



# PERSPECTIVE ON CHANGE

Somali-led nexus  
integrated humanitarian  
system

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## Introduction

The Nexus Platform is a consortium of Somali NGOs that aims to shape the future in Somalia and Somaliland and breaks the silos of humanitarian aid, development and peacebuilding interventions. The long-term perspective on change outlined here additionally serves as a blueprint for the outcomes the Nexus consortium can contribute to in its approach to humanitarian responses and Institutional Development Unit (IDU)<sup>1</sup>. It provides a long-term view on the changes Nexus seeks in their integrated humanitarian work with a triple nexus lens, the outcomes Nexus aims to contribute to and its interplay with relevant actors in the humanitarian system in Somalia.

This Perspective on Change starts with an overview of the humanitarian needs in

Somalia, a problem analysis of the current humanitarian responses and an overview of stakeholders. What follows is a model for integrating elements of development and peace programmes in humanitarian programmes so that these are better equipped to act on recurrent crises and put the self-reliance of affected communities at its core. Subsequently, we outline our vision on how we turn the humanitarian system on its head moving towards a Somali-led humanitarian system.

The learning paper provides more information on the background and the process of developing this Perspective on Change.

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<sup>1</sup> The Nexus Platform works along its five strategic pillars. While this Perspective on Change focuses on pillars (2) Integrated and Anticipatory Humanitarian Response; (4) Thought Leadership and Advocacy; and (5) Strengthen Somali Civil Society and Government, it does not address the Nexus' pillars on (1) Community Driven Development and (3) Somali-led Peacebuilding and Conflict Resolution Interventions.

# Humanitarian needs in Somalia

Somalia is currently experiencing a triple threat: COVID-19-related humanitarian consequences, flooding/drought, and the worst Desert Locust upsurge in decades. An estimated 5.9 million people need humanitarian assistance across Somalia and Somaliland. Somalia's recent past is marked by recurrent climatic shocks, armed conflict, and violence. The long-standing drought in 2016-2019 already deprived the livelihoods of vulnerable populations who depend on rain-fed agriculture and pastoralism.

In 2020, the heavy Gu' (April-June) rains caused flooding in 39 districts affecting 1.3 million people and displaced 505,000 people. These above-average rains created a conducive environment for further locust breeding. Flooding contributes to increase Acute Watery Diarrhoea, cholera among affected populations. Moreover, estimates indicate that the 2020 Gu' season crop harvest could be 15 to 25 per cent lower than the long-term average in the fourth quarter of 2020 endangering the livelihood of many. The combined effects of Desert Locusts, other pest infestation, and flooding are drivers for the increase in the number of food-insecure people and the severity of food insecurity. Without sustained humanitarian assistance, 3.5 million people are projected to fall into crisis or emergency food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 or higher), during the third quarter of 2020.<sup>2</sup>

In the first half of 2020, movement restrictions were imposed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic fractured imports and domestic supply chains. Combined with flood-related access challenges, this resulted in price surges of food items and decreasing purchasing power of many Somalis, despite

the Federal Governments' suspension of taxes on essential commodities in April-June 2020.

A nationally representative survey carried out by the Nexus coalition in June-July 2020, shows that over two-thirds of Somalis perceive they are at risk of contracting COVID-19. Still, Somalis see food and livelihood insecurity as a more immediate threat. Movement restrictions disrupted households' income-generating activities. Combined with a decrease of remittances for more than a third of regular remittance-receiving households, the pandemic has had a detrimental impact on households' finances. Such limited resources force families to make trade-offs, particularly regarding the purchase of basic foodstuffs and water instead of protection against coronavirus through the purchase of hand soap, face masks, or other healthcare<sup>3</sup>. Against the backdrop of the pandemic, the labour market remains stagnant and forced evictions are on the rise. Closure of schools has left 1.1 million students without a classroom, on top of the three million already out-of-school children<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> OCHA (2021). *The Cost of Inaction, as of April 2021*. OCHA: [https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Cost%20of%20Inaction\\_Draft3.pdf](https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Cost%20of%20Inaction_Draft3.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Nexus. (2020). *The significant impacts of COVID-19 on the livelihoods and health of Somali communities: Findings from a nationally representative household survey*. NEXUS: Nexus Policy Brief August 2020: [http://nexusom.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Nexus-Policy-Brief\\_Significant-Health-Economic-Impact-COVID19-Somali-community\\_AUG2020-vf.pdf](http://nexusom.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Nexus-Policy-Brief_Significant-Health-Economic-Impact-COVID19-Somali-community_AUG2020-vf.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> OCHA (2020) Humanitarian Response Plan Somalia – HRP Revision COVID-19-. UN-OCHA: [https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/20202607\\_HRP\\_REVISION.pdf](https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/20202607_HRP_REVISION.pdf)

Meanwhile, tensions escalate over resources and clan-based violence, conflicts between government forces and their allies, and non-state armed groups act as a critical driver for displacement and continue to endanger the lives of many Somalis.

The COVID-19 crisis affected everyone in Somalia but significantly, it impacted badly the marginalized groups, particularly women. Women are systematically excluded from decision-making processes, have fewer economic opportunities and face many other barriers to enjoying their full rights, while also being primary caregivers

for children. Existing (gender) inequalities are expected to continue increasing as the protracted nature of these crises means recovery will be slow to realise. Any additional strain on already meager resources will have devastating impacts for women, which may increase risks related to COVID-19.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, movement restrictions continue to hamper the ability of the international humanitarian community to reach those exposed to multiple risks and recurrent crises, which impedes the effective implementation of durable solutions during this multitude of protracted crises in Somalia.

# What is wrong with the status quo?

## Our problem analysis

### A system that delivers short-term responses for recurrent needs creating dependency

Somalia is heavily dependent on development aid, majorly on humanitarian aid – amounts to about a third of Somali GNI every year for the past decade. Humanitarian responses deliver periodic short-term relief for the symptoms of crises rather than investments in communities' self-reliance for the next occurrence of similar climate-related or human-made hazards. Years of reliance on aid (and remittances) has had a profound impact on Somali society. Humanitarian and development actors, and in some cases, Somali citizens, struggle to see Somalia beyond an aid paradigm.

In 2018, Somalia's ODA to GNI ratio was 33.6. This has been at comparatively high levels the past decade<sup>5</sup>. The majority of ODA funding (79%) was spent on humanitarian assistance (largely driven by the drought) from 2016 to 2018. Currently, the humanitarian system in Somalia is predominantly designed to respond to emergencies reactively. Humanitarian responses deliver periodic short-term relief for the symptoms of crises rather than investments in communities' self-reliance for the next occurrence of similar climate-related or human-made hazards. Humanitarian aid has become an essential part of the service delivery model. Cash-assistance programmes, for instance, initially designed to provide short-term relief but are morphing into social safety nets.

The humanitarian system in Somalia needs to respond to the number of crises including recurrent climate-induced crises where conflict further aggravates structural deprivation of livelihoods and food systems, all of these issues are protracted crises

that last for decades, where communities are regularly affected. Years of reliance on aid (and remittances) has had a profound impact on Somali society. Humanitarian and development actors, and in some cases, Somali citizens, struggle to see Somalia beyond an aid paradigm.

Humanitarian programmes in Somalia are furthermore constrained by the demands of an internationally led aid system that is reactive rather than proactive. Inflexible short-term funding that does not account for core costs impedes continuity between events<sup>6</sup>. This leads to humanitarian programmes that act in response to, not in anticipation of the multitude of crises Somalia faces. Development programmes, on the other hand, focus on *either* the drivers of conflict *or* combatting the effects of climate change *or* increasing the capacity of government actors. More importantly, they often lack the flexibility to respond to sudden-onset crises such as the recent COVID-19 pandemic.

<sup>5</sup> OECD. (2020). *Aid at a glance*. OECD-DAC: <http://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-data/aid-at-a-glance.htm>

<sup>6</sup> Medinilla, A., Shiferaw, L. T., & Veron, P. (2019). *Think local. Governance, humanitarian aid, development and peacebuilding in Somalia*. ECDPM: ECDPM Discussion Paper No. 246.

Such a reactive humanitarian system delivers aid in a way where most control over the modality and type of assistance provided is held by the actor providing funds. The affected communities' right to prioritise their own needs is not part of the humanitarian decision-making process. Communities are forced to work within this reactive system and positioned to compete for aid as a resource. Pitted against each other, this structure is not conducive to enhancing community agency, state-building, and social cohesion. Similarly, local humanitarian actors -who are at the frontline of aid delivery- are caught in unequal partnerships and with limited power to influence decision-making. This inadvertently encourages aid dependency in the long run instead of a peaceful, socially and economically self-reliant Somali society.

The combination of recurrent climatic shocks, conflicts, and related displacement requires more coherence, complementary, and interdependence of humanitarian, peace, and development programming (i.e. triple nexus programming) in Somalia. Although the need for triple-nexus programmes is widely acknowledged<sup>7,8</sup>, humanitarian, peace, and development sectors are often still separate domains within the policies of government actors in Somalia as well as within large donors and the UN system. Also, the political instability and lack of central governments have hampered the international community's ability to move from humanitarian aid to development financing. Currently, development, as well as humanitarian programming, remains top-down and siloed in Somalia<sup>9</sup>.

In such protracted crises, integration of more long-term oriented views within humanitarian programmes that move beyond the paradigm of solely responding to the event at hand, and empower affected communities to prioritise their own needs, are required to better support communities to actively shape their own resilience.

### **Inefficient and unsustainable – International actors own the humanitarian system**

While the spirit of the Grand Bargain calls for shifting power to affected populations and, by extension, local humanitarian NGOs and government actors, decisions are not made by those whose lives are impacted most. Aid in Somalia is overwhelmingly channeled through international actors, despite local humanitarian actors being at the frontline of aid delivery, particularly in the most insecure parts of the country.

Globally, only an estimated 3.1% of humanitarian funding goes directly to local civil society. While nearly half of the Somalia Humanitarian Fund (SHF – the country-based pooled fund) in 2019 was allocated to local and national NGOs, overall, only 2.4% of Somalia's reported funding (coming directly from (back) donors and through the country-based pooled fund) was allocated to LNNGOs. This is not even a tenth of the 25% aim agreed in the Grand Bargain<sup>10</sup>. Direct funding towards LNGO's thus still plays a minor role in comparison to the

<sup>7</sup> António Guterres. (2016). Secretary-General-Designate António Guterres' Remarks to the General Assembly on Taking the Oath of Office. United Nations Secretary-General: <https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/speeches/2016-12-12/secretary-general-designate-ant%C3%B3nio-guterres-oath-office-speech>.

<sup>8</sup> United Nations (2016). *One humanity: shared responsibility*

*Report of the Secretary-General for the World Humanitarian Summit*. UN-General Assembly: <https://agendaforhumanity.org/sites/default/files/Secretary-General's%20Report%20for%20WHS.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> Medinilla, A., Shiferaw, L. T., & Veron, P. (2019). *Think local. Governance, humanitarian aid, development and peacebuilding in Somalia*. ECDPM: ECDPM Discussion Paper No. 246.

<sup>10</sup> Fröjmark, H., & Carstensen, N. (2020). *Localisation in numbers – funding flows and local leadership in Somalia. Local to Global Protection*. [https://www.local2global.info/wp-content/uploads/L2GP\\_Somalia\\_country\\_brief\\_July\\_2020\\_final.pdf](https://www.local2global.info/wp-content/uploads/L2GP_Somalia_country_brief_July_2020_final.pdf)

second level and indirect funding through the Red Cross and UN agencies.

Faced with immense needs, scepticism of international actors, long-term donor concerns about misappropriation and diversion of aid, the current aid system is not fit for purpose in Somalia.

For local humanitarian actors who witness and respond to the reality on the ground, there are no distinctions or silos between aid, development and peacebuilding<sup>11</sup>. Crises are either direct consequences of, or are worsened by, underlying insecurities that must be addressed through actions that traverse humanitarian needs, peacebuilding, and sustainable development. With an intimate understanding of the drivers of humanitarian crises, a long-term presence, and the relationship capital to address root causes, local humanitarian actors can transcend these issues as they are often multi-mandate organisations working on humanitarian, development and peacebuilding concurrently.

Moreover, local organisations are often more efficient and cost-effective in delivering aid compared to their international counterparts. They are closer to the affected communities and often deemed more trustworthy than international actors. They are quick to respond to sudden-onset emergencies. Their greater access and a better understanding of conflict dynamics, allow these local humanitarian organisations to design faster and more appropriate responses. Generally, local organisations are expeditious at navigating through relevant authorities through their shorter lines of communication, especially at sub-national levels in the Somali context.

The first World Humanitarian Summit acknowledged that the localization of aid is an essential next step in improving the humanitarian system and the way aid

is delivered. As embodied in the Grand Bargain commitments, localization would bring short-term efficiency gains, but also promote local ownership through strengthening civil society, so that affected populations and countries' capacity to manage future shocks is enhanced.

Despite the rhetoric on supporting local actors through Grand Bargain commitments and the discourse towards locally led humanitarian action in the Charter for Change, decision-making power in the Somali humanitarian system converges around a small number of UN actors and large donors. The principal donors and decisions makers, that is, the United Nations, large INGOs (including Oxfam) provide too few resources directly to local governmental and civil society actors in Somalia.

The adage 'as local as possible and as international as necessary' is seen as a method for capitalising on the strengths of international and local actors. Here partnerships are developed where programmes are implemented by local actors who have greater accessibility, and contextual knowledge and INGOs provide due diligence and capacity-building support. In the Somali context, similarly to other protracted crisis and especially in hard-to-reach areas, remote management of responses in hard-to-reach areas has become normalised. The risks that come with accessing those most in need (in line with the humanitarian principle of impartiality) are outsourced to local humanitarian actors. The international actors' power of the purse drives local humanitarian organisations towards such 'partnerships' which are often a hierarchical engagement that can be boiled down to "contractual arrangements with service providers, rather than a full partnership of equals in which risk and reward is shared"<sup>12</sup>.

<sup>11</sup> Castellarnau, M & Stoianova, v. (2018). *Bridging the Emergency Gap: Reflections and a Call for Action after a Two-Year Exploration of Emergency Response in Acute Conflicts*. Barcelona: Medecins Sans Frontieres. .

<sup>12</sup> Svoboda, E., & Pantuliano, S. (2015). *International and local/diaspora actors in the Syria response: A diverging set of systems*. London: Overseas Development Institute.

Although local organisations are theoretically represented in decision making bodies within the UN-led cluster system, few local organisations feel enabled and empowered to actively participate, given the dominance of international actors in these decision-making bodies. In reality, local actors have a sparse influence on the agenda of such decision-making bodies and their views and voices are not taken into account in other international and national coordination fora<sup>13</sup>.

Similarly, although humanitarian responses in Somalia, do focus on widening the space for local responders in humanitarian emergencies and decision-making, responses that are fully led by INGOs inevitably create unequal power dynamics that can negatively impact on the meaningful localisation sought by local actors in Somalia.

## Who are the main actors and stakeholders relevant to this Perspective on Change?

**Nexus coalition:** Nexus is a paradigm-shifting platform for civil society leadership that aims to shape the future in Somalia and Somaliland and break the silos of humanitarian aid, development, and peace-building interventions. Founded in 2019, the Nexus coalition is led by eight Somali NGOs –Centre for Peace and Democracy (CPD), Gargaar Relief and Development Organization (GREDO), Horn of Africa Voluntary Youth Committee (HAVOYOCO), KAALO, Save Somali Women and Children (SSWC), Social-Life and Agriculture Development Organisation (SADO), Taakulo Somaliland Community (TASCO), and WASDA. Two INGOs – Oxfam and Save the Children International were invited to join as international partners to support with critical investments as the consortium establishes itself during its formative years.

The entirely locally led Nexus consortium is operational across every region of Somalia and Somaliland. The platform is built upon principles of South-to-South learning and civil society strengthening, whereby expertise is openly exchanged between member organisations to build a consortium that is more than the sum of its parts. Humanitarian response is central to the platform's nascent phase, but in the development of the platform and its ways of working Nexus will enter more in the development and peace spheres: whilst humanitarian actions are the platform's immediate priority in its current scope of work, programs exemplifying locally-led decision making are planned in community development, government and civil society strengthening, women's empowerment and other areas across the triple nexus.

<sup>13</sup> Almansa, F. (2020). *Breaking the Localisation Deadlock- Review of Humanitarian Capacities, Power Relations and Localisation in the Somali Humanitarian System*. Oxfam: Hargeisa.

**National and sub-national government actors across Somalia:** National and regional governments bear the primary responsibility for disaster risk reduction, preparedness, and response. Civil society should work in partnership with government actors, to both support and strengthen their capacity and legitimacy, as well as to hold them to account. Several existing government policy frameworks demonstrate momentum to move towards both a more locally-led humanitarian system in Somalia as well as a shift towards integrating humanitarian, peace, and development programmes.

At the national level, Somalia's National Development Plan (launched in 2016 and its first since 1986), particularly its resilience pillar emphasises matching short-term needs with building long-term household resilience, in line with the triple nexus approach envisioned here. Moreover, the Somali Development and Reconstruction Facility, a coordination and financing mechanism that brings government, the UN, World Bank, NGO's and donors together focus on longer-term resilience, disaster preparedness and the prevention of future crises. A participatory and bottom-up prioritisation and phasing of needs based on a participatory and inclusive planning methodology is at its core. However, relations between the Federal Government of Somalia and the federal member states are still fragile, and not based on subsidiarity but instead reflect a continuous negotiation between the leaders at these levels. Therefore, the actual policy implementation of the principles set out in high-level frameworks such as the National Development do not resonate far beyond Mogadishu, yet.

The further development of local governance and local service delivery provides a real opportunity for Somali leadership, integration of the triple nexus approach, and most importantly to provide assistance that is more responsive to community set priorities. Strengthening implementation of local level government policies provides an important entry-point (eg. through District Development Plans; District disaster management response plans, early warning triggers), to shift the humanitarian system to be based on community needs. Local humanitarian organisations in general and Nexus members, in particular, can play a crucial role through more direct engagement and better coordination of their work with those local government actors.

**Actors in the UN system:** In Somalia, the UN is represented by a complex structure, including UNSOM (United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia) and the various UN agencies working in Somalia. UN agencies tend to work independently of one another. The biggest humanitarian and development agencies, e.g. WFP, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNDP, secure a large part of their funding for working in Somalia outside Somalia's Single Humanitarian Fund. These funds are often distributed to local Somali humanitarian actors in a manner that perpetuates the cycle of unequal partnerships and sub-contracting instead of fostering Somali leadership of the humanitarian system. UN actors (and some INGO's that serve as donors as well) are the most powerful actors in the current humanitarian system in Somalia – they hold the power of the purse- and are therefore one of the key actors to influence to move towards a locally-led humanitarian system.

There is a (renewed) momentum within UN-agencies in Somalia to implement a triple-nexus approach. There is an abundance of policies calling for better integration of humanitarian, development, and peace-building programmes. The Humanitarian Country Team and its partners explicitly call for integrating UN's New Ways of Working (grounded in triple-nexus programming) and more synergies between humanitarian and development actors in its Humanitarian Response Plans.

Resilience-building is seen as a viable entry point for connecting humanitarian relief with longer-term development planning. This is demonstrated in WFP, FAO, and UNICEF launch of the Joint Resilience Action (2018-2022). Similarly, the Somalia Durable Solutions Initiative, based on the premise that durable solutions to displacement can only be attained through strong government leadership, the inclusion of affected communities, and collective efforts from humanitarian, development and state-/peacebuilding partners, is emblematic for a shift towards triple-nexus policymaking.

Despite advances in policy frameworks, UN-agencies still tend to operate as fully separate entities with specific mandates which inspires competition rather than cooperation. In practice, this means coordination and cooperation thus rests on the interests of each agency and joint programmes merely include a few of those agencies. Moreover, efforts to improve coordination and cooperation between UN and government actors have been - and are perceived by many other relevant actors- as a Mogadishu-centric exercise. This demonstrates that a top-down approach to incentivising cooperation has not delivered on its potential and that the real starting point for implementing programmes that traverse the boundaries of humanitarian, development and peace programming is at the local level.

**International donors & INGOs:** In 2016, local and national NGOs did not report receiving direct funding from donors, even though local and national actors undertake much of the front-line delivery of aid in Somalia. - While nearly half of SHF in 2019 was allocated to local and national NGOs, overall only 2.4% of Somalia's reported funding was allocated to LNNGOs – not even a tenth of the 25% target agreed in the Grand Bargain. Of the 59 signatories to the Grand Bargain, only 7 are able to report passing 25% or more of their funding to local actors. In 2019, the charter for change reported that five donors had established different systems and metrics over the past year in their humanitarian funding to track the levels of funding that go to local actors.

Nevertheless, (bilateral) donors are beginning to adapt their processes to facilitate more coherent, multi-year, funding mechanisms that span the triple nexus are emerging. Moreover, some donors and INGO's, particularly those that committed to the Charter for Change, have already adopted a more transformative stance towards the humanitarian system in Somalia, in line with the vision presented here. These donors see the allocation of funds towards local actors not solely as an instrument to deliver more efficient and cost-effective aid, but instead view the localisation agenda's success in terms of much stronger national capacities and leadership. Thereby accepting and aligning with our view that strategic and financial decisions should undisputedly be made by local humanitarian actors.

In more detailed power and stakeholder mappings we have identified the Swiss agency for Development Cooperation (SDC), the Dutch and Swedish embassies, the Dutch Relief Alliance, the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), and Oxfam in particular as donors and INGO's that are aligned with our transformative approach to the humanitarian system. Furthermore, those INGO's that are signatories to the Charter for Change (C4C) should walk the talk and are influencing targets for delivering on C4C.

**Diaspora organisations:** The Somali diaspora is a major contributor to Somali society. Diaspora contribute directly to livelihoods by sending remittances, which are an important social safety net. They contribute to recovery and economic development in general, through their investments in local economies. The Somali diaspora also provide support to local (humanitarian) organisations, particularly during emergencies. Diaspora contributions are vital for the Somali regions to consolidate economic growth. As a result of the relative political stability of recent years, diaspora have become a mainstay in development programming in Somalia. They are often deemed trustworthy by affected communities, as their charitable giving is based on Islamic principles as Zakaat; Waqaf; Sukuuk, adding a sense of legitimacy to their donations. Although, there is likely a lot of variance in the extent to which individual diaspora organisation align with Nexus vision outlined above (which needs to be mapped out further when implementing our interventions), we see diaspora (organisations) as an important alternative source of funds that communities can tap in to.

**Private sector:** The private sector, along with the NGO community, are among the primary service providers in Somalia. Due to its long-time presence, particularly in times where governing authorities have come and gone since the 1990's, the private sector has an advantage over government actors in terms of familiarity with, and relevance to, affected communities, similar to LINGOs. The private sector is visible and directly relevant to the lives of many Somali's. Private sector actors can be key partners in advancing new triple-nexus programmes; as a catalyst for innovation; as service providers for key infrastructure projects; and as sources of timely information through market analyses. Women's Business Association's throughout Somalia are a potential ally of particular interest in efforts to foster (women's) economic empowerment through business skills development and youth employment activities.

# It's time to restore agency and make self-reliance of communities central to a Somali-led humanitarian system: Our vision and goals

## Our Vision

We envision that by 2035, Somali local actors have a leading role in the humanitarian system that puts the agency and self-reliance of communities at the centre, through delivering a combination of aid, development, and peace programmes.

To contribute to a peaceful, economically vibrant and self-reliant Somalia, we need a humanitarian system that puts the agency and self-reliance of Somali communities at its center in its responses and Somali-civil society in the lead of its decision making.

The protracted and recurrent crises Somalia faces need to be addressed by humanitarian responses that look beyond providing assistance for the crisis at hand, but contribute to building self-reliance and agency of affected communities. We envision a humanitarian system where locally-led humanitarian responses are the default. We move away from short-term, project-based funding and stop-gap solutions towards a model that integrates humanitarian, development, and peace programming.

Whereas local humanitarian actors are at the frontlines of delivering humanitarian assistance and the first responders when a crisis hits, they are the last to influence decision-making within the Somali humanitarian system. The responses we deliver are therefore locally-led, sensitive to conflict dynamics, deliver on acute humanitarian needs where necessary, and

incorporate a long-term development-oriented view where possible.

### **Achieving the vision with two complementary pillars: Delivering triple nexus programmes and transforming the humanitarian system.**

To achieve this vision of a locally-led humanitarian system that puts agency and self-reliance of affected communities at the center, the perspective on change toward a Somali-led humanitarian system rests on two main pillars, as visualised in the diagram on page 11.

The first pillar focuses on delivering locally-led humanitarian responses that promote the agency and self-reliance of crisis-affected communities. By delivering aid through the triple-nexus of humanitarian, development, and peace programming, we place local actors and affected communities at the center.

The second pillar aims to transform the aid system to one in which locally-led responses are the new normal in Somalia, and local



organisations claim their rightful space. We turn the humanitarian system upside down and work based on equitable, dignified and accountable partnerships.

The following sections present an in-depth description of the changes we envision and

outcomes we work towards in these pillars, as illustrated in the diagram shown on page 11. For each pillar, we describe the relevant pathways, long-term, intermediate, and early outcomes, as well as the interventions we will employ.

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## **Pillar 1. Delivering locally-led humanitarian responses that increase agency and promote resilience and self-reliance of crisis-affected communities**

The protracted and recurrent crises in Somalia call for a more conflict-sensitive, complementary, and holistic model of humanitarian programmes, that increases agency and promotes the self-reliance of affected communities. We deliver programmes that combine development, humanitarian and peace programmes. Our model improves peoples' access to livelihoods and services and recognise peoples' capabilities to adapt livelihood strategies and actively shape their resilience when faced with adversity. We invest in communities' preparedness and flexibility in dealing with recurrent and sudden-onset crises and strengthen our engagement with affected communities. Through Nexus' thought leadership we built a stronger and wider alliances that support our vision of turning the humanitarian system on its head.

As outlined in the problem analysis, the nature of the protracted and recurrent crises in Somalia calls for a more conflict-sensitive, complementary, and holistic model of humanitarian programmes, that increases agency and promotes the self-reliance of affected communities. The first pillar in our perspective on change present this triple nexus model of humanitarian programmes.

Our model of humanitarian response seeks to change two long term outcomes. The first long term outcome focuses on building communities' self-reliance. That is: **By 2025, self-reliant crisis-affected communities can build sustainable livelihoods in crisis (Long term outcome 1)**. Additionally, the outcomes listed here contribute to long term outcome 2: **By 2025, crisis-affected communities can seek the assistance they need from humanitarian actors and**

**the diaspora and hold those actors to account for quality responses that are responsive to community-set priorities.**

All the Nexus consortium members are firmly rooted in affected communities and have detailed knowledge of conflict dynamics take the lead in designing and delivering integrated humanitarian programmes. Conflict sensitivity is thus incorporated in all stages of our model of humanitarian programming. We rely on Nexus members' breadth and depth of tacit knowledge of local conflict dynamics, gathered throughout years of experience, and supplemented with the explicit knowledge nourished by investment in a continuous two-way dialogue with communities through innovative feedback technologies.

Affected communities and Nexus members jointly assess the needs that arise. This model does not start from a reductionist approach where the objective is to isolate a specific 'need' within a community where a Nexus-member can 'respond' to (given a particular funding opportunity). Our model also incorporates assessments of the strengths, in terms of, for instance, assets and capacities of affected communities. This results in more accurate appraisals of which type of interventions effectively enhance self-reliance. Moreover, assessing strengths instead of isolating needs naturally leads to more holistic and less siloed interventions and ensures continuity of activities between crises.

We routinely coordinate with government authorities at local levels in the design and implementation of our activities as we strive to reinforce their role as well.

Note that the type of interventions we envision are not innovative per se from either a purely development or humanitarian point of view. The crux in triple nexus programming is, however, to combine elements of humanitarian and development programmes in a conflict-sensitive manner. We thus aim to apply development interventions across a broader spectrum of groups traditionally targeted by humanitarian aid to foster a transition from short-term crisis response towards longer-term (development) oriented perspectives. Vice-versa, we continue to integrate the flexibility and speed of funding mechanisms traditionally applied within humanitarian interventions to deliver life-saving assistance where needed. When describing the early outcomes, we thus highlight those elements of humanitarian interventions that integrate the triple nexus approach.

In achieving these aforementioned long-term outcomes, we group intermediate and early outcomes and our interventions along three pathways. These pathways focus on **improved livelihoods and access to**

**services, preparedness and anticipatory action for recurrent crises and flexibility for responding to sudden-onset crises, and meaningful participation of local humanitarian actors and strengthened engagement with affected communities.** The following sections describe these pathways, the associated intermediate and early outcomes and their interventions.

## **1. Improved livelihoods and access to services**

Our model and activities recognise peoples' capabilities to adapt livelihood strategies and actively shape their resilience when faced with adversity. We thus secede from the implicit notion within humanitarian programmes that crisis-affected communities are economic voids. Instead, we aim to increase the incentives for communities to generate income and focus on providing durable improvements in (crisis-affected) livelihoods. This is presented in Intermediate outcome 1: **By 2022, Nexus programmes increase incentives for communities to generate income and provide durable improvements in (crisis-affected) livelihoods.**

For improving livelihood and access to services, we envision the following outcomes and intervention strategies.

### **Early Outcome 1.1: Affected communities benefit from the community instead of household focused cash programming**

We operate the assumption that first meeting the basic needs of households is a prerequisite for spending time and resources to (re)build (financial) assets. Moreover, the necessity to respond to short-term and acute needs using cash assistance will not go away. We acknowledge that cash assistance enables the flexibility of households to purchase products and services according to their prioritisation of needs.

Currently, cash programming predominantly focuses on the household or individual level. Our Nexus model of humanitarian programming will move away from households or individuals as the primordial locus of cash-based programming. Instead, we aim to move towards more community-based mechanisms in the delivery of our cash-based assistance.

Interventions here include delivering cash-based programming in conjunction with the (re-) establishment of savings groups and tying these to investment activities that foster entrepreneurship. The re-establishment of savings and lending groups will increase savings and access to credit, especially for women. These savings act as a cushion for savings-group participants during calamities or shocks. Moreover, these can be invested in productive assets fostering entrepreneurship when crises are not imminent.

Cash for Work programmes will focus on the building or rehabilitation of productive community infrastructure. Through its community focus in its Cash for Work programmes, the Nexus consortium will focus on (re)-building the infrastructure of vital importance to the ecological, social and economic capital of the community. Such Cash for Work projects will also have longer-term objectives as they aim to improve or rehabilitate access to markets, access to water for livestock and farming to foster resilience. Additionally, such community-centered Cash for Work projects build community (members) skills in the rehabilitation of such works.

***Early Outcome 1.2: Improved and community-owned sustainable water infrastructure.***

We aim to increase local communities' ownership of the water infrastructure. Our interventions intend to engage communities more closely in the implementation of National Development Plans at local levels.

Particularly in monitoring and tracking whether such plans in the realm of water infrastructure have come to fruition and materialise in actual investments.

Additionally, we engage the Somali diaspora and the private sector here, particularly for water infrastructure projects. We train communities to increase their potential of raising funds from within their own communities and tie this to fundraising from diaspora organisations. Community and diaspora fundraising for such projects have the added value of increasing the legitimacy and ownership of such investments in local development across a range of actors. The Nexus consortium will scope in more detail which diaspora organisations are relevant in this respect.

The Nexus coalition will investigate which private sector actors are at the forefront of efficient water treatment, distribution, and innovative technologies in water harvesting and conservation. Where possible the Nexus consortium will develop partnerships with such private sector actors.

***Early outcome 1.3: Increased economic empowerment for women and youth through employment, business and skills development.***

Throughout our humanitarian interventions, we aim to set aside resources to increase literacy and provide training that builds other foundational skills. Moreover, the aforementioned strength assessments will determine the skill sets that are already available within communities and assess what type of skills are missing, particularly for women and youth on the supply side of the labor market.

Surveys fielded among employers and businesses will inform the strategies employed to match the skills built and training delivered to affected populations. Moreover, these research efforts will mainly focus on how recurrent crises disrupt the

labor market. Such kind of research aims to find ways for further developing business and getting the opportunities for skills development training which are particularly useful for crisis-affected communities.

Youth and women are often excluded from peacebuilding initiatives specifically and community decision-making more generally due to the traditional prominence of elders. Against the backdrop of poverty, illiteracy, youth often become disenchanted with peacebuilding processes. This drives youth to join clan-based armed groups or extremist armed groups.

Similarly, women remain socially and economically disadvantaged as a result of conservative social norms, coupled with poor service provision. Their contributions to political and peacebuilding initiatives are overlooked or repressed. Therefore, these training will include modules that focus on peacebuilding, where relevant so that youth and women can play a more meaningful role.

Finally, the Nexus consortium will take a facilitative role in continuing to provide supportive mechanisms for entrepreneurship such as; micro-finance during emergencies.

## 2. Preparedness and flexibility in dealing with recurrent and sudden-onset crises

The second pathway enables preparedness and flexibility in dealing with recurrent and sudden-onset crisis through the Nexus Anticipatory and Emergency Fund. Humanitarian assistance should aim to decrease the devastating impact of recurring shocks and explicitly focus on building self-reliance and communities' capacities to withstand or mitigate the impacts of recurrent crises. In doing so, we aim to reduce dependence on

humanitarian responses in the future. The funding and grant-making mechanisms we put forward aim to ensure flexibility so that immediate humanitarian needs continue to be met and life-saving assistance can quickly be delivered where necessary. This is exemplified in intermediate outcome 2: **By 2022, Nexus implements programmes that are able to pre-empt recurrent crises and establishes funding mechanisms that have the ability to adjust to sudden-onset crises.** In working towards this intermediate outcome, our early outcomes and interventions focus on community-led early warning systems and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and the implementation of a Nexus Anticipatory and Emergency response fund.

### **Early outcome 2.1: Community-led early warning systems and DRR plans in place.**

Crises are predictable, and local communities are often able to detect the signs of slow-onset emergencies, such as droughts<sup>14</sup>. However, communities do not always have the capacity to respond. Nexus will help communities to design and implement innovative risk reduction measures, avenues for strengthening resilience, and skills to access and interpret forecasts through further investments in community-led task forces at the local levels. Recognising that shocks and disasters impact women, men, girls and boys, elderly and disabled differently, Nexus will ensure that risk analyses include the unique challenges such groups face. Similarly, in risk analyses and early warning systems, there is a need to put more attention to conflicts over resources that might emerge following climate-induced disasters.

Additionally, the Nexus coalition will support local authorities and communities in their preparedness planning. For instance, by assessing viable relocation options in case

<sup>14</sup> Development Initiatives. (2013). *Global Humanitarian Assistance Report 2013*. Development Initiatives: Bristol, UK.

flooding is imminent. These efforts do not only focus on those communities where relocation is necessary or about to happen, but also on those households aiming to return

**Early outcome 2.2: Nexus delivers grants through the Nexus Anticipatory and Emergency Response Fund.**

A key element of Nexus' model of humanitarian programming in Somalia is the locally-led, managed, and distributed Anticipatory and Emergency Response Fund. This fund is fully led and administered by the Nexus consortium and focuses on anticipatory and early action. The anticipatory fund is designed to address needs in a pre-emptive manner and to provide funding for early action to effectively respond to local emergencies. The Nexus Anticipatory and Emergency Response Fund recognizes risk information and alerts from community sources as critical early warning sources, in general and especially so for smaller-scale emergencies. There will be a strong emphasis on government collaboration, particularly regarding early warning and preparedness for the anticipatory fund. The Anticipatory and Emergency Response Fund is further detailed in Nexus' Anticipatory and Emergency Response Fund paper.

**3. Strengthened engagement with affected communities and more meaningful engagement of local actors in the humanitarian system**

The third pathway concentrates on strengthening engagement with affected communities, amplifying the voices of marginalised groups, and more meaningful participation of local humanitarian organisations within the humanitarian system (see pillar two below). This pathway is at the core of our Perspective on Change and

where the two pillars overlap by combining our triple-nexus model of humanitarian programming with influencing activities aimed at turning the Somali humanitarian system on its head.

Within this pathway, we empower affected communities, Nexus members themselves, and other, local humanitarian NGOs (beyond Nexus members).

In empowering communities, our interventions contribute to intermediate outcome 3a: **By 2023, agenda-setting and meaningful decision making by local organisations that includes marginalised groups the humanitarian system.**

This cannot be done by Nexus members in isolation but only in cooperation and through forming alliances with other Somali (humanitarian) NGOs. Our triple-nexus model of humanitarian programming will inform an evidence base that contributes to Nexus' thought leadership encouraging other Somali NGO's to adopt similar approaches. This is demonstrated in intermediate Outcome 3b: **By 2022, the Nexus consortium is a thought leader in the design and implementation of exemplary triple-nexus programming and localisation of humanitarian aid & other actors adopt similar approaches.**

**Early Outcome 3.1. Nexus members have strengthened their engagement with affected communities, particularly marginalised groups, by implementing accountability mechanisms towards communities.**

Reinforcing and strengthening engagement with affected communities is a key early outcome that the coalition will work towards. Continuous and comprehensive consultations and communication at the planning, delivery and evaluation phase of programmes will increase ownership of these activities with communities in need.

This approach is already implemented by many Nexus members, and Nexus will seek to transfer lessons from development and peacebuilding programming to humanitarian program design. Affected populations are well placed to identify the root causes and structural drivers of recurrent crises and conflict. Additionally, Nexus will demonstrate that the comparative advantage of local actors in practicing 'deep participation' of affected populations. The consortium will capitalise on its existing (in) formal networks and connections with communities and community leaders. Combined with members' intricate knowledge of conflict dynamics, these activities enhance the trustworthiness, transparency and legitimacy of the Nexus consortium, in truly representing the voices, strengths and priorities of affected populations.

. A variety of methods will be used to build a two-way dialogue with communities; through support from participatory planning processes, the Nexus platform will ensure the community representation in decision-making structures; as well as through investments in innovative feedback technologies, and partnerships with community radio the community members get the opportunity to raise their voices. Such community feedback mechanisms will be employed to amplify the voices of marginalised groups in particular, and those voices considered 'hardest to reach'.

Nexus will develop a Women's Leadership tool contextualised for the Somali cultural context for community-level implementation. Community consultations in the design of the tool, will take into account the cultural context, and identify meaningful opportunities to engage women in community-decision making processes. The tool will be designed collaboratively and tested in communities where Nexus members are already undertaking humanitarian action, to

enhance the effectiveness and impact of the programming and demonstrate the value in engaging women and girls in decision-making. The tool will be designed to be useful for local and international actors to provide genuine engagement of women and girls in the design, implementation and evaluation of humanitarian response activities.

In partnership with Loop<sup>15</sup>, Nexus is exploring the development of an independent global digital platform that enables people to share their opinions in an open, transparent and safe manner, to improve the quality, responsiveness and appropriateness of integrated humanitarian programming. Loop harnesses technology already developed in the private sector, partnering with telecom providers and providing a digital platform where anyone from anywhere can feedback on the services they have received, in an open, transparent and real-time manner. Through the Loop system, service providers can reply directly to feedback. They can use the feedback to implement project course correction and build trusting relationships with those they are there to serve. The Loop platform is developed and piloted in 2021, through a scoping mission led by Nexus, jointly with Loop and Zamid, a Mogadishu-based tech consultancy firm. This will explore the feasibility and design approach required to successfully launch LOOP in Somalia, ensuring that design is tailored to enable women, youth and minority clans/groups voices are heard. Once rolled out beyond the pilot phase, Loop would have the potential for trends to be analysed, complimenting other monitoring and evaluation findings. Investments in Loop will also enable the technology to be utilised in other countries, beyond the Somali context.

Moreover, the Nexus consortium members will invest in data and information sharing to make the process to target most-in-need beneficiaries for humanitarian assistance

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.ourloop.io/>

more efficient. Currently, these are repetitive exercises that focus on-extracting similar data and information for activities in different clusters. This results in data that is scattered throughout organisations which is highly inefficient. Nexus will explore the opportunity to build a centralised beneficiary registration system, so that data is connected instead of perpetually (re)collected. Here, the Nexus consortium will draw on existing resources that help to assess the risks for beneficiaries' privacy sharing data might incur. For instance, by sharing data in line with the principles set out in Oxfam Responsible Program Data Policy<sup>16</sup> and practising responsible data management<sup>17</sup>. In doing so, assistance can be delivered more accurately and efficiently.

**Early Outcome 3.2. Nexus members capitalise on their existing access to decision-making and coordination spaces (HCT, SNC, other fora, clusters and sub-cluster) to further Nexus' vision and mission.**

In 2019, Nexus-members managed a combined footprint of more than 30 million USD, and its members are active across Somalia and Somaliland. Nexus consortium members already have the power to influence decision-making within the humanitarian system through their involvement in a wide variety of decision-making bodies. Currently, they operate mostly as individual organisations and are at the initial stages of realization about their collective power as the Nexus consortium. Note that more active participation in these decision-making bodies and close collaboration with government actors also contributes to international actors delivering on their Grand Bargain commitments. The Nexus platform will develop a shared influencing and advocacy agenda soon, which aims to ensure that the individual

Nexus members' participation in the cluster system and other humanitarian decision-making bodies is useful to the Nexus' vision of more locally-led responses and for the newly developed triple nexus model of humanitarian programmes.

**Early Outcome 3.3 Other LNNGO's are aware and knowledgeable on transformative aid localisation.**

Nexus aims to raise knowledge awareness among other local actors (beyond Nexus members), to form alliances, to strengthen local capacity of the humanitarian system to be equipped to respond to crises without heavily depending on international actors. The consortium seeks to broaden its membership and will appeal to local and national NGOs role as allies within Somali civil society, rather than the way they are currently treated (sub-contractors in competition). Through inspiring advocacy for Nexus' vision of a peaceful and self-reliant Somali society where locally-led responses are the norm, the coalition seeks to encourage Somali civil society to become knowledgeable and engage in transformative aid localisation.

Activities and research that showcase learnings, best practices and providing rigorous evidence of the effectiveness of the Nexus model of humanitarian programming will encourage other Somali humanitarian actors to adopt similar practices. Moreover, sharing best practices and learnings with other local humanitarian actors (i.e. beyond Nexus-members) in coordinating their work with government actors will contribute to Nexus' thought leadership and strengthen alliances with other Somali (humanitarian) NGO's.

<sup>16</sup> Oxfam. (2015). *Responsible Program Data Policy*. Oxfam International: <https://oxfamilibrary.openrepository.com/bitstream/handle/10546/575950/ml-oxfam-responsible-program-data-policy-en-270815.pdf?sequence=1>

<sup>17</sup> Hastie, R. & O'Donnell, A. (2017). *Responsible Data Management training pack*. Oxfam Great Britain: <https://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/oxfam-responsible-program-data-policy-575950>

## Pillar 2. Transform the aid system in Somalia to one in which locally-led responses are the new normal

The second pillar seeks to reform the top-down humanitarian and development system to one that is locally driven and owned and where Somali-led responses are the new normal. We reinforce the central role of government actors in disaster risk reduction, preparedness, and humanitarian response. Our influencing efforts increase the funding for local humanitarian actors and provide means to build more equitable and dignified partnerships between local humanitarian actors, donors, and INGO's.

The second pillar seeks to reform the top-down humanitarian and development system to be locally-driven and owned. Creating more equitable partnerships among local humanitarian actors, NGOs, (local and national) government bodies, donors and international actors are critical steps in achieving a locally-led humanitarian system that puts the agency and self-reliance of communities at its core. The second pillar focuses on achieving long-term outcome 3, and we envision that: **By 2025, Somali NGOs and government actors can claim their role as rightful owners in the humanitarian system. Somali-NGO's set the agenda, ensuring representation of Somali voices in all its diversity, and manage a substantial percentage of the humanitarian funds.**

Here, our influencing and advocacy efforts revolve around 2 pathways. First, we aim to reinforce the central role of government actors. Second, for Somali leadership to flourish and civil society to thrive, we pursue more equitable partnerships with donors committed to Grand Bargain agreements and changes in the way humanitarian funds are allocated.

### 4. Adopting an approach to humanitarian interventions that reinforces the central role of government actors.

Somali government actors bear the primary responsibility for the safety and well-being

of citizens. Thus, by extension for disaster risk reduction, preparedness, and, where necessary humanitarian response. The Nexus consortium envisions a more direct engagement with local government actors where local humanitarian actors develop activities in line with national and regional development plans. Through closer cooperation and direct engagement with local government actors by Nexus members, our approach starts from local realities. It aims to build trust between communities, humanitarian actors, and reinforce the role of these often relatively young, accountable authorities. This is in stark contrast to the current approach in the humanitarian system that sets up parallel structures that drain rather than support local capacities. Such strengthened collaboration with local governments also entails dealing with conflict and power imbalances on the basis of the reality on the ground rather than through predetermined, top-down power constellations.

Most potential for strengthening governance in Somalia lies at the sub-national, district and lower levels of government. There is momentum for change. The relative political stability of the past years has given rise to the gradual development of local governance and service delivery. We see this as an opportunity to engage with government actors to make assistance more responsive to community set priorities. Enhanced responsiveness and representation of Somali voices, in turn,

strengthen the legitimacy of government actors with their constituents.

Both the Somalia National Development Plan as well as the Somaliland Development Plan, adopt approaches that are in line with triple-nexus programming and prominently feature household resilience. Moreover, we also see an emerging alignment with the aid localisation agenda. Higher-level government bodies, in particular, are adopting this discourse in their policy formulation and some are actively demanding international actors to follow through on Grand Bargain commitments (for example Somaliland Directive MONPD/1225/2020).

Our objective is that Somali government actors advocate for more accountability from donors, international actors and the UN system on a shared agenda with local humanitarian actors. This is presented as intermediate outcome 4.

**By 2023 Government actors influence international actors on a shared agenda, that ensures representation of Somali voices and demands accountability of international donors.**

**Early Outcome 4.1: Gov. actors are knowledgeable and have the capacity to advocate towards international actors on aid localisation agenda.**

Currently, regional and local governments, in particular, have limited knowledge and capacity to advocate successfully on the aid-localisation-agenda, which hampers their collective bargaining power towards more powerful and better equipped international donors and the UN system. We will build government actors' knowledge and awareness of the aid localisation agenda and build capacity to advocate in partnership with local and national NGOs. We build trust between these government and local humanitarian actors through closer collaboration and aligning Nexus' members' activities with national and regional development plans.

This outcome will be achieved through a variety of activities and interventions outlined below.

- Nexus members will actively lobby for capacity-building funds for government actors. Particularly on the implementation of regional and national development plans.
- Establishing aid localisation working groups jointly with Nexus-coalition members within relevant government bodies will additionally contribute to raising knowledge and awareness and building capacity.
- Nexus members fully engage government actors in the implementation of their humanitarian responses and coordinate early with relevant government institutions. Where possible Nexus members develop and deliver responses in partnership with (local) government actors.

Nexus consortium members will enhance information sharing with relevant line ministries at national and regional levels to ensure that Nexus members' responses are strategically aligned with national and regional development plans (e.g. [Nexus COVID-19 Health and Economic Impact Report](#)).

The Nexus coalition develops operating standards for engaging with government bodies, particularly highlighting how to navigate risks of close partnerships between government actors and local humanitarian actors, and navigating challenges for upholding the humanitarian principles.

## 5. Funding for local humanitarian actors and equitable partnerships

The last intermediate outcome that contributes to Somali leadership and local humanitarian actors claiming their rightful place in the humanitarian system focuses

on funding streams and building more equitable partnerships between local humanitarian NGOs, international actors, donors, and INGOs. We envision that **by 2030, international actors and donors deliver on Grand Bargain, and where relevant Charter for Change, commitments empowering local humanitarian actors to manage a substantial percentage of humanitarian funds (Intermediate Outcome 5).**

Bilateral donors, UN actors, and INGOs play a pivotal role in the allocation of funds into the humanitarian system in Somalia. Currently, they do not allocate enough funding towards local humanitarian actors. Although nearly half of SHF funding was allocated to national and local NGOs, this merely represents 2.4% of the total aid flowing into Somalia. A large share of donors and INGOs that are active in Somalia are signatories to the Grand Bargain, many of them do not deliver on these commitments, particularly in making at least 25% of funds directly available to local humanitarian actors.

Early outcome 5.1 and 5.2 contribute to international actors and donors delivering on their Grand Bargain commitments.

*Early Outcome 5.1: UN & bilateral actors have innovative funding mechanisms to increase funding towards LNNGO's and participation of LNNGOs in decision-making spaces*

Early Outcome 5.1 focuses on the UN and bilateral donors. Our influencing efforts here aim to increase the availability of funds earmarked for local humanitarian organisations from UN and bilateral donors.

The Nexus consortium will act as a 'critical friend' to the international donor community and the UN system. Currently, many relationships between international donors, UN agencies and local humanitarian NGO's rely on sub-

contracting and preserving the inequities present in the current humanitarian system. Our interventions center on efforts that increase the transparency of funding flows and provide evidence of the ineffectiveness of transactional partnerships. At the same time, Nexus will champion those that fund projects that promote equal partnerships, foster autonomy of local humanitarian actors and explicitly seek for a shared vision based on the complementarity of local and international actors. Moreover, we aim for more meaningful participation of local organisations in decision-making around the allocation of these funds. As donors find it difficult to allocate funding directly to local national organisations, innovative funding mechanisms need to be found, beyond the SHF.

Nexus focuses on the following interventions and activities under early outcome 5.1.

- Nexus will showcase its members' capacity to manage substantial funds<sup>18</sup> and thus increasing confidence for donors to invest in LNNGO's. Here, we will directly engage with, and lobby for funds among those bilateral donors aligned with our vision on transforming the humanitarian system and localisation (e.g. SDC, the Dutch and Swedish Embassy, DRA, DFAT). This will be done in a concerted effort as the Nexus consortium (as opposed to as an individual member organisation).
- Advocate for the adoption of measures of localisation performance (e.g. NEAR localisation performance framework<sup>19</sup>) within the grant-making mechanisms of donors and UN agencies.
- Strengthen the Nexus consortium so donors can overcome challenges to direct financing through integrated Institutional Development of technical expertise, policy development and training. In the very short term, the Nexus

<sup>18</sup> The Nexus consortium manages a combined footprint of more than USD\$30 million, and are active within all Federal members States in Somalia and Somaliland.

<sup>19</sup> See: [NEAR Localisation Performance Measurement Framework](http://www.near.ngo/home/workdetail?id=21) <http://www.near.ngo/home/workdetail?id=21>

consortium will develop standardised due diligence frameworks within coupled with a tiered graduation model for capacity investments in local actors.

**Early Outcome 5.2. INGO signatories of C4C deliver on their promise of transparent funding 25%, end subcontracting and support capacity-building.**

Early Outcome 5.2 concentrates on INGOs. Particularly the signatories to the Charter for Change who show a more in-depth engagement and closer alignment with our vision of a Somali-led humanitarian system. The Nexus consortium aims to enact more equitable and dignified partnerships with these INGO's. We help both humanitarian actors INGO's to make their performance on localisation measurable. Furthermore, we demonstrate that shifts towards longer-term relationships and investing in local capacities (through covering indirect costs) is a necessity. We recognise that there is still an important role for INGOs to play

in this transition and that international assistance may be necessary, particularly in the short-to-medium term. We will focus on enhancing the quality and equity of power in these partnerships, and ensuring that 'exit strategies' and plans for transitions of activities towards local humanitarian actors underpin all activities.

Nexus engages in the following interventions and activities under early outcome 5.2.

- Comprehensive and recurrent research that makes the funding flows more transparent. This research focuses on the extent to which INGOs (as well as international donors and UN-actors) reach targets set out in the Grand Bargain and Charter for Change using NEAR's localisation performance measurement framework.
- Expansion of our engagement with the UNDP-initiated and Ministry of Planning-led AIMS project tracking funding tools to support measuring and demonstrating progress towards reaching C4C and Grand Bargain commitments.

## Assumptions

Our perspective on change relies on making assumptions about how changing humanitarian responses and a shift towards a Somali-led humanitarian system works. We assume that: the time is now and there is a conducive environment for locally-led triple-nexus approaches to humanitarian programmes to thrive; closer cooperation with government actors is possible and leads to more effective humanitarian assistance; humanitarian principles can be upheld; other INGO's can become allies for transformative change; and the Nexus consortium is capable of implementing triple Nexus humanitarian programmes and joint, transformative influencing efforts

The last section of this Perspective on Change outlines the assumptions formulated by mapping the causal links between the outcomes presented.

***There is a conducive environment for locally-led triple-nexus approaches in Somalia.***

There are a lot of policies that are calling for nexus approaches, both globally and

in Somalia<sup>20</sup>. Relative political stability in recent years (although this should not be mistaken for lasting peace) gives hope for long-term recovery and economic development. Government actors have adopted the language of resilience and self-reliance and are calling approaches that integrate development, aid, and peace programmes. The UN system embraces the development, aid, peace-nexus, through its New Way of Working. Resilience and self-reliance provide useful narratives and objectives that both the humanitarian and development community can get behind. Although fragmentation of funding in humanitarian, peace and development silos remains a risk, the triple nexus approach is gaining traction among donors, and INGOs as well<sup>21</sup>. Moreover, donors are encouraging consortium approaches that transcend sectoral divisions. We assume that there continues to be a conducive environment for the implementation of triple nexus approaches.

***Closer cooperation with government actors lead to more effective programmes and a locally-led humanitarian system***

We argue for closer cooperation and direct engagement with local government actors throughout our perspective on change. This is in contrast with the approach in the current humanitarian system, which builds up a parallel structure that drains rather than support local capacities. We assume that, by directly engaging with these (local) government authorities and reinforcing their role, triple-nexus humanitarian programmes will become more effective. Moreover, we assume that through this closer cooperation with government actors, awareness-raising on aid localisation, and capacity building, government actors adopt our views of a Somali-led humanitarian system.

***Nexus is able to uphold humanitarian principles while closely working with government actors.***

Closer engagement with government actors carries risk in upholding the humanitarian principles for local humanitarian actors. There are particular trade-offs between the extent of coordination with government actors and operational independence. We will develop operating standards for engaging with government actors based upon practical implications of the implementation of the humanitarian principles in the Somali context. We assume that by implementing these standards for engaging with government actors, Nexus members can uphold the humanitarian principles.

***Non-nexus members /other local NGO's can become allies in transforming the humanitarian system.***

There is a high degree of competition, fragmentation, and rivalry among local (and international) organisations within the national NGO sector in Somalia. Local humanitarian NGOs in Somalia often compete with each other for funds within the top-down and inequitable humanitarian system. In our engagements with non-Nexus members, we seek to build alliances. We assume that by sharing experiences and learnings from our triple-nexus approach and building knowledge and awareness on aid localisation, we are able to build these alliances.

***Nexus individual member organisations are capable of implementing triple-nexus-programs and effectively influence the transformation of the humanitarian system through the Nexus consortium.***

The Nexus consortium provides investments in Nexus members capacity through its Institutional Development Unit. Based

<sup>20</sup> Medinilla, A., Shiferaw, L. T., & Veron, P. (2019). Think local. Governance, humanitarian aid, development and peacebuilding in Somalia (No. 246). *ECDPM: Discussion Paper*

<sup>21</sup> Majid, N., Abdirahman, K., Poole, L., & Willitts-King, B. (2018). *Funding to local humanitarian actors: Somalia case study*. Overseas Development Institute: Humanitarian Policy Group Working Paper.

on external capacity assessments and priority-setting of Nexus members, a Nexus institutional development plan is currently being formulated (supported by Oxfam and Save the Children), this will ensure that

Nexus individual members can integrate all necessary elements in their activities, align priorities and approaches and advocate for transforming the humanitarian system in Somalia.

# Acknowledgements

## DRA 2.0.

The [Dutch Relief Alliance \(DRA\)](#) is a coalition of 15 Dutch aid organisations in partnership with the [Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#) (MoFA). The structure of the DRA enables participating NGOs to respond to major international crises in a timely and effective manner. The DRA responds to humanitarian crises by designing Joint Responses (JR) drawn up and implemented by the members best placed to respond to a crisis. DRA Joint Responses are underway in, amongst others, Nigeria, the Central African Republic (CAR), South Sudan, Yemen, Sudan, the Syria region, and Somalia.

In 2019, the DRA initiated a pilot project, in which “should stretch us in our thinking and imagination around collaboration, building on what we have achieved already”<sup>22</sup>. In the initial phase, the successful applicant to the DRA Pilot programme is tasked to develop a process, which will lead to the implementation of a pilot that will test ways to take DRA JR experiences to a next level and further improve collaboration for increased effectiveness of emergency interventions. The ultimate goal of the pilot is to test if/whether putting in practice the Future DRA principles in a JR allows the DRA collective to improve cooperation between members to increase the effectiveness of emergency aid interventions.

In this context, DRA means the following by ‘Improvement’:

- Local ownership/leadership for the sustainability of results
- Allow for long-term focus beyond emergency response
- Improved/ increased impact
- Create possibilities for attracting additional funding

This pilot project was an opportunity for the Nexus platform to more clearly articulate and plan its humanitarian pillar of work. In doing so, the pilot developed intervention strategies that traverse the (traditional) boundaries of development, humanitarian and peace programming that have a more long-term perspective and bring continuity in responding to the many recurrent crises Somalia currently faces. Moreover, to overcome the structural inequities present in the Somali humanitarian system, the pilot mapped out pathways to shift power towards Somali humanitarian actors. Thus, moving from a predominantly internationally led humanitarian system in Somalia towards a humanitarian system where local organizations are in the driver’s seat.

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This paper is the result of a series of workshops attended by all Nexus members. Executive and Deputy Directors and Humanitarian staff included:

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<sup>22</sup> From the Call for Proposals DRA 2.0. document

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The herein included literature review completed by Alexander Fenwick and Rowan Harrity.



## ABOUT NEXUS:

Nexus is a paradigm-shifting platform of Somali civil society, strategically investing in the institutions of civil society and government to lead the way in identifying, scaling and integrating community-owned and driven solutions to humanitarian, development and peacebuilding needs.



**KAALO**  
Aid and Development Org.

