

# OPERATIONALISING NEXUS APPROACHES IN SWISS INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION



LEARNING JOURNEY

PRELIMINARY SYNTHESIS NOTE BASED ON INTERVIEWS

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## Summary

HD(P) is particularly relevant for fragile and conflict affected contexts and protracted crisis. A double nexus approach is being instituted and there many examples of complementarities between HA and SC/EEC. It is a *means to an end* and focus on *target group* and value addition are at the centre of developing complementary engagement. *Joint analysis (including Peace and Human Rights Division (PHRD, formerly PHRD) is therefore the key entry-point to assess if and how, and which nexus approach is the most appropriate.*

*Where presence is limited, both in terms of instruments and location, it is difficult to develop a nexus approach even between HA and SC. Chad is a case in point where HA's staff covers more countries, and SC is only present in the part of the country where there is no conflict. Such examples need pragmatic approaches and are cases in point of avoiding a top down template approach.*

*Nexus approaches start from the field and are hinged on the instruments that are in place. A triple nexus approach is highly dependent on an HSA adviser being in post. Nexus approaches are initially not so concerned with external partnerships, but there are good examples of Switzerland seeking external partners, placements of Secondees and support to the RC function. Closer collaboration with multilaterals instruments are being formulated.*

*Nexus approaches are staff driven and there is a high level of commitment and analytical capacity vested in ongoing efforts. The head of cooperation function is seen as the most important function for successful formulation and implementation. The organisational set-up and administrative processes frustrate staff. Some offices are not yet integrated which complicates close collaboration and gives rise to time consuming parallel administrative processes.*

## Recommendations

### Field:

- Focus on the needs of target groups and how complementarities provide value addition
- Have a nexus lens as the starting point for new projects (can be different nexus constellations).
- Be ambitious and assess options for a triple nexus approach
- Conduct joint analysis – always invite PHRD to participate (although PHRD pointed out that sensitive information cannot be shared more widely, and this should be respected.)
- Develop complementary programme or other engagement
- Assess value addition for Switzerland and engage in coordination

### HQ

- Continue high level visits and energize the field by pointing to opportunities and see institutional constraints in practice.
- Continue to align processes between HA and SC/EEC: Focus on approval processes, joint geographic desks, and financial procedures.
- Ensure that bureaucratic processes do not stall “good” initiatives, (could there be a “help” desk at HQ?)
- Act as a connector and advocate between the field and global level (example Burundi)
- Act as connector between HA, SC/EEC and WOGA partners (PHRD, SECO and others) and push for “smart ways to work together”
- Keep nexus alive and avoid top down template – nurture and spotlight good initiatives
- Continue reforms for more integrated office
- New Cooperation strategies to have formats that are more inclusive for WOGA partners, focus on adaptive programming and less rigorous result frameworks.
- Continue to train staff in conflict sensitive programming and include training on nexus approaches
- HR reform so post the best people in the most difficult locations

## 1 Introduction

This Learning Journey (LJ) builds upon the work done in the context of the independent evaluation commissioned by SDC on the humanitarian development nexus (HD-N) and goes beyond its finding by emphasising the importance to add the “peace”-component into nexus thinking.

Many practices have been developed in the cooperation offices in the last few years that address not only the HD-N, but increasingly also the interlinkages with the peace policy instruments (often through Human Security Advisors) and peacebuilding in HA, SC and CEE programmes, constituting a body of evidence from which lessons can be drawn on how the existing Swiss instruments can increase their impact.

After having commissioned a State of the Art report reflecting documentation of current international practices with regard to the nexus, interviews have been conducted with senior management and staff, who are already working in and on both the HD-N and the humanitarian development peace nexus (HDP-N). Interviews are still ongoing, so far 48 staff interviews have been conducted and 15 interviews still pending. Interviews have also been conducted with Swiss NGOs, these are not summarised in this note. The interviews serve to inform the key purposes of the Learning Journey, namely to develop an institutionalised common understanding of the triple nexus for the Swiss International Cooperation (IZA), to deepen the understanding of the benefits of the nexus approach and identify conducive factors for working in and on the nexus, and to identify the main administrative, cultural and political bottlenecks at strategic, institutional and operational level.

## 2 Definitions and approaches

### Box 1 Defining the nexus

The **nexus definition** as put forward by the independent evaluation on the HD-N and accepted by the Directorate serves as a starting point. It defines the HD-N as:

*“The integrated use of instruments (both bilateral and multilateral) of humanitarian aid and development cooperation”.*

*“Integrated” means “the simultaneous and synergetic application of instruments in the same geographic context in order to augment, effectively intertwine and operate synergistically to enhance joint outcomes for the targeted populations in the short, medium and long term”.*

The LJ journey process aims to enlarge the definition to the humanitarian development peace nexus (HDP-N). In this process we use, as a working definition, the recommendation agreed upon by DAC members (including Switzerland) and issued by [OECD DAC in 2019](#):

*“Nexus refers to the interlinkages between humanitarian, development and peace actions”.*

*“Nexus approach refers to the aim of strengthening collaboration, coherence and complementarity. The approach seeks to capitalise 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”.*

This implies joined-up efforts across the instruments towards achieving collective outcomes where:

*“Collective outcome refers to a commonly agreed measurable result or impact enhanced by the combined effort of different actors, within their respective mandates, to address and reduce people’s unmet needs, risks and vulnerabilities, increasing their resilience and addressing the root causes of conflict”.*

*“Joined-up refers to the coherent and complementary coordination, programming and financing of humanitarian, development and peace actions that are based on shared risk-informed and gender sensitive analysis; while ensuring that humanitarian action always remains needs-based and principled.”*

***Across all nexus types, HA, SC/EEC, and PHRD staff emphasise that nexus approaches are pathways to bridge the instruments to be more coherent and complementary and deliver better outcomes.*** Thereby, nexus aims to establish synergies or work to comparative advantages of instruments. The use of the word ‘integrated’ in the HD definition raises concern for some, carrying the implication that the end goal is to merge

different instruments, rather than apply them complementarily and coherently. It is therefore important for shared understanding to emphasise that rather than reducing or even erasing the differences between humanitarian, development and peacebuilding approaches, *a nexus approach aims to draw on the strengths, reduce gaps and overlaps. It is proposed to substitute “integrated” with “complementary”*.

***At the conceptual level, most staff see the inherent logic to applying double and triple nexus approaches, pointing to the complexity of the contexts in which they operate.*** In this manner, nexus approaches are understood as a means to an end – but never the end in itself. Importantly, the context is a point of departure, dictating which instruments are relevant, and therefore neither nexus (HD- or HDP) is inherently better than the other. It is a question of which nexus is appropriate in the given context, as well as which instruments are in place on the ground.

***While nexus approaches and the DAC Recommendation have emerged from an understanding of the complexity of humanitarian crises and conflicts, there remains a sense that the definition is too broad to give concrete direction on the operational and institutional side of things.*** All too often, what works on paper is seen to fall short in practice when institutional set-ups and incentives struggle to catch up to conceptual nexus thinking.

***While most see the value of nexus approaches, a degree of scepticism remains, particularly when discourses or agendas surrounding the nexus are experienced as top-down.*** The camp that expresses scepticism or nexus-fatigue fall back on the value of a Whole of Government Approach (WOGA). An explanation could be that the WOGA captures the institutional set-up, whereas the definition of nexus remains at a higher level. A WOGA approach, which has emerged out of nexus thinking on the security – development divide<sup>1</sup>, is not at odds with nexus approaches. On the contrary, it may offer insight into the ‘*who*’ of operationalisation of nexus approaches given its focus on the institutional set-up. In the same vein, some prefer ‘*resilience*’ or ‘*empowerment*’ approaches instead of the word *nexus*, as these words signal a people-centric approach. In the end it seems to come down to semantics, as a nexus approach is a broader umbrella and a means to an end that can encompass both WOGA and resilience/empowerment.

***The triple nexus is met with different interpretations of what ‘peace’ entails, ranging from conflict sensitivity and social cohesion to diplomacy and stabilisation, complicating a shared understanding of what the HDP-nexus entails.*** Particularly when peace is seen as closely linked to the concept of stabilisation, it raises concerns over the securitisation of humanitarian assistance and development, and the risk of over-militarising engagements in complex political settings. Therefore, it is particularly useful to adopt the clearer distinction of ‘Peace Writ Large’ and ‘peace writ little’ (CDA, 2012). Development and humanitarian actors’ nexus activities would typically be more focused on the latter, with activities at community level focused on social cohesion, or including conflict-sensitive approaches and Do-No-Harm principles in planning and implementation.

***Peace is not understood as the absence of violence, but by the political will to regulate through politics, rather than violence.*** Taking a conflict transformation approach, the aim is not to manage conflict, but to transform conflicts to be non-violent. Setting itself apart from stabilisation – where the aim is to ‘freeze’ the situation, to make it stable – a conflict transformation approach is closely linked to the longer-term development and resilience of a society to handle conflict.

***Across the LJ interviews, the fact that nexus approaches should take context and ownership of target groups as a point of departure was voiced again and again.*** Many nexus discussions have conceptual and been happening at a high-level, but it is a key message that they should not lose sight of the people that they are intended to support. For example, what ‘peace’ means differs across contexts, and therefore it is important to talk to people as a starting point for engagement.

### **3 Nexus entry points**

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<sup>1</sup> Stipitate, F. and L. Greenwood. (2013). *Whole-of-Government Approaches to Fragile States and Situations*. Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS).

### 3.1 Sectors and themes

**There are certain themes and sectors, where complementarity of approaches seem more advanced than others.** These include for example education, food security and nutrition, disaster risk management, and themes like durable solutions, and there are others (see Box 2). Although this is a main finding, it is worth noting an opposite viewpoint, that care need to be taken not to exemplify the same sectors again and again because this could lead to a top down template approach, which should be avoided. “There should be no recipe, but an open mind to see opportunities for change. In the same vein it was suggested to develop Cooperation Strategies in conflict affected contexts with nexus as the first choice modality and then deduct from there. This is done in Myanmar. *“The nexus applies to all our projects in the mixed controlled areas and the non-controlled areas, because you need to have a good comprehensive analysis as the starting point”.*

**Taking this route, it is important to underline that a triple nexus is not “better” than a double nexus approach but it is critical to have a comprehensive focus.** HDP is often aspirational and emerging. Some interviewees called the current state of affairs for – “living the nexus”. Currently there are two contexts among the priority countries where a nexus approach is being institutionalised - these are HoA and the Syria contexts.

#### Box 2 “Nexus” sectors and themes

***Education is a sector with interesting examples of HD that is aspiring to include peacebuilding as in “p small writ”.*** In Afghanistan, SDC has had a mandate for a long time. The office is integrated, and the education programme has been a double nexus approach from the outset, well-aligned to the response plan for Afghanistan. The protection component of the education programme bridges humanitarian response to peace and security, covering psychosocial support, infrastructure (school safety plans), sexual abuse, gender-based violence and harassment, but also political dialogue to ensure that schools are a safe environment. Dialogue is seen as an important dimension of ‘peace’ at the local level, and the political will to ensure safety of schools has enabled the ‘p small writ’ side of the programme. Children’s safety and need for education is a strong gateway to engaging with peace, as is also exemplified in South Sudan, where building a school at the cross-roads between different tribes was used as a means to build social cohesion and unity amongst the children. Another education example is from Mali, where it took considerable internal efforts to bring together HA and SC and include peacebuilding as well.

***Food security and nutrition are topics where the value of double and triple nexus approaches are evident, given that food insecurity often is exacerbated by natural disasters and droughts – which in turn can add fuel to existing tensions or lead to violence related to food and other resource shortages.*** In South Sudan, working with the SS Council of Churches and other actors on peacebuilding is crucial, given the cycles of violence from recurring crises and resource shortages. There is an emerging understanding in the development community (e.g. WFP and other UN agencies), that without peace components in their programs and the engagement of trusted security actors, development and private sector actors will not progress. Another example emerges from the Great Lakes, where there were initial tensions because of different approaches being managed in parallel, with HA working on acute nutrition needs and SC on structural malnutrition. This has been solved by working through a consortium of NGOs for the long term programming and use crisis modifier funds for sudden crises. In Burundi, there has been an opportunity to engage on food security politically, enabled by a meeting in Washington. Political leverage allowed for use of different instruments and a greater impact. The issues were leveraged to a global level, which created options for structural changes.

***In the Horn of Africa, Durable Solutions is a niche with potential for Switzerland and an initiative that essentially takes a double nexus approach, but also aspires to become more comprehensive and include peace building aspects.*** Durable solutions also appears to be an area where a small donor can successfully influence relevant policies. The secondments to RC offices in charge of coordination on durable solutions within the UN-System in Somalia, as well as the engagement of high-level expert Walter Kälin has been a determining factor in achieving high level dialogue and impact with authorities.

***The health sector presents another social sector where triple nexus approaches are emerging as valuable to maintain neutrality in a fragile, conflict-affected context.*** In Ukraine, a political economy analysis was undertaken of the health sector, that highlighted resistance to the reform process that was financed by the World Bank. Switzerland, in this case supporting the World Bank alongside the EU, was in the precarious situation of having chosen sides in this conflict, and thereby not a fully neutral actor in the ‘bigger peace engagement’. This indicates that there is an important ‘peace’ element in the health sector in Ukraine. or at the very least, a necessity to ensure conflict sensitivity in humanitarian and development

### 3.2 Peace

***In certain contexts where there is political resistance toward engaging on ‘peace’, the triple nexus approach presents an opportunity to work on peace through the other instruments.*** In Sri Lanka, for example, applying a nexus discourse has been a useful way to breach the topic of peace and reconciliation, because development aspects of SDG 16 are more acceptable and are met with significantly less resistance from the government. Development actors are typically closer to the Government and in contested areas, which may present opportunities for a nexus approach, where governments are willing to engage with development actors but not on peacebuilding; on the other hand, this can present a risk for both the peacebuilding and humanitarian constituents, whose neutrality and independence may come into question. The transversal themes of gender, governance and human rights are central to a peacebuilding guided by a conflict transformation approach, because principles of equality, inclusion and opportunities political participation underpin non-violent response to conflict.

### 3.3 Sub-national level

***Given the experience and size of Switzerland the sub-national level is seen by many as the most impactful way to implement nexus approaches.*** Swiss engagement in Haiti is a good example of this, where the intervention logic has been that it is better to work at the local level, where resources can be concentrated and where the work is closer to the population. This affirms the finding presented in the *State of the Art report*, where other actors have had success in implementing nexus approaches through area-based or territorial approaches. Working on a sub-national level also links to building ownership, where local governments are important actors to engage. Another example is Columbia, where there are opportunities *for triple nexus at the sub-national level (programme for territorial development, PDET)*.

#### *Box 3 Coordination as an entry point*

In Chad the EU, UN and other bilaterals have quite substantive programmes and both hum and dev and some are involved in peace building and others in stabilisation. They are in particular engaged in peace and security issues around the Lakes.

The coordination among donors is quite weak, and so is the RC/HC. The UN agencies have large resources, but they also do their own thing, and there seems to be no OneUN in sight. There is a technical coordination around OCHA that works quite well.

The EU has launched a new initiative on the nexus, and asked Switzerland to take a role in coordination. This is not straightforward as Switzerland is a small donor and not engaged in the South, but many stakeholders point to Switzerland as the “connector”.

This request has raised valid questions of broader significance in the cooperation office: Is this the right entry point, and do we have sufficient weight, or could we engage in a different way and be more proactive ourselves?

## 4 Institutional actors and roles

### 4.1 HA and SC/EEC

***In the HD nexus there are an increasing number of experiences of close collaboration, especially in the form of projects at integrated embassies.*** In HoA, for example, the number of co-financed projects with built-

in crisis modifier funds have increased from 2 to 6 in the last two years<sup>2</sup>. Other integrated embassies also reported that they have both approved projects and a pipeline.

***Integrated embassies and joint desks between HA and SC/EEC drive HD nexus approaches. Joint desks help staff to understand and focus on complementarities rather than differences.*** The joint desks also help to align processes. Nevertheless, it is not everywhere that complementarity comes easily. Constraints include that HA has a universal mandate and SC/EEC is sector and area-driven. Also mentioned were the different timelines for projects, dissimilar end goals, as well as the views on working with government versus impartiality and independence. When offices are not integrated it is the differences rather than the complementarities that lead work to continue in parallel silos.

***The message from field staff is that their efforts are best supported by HQ if the silos at this level are removed.*** Respondents voiced frustrations that their nexus efforts were not replicated at HQ. Joint (geographical) desks, joint discussions on budget and joint OPComs were proposed as next steps for HQ. It was also said that it seems to be “the middle body in the hierarchy” that is not easily changed. Everybody spoken to in the field and in HQ are interested in aligning processes to be fit for nexus approaches, but there is bureaucratic requirements that are stumbling blocks - although some progress was also acknowledged to have taken place after the HD nexus evaluation (2018).

***Joint strategies are a mechanism that help complementarities, but it is not sufficient.*** Joint strategies seem hinged on joint understanding at a particular point in time but is not always followed up by joint analysis and complementary initiatives. For a strategy to properly frame the complementarities there seems to be a need for incentives for the different divisions, right now the basis for collaboration is leadership and staff initiatives. It was said that because the nexus approaches are so people driven currently, there is a risk “losing” the investments when there are staff changes. It was suggested to adapt the format of strategies so allow all divisions to have ownership and for partners to sign on to an agreed “rules of the game” document.

#### ***4.2 WOGA with emphasis on PHRD and SDC***

***With focus on protracted crisis situations there are grounds for closer and more systematic collaboration between PHRD and SDC.*** SDC is continuously deepening its approaches to be fit for fragility; including addressing root causes of conflict. PHRD is at the same time becoming more opportunistic, and taking bigger roles in peace mediation processes, in normative processes (and for example in the security council) and strives to link country level engagement to these processes. This creates the ground for the closer working relationship, which has been developing in recent years.

***There are complications, but there are also real breakthrough stories from the field.*** With HDP increasingly becoming a priority there are a range of opportunities and invitations to PHRD from SDC, and there are good examples of close working relationship and value addition. SDC staff said that they need the political backing to work in the triple nexus, because “you get close to the power balance on the ground and a nexus approach advocates for political change”. There are also stumbling blocks, one of which is PHRD’s limited budget and staff resources. A general message from the field interviews is that more resources to PHRD would benefit everybody and suggestions include that PHRD should focus more on SDC priority countries and posting of HSAs in SDC priority countries. Others both from SDC and PHRD said that instead of focusing on the need for PHRD to stretch and increase their resources there should be focus on developing smart ways to cooperate (training on conflict sensitivity for example).

***Interviews showed that the mutual understanding and knowledge of the different processes and tools is increasing.*** In South Sudan for example the long term presence of HA and PHRD have created complementarities, and the Swiss programme is appreciated by other stakeholders exactly because of this synergy. A “low hanging fruit” to increase mutual understanding and complementarity – is to invite PHRD and especially HSAs to bring in their expertise in joint analysis, where this is not already happening.

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<sup>2</sup> HoA Annual Report 2020

***Patience and personal relationships seems to be a recipe for success for inclusion of peace components.***

Patience and working through personal relationships were said to show good results from the field. Mali is case in point of working in complementarity (although this is not an integrated office). This is carried by leadership and a team that have taken the time to find ways to cooperate and focus on the target group and see that synergies create additional value. The teams said that they really like to work together and job satisfaction was said to have a direct impact on incentives and thereby the quality of nexus projects. This complementarity is exemplified in engagement in the Columbia peace process (PHRD, HA and SECO), which give Switzerland recognition for its ability to apply different instruments in the same process.

***Box 4 Linking migration and development***

In the new International strategy, the link between migration and development is of high priority. A nexus narrative has been agreed between SDC, PHRD and SECO. It takes the starting point in root causes of forced displacement and combine our instruments:

Protection of forcibly displaced; local integration (durable solutions); and looking at the root causes of conflict. In the case of protection there are many links, and local integration also has peacebuilding aspects (social cohesion), and in root causes we can work on conflict mitigation. This complementary approach is considered a win-win not least for those populations that are targeted.

***The global cooperation department is developing an interesting initiative to bring the Peace Building Fund (PBF) and the State and Peacebuilding Fund (SPF) and the Peace and Development Advisers of the UN closer to the bilateral programmes to promote nexus engagement.*** Switzerland is a longstanding donor to these mechanisms and there are likely to be considerable synergies. This also includes strengthening the dialogue with the RC function and help strengthen the UN system. The current plan is at the stage of an entry proposal (project) of 9 years and multilateral cooperation with 8 country offices. Switzerland can help on grounding nexus approaches with its own instruments and facilitate exchanges. Another aspect of their collaboration could be to help the multilaterals to keep focus on the prevention agenda. One interview emphasised that in some regions opportunities for multilaterals come up faster than their planning mechanisms can manage, resulting in mismatches and missed opportunities in, and Switzerland could play a role in linking the two.

***4.3 Leadership, staff and mindsets***

***Senior Leadership has a role in signalling the need for new approaches in protracted contexts where there has been siloed “business as usual” engagement for a long time.*** Joint missions by senior leadership are influential and examples have encouraged staff and helped see nexus opportunities. The joint visits of senior leadership should continue to go to such places and inject ideas and support to change. The joint visit to South Sudan resulted in financing of two SC projects, which have created new dynamics around youth engagement in peacebuilding and brought PHRD and HA closer together around a targeting and peacebuilding as a humanitarian and development activity. In Mali and Niger, a joint visit resulted in an understanding of the limits of the P in a given situation, because the Peace element is about stabilisation and security. One conclusion of the nexus visit to Haiti, was to work more with multilaterals, because we have very concrete experience with the multilateral partners. Haiti is one pilot to implement the UN reform and a nexus expert was attached to the UN RC office. MTRs and evaluations are also important and assessment of options for nexus engagement should be standard in terms of reference.

***Interviews emphasised that the role of the head of mission is the pinnacle for nexus successes.*** Leadership at all levels matters because nexus approaches at this point are dependent on individuals rather than systems. Sharing of good examples and cordial relations were also mentioned success criteria. There were warnings against matrix organisations and top down directives from HQ on how to develop ideas and collaborations.

***It is difficult to attract and maintain senior staff to postings in fragile and conflict affected countries.*** In some countries it is difficult to recruit staff both in leadership positions but also international staff generally. The high turn overs and vacancies lead to missed opportunities and processes that start and “die”. This has an effect on team spirit, learning and working with others. In South Sudan for example the UN has started “hubs of relative

stability” based on nexus engagement, but although there was an interest to follow this initiative, it fell between the cracks because of staff turnover and vacancies. Generally, there were calls in interviews for *HR to take steps to incentivise recruitment of the “best people to postings in difficult places”*.

***The presence of an HSA in a mission is key***, because communication lines are short, and there is a mix of expertise in the same office. This way, nexus approaches develop organically through interactions and common ground, and while there are also cases of disagreements, this was said to be useful and lead to more nuanced views. In those cases where there is no HSA, it was suggested that SDC could post nexus staff.

***Secondments seem to be a strategic “injection” to promote nexus approaches***. For example, in the Durable Solutions Initiative in Somalia, two secondees are posted in the RC office. This helps both the UN, the Somali Government and Swiss interests in promoting durable solution approaches and work at multilateral levels. The ongoing review of the SHA pool will also assess the availability of nexus experts, it is anticipated that this resource can be used to expand the number of secondments.

***Mindset change is an important key to unlock openness for more nexus approaches***. It was said that when staff from different divisions understand the logic and see examples, there is likely to be a change of minds. This implies a recognition of each other’s strengths rather than critiques. With a mindset change it was said that staff then see opportunities rather than challenges. Other voices emphasised that this is not enough, there should be formal recognition of nexus portfolio initiatives and experiences in promotions, and simplification of processes to allow time for engagements.

***There are risks at different levels, and this is really important to bring into the picture (also in LJ)***. One risk is that nexus becomes a template and is seen as an end goal. A nexus approach is always a means to an end. To this comes the risks for the different divisions which must be respected. Nexus must not be the lowest common denominator, but approaches that create value addition.

#### ***4.4 Processes***

***Processes must be inclusive and first steps be based on joint understanding of context***. Staff said that it is time consuming to engage in joint analysis and joint understanding of root causes and problems to be addressed, and then comes issues around complementarity: same focus area; level of engagement (community, sub-national; national; existing projects/new projects; etc; advocacy dialogue, networks, partners etc. Some staff reported that field trips were the best way to adapt mindsets and open up for constructive discussions. It was also said that it should be acceptable that not everything makes “nexus sense”. Top down approaches from HQ are difficult, because there is limited local ownership, and other examples given were that existing projects do not easily lend themselves to be transformed into nexus approaches.

#### ***4.5 Loss of momentum***

***There are examples where nexus approaches have been started and then complications, lack of results, lack of interest, change of leadership/role models change and nexus approaches fade away***. This is reported to have happened temporarily in Mali, where the whole donor community needed an impetus to restart their efforts after the coup last year. Or in Ethiopia where a Swiss initiative to meet and share experience on nexus, and in particular on durable solutions, stopped for internal administrative reasons. There may also fall back to less ambitious nexus approaches, i.e. working on double nexus rather than triple nexus. In the case of Mali, a high level conference led to some partners departing from dogmatic stand points and opening up to reengaging, which shows that even if nexus is best coordinated from the field there are important roles for HQ and high level engagements to help unlock local positions and “politics”.

#### ***4.6 Co-financing***

***One point that came across is interviews was, whether co-financing is the litmus test for partners to say that work together in a nexus approach***. Co-financing is administratively difficult, and was found that there would be a need for clarity from senior leadership on what “qualifies” as nexus. Some say that even if co-financing is difficult and even if one partners contributes very little, financing shows real commitment and is binding

partnerships. Views were also that PHRD is in a particular position and their role is often more the technical know-how and time investment than funding.

#### ***4.7 Levels of decision making***

***There is a fundamental difference in decision making:*** HA is still centralised and SC is decentralised, although HA increasingly is said to have some flexibility in this regard, but 2/3 HA budget is multilateral and also at country level there is a lot of multi/bi, which limits the HA funding for nexus approaches in some cases. PHRD decision making is centralized, but there are openings, like in South Sudan and with a small portion of funds now being managed from the field. This creates frictions overall and points to a bigger problem and the need for more integrated embassies with a high degree of decentralized decision making.

#### ***5 Partnerships***

***There are mixed views on the partnerships between the multilateral actors in the field, and there is a sense that there is gap between New York, Geneva and Washington nexus narratives and what happens in the field.*** A strengthened role for the RC function is considered a must for partnerships to be more successful. This was the message in field interviews but there is an important role for HQ in different ways, including through the Utstein group where members align their board positions. The EU and likeminded bilaterals are allies but there seem to be examples of cooperation. Partnerships on violent conflict prevention had been associated with some hopes but have not progressed as expected by the leading multilaterals (re. Partnerships for Peace).

***Switzerland is seen as a partner that lives the nexus, advocates for taking both hum and dev into account, but could be better recognised for the triple nexus.*** There are opportunities to communicate the experience for partners to see Switzerland as an attractive partner that has principled positions, a long history of peacebuilding and the advantage of not having been involved in conflict.