced persons. The aim is to create a comprehensive framework that addresses the needs of IDPs while promoting stability and resilience in affected communities.

Advocates for flexible funding mechanisms support integrated programming across sectors, arguing that it allows for resources to be redirected as situations evolve, ensuring that all dimensions of the crisis are addressed simultaneously. This is the case with the ‘Resilience, Inclusiveness, Stability and Empowerment of Communities in Karamoja’ (RISE-K) project, funded by Irish Aid and the DANIDA SP II for refugees and host population in West Nile. The project interventions focus on three impact areas that include gender relations that contribute to peace, food security and timely humanitarian response in light of conflicts and crisis.

Critique of the Triple Nexus

In spite of its positive attributes, there has been significant criticism of the concept of the triple nexus approach and its implementation. Scholars have argued about the sensitivity of the humanitarian actors regarding integration with “peace”. According to them, humanitarian actors view it as a guise for securitised approaches which necessitate collaboration not with peacebuilding actors but rather with militaries engaged in stabilisation. There is also fear that powerful Western donors are pushing reforms to demonstrate cost-effectiveness in an era of public scepticism towards aid and to meet security rather than humanitarian or developmental objectives, principally stemming the flow of migration. Such fears were mirrored in negotiations over Sustainable Development Goal 16 (SDG 16)—on peace, justice, and strong institutions—when some states worried that SDG 16 would be abused by states looking to securitise and militarise development.

In fragile contexts where failures in development and peace processes mutually reinforce each other resulting in a conflict trap, it is challenging to provide potential solutions to their vulnerabilities. In terms of both theory and practice, there appears to

be more questions than answers. For example, scholars observe a two-decade-long pattern that affects a number of neglected fragile countries, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia where violence is widespread despite external peacebuilding efforts making them to be unable to escape from the conflict trap for long. Such contexts may therefore require “a different kind of thinking” (Francis, 2006).

Oxfam has a long history of engagements in Uganda dating back to the 1960s with its initial focus primarily on long-term development projects, such as agricultural development, water and sanitation, and education, informed by community-based approaches. Over time, Oxfam’s engagements in Uganda evolved to include responding to crisis through humanitarian relief response in Karamoja region in 1980s, and to community vulnerability caused by the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) insurgency in northern Uganda in the 1990s as well as through protecting and advocating for the rights of vulnerable groups, such as women and children. In 2000s, Oxfam’s interventions particularly in northern Uganda focused on peacebuilding and post-conflict recovery, reconstruction and development. It also championed peacebuilding efforts by promoting dialogue, reconciliation, and social cohesion among communities affected by conflict as well as in building resilience of communities to shocks and stresses, including climate change and economic instability.

Informed by the 2016 World Summit outcomes, Oxfam embraced the nexus approach, developed a briefing paper on nexus and has continued to adapt its programming to complex and dynamic challenges in project contexts in order to create more sustainable and impactful interventions. This holistic approach has been instrumental in addressing the complex challenges the communities face, including conflict, poverty, and climate change. In Uganda, Oxfam has been implementing the Power of Voice Project (PvP), DANIDA SP II in West Nile region and ICSP RISE-K project in Karamoja region with fully-fledged structures established on the ground, from partners to communities. The entry points for the nexus approach have included, *inter alia*, joint context and conflict analyses, including gender responsive conflict analysis to show how conflicts affect men, women, boys and girls differently; development of terms of reference; stakeholders’ engagements; and capacity enhancement of local actors for them to embrace nexus, enhance localization agenda and achieve sustainability.

At the onset of nexus there were concerns that local actors did not have the requisite capacity to, among others, manage large funds. Oxfam therefore addressed them by

CEFORD sometimes gets more money than Oxfam, and this is due to our capacity building initiatives.
YSAT, a refugee-led organization, is now writing their own proposals without Oxfam's support. They can even get bigger grants than Oxfam, in terms of billions of shillings.
YETA -Youth Empowerment to Act, started in a very humble way. When they wrote a proposal to us, the proposal was good. As part of due diligence, we went to see them in their offices, but found that the organization was not yet established, and they even did not have a bank account. As Oxfam, we took it up and supported the organization, paid their salaries up to the year 2021. Oxfam then enrolled them to benefit from DANIDA SP II. Now, the partner has started receiving funding from UNHCR.
Therefore, Oxfam takes such risks to build the capacity of partners, which is paying off. Most of the partners supported by Oxfam are now registered with the National Bureau for the NGOs.

investing in capacity-building initiatives of the local actors to enable them to do things on their own. There were also other forms of capacity building rolled out to the local partners, including: (a) trainings using various tools, such as financial management, outcome harvesting tools, advocacy methods, GALS methodologies, localization, humanitarian principles, conflict sensitivity, communication skills, human resources management, safe-guarding policies and measures, WASH, etc.; (b) on job mentorship in form of field visits to understand capacity needs of the partners and community, assessing the procurement processes of the partners, etc.; (c) capacity engagement meetings with partners, including offering opportunities for their participation in national, regional and global levels on various issues; and (d) provision of financial

Text box 1 description of Oxfam partners' capacity building outcomes

support to the partners to implement the initiatives to enable them take ownership, right from design to implementation of the projects.

Oxfam's aforementioned investment in capacity building of local organizations has so far culminated in the empowerment of the targeted organizations' personnel, enhanced performance, entrenched localization agenda and driven the desirable change and adaptation, as illustrated in the text box above.

APPLICATIONS OF THE TRIPLE NEXUS IN OXFAM'S AND PARTNERS' PROGRAMS

This review of Oxfam and partners' knowledge and practice of triple nexus was based on the whole country program but with more target on the three projects namely Power of Voice Project (PvP), DANIDA SP II and ICSP RISE-K project that were designed following Humanitarian, Development and Peacebuilding (HDP) nexus approach. The learning from these projects and the whole country program demonstrate how Oxfam in Uganda in collaboration with various partners applies the triple nexus approach, linking humanitarian support, development, and peacebuilding, into its program design and implementation.

The analysis of knowledge and practice is presented in three parts. The first provides a critical discourse centred on how Oxfam and partners applied triple nexus in these three designed as nexus projects. The second is on how they did in the whole country program, including projects that were not designed as nexus projects. The last part presents results of assessments of the extent to which Oxfam adopted triple nexus across a program management cycles from project initiation through design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and reporting. Their knowledge and practice gaps have been elucidated in each part.

How Oxfam and partners applied triple nexus in implementation of ICSP RISE-K, Power of Voices and DANIDA SP II projects

Power of Voice Project

The Power of Voices Partnership (PvP) Fair for All programme is a five-year initiative with the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs led by Oxfam NOVIB. The focus of the programme is to support and strengthen CSOs to play their diverse roles as educators, mobilizers, creators and watchdogs to make trade and value chains fair for all. In Uganda, the Fair for All project aims at strengthening CSOs to create space and mobilize demands of small-scale producers to contribute to more inclusive and sustainable agribusiness value chains (focus on agriculture, specifically coffee and horticulture) that respect land rights and promote grassroot women's rights and economic empowerment. The project aims at creating a conducive environment that promotes equal opportunities for individuals and businesses, resulting in poverty reduction, better service delivery and sustainable business practices.

To implement this project and achieve the set objectives, Oxfam in Uganda partnered with the Southern and Eastern African Trade and Information Negotiations Institute

(SEATINI-Uganda); Civil Society Budget Advocacy Group (CSBAG); Agency for Community Empowerment (AFCE); Uganda Agribusiness Alliance (UAA); and the Eastern and Southern Africa Small Scale Farmers' Forum (ESSAF).

The PvP is a 5-year Strategic Partnership project (2021 – 2025) being implemented in the West Nile districts of Nebbi and Zombo to achieve economic transformation by empowering smallholder coffee and horticulture farmers to attain improved livelihood through inclusive and sustainable businesses. AFCE works with farmers in Nebbi and Zombo on coffee and horticulture production and marketing and ESAT (Eastern and Southern Africa Farmers Federation) support farmers on land rights, UAA (Uganda Agribusiness Alliance) focus at marketability and advised farmers how to tap into markets. CSBAG majorly empower farmers to engage decision makers and advocate for better budgeting to provide services such as health and education, working through participatory budget clubs. SEATINI focuses on tax awareness and influencing tax regulations.

According to interviews conducted with various stakeholders, such as one extracted in textbox 1, the PvP partners work for the same groups in Nebbi and Zombo, providing different interventions that are nestled around triple nexus. The interventions are centred on farmer groups that AFCE identified and mobilised and all the implementing partners work to directly and indirectly support them. AFCE and ESAT help the same beneficiaries' groups grow and sell coffee and vegetables while CSBAG, SEATINI and UAA concentrate on voice and engagement on tax.

AFCE identified beneficiaries and mobilised them into groups then all the other partners came to work with the same beneficiaries. AFCE is a focal organisation in the field, and it is at the center of all the work. The farmers that AFCE supports in coffee and horticulture production want service delivery from government such as good roads, extension services, education, but how does the government get resources to provide them. This is where SEATINI comes to support local government to enhance revenue.

Then CSBAG comes in to influence on budget allocation; where does the resources go, is it on farmers' service delivery needs?

ESAT comes on land rights. Women access land for growing vegetables which is short-term, but they do not have land rights in case of a long-term crops like coffee. This is where ESAT becomes important to address land rights.

Text box 2 How triple nexus is applied in the PvP project

The PvP is a livelihood enhancement project that links short-term needs with long-term development solutions, creating resilience that can cushion project beneficiaries in case of shocks from disasters. The nestling of different project interventions in a humanitarian prone region, enhancing the participants' resilience, is how Oxfam and

partners apply triple nexus in PVP. This demonstrates how the development project integrated humanitarian preparedness consideration. However, there is no clear indication of how Peacebuilding is being implemented or mainstreamed across the different interventions by the partners. This is consistent with the literature presented in the previous section that peacebuilding is least defined and understood, especially due to its diffused and ambiguous nature. To the contrary, the peacebuilding component in the DANIDA SP II was comprehensive, encompassing community and domestic conflict resolution.

The DANIDA SP II Project

The DANIDA SP II initiative, titled Humanitarian Development & Peace Initiative for Crisis-Affected Populations in Uganda, is a four-year Strategic Partnership (2022–2025) funded through Oxfam Denmark. This project focuses on four key areas: economic justice and inclusive democracies, education for active citizenship, inclusive peacebuilding, and humanitarian action and resilience. The key areas reflect the three pillars of HDP nexus. Primarily implemented in the West Nile districts of Yumbe, Madi Okollo, and Terego, the initiative promotes peaceful coexistence, livelihood and food security, education, climate justice, and economic and social justice. A smaller component related to the East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP) is implemented in the South-West. Project implementation involves collaboration with four Refugee-Led Organizations, one National Community-Based Organization, and four NGOs.

The project partners include the Uganda Refugee Disaster Management Council (URDMC), Youth Social Advocacy Team (YSAT), Youth Empowerment to Act (YETA), and Civic Response on Environment and Development (CRED). Other partners are Agency for Community Empowerment (AFCE), Lugbara Kari, Community Empowerment for Creative Innovation (CECI), I CAN South Sudan, and Luigi Giussani Foundation. Together, these organizations work to address the challenges facing refugee and host communities. In addition to the West Nile districts, EACOP-related activities are implemented in Buliisa and Kikube districts, reflecting the project's commitment to promoting social, economic, gender and climate justice across various regions.

Uganda's proximity to politically volatile countries like South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo has resulted in a significant influx of refugees, with the country hosting 1,796,609 by December 2024 (see the Uganda comprehensive refugee response portal 2024). A high population of these reside in the West Nile subregion,

making it the area with the highest refugee population. The COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbated existing challenges, increasing protection risks and worsening food insecurity. To address these issues, the DANIDA SP II project provides support in Imvepi, Bidibidi, Rhino Camp, and Omugo refugee settlements, as well as the surrounding host communities, through targeted interventions aimed at creating sustainable, peaceful, and just societies.

Efforts to enhance educational outcomes for refugees through the Education Response Plan for Refugees and Host Communities have faced setbacks due to the ongoing influx of refugees. Enrolments in settlement areas remains low, and significant gaps persist in providing quality education. Similarly, Business, Technical, and Vocational Education and Training (BTVET) in Uganda continues to encounter challenges, including limited recognition, inconsistent policies, inadequate financing, and slow progress toward integrating green skills development.

The project addresses immediate humanitarian needs while tackling root causes of crisis as long-term solutions. Livelihood interventions under DANIDA SP II to address immediate humanitarian needs integrate both peacebuilding and development by fostering collaboration between hosts and refugees through farmer groups. The peacebuilding component of the nexus is implemented through consistently working with a combination of host and refugee communities. This approach promotes peaceful coexistence, reducing tensions and disputes over land and facilitates access for cultivation. To support these efforts, dialogues have been conducted with communities, landlords, and key district-level stakeholders, working with conflict mediation structures, to mitigate potential conflicts related to land access for refugees.

Long term livelihood needs and the environmental impact of the large influx of refugees are addressed by working on greening agriculture, providing green skills and making of energy saving stoves to protect the environment. Refugees, rely heavily on wood for cooking due to the lack of alternative energy sources, often collect wood from host communities, thus creating conflicts. To mitigate conflicts, nursery beds have been established, and trees distributed and planted to restore those lost due to fuelwood harvesting. Dialogues have played a crucial role in addressing these issues, reducing tensions, and fostering mutual understanding. This is a climate change mitigation and development intervention with a peacebuilding component.

Cash grants aimed at increasing resilience to shocks (development) also have an opportunity for peace through supporting groups comprising of both refugees and host

communities, which created harmony. Additionally, peacebuilding pillar is also being addressed by dismantling negative gender norms among others. Furthermore, cultural and religious alliances have been formed, and their capacities strengthened, to facilitate dialogues and mediate conflicts. These alliances address disputes related to land access, water usage, and stray animals, contributing to more harmonious relationships between refugees and host communities.

URDMC, Livelihood, Imvepi in Terego, Bidibidi in Yumbe
YSAT, Livelihood, Omugo (Terego/Madi Okollo)
AFCE, Livelihood, Yumbe, Terego, and Madi Okollo
YETA, Women leadership/ peacebuilding, Imvepi
Lugbara Kari, Peacebuilding, Ofua, Rhino camp, Terego district
I CAN South Sudan, Peacebuilding, Bidibidi Yumbe district Zone 1 &2
CECI, women leadership and peace building, Bidibidi Zone 3
LUIGI Giussani Foundation, Green skilling in TVET institutions (Omugo, Lodonga and Inde) in Madi Okollo, Yumbe and Terego
CSBAG, Budget tracking for Education and health service delivery in Yumbe and Madi Okollo
SEATINI, Revenue mobilization in Yumbe, Terego and Madi Okollo districts
CRED, Human Rights of ECOP project affected persons in Buliisa and Kikube

Text box 3 Location of DANIDA SP II project partners interventions

Whereas all the three HDP nexus pillars are implemented in the project areas, partners implement in different locations as shown in the text box, and not necessarily targeting the same beneficiaries' groups, as noted in the PVP and RISE-K project.

Furthermore, DANIDA project is implemented within the framework of Area-Based Management approach that Oxfam in Uganda established in West Nile. In this approach, all projects are supervised and coordinated by the Area Manager based in West Nile. The project leads based in the Oxfam Country Office provides technical oversight. Through this approach, Oxfam concentrates efforts in one area at scale, allowing projects to build synergies with each other. The projects such as one funded by the Government Affairs Canada (GAC) on Sexual Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR), education, the livelihood project among others build synergies with the DANIDA SP II. Therefore, the Area-Based Management approach has strengthened the application of triple nexus in the DANIDA SP II project by providing opportunities for linking with the area-wide program. The challenge, as will be discussed later, is how projects are coordinated to deliver the nexus objectives.

ICSP RISE-K Project

The 'Resilience, Inclusiveness, Stability and Empowerment of Communities in Karamoja' (RISE-K) is a 5-year (2023-2027) project funded by Irish Aid. The project is implemented in Moroto, Amudat and Nakapiripirit districts of Karamoja sub-region. The project implemented by Oxfam intends to directly reach 37,970 women, youth and other vulnerable people from mining and pastoralist communities who are living under extreme poverty and facing severe labour rights violations. Oxfam partners with Resource Rights Africa (RRA), National Association of Women of Uganda (NAWOU), CARITAS Moroto, and The Uganda Apiculture Development Organization (TUNADO) to deliver interventions focusing on governance and accountability for effective service delivery, promotion of women's rights, enhanced local capacity for effective people-centred, climate and conflict -sensitive, gender-responsive and inclusive disaster preparedness and response and improved income and food security.

The RISE-K project focussing on three impact areas that include gender relations that contribute to peace, food security and timely humanitarian response in light of conflicts and crisis. The three (03) pillars or concepts of the Nexus are divided among partners: CARITAS Moroto - Humanitarian and Development (Livelihood - Agriculture), The Uganda Apiculture Development Organization (TUNADO) - Development (Apiary), CBTP- accountability (development), Resource Rights Africa (RRA) - Advocacy and Peacebuilding, and National Association of Women of Uganda (NAWOU) - Peacebuilding. They deliver interventions around governance and accountability for effective service delivery, promotion of women's rights, enhanced local capacity for effective people-centred, climate and conflict -sensitive, gender-responsive and inclusive disaster preparedness and response, and improved income and food security.

In terms of applying the HDP nexus, all the interventions on the three pillars are implemented in the same communities unlike where livelihood is in one district and peacebuilding is in another. Every partner implements in the same two Sub Counties in a district. The beneficiaries of gender interventions are also of livelihoods. The project allocated funds for humanitarian response, sitting with Caritas Moroto, but under the humanitarian response platform, where organisations sit and decide on response. Textbox 2 was quoted from a focus group discussion, highlighting how the triple nexus is applied in RISE-K project.

The integration of HDP nexus in RISE-K project practically started from co-creation, where Oxfam invited partners to develop the proposal and eventually implement it

based on their expertise. The project was co-created around the three pillars of nexus with specific partners to implement. Project result areas were developed for each pillar. Each partner focused on co-creating activities which their organisations would implement to achieve the specified results. In other words, the three pillars of the triple nexus are divided among partners.

Similar to how the PVP is being implemented in West Nile, the RISE-K project implementation is focused in one area where all the partners initiatives are taken to the same groups of beneficiaries (project participants). There are synergies in the RISE-K that are quite effective, originating from a nexus project design. Synergies among the partners and components were enhanced through joint planning, peer visits and joint monitoring conducted regularly by partners working in the RISE-K project. For instance, the partners met regularly on the Karamoja humanitarian platform; budgeted for and provided quick support for targeted recipients. Collaboration of partners in the case of RISE-K project was noticed to be more effective, but the challenge of integration persist because each pillar which each organisation implements represents separate projects.

With CARITAS, we have the block gardens that we plant vegetables, and other things like cassava, green grams. NAWOU is teaching couples that they take to Moroto for training on family issues and they also come and train us. We also hold community barazas on the importance of peace. CARITAS brought for us some posho, beans and cooking oil when we had a problem of hunger that led to the death of some of our community members.

Text box 4 RISE-K project participants describing the project in a Focus Group Discussion in Lotisan Sub County

How Oxfam applied the triple nexus in other projects

This review and learning also examined how Oxfam applied HDP nexus in projects that were not developed with this approach unlike the PVP, DANIDA SP II and the RISE_K. Some projects were developed covering only one or two nexus pillars with or without opportunities to incorporate the third. This review and learning established that there are projects that are implemented with opportunities to incorporate another or all the HDP pillars but were not. It could be argued that triple nexus may not be relevant in all projects but given that this is an approach its application can cut across most projects that align with Oxfam core goals and objectives.

The triple nexus aspects are built up in some of the projects not initially designed following nexus approach by implementing alongside other projects in the same area. An area-based management approach as previously noted has been pivotal in incorporating nexus in such projects. The Area-Based Management approach implemented in West Nile has enhanced collaboration among project teams across

different themes, as previously mentioned. However, this approach still encounters challenges due to some project implementation teams being heavily influenced and managed by their respective thematic leads at the Oxfam Country Office in Kampala.

The nexus approach has also been exhibited in projects that are hosted in one theme and draws implementing staff from the others, allowing them to offer expertise that are nestled around the HDP nexus. The case of the “Advancing Leadership, Empowerment Access and Protection of Women and Girls (ALEAP) project” in Kyaka, Omugu and Bidibidi under resilient livelihood was a good example. The Resilient Livelihood Manager and project officer support the implementation team that was drawn from humanitarian response theme. In this project, the activities were tagged to staff from the beginning based on their expertise no matter the theme one comes from. Whether or not ALEAP had the three pillars of triple nexus, it demonstrated attempt to break silos, which is a significant barrier to triple nexus approach.

There are synergies that are quite effective, for example in the Irish Aid project (RISE-K) which was designed with a nexus approach, but it is revealed that there are some projects whose synergies depends on the level of openness of the implementing teams. Those who are open seek and receive technical expertise from other themes thereby bring in nexus perspective. For example, a project had a leadership program and sought support from the Gender Justice team. It is noted that these synergies are not institutionalised, giving way for implementing teams to depend. Institutional coordination has not effectively discouraged those with project management and implementation practices that are not very open to collaboration that could harnesses synergies among projects.

There are quite a lot of prospects for taking a nexus approach. The question is whether the prospects have been developed and taken further in nexus approach or there have been missed opportunities. There are many projects implemented without nexus approach even though there were opportunities. In extending this discussion, Oxfam and partners should be clear that triple nexus approach will be applied. This underscores the critical importance of donor engagement in the triple nexus agenda. Like the DANIDA SP II that was designed jointly with partners in a workshop and made clear that it is a Nexus project.

Projects missed opportunities to effectively apply the triple nexus approach due to gaps in knowledge and practice, some of which are discussed below. In some cases, the triple nexus approach was applied unintentionally, as implementers were unaware that their

actions aligned with this methodology. This lack of awareness suggests that additional opportunities might have been identified and leveraged if the implementers had been more deliberate and informed about the approach. This challenge was also evident among several partners implementing triple nexus projects, despite the approach being communicated during the design workshop. Some staff acknowledged that their work aligned with the triple nexus approach, but they only realized this after receiving training from Oxfam. Even after training, the concept and practical application of the nexus approach remained unclear to many.

These gaps highlight the critical need for ongoing knowledge generation and learning to ensure the HDP nexus approach becomes fully understood and effectively applied within Oxfam and its partners. It also emphasizes that many interventions, though designed with a single pillar in mind, could have been better aligned with the triple nexus approach, thereby missing valuable opportunities for integration and impact.

Knowledge and practice gaps in applying HDP nexus

The application of triple nexus has been complicated with the understanding that all the three pillars of humanitarian, resilient livelihoods, gender, peacebuilding must all be distinctively in there, making a project very heavy yet with little resources. The ideal is, if there is a call for proposal on governance, but in this call what component on peacebuilding, humanitarian response, long-term development solutions that neatly align with the core issue could be included, which is rarely the case. This is where there is a gap in knowledge and practice, essentially trying to fit major interventions across the three pillars into one project. So, what do this tell us about HDP nexus application in Oxfam and partners? The application mirrors attempts to put in whole Oxfam program themes into one. Essentially, the project should focus on the core issue in the call and consider what to include across the other pillars.

There is a challenge that a partner may have two components, and the other is lacking in their programming. A partner may not manage to effectively implement all the three components. For example, CARITAS Moroto is mainly implementing humanitarian and development, and it could be challenging to switch and incorporate peacebuilding as a whole intervention area. Often the budget does not allow for this switch. Yet a relevant aspect of peacebuilding could be seamlessly addressed in the humanitarian and development intervention without requiring a major shift. The challenge in Oxfam and partners' programs therefore has been a failure on seamless integration and implementation of programs with HDP nexus.

As previously noted, there are several projects that were not designed with nexus perspectives but there are opportunities to apply this approach. To do this, internal coordination among program themes and projects is essential, but it is not being executed effectively. It is recognised that a key aspect of nexus is coordination. However, internal coordination in Oxfam is low, and silos operation is dominant. The question for Oxfam management intervention is what keeps coordination low, yet it was meant for people to talk and work together. A low level of coordination among different themes and projects constitute a critical gap in HDP nexus practice. There are institutional arrangements such as the Country strategic framework, annual planning and review meetings, and monthly program meeting that could strengthen internal coordination. Managers meet on quarterly basis to discuss broad overarching issues, and these would be more effective spaces.

Joint planning as a mechanism to strengthen coordination and triple nexus application is encouraged, but so infrequent, leaving nexus to be project-based rather than institutionalised, thus weakening HDP nexus practice. In an interview, a staff revealed that, “*We try to encourage people to do joint planning. We can talk about it, understands it but we still go back to silos*” (Interview October 2024). This highlight the outstanding constraint that silos operation has on HDP nexus approach that effective joint planning could address. Efforts to identify components that could be implemented together, and link thematic areas are made when projects are being co-created, but implementation fall back to siloed themes. What perpetuate these situations have been discussed in the last section of this report.

Oxfam increasingly thinks through program design using triple nexus approach, but the challenge is trying to bring all the four themes into the design and implementation. Not all the four themes necessarily always need to be there. In trying to do this, there is misrepresentation of the nexus. HDP nexus does not mean everyone, or every theme should be there in project. A project may require three staff, for example, but Oxfam ends up with twelve, just to accommodate all themes as program. In the same way, it usually ends up with several partners doing small pieces with little resources. Apparently, the dwindling funds in the humanitarian response and preparedness ecosystem is creating unforeseen heavy weight on nexus approach.

Because of dwindling funding, people use nexus to bring in unrealistic number of staff and partners. Proposals are developed with high cost of staff, making nexus drain resources that could go to communities, as further discussed in the next section on the effectiveness, efficiency and impact of nexus. High cost can also make Oxfam

unattractive to donors. A remedy to this misinterpretation is that Oxfam management should be deliberate to put a realistic number of staff to increase resources efficiency. The problem of job insecurity could be solved by management being firm that one project cannot absorb every staff and partner. This is aimed at curtailing resource struggle that leads to misrepresentation of triple nexus.

Recalling an earlier discussion on the purpose of triple nexus, the direction is to ensure moving away from looking at humanitarian projects exclusively from development. The idea is having, besides humanitarian response, development program through resilience and in future have peace so that there is less humanitarian crisis. This is aimed at enlarging program impact in the community by fostering cross program collaboration internally among teams and connecting with stakeholders such as partners, CSOs and government in more integrated ways. Since this is the new discourse, escalated by UN as an approach, the major struggle noted among Oxfam teams is to be seen to apply nexus even where it has not been feasible. It was remarked in one interview with Oxfam staff that, “*Not every project can come complete with three pillars, but we try to touch all* (Interview, 11th October 2024). This analysis underscores the key role program management should play in assessing where nexus is feasible and where it is not, and when it is feasible, which pillar, and what aspects in a pillar can be integrated.

Within Oxfam, new developments are emerging in programming and implementation because of adopting HDP nexus. A group interview with Oxfam team in West Nile revealed a fascinating narrative, highlighting a positive shift, but also raising a challenge in fundraising to finance projects. They said,

“In proposal development, we used to do it in form of silos, like if you are in education, then you plan and write proposals alone, but now, we write proposals together to cover all the themes” (Interview, 14th October 2024).

This shift builds and benefits from synergies that can lead to more coherent programs. What needs to be established is whether this practice has helped fundraising or not. This could raise funds from donors that have embraced triple nexus but could be to the contrary to those who have not. Representing all components in one project could also contribute to failure of fundraising, arising from forcing proposal design to fit and flow. Although the RISE-K project proposal was successful a dilemma arose before the project was awarded that could offer some learning. After winning, Oxfam was told to narrow down, but the concerns were on whose work (theme) would be removed and which partner should be dropped.

Reflecting on the literature review in section two of this report, the HDP nexus is a sectoral approach, which should primarily enjoin all actors in humanitarian space. Therefore, all these programs across the three pillars do not have to be within Oxfam and partners. An effective coordination of all actors in the target area could deliver nexus. However, this is not happening effectively, which raises a question on how well actors are coordinated and across organizations (externally outside Oxfam) to ensure a nexus approach. The case of external coordination in West Nile can illustrate this. Oxfam participates in joint sectoral coordination meetings with the districts. These meetings review implementation progress and challenges, aiming at a coordinated program that eliminates duplication and promptly respond to the beneficiaries' needs. These have not delivered nexus as a sectoral approach as organisations are more inclined to their programs than linking them externally across organisations. The questions which external coordination should effectively deal with, for example, how do we link education and livelihoods? How do we link peacebuilding with education? This is something that Oxfam could lead and provide added value the way it has done with localisation agenda.

The foregoing discussion confirms the feedback obtained during the review and learning process that Oxfam had a lot of discussion about nexus, but the practice still requires a lot of improvement. A lot of analysis is often done and not commensurate with what is translated to actions. This is leading to paralysis of analysis. Notwithstanding these critical perspectives, there are formidable knowledge and practices of nexus that should be amplified. The arrangement and collaborating among RISE-K partners is formidable although it is also bedevilled by the design placing each partner for a nexus, making it more of individual projects to them than an approach that partners can adopt as a way of working. The PvP way of working where partners anchor their interventions around the same groups supported by AFCE and the experience in ALEAP implemented with staff drawn across themes are some of examples of good knowledge and practice required for HDP nexus.

Reflection on how Oxfam and partners apply the triple nexus in different project management stages

The triple nexus approach can be evaluated across five critical stages of the project management cycle: program initiation (Request for Proposal - RFP), program/project design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and reporting and closure. To assess progress in integrating the nexus approach, Oxfam in the Horn, East, and Central Africa (HECA) developed a comprehensive checklist as stated in section one. This checklist includes performance indicators for each stage of a programme/project

management cycle, scored through group consensus on a scale of 0 to 3, with 3 being the highest score. The scoring framework provides a clear interpretation of the results, as detailed in table 1 below.

Table 1: Definition of Score for triple nexus assessment

Score	Score definition
0	No signs of adopting the nexus
1	Positive signs of adopting a nexus approach
2	Good commitment to adopting a nexus approach
3	Nexus approach has been fully adopted.

The total percentage score is calculated by dividing the total score attained in the assessment as the numerator by the sum of maximum score obtainable from all the applicable indicators. The percentage score determines the level of performance in applying triple nexus. The checklist provides the threshold for determining the level of performance as provided in table 2 below.

Table 2 Triple nexus performance threshold

Percentage score	Level of performance
Less than 30%	Weak adoption of nexus approach
30% - 50%	Positive/good commitment to nexus approach
51% - 80%	Strong nexus approach
81% - 100%	Nexus approach has been fully adopted

A workshop was held with Oxfam staff and partners to evaluate how the triple nexus approach was applied across the stages of program and project management. These stages include project initiation (donor requests for proposals), program/project design, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL), and reporting and closure. Participants were divided into two groups—Oxfam staff and partners—who independently scored performance at each stage (self-assessment), providing justifications and recommendations for their assessments. This group-based scoring relied on consensus to gauge the application of the nexus approach.

The findings from the workshop complement interview data, offering a comprehensive view of how Oxfam and its partners apply the triple nexus approach in Uganda. The Oxfam staff group reported a score of 70%, while the partners group scored 75%. According to the performance thresholds in Oxfam’s nexus assessment checklist,

Assessment score of two groups:
Oxfam staff – 70%
Partners’ staff 75%

Text box 5 Triple nexus assessment scores

both scores reflect a strong application of the nexus approach. The difference between the two percentage scores is not big, signposting validity in the assessment. Detailed scores can be found in Annex 1. The following discussion provides insights into how Oxfam and its partners assess their application of the triple nexus across each stage of programme and project management. The discussion also demonstrate some areas of consistency between the self-assessment conducted by Oxfam and partners' staff and the interviews carried out by the consulting team.

Project Initiation/Donor Requests for Proposal Programme/Project Design

This stage involves analysis of contexts and risks, identifying beneficiary needs, potential stakeholders and proposing ways of solving the problem, broken into goals, objectives, outcomes, outputs and strategies/activities. Indicators were developed to assess how Oxfam and partners integrate triple nexus in the programme/project design. The assessment included integration of data from comprehensive context and gender-sensitive analyses of the root causes and structural drivers of conflict in project design, whether data directly informs the project development across the HDP nexus pillars, ensuring alignment with the unique challenges of the target areas, coordination with other stakeholders, and ensuring these analyses are participatory and inclusive. Additionally, the assessment checklist seeks to establish whether activities are designed to address the underlying drivers and/or root causes of people's problem, staff expertise and alignment of indicators with HDP nexus, and if learning is embedded in project design.

The self-assessment shows deliberate efforts are being made to use data from gender analysis, and those often provided by partners, to inform the three pillars. While there is context analysis, including information partners share, especially during project proposal preparation, it is not updated and shared with the different stakeholders and there is no formal system in place to carry it out periodically. Oxfam team reported that context-specific area-based programming outcomes and global indicators are developed, aligned HDP nexus, and activities aligned to the root causes of the problems experienced. There are positive attempts to promote the nexus approach such as training, meetings and forming a working group. However, there are limited capacity among Oxfam and partners. The assessment also established that project designs provide for reflection, monitoring and learning events, but learning questions are incorporated though they are developed during implementation.

Programme/Project Implementation Stage

At implementation, the emphasis in the assessment checklist is on coordination within teams, active partnerships, collaborations, and coordination with other actors including local authorities and duty bearers, co-creation spaces and dialogues. The assessment also focus on existence of comprehensive/robust work plans that consider humanitarian response, longer-term development, and peace building initiatives while considering conflict-sensitivity, Do No Harm', regularly updating conflict and safe programming analysis, early warning, crisis modifiers and contingency measures within Oxfam granting modalities.

The self-assessment revealed that there is coordination among Oxfam teams and deliberate efforts to promote it in the nexus projects but still requires improvement. There is coordination with project implementing partners and good relationship with local government, which are essential for triple nexus approach. However, engagements with local authorities are not intended for promoting nexus but effective project implementation. Oxfam also provides partners with opportunities to co-create projects, joint monitoring and reflection. There are workplans that consider humanitarian response, longer-term development, and peace building initiatives but the nexus approach is emphasized in only three projects namely PVP, RISE-K and DANIDA SP II.

While conflict sensitivity is emphasized in all projects, regular updates are not undertaken. But to partners, this has been fully adopted by applying Gender Action Learning Systems (GALS) methodology on household conflict management. Similarly, gender sensitivity and analysis is emphasized in all projects, and there is a gender justice theme at Oxfam to ensure that interventions are delivered in gender-sensitive ways and gender analysis informed understanding of risks of exploitation and abuse. And finally, Humanitarian principles and safeguarding frameworks are respected and both Oxfam and partners comply with them

Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning and Adaptive Management

The nexus checklist was designed to examine whether there are regular assessments, performance reviews, learning events and evaluations that reflect HDP triple nexus, and lessons generated are used to improve accountability and programming. The indicators are outcome-focussed across the HDP nexus with context-specific baseline information. It is used to assess whether there is a flexible MEAL system that supports adaptive programming, and Theory of Change are periodically updated. The

Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEAL) and adaptive management ensure that programming remains aligned with the overarching goals and contributes to achieving long-term outcomes in a sustainable and accountable manner.

The findings indicate that performance reviews held twice annually to reflect on the achievements with efforts of integrating and concretization of the nexus approach, and partners also acknowledged regular assessment in the projects. Learning agendas are developed and lessons from previous projects are utilised to inform design of the new projects with triple nexus approach. Baseline assessments are planned, budgeted for and conducted where data is generated for contextual indicators for new projects.

The MEAL system in place permits changes in targets and indicators informed by data, stakeholder engagements and context analysis especially, for long term projects, but major adaptive management roles were not mentioned. To the contrary, information from DANIDA SP II project indicates that they have biannual Adaptive Management meetings where lots of changes are made to the project. Theory of change is updated in consultation with partners, especially for PvP, RISE-K and DANIDA SP II, and information is availed especially during co-creation, initiation and design phases of projects, inception meetings, partner forums and sharing reports with OPM and donors.

Reporting and Closure

What is assessed on reporting and closure stage is about report templates that cover Oxfam's work and results across the HDP nexus dimensions. The assessment reveals that reporting templates at Oxfam capture the dimensions of triple nexus and work done by Oxfam, but partners pointed out the need for intentional reporting in alignment with the HDP.

In conclusion, the findings of this report highlight several strengths in how Oxfam and its partners have integrated the triple nexus approach across the program and project management cycle. The adoption of a structured assessment checklist with clear performance indicators is a notable strength, ensuring systematic evaluation and group-based consensus on nexus performance. Both Oxfam staff and partners reported high scores—70% and 75%, respectively - indicating strong adoption of the nexus approach. Efforts to integrate context-specific gender-sensitive analyses and to align activities with the HDP pillars during project design are commendable. Additionally, the commitment to learning, as seen in the inclusion of regular assessments, adaptive MEAL systems, and updated Theories of Change, demonstrates a forward-looking approach.

Strong collaboration with partners, local authorities, and other stakeholders further reflects Oxfam's dedication to co-creation and accountability.

However, the report also identifies several gaps that require attention to fully realize the potential of the triple nexus approach. A significant challenge lies in donor engagement, as many funding calls fail to comprehensively address all three nexus pillars, often emphasizing one or two components. While Oxfam advocates for multi-year and flexible funding, not many have been obtained, thus limiting long-term planning. Finally, while reporting templates align with nexus principles, partners emphasize the need for more intentional reporting on the HDP dimensions. Addressing these gaps will be crucial for advancing the triple nexus approach and achieving sustained impact.

EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY OF THE TRIPLE NEXUS APPROACH

Effectiveness of the Triple Nexus Approach

Effectiveness is an evaluation criterion used to examine the extent to which a set of interventions achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives and results. It can be used to examine an activity, a project and an approach. Effectiveness of triple nexus is the extent to which the approach achieves the intended objectives. Oxfam emphasizes that humanitarian relief, development initiatives, and peacebuilding must happen simultaneously rather than sequentially to address the systemic inequalities that perpetuate poverty and vulnerability. The humanitarian-development-peace nexus aims to meet urgent needs while tackling the root causes of conflict and vulnerability, fostering sustainable development, and advancing peaceful coexistence within communities.

In summary, the objectives of triple nexus are enhancing coherence in responses to complex crises that have both short-term and long-term dimensions, addressing root causes of vulnerabilities and conflict while meeting urgent needs and promoting resilience in communities by linking emergency relief to sustainable development and peace. In this review and learning, the focus was whether and how the triple nexus approach helped Oxfam and partners achieve the above-stated objectives.

The triple nexus provided locus for creating change across the HDP nexus, considering immediate needs and long-term solution, thus confirming that this approach is effective in achieving the desired objective. The example from Oxfam and partner work for the mining communities in Moroto district in Karamoja region describes in Text box 4 illustrates the approach's effectiveness in creating change. Through the RISE-K project, Oxfam and Resource Rights Africa (RRA)

On the humanitarian aspect, we are implementing activities that are changing the livelihoods of communities. We hold talk shows and involve communities and district officials to create awareness and addressed issues affecting the communities and artisan miners. In development, the mining companies are now compensating communities because of the constant engagements and community sensitizations that we have held. Though engagements to ensure compensation started sometimes back, with the inception of the RISE-K project, we intensified advocacy and capacity building of the mining groups to enable them advocate for their rights. We also provided platforms for the artisan miners to engage directly with the interested investors and these efforts have resulted into the compensation of about 9 clans since the inception of the RISE -K project – thus leading to peaceful co-existence. (Interview with Oxfam partner Resource Rights Africa, 15th October 2024)

Text box 6 Effectiveness of triple nexus in creating change for mining communities in Karamoja, Uganda

engaged district local government and mining companies as duty bearers to address communities' humanitarian need such as immediate livelihoods while also engaging them in long-term solutions involving compensation of local communities rather than taking their land for free, which would attract protest and fatal retaliation by security organs protecting mining companies.

The triple nexus approach has proven effective in fostering linkages and coordination among partners, which is its core objective. By integrating humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding efforts, it creates a strong network of collaboration. For instance, when one partner focuses on a specific sector, such as peacebuilding, others address complementary areas like livelihoods, or broader development goals. In an interview, a staff of Lugwara Kari, one of the Oxfam partners implementing DANIDA SP II said, “*As one does intervention in one sector, one think of how to connect with other sectors. We do our part and where we reach the end, we linked the same beneficiaries to the other partners across the three elements of triple nexus*” (Interview 21st October 2024). This interconnected approach ensures that interventions in one sector are seamlessly linked to those in others, providing comprehensive support to beneficiaries.

Partners effectively align their efforts, as illustrated by the practice of transitioning beneficiaries from one program to another, like with the Power of Voice Project (PvP), ensuring continuity and synergy. This collaboration not only maximizes impact but also builds a unified strategy to achieve sustainable outcomes for communities. This is also highlighted by the example of I CAN South Sudan's engagement with multiple partners in West Nile refugee response program. A partner in implementing DANIDA SP II project, I CAN South Sudan, focuses on peacebuilding but also engages with other partners on livelihoods, reproductive health, and development. Their initiatives such as roundtable discussions on peace and climate justice further strengthened collaboration, enabling partners to address cross-cutting issues holistically.

The triple nexus approach has proven highly effective in creating synergies among organizations and within projects, ensuring cohesive and impactful interventions. The RISE-K and PvP projects exemplify this effectiveness by demonstrating how collaboration among partners enhances outcomes across humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding efforts. In the PvP project, synergies are evident through coordinated actions: UAA provides farmers with inputs, AFCE trains them on crop cultivation, and UAA further supports them with market access strategies. This seamless integration of roles ensures that farmers receive comprehensive support, from production to marketing, fostering economic resilience and sustainability. Such

collaboration not only maximizes the impact of individual partner contributions but also illustrates how an effective triple nexus approach aligns efforts to achieve shared goals. By bridging gaps and linking processes, this approach ensures that outcomes are amplified, benefiting communities in meaningful and lasting ways.

The nexus approach has demonstrated its effectiveness by addressing interconnected challenges through integrated solutions that tackle root causes of conflict and crisis, such as food and water scarcity. For example, RISE-K activities empowered households to grow crops and diversify into other enterprises like apiculture, promoting economic resilience. Recognizing the water crisis as a critical issue, desilting dams was prioritized, ensuring reliable water access for both households and livestock. This initiative combines humanitarian relief, climate change adaptation, and long-term development, highlighting the multidimensional impact of the nexus approach. Additionally, by securing water resources, the intervention prevents conflicts over access, directly contributing to peacebuilding efforts. Similarly, the green project elements with the DANIDA SP II are important in preventing future shocks by, for example, providing clean cooking stoves that reduce the need to cut down trees, thereby protecting the environment and reducing conflict between the host and refugee populations. As earlier mentioned, tree cutting had been a source of conflicts between host and refugee population. This holistic strategy not only meets immediate needs but also addresses systemic vulnerabilities, fostering stability and sustainable livelihoods in the process. The nexus approach thus ensures that short-term actions are connected to long-term development and peace outcomes, creating a pathway for communities to thrive.

These examples provide evidence that suggests the triple nexus approach has been effective, but this is not to say it does not have flaws. HDP is not everything in one, but how effectively organisations can deliver on these multiple needs and demands together as a sector, not just an individual organisation and project, is not the case. Oxfam is linking and coordinating internally all three nexus pillars and very little with others as a sector for the purpose of applying the triple nexus approach, but for effective implementation, especially under the local governments and the Office of the Prime Minister in the case of refugee settlements. For example, Oxfam provides humanitarian response, UNDP works with the government to support development infrastructure, UNICEF for education, and another facilitates peacebuilding, and if all three pillars are coordinated as a holistic response, it would be more effective. What is holding back the triple nexus are primarily how they apply it, as discussed in the previous section, and the constraints discussed in the last section of this report.

Efficiency of the Triple Nexus Approach

Efficiency in program and project management refers to the ability of an intervention to achieve its objectives in a cost-effective and timely manner, ensuring that inputs are effectively converted into outputs, outcomes, and impacts. When applied to the triple nexus approach, this criterion evaluates how well the integration of humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding efforts meets its goals within the constraints of resources and time while adapting to an evolving context. The assessment of the triple nexus approach's efficiency seeks to determine the extent to which it delivers results compared to alternative approaches. It also considers whether the approach achieves its objectives in a timely manner, even when external factors influence project implementation. Moreover, it examines whether projects guided by the nexus approach could have been implemented more efficiently. This report evaluates the efficiency of the triple nexus approach in terms of resource utilization, coordination, and achieving objectives within Oxfam's operations in Uganda.

The triple nexus approach has proven to be an efficient strategy for program delivery, enabling the linkages of activities and maximizing the use of available resources to deliver on the three pillars. By aligning humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding efforts, it enhances budget performance, ensuring greater value for money while optimizing the use of human resources. Although it may not directly lead to cost savings, because of misrepresentation of personnel requirement by bringing many experts from all the three pillars in one project, the approach significantly deepens impact by fostering collaboration, addressing complex challenges more comprehensively.

The Triple Nexus approach adopted by Oxfam and its partners in Uganda has demonstrated notable efficiency through its non-monetary benefits. It is not the money that matters but the significant benefits. While it may not always be cheaper or more directly effective, the approach promotes long-term thinking and adaptability, allowing organizations to respond flexibly to unforeseen challenges, making it efficient. For example, Oxfam linking its education programs for refugee and host population in the humanitarian response areas to national budgets and issues around equitable spending exemplifies how nexus programming aligns with broader systems, enhancing impact, coherence and sustainability as non-monetary benefits. By focusing on long-term benefits and preparedness, the approach empowers beneficiaries and fosters resilience in face of risks and ensure continuity in case of disruptions. Therefore, these make nexus programming efficient considering its non-monetary considerations.

The added value of coordination and reduced duplication of services which are noted in the ways Oxfam works with partners in the nexus projects demonstrates efficiency. For example, Oxfam and partners in the RISE-K project are well coordinated, working with the same beneficiaries and there is no duplication of services that would be wasteful. Considering this from a related perspective, for example in the DANIDA SP II and PvP projects, Oxfam calls partners for capacity building and feedback meetings where discussion on nexus approach is incorporated. Joint monitoring visits are conducted, especially for all partners implementing a project. This reduces cost than it would be incurred in case of single partner monitoring visits and creates an understanding and learning across themes, partners and stakeholders. It is sufficing to argue that reduced duplication and amalgamation of activities increases efficiency of nexus approach through improved cost-effectiveness.

Coordinated efforts of Oxfam and its partners in Uganda exemplified by the implementation arrangement in PvP has enhanced project efficiency by optimizing time. For example, when AFCE mobilizes farmer groups for their activities, other partners in the PvP can engage the same beneficiaries, not spending time and resources mobilising again, thus maximizing outreach and impact without duplicating efforts. This shared approach fosters synergy among partners, streamlining interventions and ensuring that resources are utilized effectively to benefit communities comprehensively.

While the triple nexus approach has its merits, its efficiency can be questioned when considering how Oxfam applies it in some projects, especially on the adequacy of resources relative to the number of beneficiaries it aims to support. The examples from the previously implemented NORAD funded project in West Nile and the RISE-K project can illustrate the argument of nexus inefficiency. In the NORAD project, different components were implemented in different places instead of concentrating them in one place, spreading thin, and eroding efficiency that could have been realised through nexus approach.

On the other hand, instances where resources are concentrated in select areas, with the same beneficiaries' groups as in the RISE-K project, deepens impact but fails to address the needs of the broader communities, limiting the project's breadth. The reliance on government to support excluded beneficiaries undermines the rationale of these interventions, which are intended to complement government efforts. This imbalance created by how triple nexus has been applied in the cases of NORAD and RISE-K projects highlights the challenges of balancing depth and breadth in nexus

programming, raising concerns about its overall efficiency in meeting diverse and widespread needs.

The efficiency of the Triple Nexus approach in Oxfam's operations in Uganda faces significant challenges, particularly due to the resource-intensive nature of its implementation. It is being delivered using a large team, which increases operational costs and reduces efficiency. While the approach encourages collaboration, some projects do not accommodate a wide range of partners, limiting the ability to fully integrate humanitarian and development efforts. Additionally, the perception that each pillar of the nexus must involve a distinct partner strains the limited funds. For instance, allocating 60,000 Euros annually to a partner is insufficient to meaningfully address a substantial scope of work. This results in fragmented and less impactful interventions. Instead of a truly integrated nexus approach, current applications like RISE-K appear to consolidate separate projects rather than harmonizing elements from all pillars into a cohesive intervention, ultimately making the approach less cost-effective and more complex.

Success stories and implications

Over the years, Oxfam Uganda has been implementing the triple nexus approach, integrating humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding pillars in the West Nile and Karamoja sub-regions in Uganda. Three success stories highlighted below were selected from the localities where Oxfam has been implementing its projects in Uganda. They illustrate the power of the triple nexus approach in addressing complex challenges faced by communities.

Success Story 1: Empowered locals engendering community transformation

This success story is of a female South Sudanese refugee, Bella (not her real name), 42 years of age, currently living in a refugee settlement in West Nile. She came to Uganda in November 2016 with her children, later her husband joined them in the camp in 2017. She narrates how the three pillars of the Triple Nexus approach interacted and transformed her life and that of the family.

I joined Oxfam's peacebuilding project through CECI, a refugee-led organization in 2021 and was elected as chairperson for women-led forum, a group that initially comprised of 20 members. Initially, I used to fear expressing myself well in public. However, with the knowledge and skills on leadership I as a group leader, I became more confident to talk in front of people. I was also mentored on gender awareness and mediation skills, which enabled me improved on my relationship with my husband, and we started settling domestic issues peacefully. I started using newly acquired skills to support people to settle issues in the community. I managed to extend my leadership from the group to become chairperson of Refugee Welfare Committee 1 (RWC 1) and had a second two-year leadership term.

I contributed to the formation of another women group called Women Movement and have registered it as a Community Based Organization (CBO), and I am its chairperson. In this CBO, we drill shallow wells in the settlement with support from an International NGO called Dan Church Aid (DCA). We get technical support from men in the community as advisors in proposal writing. In addition, Oxfam trained me on Gender Action Learning Systems (GALS) methodology, which helps me in supporting women and men to cooperate among themselves at the household level.

A year ago, my husband passed on. However, given the skills and community responsibility I have, I am confident as a single mother, to take good care of my three children.

From the training allowances and transport refunds I get when I am called for a workshop, I have opened a small business and selling general merchandise but still join my fellow women to do mediation in the community. This year alone, I have handled four mediation cases and succeeded in three. The one that failed was because the parties refused to compromise, which I managed to refer to Women's Protection and Empowerment (WPE).

I attribute my success to Oxfam's funding support, which is channeled through CECI, which is empowering the local structures to solve our own problems and contribute to development

Success Story 2: Strengthened Community structures and coexistence

This case story is from Lolum (not real name) from Karamoja, a project participant of RISE-K, who narrated benefits across the three pillars of triple nexus.

Our group is called Lokitumo Youth Farmer Group. We started the group in 2023, with support from CARITAS. In 2023, we used to grow vegetables like onions, green peppers, carrots, and we used to save our money, but one of the members took our money. When we joined CARITAS, they trained us on how to grow vegetables and gave us seeds of green gram, cow peas, onions, carrots, green pepper, okra, and cassava. One of the group members gave us a half-acre for the kitchen garden, and 3 members gave 16 acres for cassava, green gram, and cow peas. We harvested carrots, onions and Okra.

The money we got from the sale of the vegetables we intend to use to invest in fast-growing greens. We have benefited because the balance of seeds from the nursery beds was given to individual team members, and they have equally sold proceeds from their gardens and bought other home items. Others have started businesses with this money, and some are saving it in savings groups. We live peacefully, support each other with garden work, and contribute to supporting a member, for example, when they fall sick. After the training on Domestic Violence by NAWOU, we are conducting community dialogues on domestic violence, and we include both men and women.

We have so far conducted like eight dialogues in different villages in Lotisan, the rate of fighting between married people has reduced, and children are no longer chased from home. This sub-county had a lot of issues with rape and early marriages. When we conduct these dialogues, we invite the police, CDO, LC3 chairman, Parish chief and the local councillors. These dialogues are our own initiatives. When hunger befell us, CARITAS gave the people food, and we have now added 2 of those elders to our group so that they can also benefit from the sale of vegetables.

Success story 3: Effectiveness of multi-actors' interventions in the same community

This is a narration by a local government official in Karamoja on the effectiveness of nexus approach through multi-actors' intervention in the same community story a local government official narrated

My name is Sarah, and I work as a community development officer in Nakapiripirit district. I have worked with the RISE-K project from last year and this started with the training on the nexus approach. We received a training on the nexus from Oxfam and

all the project partners of the RISE-K project were introduced to the district and we have worked well from then till now.

We have collaborated very closely with the project partners like TUNADO, CARITAS, NAWOU, RRA and CBTP. These partners closely involve us in their activities, and we sometimes go with them for field activities. I have appreciated the nexus model because it will go along way in providing holistic support to our communities because all these partners target the same beneficiaries. TUNADO and CARITAS have trained the target groups on livelihoods, and this has helped to deal with issues of hunger. NAWOU trains people on peace building issues and this has helped us in Morita to tackle issues of domestic violence, early marriages equally, the intervention on RRA through the radio talk shows we jointly hold, have helped people the mining sites understand their mining rites but also ensure children are not employed at the mining sites.

We received training from Oxfam on disaster response and this has improved our capacity on how we report disasters, and we have been able to receive support after the training. In the training, we were taught the importance of statistics and evidence, and I used this Information when we received a disaster of drought in my subcounty. I used this information to report to the Karamoja humanitarian alliance and also to the district that escalated this to the office of the Prime minister. As a result, the alliance through CARITAS brought maize to rescue the community that was struck with drought. As a result of the support from CBTP on service monitoring and also input in the budgeting cycle, the community is more vigilant on the quality of services. As the subcounty, we are now keen to ensure we develop gender responsive budgets and try to push for disasters to be catered for in the budget.

I have seen how resilient the community members of the subcounty have become because of the Nexus approach. The same community receives support in all the 3 aspects of the nexus. The intervention of NAWOU and RRA has resulted in peace, and this has given the community an opportunity to focus on development initiatives like apiary, and vegetable planting.

Implications - what the cases are telling us

Notwithstanding challenges associated with the application of the triple nexus approach, the success stories of its implementation by Oxfam Uganda in the West Nile and Karamoja sub-regions have significant implications for theory, policy, and practice in the humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding sectors.

First, in terms of conceptual/theory building, the nexus approach challenges the traditional siloed approach to humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding by highlighting the interconnectedness of these sectors and the need for integrated solutions. In addition, the emphasis on a nuanced and holistic understanding of complex and dynamic contexts through critical analyses enable interventions to be adapted accordingly to respond to evolving needs of targeted vulnerable population. Furthermore, the triple nexus approach implemented by Oxfam in Uganda underscores the importance of focusing on sustainability of intervention and long-term impact, where targeted local communities are empowered so as to encourage ownership, participation and leadership in addressing their own challenges.

In extending this discussion, Oxfam's work through CECI, a local partner in Yumbe district in the West Nile for instance, underscores a paradigm shift in the concept of "working for" to "working with" communities within the theoretical framework of localization. The theory to ponder is that whenever Oxfam focuses on localisation and enhancing the capacity of local partners at the community level, the likelihood of project acceptance, local ownership, creativity, success, and sustainability is high. The example from case story 1, about CECI, is instructive. In another dimension, Bella's powerful story illustrates how the initial humanitarian life-saving support provided to her alleviated her vulnerability, and how the skills training she acquired, such as mediation and GALS methodology, enabled her and her cohort to provide protection to vulnerable groups such as women, girls, and children. With her skills, Bella gained the trust of her community and has progressively provided leadership, mentorship and training to the community. Her story further shines light on the beneficial connectedness between localisation and triple nexus approaches.

Furthermore, the lessons learnt from case story 3, for example, underscore the significance of policymakers' evidence-based decision-making, including effective utilization of resources. The projects in Karamoja showed the opportunities that the triple nexus offers in certain contexts where multiple actors are involved, through complementarity among projects implemented in the same geographical areas and targeting the same communities, with some projects addressing particular pillars of the nexus based on their comparative advantage.

The success stories aforementioned further have implications for practice by the triple nexus community in terms of the need to adopt integrated programming approach, building institutional and personnel capacity of local organizations and communities to spur domestication, cascading and sustainability. Further lessons can be drawn by the

triple nexus ‘community of practice’ on the importance of effective monitoring and evaluation system in informing continuous vertical and horizontal learning, evidence-based decision-making, and adoption throughout project cycles.

Overall, evidence from the three case stories points to effectiveness, efficiency and relevance of the triple nexus collective outcomes under its three pillars, particularly in reducing vulnerability to shocks and stresses, increasing community resilience, improving access to essential services, improving social cohesion and peaceful coexistence among communities. It also shows the effectiveness, efficiency and relevance of the triple nexus in strengthening women and marginalized groups’ voices and enhancing localization at the local governance structures.

Added Value of Oxfam in the Triple Nexus Approach Ecosystem in Uganda

Oxfam’s involvement in Uganda’s Triple Nexus ecosystem—integrating humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding efforts—is characterized by its unique strengths and contributions that amplify the impact and sustainability of initiatives in this space. The organization’s expertise, strategic collaborations, and innovative approaches enable it to address complex challenges effectively, leveraging its comparative advantages to benefit local communities.

Expertise in the Humanitarian Pillar and Integrated Approaches: Oxfam’s strongest pillar lies in its humanitarian expertise, which serves as a cornerstone for its contributions within the Triple Nexus framework. By integrating its strengths with those of partners skilled in peace and conflict resolution, Oxfam creates impactful synergies. This was evident during the Mozambique floods, where Oxfam collaborated with organizations such as Save the Children, demonstrating how collective integration fosters resilience and effective responses. Harmonizing approaches across the humanitarian, development, and peace sectors is a critical value Oxfam brings, ensuring that strategies are aligned and mutually reinforcing.

Advocacy, Campaigns, and Policy Influence: Oxfam enhances the Triple Nexus ecosystem by embedding campaigns and influencing into its programming. Its ability to conduct research and leverage policy influence could empower stakeholders to play active roles in achieving nexus objectives. This pragmatic approach ensures that nexus interventions are not only impactful but also adaptive to local contexts, contributing to systemic changes that address underlying causes of inequality and injustice. By connecting these dimensions with its humanitarian and development work, Oxfam deepens its impact while advancing strategic objectives.

Localization and Empowerment: A cornerstone of Oxfam’s added value is its emphasis on localization. Drawing from lessons learned, Oxfam prioritizes empowering local actors, enabling them to take ownership of initiatives. For instance, the success of PELUM leading a livelihood project consortium highlights the effectiveness of localization. Through a project “Empowering Local National Humanitarian Actors” (ELNHA), implemented from 2016 to 2022, Oxfam pioneered the set-up of humanitarian platforms in Karamoja, Acholi and West Nile to strengthen the voice of local actors in the humanitarian response and improve their coordination and capacity. During this period, Oxfam also took on the role of convener of the working group of the Charter for Change (C4C) that it was already a signatory, drawing local actors across the country who endorsed it. Oxfam’s commitment to localisation agenda could ensure that local organizations and communities are at the forefront of implementing nexus approach, fostering sustainability and resilience, and thus offering added value.

Addressing Inequality and Innovating for Efficiency: Oxfam’s focus on tackling inequality and injustice aligns seamlessly with the Triple Nexus framework. By integrating food security and climate justice into its programming, such as in the DANIDA SP project, Oxfam demonstrates how nexus approaches can be cost-efficient while achieving significant impacts. Leveraging funding opportunities to address multiple components of nexus programming allows for strategic and comprehensive solutions that align with Oxfam’s goals.

Knowledge Sharing and Capacity Building: Oxfam’s role in facilitating learning and capacity building strengthens the overall nexus ecosystem. Its track record in leading methodologies like GALS (Gender Action Learning System) showcases its ability to enhance local capacities and amplify voices. Oxfam’s commitment to equitable partnerships ensures that nexus collaborations are inclusive and mutually beneficial. Through its extensive networks and large constituency, Oxfam fosters greater adoption and scalability of nexus approaches.

Driving Systemic Change and Innovation: Oxfam’s ability to innovate and adapt within the Triple Nexus framework positions it as a key player in advancing systemic change. By integrating campaigns, policy influence, and localized solutions, Oxfam ensures that its interventions are not only impactful but also address root causes of challenges. This holistic approach enables Oxfam to demonstrate how nexus strategies can lead to transformative outcomes.

Reflecting on the above narrative, clearly, Oxfam's added value in the Triple Nexus ecosystem in Uganda is anchored in its humanitarian expertise, advocacy, localization efforts, and innovative programming. Its ability to foster equitable partnerships, build local capacities, and integrate diverse components of the nexus framework ensures that initiatives are impactful, sustainable, and aligned with broader strategic objectives. By leveraging its strengths, Oxfam plays a pivotal role in enhancing the effectiveness of nexus interventions, ultimately contributing to resilient and empowered communities across Uganda.

CONSTRAINTS AND FUTURE OUTLOOK

Constraint for triple nexus in Oxfam and partners

One of the major constraints is the lack of understanding of the Humanitarian-Development-Peacebuilding (HDP) nexus and its implementation frameworks. Oxfam and partners' staff often find themselves overwhelmed by the extensive descriptions and interpretations of the Nexus. This leaves them lost in theoretical definitions rather than focusing on actionable strategies. Without clear guidance, implementers struggle to translate the nexus into cohesive programming, leading to disjointed efforts.

At the local level, the HDP nexus is often perceived as an initiative imposed by international organizations, such as the UN, INGOs, and donors. This perception undermines its consideration as an approach that local partners can adopt in their programming and systems. This, therefore, undermines its localisation, sustainability, and ownership by local actors. Without substantial investment in building the capacity of local organizations and communities, the nexus risks failing to be adopted by Oxfam's local partners. Yet ensuring that local actors are equipped to handle future crises is crucial, especially as international organizations are unlikely to remain in these spaces indefinitely.

Another critical challenge lies in decision-making processes around programming. Staff are given greater autonomy to shape programs, but this often leads to confusion about roles and thematic alignment. For instance, during calls for proposals, teams prioritize their own themes' relevance rather than focusing on the proposal's specific requirements. Keywords like "governance" or "resilience" could be interpreted as relevant to a thematic program named with such words yet it can be relevant to others or multiple themes, thus creating competition for potential project resources and complicating coordination. This lack of a unified approach dilutes the nexus's intended integrative focus.

A deeply ingrained silo mentality further hinders the implementation of Nexus. Themes and teams often operate within rigid boundaries, maintaining a "what is mine is mine" attitude. This mentality prevents holistic integration of humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding efforts. Transforming this mindset and encouraging cross-themes collaboration is essential to breaking down these barriers.

The structure of funding compounds these challenges. Funding streams have not opened barriers to integrated programming. Similarly, institutional mandates of funders emphasize areas of focus, leaving little room for cross-themes and initiatives across the three pillars yet sectoral integration at implementation is also weak. These structural constraints limit the flexibility needed to implement the nexus effectively.

Coordination challenges exist both internally within Oxfam and externally with partners. Internally, teams struggle to align their efforts and identify opportunities to integrate Nexus principles into programming. Externally, coordinating among diverse stakeholders with varying mandates, funding structures, and timelines is equally complex. This lack of synchronization leads to fragmented initiatives, reducing the overall impact of Nexus-aligned interventions.

Lessons Learned

The lessons learned are categorised into two, describing best practices that outline what went well, and what should be done differently.

Best practices - what went well

Oxfam and its partners have demonstrated commendable practices in applying the triple nexus approach. These best practices reflect adaptability, learning, and strategic focus in Oxfam's programming.

Using flexible funding and adaptive program designs to respond to changing circumstances

Effectively utilising flexible funding mechanisms and adaptive program designs to address the dynamic needs of communities is a best practice. Oxfam exhibited this flexibility that allows programs to respond quickly to changing circumstances, such as shifting humanitarian needs, development priorities, or peacebuilding opportunities. Such flexible funding, as seen in the GAC project and the DANIDA SP II in West Nile, demonstrates a practice that could be scaled up. By tailoring interventions to evolving contexts, Oxfam ensured that resources were allocated efficiently, and interventions remained relevant. This adaptability strengthened the overall resilience and sustainability of the impact of nexus programs.

Internal reflection for continuous improvement

Oxfam has engaged in internal reflections to assess the effectiveness of its programs and identify areas for improvement. While there is room to enhance this process, the practice of reflecting on successes and challenges has fostered a culture of learning within the organization. These reflections provide valuable insights into what works and what needs refinement, contributing to more informed decision-making and program adjustments. Enhanced documentation and analysis of feedback could further amplify the benefits of this practice and develop clear ways of implementation.

Area-based Approach in Implementation

Oxfam has adopted an area-based approach, focusing its interventions within specific geographic areas, such as the West Nile and the RISE-K project in Karamoja. This ensures that humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding initiatives are concentrated in the same locations, creating synergies and maximising impact. The area-based approach enhanced coordination among stakeholders, reduced duplication of effort, and enabled a more holistic response to community needs. By concentrating resources and efforts, Oxfam ensured deeper, more sustainable outcomes in the targeted areas.

Lessons on what could be done differently

Creating synergies across themes is key to effective triple nexus

There is a tendency to silo themes like governance, gender justice, humanitarian response and resilient livelihoods, rather than integrating them for nexus programming. Encouraging thematic integration by designing programs that reflect the interconnected nature of humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding efforts strengthen synergies and ensure cohesive programs.

Being intentional in nexus programming

From the perspectives of human resources, looking at the shift in humanitarian funding landscape, it is imperative to be very intentional in the programming to earn synergies. This requires a lot more coordination, knowledge, and being aware of the widened scope of programs.

Addressing funding gaps through strategic advocacy is critical

The persistent funding gaps in refugee programming and triple nexus operationalization require Oxfam to advocate more effectively at higher levels of government and among donors. What Could be done differently is to advocate for sustainable, multi-year

funding mechanisms tailored to nexus programs, emphasizing their holistic and integrated benefits for long-term impact, highlighting how nexus programming aligns with donor priorities, such as resilience, governance, and development.

Creating a stronger relationship with the government as the lead responder can leverage resources for effective nexus

The government is a primary responder with significant resources, yet Oxfam's engagement with governmental coordination and implementation mechanisms remains underutilised. Relationships with government entities to improve nexus could be strengthened by participating more actively in existing coordination mechanisms and by reporting comprehensively on nexus efforts to ensure alignment with national strategies and to leverage government resources effectively.

Building a culture of trust and teamwork can enhance collaboration

Staff often prioritize their thematic or individual niches, which creates barriers to the collaborative nature of the nexus approach. In nexus, you have to let go of the personal thought of 'what is mine should remain for me' and get out the feeling of job insecurity. Fostering a culture of trust by emphasising shared goals and reducing competition for resources can complement different thematic areas, as the nexus approach requires a high level of teamwork.

Applying the triple nexus more effectively requires leadership

Effective nexus programming requires strong leadership to manage resources strategically, constantly adapt and align interventions with broader goals. There must be a management perspective on how to allocate available resources, align work, determine partnerships and human resource requirements to ensure efficient nexus programming. What could be done differently is strengthening leadership in strategic resource allocation and multi-stakeholder coordination, and implementing systems to monitor resource use and assess impact, to ensure efficiency and alignment.

Recommendations

This learning review provides two sets of recommendations. The first set is for policy and management decisions that Oxfam could take to improve triple nexus approach. To strengthen the integration of humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding efforts, a series of targeted policy and management strategies must be adopted. These recommendations aim to address current gaps, optimize resource use, and foster

sustainability through enhanced collaboration and planning. The second set of recommendations relates to the practical ways to apply triple nexus in Oxfam and partners' programs

Policy and Management Recommendations

Fostering joint planning and collaboration

One critical step is moving away from siloed approaches by embedding joint planning processes from the start. Collaborative design, involving inter-themes teams, ensures that objectives across humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding pillars are aligned. By integrating cross-sectoral reviews before finalizing program plans, Oxfam can identify shared priorities, bridge gaps, and promote a unified approach. Encouraging internal cooperation in planning will help break down silos and create more cohesive interventions.

Optimizing resources and streamlining teams

Resource efficiency must be a priority, especially in the face of dwindling funding. Many projects are overstaffed, in the name of nexus approach, resulting in inefficiencies. Conducting project reviews to ensure teams are lean and appropriately structured will maximize resource allocation while maintaining effectiveness and a competitive profile for Oxfam. To address job security concerns that influence the number of staff recruited, management should focus on developing robust policies that stabilize key roles without inflating staff numbers. By doing so, Oxfam can ensure their structures are fit for purpose and capable of meeting project demands sustainably. This requires the management to be firm and intentional on staffing requirement and avoid overstaffing and inviting too many partners than what a project would need.

Strengthening institutional arrangements for coordination

Institutional arrangements must be fortified to improve coherence and responsiveness. Regularly scheduled monthly program review meetings would provide a consistent forum to address challenges in triple nexus and monitor progress and holding each other accountable. Quarterly management meetings, currently too brief to address critical issues, should be expanded in duration and focus to encourage deeper engagement and actionable outcomes. Enhanced annual planning and review sessions can ensure resource constraints and other barriers are addressed systematically. Strengthening these institutional arrangements could sustain effective coordination.

Building local capacity for sustainability

Empowering local institutions and actors is essential for ensuring sustainability beyond external interventions. Comprehensive capacity-building initiatives should focus on equipping local stakeholders with the skills needed to manage partnerships, navigate local dynamics, and implement nexus-driven strategies effectively. These efforts should also include fostering local leadership and institutional resilience to maintain the momentum of programs once external support subsides.

Enhancing coordination at all levels

Effective coordination across stakeholders including governments, donors, UN agencies, NGOs, and private sector actors is fundamental to the success of the Triple Nexus. This coordination should be facilitated both internally and externally through dedicated platforms at local, national, and international levels. Shared accountability frameworks can help align objectives, develop collective outcomes and measure collective impact, ensuring that all stakeholders contribute meaningfully to nexus initiatives.

Establishing a learning framework for the nexus

A structured learning framework is critical for improving the understanding and practical application of the nexus approach. This framework should include clear knowledge and learning questions integrated into program designs and reviews. Monitoring and evaluation data should be leveraged to refine strategies and identify best practices, while platforms for sharing lessons learned can promote innovation and cross-sectoral collaboration.

Creating spaces for engagement and reflection

Meaningful engagement is crucial for fostering mutual understanding and collaboration among diverse stakeholders. Oxfam should invest in platforms and forums that enable regular dialogue, knowledge exchange, and joint reflection on triple nexus. These spaces can help maintain momentum, address emerging challenges, and ensure that programs remain responsive and effective.

Developing an actionable implementation plan

Finally, to operationalise these recommendations, Oxfam should develop a clear, actionable plan for improving triple nexus approach that outlines specific steps, timelines, and responsibilities. This plan should be regularly monitored, with progress

reviews to adapt strategies as needed. A structured implementation framework ensures that recommendations transition from concepts into tangible, impactful actions.

Recommendations on practical ways of applying the triple nexus approach

The key question is how Oxfam could bring the four themes – Humanitarian Response and Disaster Preparedness, Resilient Livelihoods, Governance and Accountability, and Gender Justice into a triple nexus approach. While there are ways to apply the triple nexus, the following are recommended as practical ways to integrate the HDP nexus for immediate relief efforts, sustainable development, and peacebuilding initiatives.

Joint assessments and analysis

The triple nexus begins with a comprehensive understanding of the root causes of crises, vulnerabilities, and conflicts. This could be conducted through multi-sectoral assessments, sharing data at the sectoral level, and identifying overlapping priorities and intervention opportunities. For instance, contextual analyses in disaster-prone regions can reveal both immediate humanitarian needs and long-term strategies to reduce vulnerabilities, such as enhancing disaster preparedness or mitigating climate risks. Oxfam and partners would then identify intervention opportunities across the HDP needs.

Integrated program design

Programs under the triple nexus should be designed to align objectives across the humanitarian, development, and peace sectors, ensuring responses meet immediate needs, strengthen resilience, and foster stability. This does not imply an objective developed for each nexus pillar, but rather aligns with encompassing results in the pillars. In practical ways, for example in conflict-affected regions, interventions could deliver food assistance (humanitarian), introduce sustainable agricultural practices (development), and mediate land disputes (peacebuilding). In this regard, adaptive approaches are essential to allow programs to adjust as situations evolve, ensuring relevance and effectiveness over time.

Collaboration and partnerships

The success of the Triple Nexus hinges on fostering partnerships across stakeholders, including governments, civil society, and the private sector. Inclusive participation ensures that affected communities play an active role in planning and decision-making, enhancing the relevance and sustainability of interventions. A notable example is

partnering with local governments and peace actors to rebuild schools, train teachers, and integrate peace education into curricula in post-conflict regions.

Coordinated financing

Flexible, multi-year funding mechanisms are essential for sustaining efforts across the nexus. Pooled funding promotes sectoral collaboration, ensures accountability, and reduces fragmentation. For example, in disaster-prone regions, coordinated financing could support immediate relief, the development of climate-resilient infrastructure, and local capacity building to lessen future risks.

Conflict-sensitive and resilience-based programming

Conflict-sensitive approaches ensure interventions do not exacerbate tensions, while resilience-building measures foster social cohesion and governance. The question is how Conflict-sensitive and resilience-based programming looks like in real practice. This could take several forms. For instance, in protracted crises, integrating humanitarian aid with education and economic recovery initiatives can address both immediate and systemic challenges, such as intra- and inter-community conflicts. Climate adaptation projects may combine food aid with sustainable farming practices and water-sharing mediation to balance resource use and promote peace. To do this, ensure that conflict-sensitive analysis is conducted, coordinated, and that a system is in place to regularly update the analysis to inform programming.

Integrating Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) into the triple nexus approach

It is recommended that Oxfam mobilises the sector to develop shared MEL frameworks that enable sectoral monitoring, evaluation and learning. For example, monitoring the impact of agricultural support on food security and social cohesion in conflict areas provides information on results across the triple nexus. Practical examples in line with these recommendations could include the following: In fragile and conflict-affected areas, emergency food assistance (humanitarian) is paired with agricultural development (development) and facilitated dialogue to reduce land disputes (peacebuilding). Furthermore, reconstruction projects simultaneously create jobs and foster social cohesion through food-for-work projects. In disaster-prone regions, immediate disaster relief efforts (humanitarian) are integrated with disaster risk reduction (development) and climate resilience measures (peacebuilding) to prevent future crises. In protracted crises, programs combine humanitarian assistance with

social protection, education, and economic recovery to address immediate needs and systemic vulnerabilities.

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Annex 1 Triple nexus checklist and assessment by Oxfam and partners in Uganda

HDP nexus assessment score by Oxfam and partners - Uganda								
No	Programme/project	Indicators	Scores[1]		Comments/reasons for the score		Recommended actions	
			Oxfam	Partnrs	Oxfam	Partners	Oxfam	Partners
1	Better coordination for joined-up programming	Country team conducted a mapping of existing organizations working in the same geographical location with the purpose of identifying areas of potential overlap and points of convergence (including partnerships with new actors for ex. informal institutions, private sector if relevant, etc.)	0	NA	No intentional mapping was undertaken, however there is a database of partners that can be analysed to identify areas of convergence for the nexus approach	NA	Undertake analysis of the partners' list and develop a database for the NEXUS A mapping be undertaken on the current status of the Nexus operation. Leverage on existing information in the MIS to benchmark Partnership Committee should be informed by the analysis	NA
2		Understanding of the larger nexus agenda in country: Country team and local partners (where relevant) are actively participating in relevant national and sub-national coordination fora, for example humanitarian clusters or established working groups	2	2	The commitment is in existence e.g. the NEXUS group however engagements and discussions are limited	Partners have been implementing nexus unconsciously e.g. CSBAG working with the Education sector to raise issues that affect Host and Refugee duty-bearers, RISE K partners, and target groups have been trained in the Nexus approach	Strengthen the coordination committee Build awareness of members on the group Improve planning to engage the teams better Improve people's JDs to include the Nexus approach	Partners should deliberately be trained to implement the Nexus Approach The Nexus approach should be simplified and disseminated to all partners.
3		Review and adapt organisational structures and positions as well as coordination, communication, management and operational processes to facilitate teams and partners working more closely together (ADDRESSING INTERNAL SILOS)	2	1	JDs have been updated to emphasize the nexus approach There's more coordination when conceptualising and developing proposals to undertake the nexus approach Deliberate effort to orient new staff on the Nexus approach	Partners have been unconsciously implementing but it is not part of the structures. The nexus approach is implemented at the project level not at the organization level	Strengthen coordination through the Nexus reference group	Institutional Capacity Building in Nexus Approach.
4	Donor Request for Proposal	The call for proposal seeks to address the underlying drivers and/or root causes of problem people face.	2	3	Most calls try to address elements/components of the nexus approach	DANIDA, Rise K, among others local Organisations involved in Co-Creation	Be deliberate to pitch/influence the nexus approach to donors Be proactive to influence the calls	It should be continuous
5		The call for proposal covers all dimensions of the HDP nexus-Humanitarian-Development-Peace.	2	1	It is not common to find donors who cover all but they cover at least 2 components to which we push for incorporation of the 3rd	Rise K, covers all, but in general, Donors don't look at 3 pillars and at times they are restrictive. Are donors aware of Nexus's approach to inform their calls?	Be deliberate to pitch/influence the nexus approach to donors Be proactive to influence the calls	
6		The call for proposal has activities or critical focus linked to HDP.	2	1	It is not common to find donors who cover all but they cover at least 2 components to which we push for incorporation of the 3rd	Rise K, covers all, but in general, Donors don't look at 3 pillars and at times they are restrictive.	Be deliberate to pitch/influence the nexus approach to donors Be proactive to influence the calls	
7		Institutional funding and donor engagement strategies have been adapted to access nexus funding opportunities	2	1	We have deliberately pitched the nexus approach to donors however, this has not been fully fruitful	We are learning to work within Consortium	Increase popularisation of our funding frameworks to donors	
8		Country Offices provided predictable, flexible, multi-year financing (wherever feasible), passing on donor flexibility from affiliates and from country offices to local partners	2	1	Under DANIDA SP II, this has been attempted for multiyear financing RISE-K has not dictated on interventions for implementation PVP provides opportunity for additional funding through the MCS and sudden opportunities	It is flexible Partners are guaranteed on annual but not multi-year It is not Predictable and the financing process is not Participatory.	Factor in additional contracting time for partners, e.g. 2 years instead of 1	Long Term contract Institutional and Programs funding.
9		Developed mechanism and tracking humanitarian, development and peacebuilding funding	2	1	The funding pipeline and PRISMA help track funding to HDP Programmatic overviews and briefs provide detail on the Nexus	At project level	Increase utilisation of the mechanism undertaking regular analysis of the funding landscape of the 3 pillars	
10	Programme/P roject design	Data from the comprehensive context analysis and gender sensitive analysis of root causes and structural drivers of conflict is used to directly inform the project design across the three pillars of the nexus. And is coordinated with other stakeholders and conducted including participation from humanitarian, development and peacebuilding actors	3	2	Deliberate efforts are being made to use the data from gender to inform the 3 pillars and different stakeholders	Partners provide data for the Project design process	Strengthen use of existing data and analyse it regularly to assess progress and inform project design	
11		The comprehensive context information from the joint analysis is systematically updated and shared with relevant partners, stakeholders and used to directly inform the programme across the three pillars of the nexus. (ex. through partner reporting, annual reporting, etc.)	1	3	Contextual analysis is done every now and then but not updated and shared with the different stakeholders	Information shared	Be more consistent	
12		Collective context-specific area-based programming/outcomes and global indicators are developed, which require the combined efforts of humanitarian, development and peacebuilding actors ideally in the same locations.	3	3	The global indicators align and the CO customises them to specific			
13		Activities seek to address the underlying drivers and/or root causes of people's problem.	3	3	Activities set are aligned to the root causes		Be more flexible on certain activities to respond to specific/contextual	
14		Activities and indicators are aligned (linked to humanitarian assistance, long-term development, and peacebuilding results) to the HDP nexus	3	3	Activities set are aligned to the root causes		Be more flexible on certain activities to respond to specific/contextual changes	

15	Oxfam programme staff/partners have personnel/expertise across the three pillars - humanitarian response, long term development and peacebuilding	1	1	There are positive attempts to promote the nexus approach however, this is still work in progress	Partners have limited capacity in Nexus approach		Capacity Building in Nexus approach
16	Learning questions are captured and resources are committed for periodic joint planning, monitoring, reflection and learning.	2	2	All projects provide for reflection, monitoring and learning events however no learning questions are provided	There is joint Monitoring, Project based, Learning questions are captured. Learning Questions are not aligned with the Nexus approach. Institutional learning and Monitoring on Nexus approach is still a gap.	All projects should be guided by PQL to generate learning questions to track progress	Joint Monitoring and Learning Questions should be aligned with the Nexus approach.
17	The programme has designed and budgeted for continuous assessment, reflection, and learning and to inform changes to programme activities (adaptive management).	3	2	All projects make provision for assessment, reflection and learning to inform project improvement	Adaptive management not fully implemented		
18	Programme/Project implementation stage There is coordination within teams for achieving programming across the nexus.	2	3	There is coordination and some deliberate effort to promote this under the existing nexus projects however, there is still room for improvement	There is coordination among Oxfam and project implementing teams. There good relationship and coordination with local government.	Programming should be intentional to promote the nexus as an approach with or without an ongoing project	
19	There are active partnerships, collaborations, and coordination with other actors including local authorities and duty bearers where possible in order to facilitate triple nexus application.	2	3	There are engagements with district and local authorities however, the intention is usually not on the nexus	There is time to time communication with local government and there is good working relationship between partners and Local government	Before deliberate in informing and implementing the nexus among local authorities	
20	Co-creation spaces and dialogues during implementation exist and are active.	2	3	Regular opportunities are provided to dialogue with partners through catch up, joint coordination and reflection meetings for better implementation	There is liberty given to partners to co-create together with the donor	Organize more frequent/regular dialogues for co creation	
21	There are comprehensive/robust work plans that consider humanitarian response, longer term development, and peace building initiatives.	2	2	There are workplans for all projects however those that emphasize the nexus approach are only 3; PVP, RISE-K and Danida	There is comprehensive workplans that are followed during the project implementation for some projects		
22	Interventions are conflict-sensitive: - Interventions and how they relate to the conflict context have been analyzed to ensure 'Do No Harm', conflict sensitivity principles embedded in all our programming - Ensure conflict analysis is internalized and regularly updated	1	3	The conflict sensitivity phase is emphasized in all projects however the regular updates are not undertaken	The interventions deal with management of conflict through involving the household and use of the GALs methodology.		
23	Interventions are designed and delivered in a gender-sensitive way and a gender analysis informed understanding of risks of exploitation, abuse	3	3	Gender sensitivity and analysis is emphasized in all our projects, with a fully fledged unit to crosscheck progress	Gender components are intergrated through the use of the GALs methodology		
24	Safe Programming analysis is undertaken periodically to actively manage programme risks on an ongoing basis, including ensure actions to prevent or mitigate it (including sexual exploitation and abuse)	3	3	Gender sensitivity and analysis is emphasized in all our projects, with a fully fledged unit to crosscheck progress	Organisations adopted safeguarding framework developed by Oxfam and its affiliates		
25	Longer-term development and peacebuilding programming is flexible and adaptive to risks	2	2	There are provisions for re-aligning projects as and when required	Longerterm projects give room for re-allocation,planning incase of risks		
26	Early warning, crisis modifiers and contingency measures are considered within granting modalities and clear triggers for utilizing them have been developed	1	3	This is on a case by case basis where some projects have humanitarian/emergency response fund to cater for the respective adjustments as and when they arise	There is a risk matrix which clearly indicates how to respond to risks	Integrate this into all projects especially with the increasing emergencies Oxfam should lobby to donors to have a centrally managed fund to cater for emergencies	
27	Resources, capacities and responsibilities for emergency preparedness have been identified in anticipation for spikes in crises and to ensure organizational readiness to respond	1	1	These are applicable to specific projects especially under preparedness and response	There is limited allocation of resources for response due to the shrinking donor space. In case of a disaster,they may not be capacity to manage the disaster immediately	Integrate this into all projects especially with the increasing emergencies Oxfam should lobby to donors to have a centrally managed fund to cater for emergencies	Integrate contingency budgeting
28	Humanitarian principles are respected so that humanitarian action is impartial, neutral, and independent ensuring that access to people in need is safe, unhindered and not compromised	3	3	Humanitarian standards are followed for adherence and partners are encouraged to follow the same	The Compliance to humanitarian principles, safeguarding frameworks		

29	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning management	Regular assessments, performance reviews, learning events and evaluations held reflect HDP triple nexus learning questions and dimensions, and strive to provide information that can contribute insights and lessons as answers to those learning questions Periodic joint learning efforts established for documenting and sharing learning and good practice/case studies/innovative approaches across humanitarian, development and peace actions (Oxfam and Oxfam with its partners), consider the use of learning trackers	2	3	There are efforts to have HDP reflection questions Performance reviews held twice annually to reflect on the achievements with efforts of integrating & concretization of the Nexus approach.	Oxfam has been able to align the nexus with the Rise-K project. There is regular assessment in the projects	Develop indicators measuring Nexus for each project designed. Also, integrate the Nexus indicators (HDP) in the Oxfam in Uganda key documents such as Country Strategic Framework (CSF) and Knowledge and Learning framework especially during review. Encourage routine joint reflections and reviews across the country program (encourage thematic program managers to engage in reviews of other thematic program areas to improve the implementation of the Nexus approach). Leverage on the achievements realized during the implementation of the Nexus. Continuously track the learnings and strengthen the utilization of the Nexus checklist across the different stages of the project life cycle and the country program.	
30		Lessons generated from learning reflections are used to improve our accountability to donors for what we have learned; programming (living our theories of change; sharing lessons with others Oxfam colleagues and peers externally) to offer information and influence the sector for social change, based on what we and partners know and learn from the work.	2	2	Influenced changes to the donors in approaches, timeframe, resources, proposed new activities or consider deletion of certain activities informed by lessons learned during implementation through risk mapping and context analysis. Currently, learning agendas are developed for new projects. Utilized the learnings from previous projects to inform design of the new projects with a triple Nexus approach.	feedback from the reflections is taken up by programme teams and lessons learnt are implemented	There is need to follow up the closure of actions generated during the learning events. Continuously engage and advocate (influence) donors plus affiliates at various levels regarding appreciation of the utilization of the triple Nexus approach as opposed to the one-sector funding.	
31		The indicators focus on outcome-monitoring across the HDP nexus over the lifetime of the programme.	2	3	Indicators track the outcomes of HDP Nexus for the DANIDA SPII, PVP and RISE-K unlike sector-funded projects and short-term projects.	The result based framework is comprehensive and understood by partners.	Look out for activities that are likely to affect other sectors and/or trigger cross-cutting issues during implementation of one sector-funded projects and short-term projects.	
32		The baseline assessment generates context-specific indicators that are used to track contextual changes in the programme location. This data collection is carefully planned, resourced and completed throughout the programme cycle.	3	3	Baseline assessments are planned, budgeted for and conducted where data is generated for contextual indicators for new projects	There is strong M&E at Oxfam that leads baseline assessment with involvement of the partners	Continue strengthening and emphasizing planning for baseline assessment especially, the timelines and plan for sufficient resources for conducting the baseline assessments to enable Oxfam attract competent consultants.	
33		MEAL system in place is flexible and supports adaptive programming, dialogue and learning	2	2	It permits changes in targets and indicators informed by data, stakeholder engagements and after context analysis especially, for long term projects. Also, MEAL staff fully participate in the development of M&E frameworks, indicators and setting targets during the design phase.	The presence of human resource, M&E templates	Ensuring that M&E frameworks are developed for every project working closely with the programs team.	Strengthen MEAL component of partners and allocate resources for partners to carry out internal monitoring.
34		Theory of Change is periodically updated based on new evidence and new developments within the context (include local partners and other stakeholders in this process)	2	3	Theory of change is updated during and/or after review and reflection events ie DANIDA SPII, RISE-K & CSF.	Consultation with partners and stakeholders is done.	Deliberately plan and allocate funds for reflection sessions on the theory of change at the project, thematic and country level. Adherence to the set program quality standards that has a provision on flexibility and adaptive programs.	
35		Accountability mechanism is in place to ensure transparency, voice and participation is strengthened for improved collective outcomes	3	3	Information is provided or availed to the stakeholders and they participate during the different stages of the project life cycle. This done through co-creation of the initiation and design phases of the projects, inception meetings, partner forums sharing reports with OPM and donors	There is room for sharing feedback from stakeholders and project participants.	Strengthen the deliberate collection of feedback and/or complaints from participants, partners and government officials	
36	Programme/ Project reporting and closure	Report templates cover Oxfam's work and results across the HDP nexus dimensions.	3	1	Reporting templates capture the dimensions of the Nexus and work done by Oxfam.	There is need for intentional reporting in alignment with the HDP	Deliberately report on the Nexus dimensions (HDP) routinely.	Capacity building on how to link interventions with the nexus during reporting
Total			70%	75%				