



A Literature Review on the Triple Nexus Model: Developing a Comprehensive Framework

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ABSTRACT

This review critically examines the Triple Nexus (TN) framework, which integrates humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding efforts to tackle protracted crises. Moving beyond linear relief-to-development models, TN advocates for flexible, integrated approaches tailored to local needs. The study identifies critical research gaps and proposes tools and metrics to operationalize TN effectively.

Findings highlight the importance of meaningful community engagement and context-specific strategies to bridge the gap between theory and practice. Innovative funding, strengthened partnerships, and adaptive governance are essential for overcoming challenges such as political instability and poor coordination, particularly in fragile states.

By focusing on measurable indicators - resilience, conflict reduction, and social protection - the review demonstrates TN's potential to deliver sustainable, impactful interventions. However, realizing this promise requires stronger local participation, improved evaluation tools, and more cohesive strategies. The TN framework ultimately offers a pathway to build resilient, inclusive communities capable of addressing today's interconnected global challenges.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Since the 1990s, the conversation around how humanitarian relief and development aid interact has undergone significant changes. At first glance, the two areas seem distinct: humanitarian relief focuses on immediate, short-term responses to save lives and reduce suffering, while development aid aims to tackle long-term, structural issues in social, economic, and political systems (Hanatani et al., 2018). However, this clear separation blurs upon closer inspection. The transition from humanitarian action to development efforts is rarely straightforward or final; it often requires a mix of coordinated and overlapping approaches to ensure a seamless progression (De Lauri, 2020). In recent years, humanitarian practices have shifted toward incorporating resilience within Disaster Risk Management (DRM), aligning more closely with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and fostering connections between immediate response and long-term development. This evolution signals a broader shift from pure disaster response toward disaster mitigation, preparedness, and recovery, advancing an integrated humanitarian-development continuum.

Over the years, humanitarian work has evolved to emphasize resilience as part of Disaster Risk Management (DRM), aligning more closely with the goals of long-term sustainability, such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This shift reflects a broader transformation: moving from purely reactive disaster responses toward disaster mitigation, preparedness, and recovery, which together form an integrated humanitarian-development approach (De Lauri, 2020). Traditionally, humanitarian efforts are guided by principles such as humanity, neutrality, impartiality, and independence. In contrast, development work often involves partnerships with national governments and relies heavily on coordination with local authorities. These differing approaches can create gaps - both in timing and in institutional priorities - that complicate the transition between humanitarian relief and development programming (Suhrke et al., 2005).

More recently, this humanitarian-development relationship has expanded to include peacebuilding, reflecting the recognition that achieving sustainable progress in both humanitarian and development work requires peace and stability as foundational components (Lie, 2020; Lucuta, 2014; Joanna Macrae et al., 2004). The need for greater coherence among these sectors has become more apparent in regions experiencing protracted crises, where the sustainability and effectiveness of interventions depend on addressing the root causes of conflict.

The purpose of this literature review is to critically assess existing research on the Triple Nexus (TN) framework, examining how humanitarian, development, and peace efforts intersect. This review explores existing literature to pinpoint critical gaps in research, share insights on effective practices, and contribute to building a robust conceptual and analytical framework for integrating humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding efforts. It draws on a diverse range of academic studies, case analyses, and practical resources, including peer-reviewed articles and secondary data. The focus spans publications from 2000 onward, emphasizing regions grappling with protracted crises where the TN approach has been applied.

By combining academic findings with practical experiences, the review underscores the pressing need for better coordination to achieve sustainable outcomes, particularly in fragile and conflict-affected contexts. Despite the evident promise of the TN, challenges persist - most notably around its conceptual clarity, implementation in practice, and the development of tools to measure its impact effectively. The review is shaped by key research questions, including:

- *What are the current gaps in Triple Nexus intervention practices?*
- *How can the TN be conceptualized to effectively integrate humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding efforts?*
- *How to develop an analytical framework for TN interventions?*
- *How have humanitarian, development, and peace efforts been integrated in practice?*

The remaining part of the paper is structured as follows: Section 2 provides the reviewed literature. Section 3 presents used methodology. Section 4 presents the results of analysis, and discussion. The last section includes conclusion and policy insights.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The complementarity of the literature in the context of the TN highlights the rich tapestry of interdisciplinary research and diverse perspectives that collectively enrich the understanding and implementation of this framework. The literature on the TN spans a range of disciplines, including international relations, development studies, peace and conflict studies, and disaster management. Each of these fields brings its own theoretical perspectives, research methods, and case studies, offering a well-rounded understanding of the challenges and opportunities in integrating humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding efforts.

Practical studies on TN implementation provide valuable insights into its successes, challenges, and lessons learned across different geographical and conflict-affected contexts. These examples showcase the adaptability of the TN approach and highlight actionable lessons that inform both policy decisions and practical applications. Together, they demonstrate how the TN framework can be effectively operationalized in diverse and complex settings.

The literature draws on both policy and theory to shape understanding and guide implementation. Policy frameworks from international organizations such as the United Nations (UN) and the European Union (EU) establish expectations and guidelines for merging humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding efforts. In parallel, academic research critiques, refines, and expands upon these frameworks, fostering a dynamic interplay between theory and practice. The use of diverse research methods further enhances this dialogue, ensuring a more nuanced and in-depth understanding of the TN's practical applications.

At the same time, the literature continues to evolve, reflecting the challenges posed by contemporary global issues like climate change, rapid urbanization, and digital transformation. This ongoing exploration highlights how these emerging factors intersect with the TN, offering innovative solutions and adaptations to ensure the framework remains relevant and effective in addressing today's crises.

A notable strength of the TN literature is its diversity of perspectives. While some studies emphasize the potential and benefits of the TN, others critically examine its feasibility, effectiveness, and unintended consequences. These contrasting viewpoints enrich the conversation, encouraging debate and contributing to the development of more refined, balanced, and practical approaches to TN integration.

In essence, the interdisciplinary nature of the TN literature - its blend of theory, practice, and methodological diversity - makes it a foundational resource for advancing knowledge and improving implementation strategies. This body of work is particularly significant in today's rapidly changing world, marked by the overlapping challenges of climate change, the COVID-19 pandemic, and ongoing global conflicts. The insights it provides are essential for enhancing the effectiveness of TN interventions and fostering sustainable, long-term solutions in fragile and crisis-affected environments. These phenomena collectively hinder the progress toward the SDGs casting a long shadow over fragile environments where, by 2030, it is anticipated that 80% of those in extreme poverty will reside (Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation (SDC), 2022). The overlapping nature of today's crises—such as the pandemic's exacerbation of conflict and fragility, alongside climate change's intensification of natural disasters, food insecurity, and livelihoods—has led to a sharp rise in humanitarian needs. In 2022 alone, an estimated 274 million people required assistance, yet available funding still fell short of meeting this immense demand.

This intensification of global challenges calls for a fundamental reassessment of how the international community responds. A shift in approach is necessary, one that involves developing new tools and methods to better understand and address the increasingly interconnected nature of these crises (King, 2023). The adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development marked a critical turning point by underscoring the collective need to strengthen global commitments to peace, development, and human rights. It reflected a shared vision for building just, peaceful, and inclusive societies, particularly in fragile contexts (Mendoza Elguea, 2021).

Amid rising demands and finite resources, there is an urgent need to rethink humanitarian and development strategies. This shift involves integrating efforts across sectors, leveraging innovative financing mechanisms, and promoting stronger international cooperation to address these evolving challenges more effectively (Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation (SDC), 2022).

Since the 1990s, discussions have significantly advanced our understanding of the relationship between humanitarian relief, development aid, and peacebuilding. However, achieving effective coordination across these sectors remains complex (De Lauri, 2020; Hanatani et al., 2018; Weishaupt, 2020). The transition from a simple, linear model of “relief-to-development” to the more intricate TN approach highlights the need for integrated responses that address the interconnected drivers of crises (Concord, 2012; Mowjee et al., 2015).

While the existing literature offers valuable insights, significant gaps remain in fully understanding and operationalizing the TN. Efforts to conceptualize an integrated approach that spans humanitarian, development, and peace dimensions have yet to reach maturity, particularly in bridging theory and practice (Infante, 2019; Lilly et al., 2018; Nguya and Siddiqui, 2020; Tronc et al., 2019a; Veron and Hauck, 2021). These gaps underscore the need for further exploration into the integration, challenges, and measurable impacts of TN interventions (Mawson Chief, 2022; U. Photo et al., 2019).

This research sits at a critical juncture. By examining the synergies across humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding efforts, it seeks to move beyond traditional sectoral boundaries. The study advocates for a more holistic, integrated model that recognizes the interconnected nature of these dimensions. Such an approach has the potential to foster sustainable and resilient communities capable of navigating the complexities of today’s global crises.

In practice, the TN framework has gained prominence as a model to enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of responses in conflict-affected areas (Center on International Cooperation, 2019a, 2019b; Infante, 2019; Oxfam, 2021; Saferworld, 2023; SDC, 2022; Sida, 2021, 2023; SIPRI, 2019; UN Trust Fund for Human Security, 2021; UNICEF, 2021a; USAID, 2020). At its core, the TN approach seeks to break down the traditional silos that separate humanitarian aid, development efforts, and peacebuilding activities. By fostering greater collaboration across these areas, the TN aims to create a more unified and effective response to crisis management and recovery.

The concept of the TN has steadily gained momentum within international policy discussions. What began as distinct, standalone efforts has evolved into a coordinated strategy that highlights the interconnectedness of humanitarian response, sustainable development, and peacebuilding (Baroncelli, 2023). This shift is underscored by significant policy milestones, such as the UN's Agenda for Humanity and the Sustaining Peace Agenda. Both frameworks promote approaches that are people-centered and sensitive to the dynamics of conflict, ensuring interventions are tailored to the realities of affected communities (Baroncelli, 2023).

Over time, the TN has matured into more than just a framework for aligning humanitarian and development efforts. It now positions peacebuilding as a critical and inseparable element, recognizing that lasting recovery and development are only achievable when peace is prioritized alongside immediate relief and long-term structural change. The integration is premised on the understanding that sustainable development cannot occur without peace, and vice versa (Cochrane et al., 2023a). The TN emphasizes the need to synergize humanitarian, development, and peace initiatives, and thereby challenges the sectoral silos that have traditionally compartmentalized responses, urging for a unified approach that acknowledges and leverages the interconnectedness of these sectors (Barakat et al., 2020). The shift toward the TN approach reflects a growing acknowledgment of the shortcomings of isolated interventions, especially in protracted crises where humanitarian relief, sustainable development, and peacebuilding are inseparably linked (Nguya et al., 2020b). By fostering greater collaboration, coherence, and complementarity across these sectors, the TN aims to provide more effective responses to crises, particularly in fragile contexts where traditional methods have fallen short. In such settings, socio-economic, political, and environmental challenges are so deeply intertwined that they demand integrated solutions (Brugger et al., 2022).

However, translating the TN approach into practice presents significant challenges. Harmonizing methodologies and metrics across different sectors remains difficult, as organizations often operate with competing mandates and priorities. These misalignments can cause conflicts over resource allocation and strategic direction (Lie, 2020). Institutional silos and bureaucratic barriers further complicate collaboration between humanitarian, development, and peace actors, undermining the very coherence the TN seeks to achieve (Talisuna et al., 2023). To overcome these obstacles, agile programming and flexible management strategies are critical. These approaches allow responses to adapt to the dynamic realities of fragile contexts while fostering more genuine inter-agency collaboration (SDC, 2022). At the same time, blending humanitarian, development, and peace efforts raises concerns about the unintended politicization of aid and the militarization of humanitarian responses, which can compromise neutrality (Nguya et al., 2020b), although humanitarian “neutrality” is debated (Anderson, 2004; Udombana, 2005; Van Mierop, 2015; Weller, 1997).

Another significant challenge lies in mitigating the unintended negative consequences of TN implementation. If not carefully applied, TN interventions risk deepening existing inequalities or creating new forms of dependency. Cochrane and Wilson (Cochrane et al., 2023a) emphasize the need for a more nuanced and context-sensitive application of the TN to avoid repeating past mistakes.

The concept of localization is central to addressing these issues. Localization calls for empowering local stakeholders and aligning global interventions with the needs, knowledge, and capacities of the affected communities (de Wolf et al., 2019). Localization ensures that interventions are culturally appropriate, community-supported, and grounded in local realities (Barakat et al., 2020; de Wolf et al., 2019). Despite its importance, operationalizing localization is not without its challenges. Defining “local” capacity, effectively transferring resources, and maintaining political will for long-term commitments are ongoing hurdles (Barakat et al., 2020). Local contexts are often too complex for one-size-fits-all international templates, requiring tailored and adaptable solutions (Barakat et al., 2020).

A consistent theme in the literature is the critical role of local actors in TN implementation. Successful interventions depend on empowering local stakeholders and incorporating their insights and leadership throughout planning and implementation. Local actors bring essential contextual knowledge that ensures interventions are culturally appropriate and sustainable (Barakat et al., 2020; de Wolf et al., 2019). This involves shifting decision-making power closer to affected populations, strengthening local capacities, and ensuring that interventions are both responsive and adaptable to local needs (Barakat & Milton, 2020). This involves shifting the decision-making process closer to the affected populations and enhancing local capacities, thereby ensuring that interventions are more responsive and adapted to local needs (Barakat and Milton 2020; Mena et al. 2022).

To make localization work in practice, international agencies must focus on concrete mechanisms to empower local actors. For example, UNICEF’s Emergency Cash Transfer Project (ECTP) in Yemen provides an excellent illustration. By delivering direct financial assistance to vulnerable households, the project not only addressed immediate humanitarian needs but also strengthened local markets and institutional capacities, laying the groundwork for long-term social protection systems (UNICEF Yemen, 2021). This dual-purpose approach demonstrates how humanitarian relief can integrate seamlessly with systemic development to achieve broader socio-economic stability (UNICEF Yemen, 2021).

Additionally, decentralizing decision-making to local governments and community leaders is essential. When decisions are grounded in the lived realities of affected communities, interventions are more likely to be relevant, effective, and sustainable. In Ethiopia’s Somali region, UNICEF’s engagement with local child protection committees to combat female genital mutilation (FGM) highlights how empowering local religious leaders and community representatives can foster cultural shifts and achieve sustainable results (Abdifatah Ali Mohammed, 2024; Dossou, 2024).

Building the capacity of local NGOs and governments is essential for sustainable development and effective humanitarian responses. For instance, in Niger, multi-sectoral approaches to tackling malnutrition have successfully leveraged local governance systems to strengthen community-based

services. This integration of immediate relief with long-term resilience-building demonstrates the power of localized solutions (Plesner Volkdal, 2024c; UNICEF Niger, 2021).

Actively involving community leaders in program design and implementation is another key factor for success, as it builds trust, ownership, and relevance. A notable example is seen in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), where stakeholder engagement in conflict-affected areas has been critical for ensuring that peacebuilding efforts resonate with local needs and secure buy-in from communities ((UNICEF DRC, 2021).

Despite the clear benefits of localization, several challenges remain. Aligning global frameworks with local priorities often proves difficult, particularly in ensuring fair and transparent resource transfers. Effective monitoring systems are necessary to prevent misuse and build accountability. Moreover, interventions must respect local traditions and cultural norms while promoting progressive social change. The Ethiopian initiative on Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) highlights how culturally sensitive dialogue can successfully challenge and transform entrenched practices without alienating communities (Dossou, 2024; UNICEF, 2021b, 2024). To close the gap between international actors and local stakeholders, it is vital to harmonize operational methods and funding mechanisms. Flexible funding and adaptive governance models provide the agility needed to respond to dynamic local contexts and ensure that interventions remain effective (Mena & Hilhorst, 2022a).

Practical solutions to operationalize localization include developing joint planning frameworks. These allow international agencies, local governments, NGOs, and community representatives to collaboratively identify priorities and design tailored interventions. Directly allocating significant funding to local actors enables them to implement and scale solutions that are most relevant to their communities. Additionally, adaptive evaluation frameworks that incorporate continuous feedback loops from local stakeholders ensure that interventions stay responsive and impactful over time.

By implementing these strategies, international organizations can shift from a top-down approach to one that is genuinely inclusive and participatory. Within the TN framework, localization serves as the bridge between global strategies and local realities. More importantly, it ensures that interventions in fragile and conflict-affected settings have lasting impacts. These examples affirm that fostering local ownership is not just a theoretical aspiration but a practical requirement for building long-term stability and resilience.

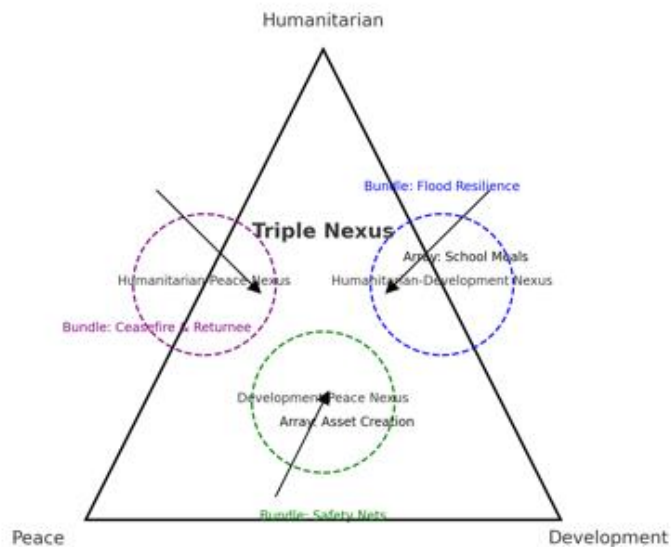
Recent discussions in the TN literature emphasize the importance of developing systematic methodologies to assess the impact of integrated interventions. Such tools aim to capture the nuanced effects of TN approaches, which are often difficult to measure using traditional metrics (Talisuna et al., 2023).

Paul Howe's work (Howe, 2019) provides valuable insights into this area, presenting the TN Triangulation Model, which bridges academic and practical perspectives. Howe highlights the importance of intentional design and collaboration across multiple actors to ensure effective TN implementation. Examples such as asset creation programs, school meals, and shock-responsive safety nets in Afghanistan showcase how different TN approaches can meet immediate needs while building long-term resilience (Howe, 2019).

Implementing the TN framework, however, is not without challenges. Conflicts can arise between the guiding principles of different domains, particularly when balancing efficiency with long-term impact. Flexible, multi-year funding mechanisms are crucial to avoid compromising the distinct priorities of each sector while still fostering integration (Howe, 2019). The TN Triangulation Model effectively conceptualizes the relationships between humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding efforts, identifying areas of overlap where coordinated actions can achieve the greatest impact.

Figure 1: TN Triangulation Model

Triple Nexus Framework: Arrays and Bundles



Source: Howe, 2019

The intersection of climate change, urbanization, and digital transformation within the TN framework underscores both the urgency and complexity of addressing today's crises. Climate change, for example, intensifies vulnerabilities in fragile contexts by increasing the frequency and severity of natural disasters (Mena, 2023). It compounds resource scarcity and drives displacement, making already precarious situations even more challenging to manage (Mena, Brown, et al., 2022).

At the same time, rapid urbanization creates additional layers of difficulty. Growing cities – particularly in low-income or conflict-affected regions – often lack sufficient infrastructure, leaving marginalized populations at greater risk (Henderson, 2005; Sharma, 2007; Smart et al., 2003). These informal urban settlements are hotspots where humanitarian needs, development goals, and peacebuilding efforts intersect, demanding integrated responses tailored to complex urban ecosystems.

Digital transformation, meanwhile, presents a double-edged sword. On one hand, it offers powerful opportunities for improving TN implementation, such as through predictive analytics, real-time data collection, and enhanced coordination across sectors (Kraus et al., 2021; Vial, 2019; Zaoui et al., 2020). On the other hand, it raises serious concerns about equity and ethics, particularly in resource-constrained settings. Issues such as the digital divide, data sovereignty, and cybersecurity must be addressed to ensure technological advancements are inclusive and accessible to marginalized groups. For example, tools like mobile-based cash transfer systems or geospatial mapping can significantly improve intervention efficiency, but their benefits must be equitably distributed.

Climate change has fundamentally shifted humanitarian and development priorities, emphasizing the need for resilience-building as a critical part of the TN framework (Hilhorst, 2018). The increasing frequency of climate-driven disasters requires a dual focus: providing immediate humanitarian relief while simultaneously addressing long-term vulnerabilities through development and peacebuilding strategies. For instance, disaster risk reduction (DRR) programs aligned with climate adaptation can promote coherence across TN dimensions by mitigating immediate impacts while strengthening long-term resilience (Mena, 2023; Mena & Hilhorst, 2022). Integrating climate resilience into TN approaches ensures that interventions remain sustainable and responsive to systemic environmental shocks (Mena, Brown, et al., 2022).

Urbanization, too, poses unique challenges for the TN. In fast-growing urban areas, especially in vulnerable regions, humanitarian needs often overlap with structural deficits in development and peacebuilding efforts. Informal settlements require carefully designed interventions that address housing, livelihoods, and social cohesion simultaneously. For example, programs targeting displaced populations in urban areas must combine solutions for shelter, economic stability, and conflict resolution to address the interdependencies in these environments.

Finally, digital transformation has the potential to revolutionize TN strategies when implemented effectively. Predictive technologies and data-driven tools can streamline coordination and optimize resource allocation. However, the risks must not be ignored. Without careful attention to ethics, security, and equity, digital tools may deepen inequalities rather than resolve them. Ensuring inclusive access to these technologies is critical to harnessing their full potential.

To organize TN interventions more effectively, “arrays” of actions can be deployed, where a sequence of carefully coordinated projects works together to achieve multiple outcomes (Howe, 2019). For instance, an array might combine livelihood programs, infrastructure development, and peacebuilding initiatives to deliver both immediate relief and long-term stability. By aligning these actions, the TN approach can maximize its impact across humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding efforts. The sequencing and coordination of these actions are crucial to their success (Howe, 2019).

Bundles refer to the grouping of complementary actions or interventions that are implemented together to achieve integrated outcomes and are designed to maximize synergies between different types of interventions (Howe, 2019). For example, a “bundle” of interventions might combine vocational training to promote livelihoods (development), food aid to address immediate needs (humanitarian), and community dialogue sessions to encourage social cohesion and peacebuilding (Howe, 2019). This integrated approach provides a well-rounded response to support vulnerable populations by addressing multiple needs simultaneously. These bundles can take different forms depending on the context and goals (Howe, 2019).

Sequential: Actions are delivered in phases, one after the other, to build on each stage’s outcomes.

Simultaneous: Actions are implemented at the same time to meet urgent and overlapping needs.

Repeated: Interventions are delivered at regular, predictable intervals to ensure consistency and sustainability.

Integrated: Single activities are designed to achieve multiple outcomes, blending humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding objectives.

By structuring interventions in these ways, bundles can create stronger synergies between humanitarian aid, long-term development goals, and peace efforts, maximizing their overall impact (Howe, 2019).

The TN-sensitive, arrays and bundles frameworks are represented in the following diagrams (figures). The dots in the diagrams represent different nodes or components within the frameworks, and their placement is deliberate to illustrate the relationships and intersections between the domains of humanitarian, development, and peace efforts.

2.1. Transformation of the Humanitarian Space

This section explores how the humanitarian space has evolved into a highly complex field shaped by ethical, political, and operational challenges. These changes require constant analysis and adaptation from both scholars and practitioners to keep pace with the shifting realities of humanitarian work.

The term “humanitarian space” itself continues to evolve, reflecting a variety of interpretations and the intricate dynamics at play. Chandler et al. (Chandler et al., 2014) emphasize how ambiguous the concept has become in today’s rapidly changing world. Assessing the impact of transformations within the aid sector - what Apthorpe (Apthorpe, 2011) refers to as “aid-land” - remains a difficult

and ongoing task. This reflects a significant departure from traditional views of humanitarian action, which were once narrowly defined as reactive, short-term disaster responses. That perspective, while dominant for decades, is now seen as outdated and insufficient to address modern challenges (Minear, 2002).

The TN becomes particularly relevant given current global crises involving health hazards, mass displacement, resource scarcity, and protracted conflicts. Weiss and Barnett (M. Barnett et al., 2008) and Chandler et al. (Chandler et al., 2014) discuss the expanded scope of humanitarian work, which now spans immediate relief, conflict mitigation, and post-conflict reconstruction, indicating a politicization of humanitarian efforts.

The classical principles of independence, neutrality, and impartiality championed by Henri Dunant in the formation of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) have been diluted (Dunant, 1862). Barnett (M. Barnett, 2005) attributes this erosion to Wilsonian principles that promote a closer intertwining of humanitarian efforts with explicit political agendas. This transition reflects a broader shift from viewing humanitarian action as a temporary solution to addressing root causes and altering the operational context (M. Barnett, 2005; Charen, 1985) supporting the concept of the TN within a resilience-based humanitarian approach, moving away from classical humanitarianism (Hilhorst, 2018).

Weiss and Barnett (M. Barnett et al., 2008) and Rieff (Rieff, 2002) debate whether it is possible to return to the so-called “golden days” of humanitarianism. However, Smillie (Smillie, 2012) dismisses this notion, pointing out the inconsistencies in adhering to core humanitarian principles. Similarly, Chesterman (Chesterman, 2001) argues that politics and military priorities often have a greater influence on humanitarian action than moral or legal considerations.

Despite widespread criticism, de Waal (de Waal, 1997) observes that the humanitarian system has shown remarkable resilience, evolving over time without significant structural reform. This adaptability likely explains the rise of the resilience humanitarianism paradigm. Hilhorst and Jansen (Hilhorst et al., 2010) emphasize that the humanitarian space is shaped not only by grand frameworks but also by the everyday practices of aid delivery.

Calhoun (Calhoun, 2004) takes a closer look at how terms like “humanitarian” and “emergency” have become part of a collective social imagination, influencing both public perceptions and the management of crises. Meanwhile, Ticktin (Ticktin, 2014) highlights the growing ambiguity in humanitarianism, where blurred boundaries between its core components paved the way for the emergence of frameworks like the TN.

At the same time, Vestergaard and Richey (Richey, 2018; Vestergaard, 2018) identify significant challenges in adhering to the Geneva Conventions’ principles during practical implementation. Richey (Richey, 2018) critiques the Western-centric nature of the humanitarian system, arguing that while it operates on a global scale, it often lacks genuine international ownership.

One of the key challenges in implementing the TN framework is the lack of continuity and coordination across different intervention phases. Humanitarian aid often starts with a “tabula rasa” mindset, overlooking previous development efforts, which weakens the overall response and recovery (Mena & Hilhorst, 2022). The disconnect, along with the differing objectives and methods of humanitarian aid and development, creates friction. Yemen provides a clear example of this challenge, where the need for a more flexible and integrated approach becomes evident. Adapting to the dynamic realities of crises and conflicts requires interventions that blend short-term emergency responses with long-term development strategies (Mena & Hilhorst, 2022).

Cochrane and Wilson (Cochrane et al., 2023) warn that if not carefully managed, TN approaches can cause unintended harm. They highlight those differing interpretations of core principles like “do no harm” among humanitarian and development actors can lead to conflicting decisions. For example, a development-driven reallocation of resources in conflict-prone areas can inadvertently escalate tensions and worsen existing vulnerabilities (Cochrane et al., 2023).

However, despite these challenges, the TN approach also offers significant opportunities to enhance the integration of humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding efforts. By focusing on resilience and addressing the root causes of conflict and vulnerability, the TN framework has the potential to create sustainable solutions. In Yemen, for instance, integrating DRR into humanitarian responses could help mitigate the effects of natural hazards while fostering long-term development goals. This requires shifting away from a short-term emergency mindset toward a more holistic, forward-looking approach (Mena & Hilhorst, 2022).

The role of local organizations in bridging the gap between development and humanitarian aid is also crucial. In Yemen, local NGOs continued carrying out development-oriented activities even during periods of emergency response. Empowering these organizations and enhancing their capacity can significantly improve the sustainability and resilience of interventions (Mena & Hilhorst, 2022b).

Cochrane and Wilson (Cochrane et al., 2023) further advocate for proactive policies that avoid the pitfalls of past interventions. They argue for stronger localization and context-specific approaches, ensuring that local actors not only have their capacities recognized but also play a meaningful role in decision-making processes. By prioritizing local leadership and tailoring interventions to the realities on the ground, TN implementation can avoid inefficiencies and contribute to more sustainable outcomes.

2.2. *The Normative Political Rationalization of the Triple Nexus Naissance*

This section explores the delicate balance between values and practical realities within the TN. Over time, the international aid system has shifted from distinct phases - relief, recovery, and development - to a more integrated and flexible approach. This transformation challenges traditional humanitarian principles while expanding the scope of humanitarian action to encompass peacebuilding and sustainable development throughout all stages of crises.

The TN is not just a policy framework; it also reflects a significant shift in political and normative theories. Scholars like Sylves (Sylves, 2004) reference Jefferson, Hamilton, and Jackson to illustrate how the sectors have moved from linear models to more circular and non-linear transitions. In the 1990s, the idea of a 'relief-development continuum' dominated discussions but was soon criticized for being overly simplistic. This eventually evolved into the concept of a 'development relief contiguum' (Mosel et al., 2014), which acknowledges that humanitarian aid can pave the way for recovery and long-term development. Similarly, the Linking Relief, Rehabilitation, and Development (LRRD) model emphasizes that humanitarian crises, poverty, and fragile states are interconnected and often overlap (Audet, 2015; Col Pk Chaturvedi, 2016; Joanna Macrae et al., 1997; Whiteside, 1996). Otto and Weingärtner (Otto et al., 2013) go further, describing this as a continuous and unpredictable cycle where populations shift between relief and development in chaotic, nonlinear patterns.

In recent years, there's been a move away from both the linear continuum and LRRD models toward a resilience-based approach, which prioritizes adaptability and flexibility in humanitarian response (Kindra, 2015). This evolution aims to address institutional weaknesses, pushing humanitarian agencies to adopt more dynamic operational models.

As Sadako Ogata, former High Commissioner of UNHCR, famously said, "*there are no humanitarian solutions to humanitarian problems*" (Ogata, 2005). This statement captures the spirit of the New Way of Working (NWOW), introduced at the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016. The NWOW calls for multi-year, collaborative efforts to achieve shared goals, such as disaster risk reduction and addressing climate change (Hanatani et al., 2018; Howe, 2019). It seeks to overcome the siloed nature of humanitarian and development interventions by fostering integrated approaches.

However, implementing the NWOW raises significant questions. Should existing coordination systems remain independent, or should they be integrated into a unified framework that includes close consultation with national governments? (Wilp, 2020). The debate touches on the tension between achieving collective outcomes and safeguarding core humanitarian principles, such as neutrality and impartiality (Kelleher Caneiro, 2017; Photo et al., 2019; Redvers, 2017).

The TN also highlights the complexities of transitioning from conflict to peace. Successful implementation requires recognizing the diverse mandates of humanitarian and development actors and understanding the specific operational contexts they work in. Lie (Lie, 2020) underscores that while humanitarian principles offer critical guidance, they are not rigid rules. Instead, they act as flexible benchmarks, requiring careful interpretation based on each unique situation.

2.3. Empirical Validation and Comparative Analysis of Triple Nexus Applications

To put the TN framework into practice, it's essential to test its concepts in real-world scenarios to ensure they are both grounded in evidence and practically relevant. Using case studies from UNICEF's work in Ethiopia, Yemen, Niger, and the DRD, this section examines how the framework plays out in diverse and complex settings. These examples highlight different ways the TN has been implemented, showcasing its strengths, limitations, and the unique challenges it faces. By comparing these cases, we gain valuable insights into the synergies created, the outcomes achieved, and the obstacles encountered when trying to integrate humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding efforts.

The Somali region of Ethiopia highlights the effectiveness of localized, community-led interventions in addressing gender-based violence (GBV) through the TN approach. UNICEF collaborated with local child protection committees to mitigate the risks of FGM in internally displaced people (IDP) camps. Emergency support services, such as medical and psychosocial care, were paired with development-focused initiatives, including engaging religious leaders, and facilitating community dialogues to address and challenge harmful practices. This approach demonstrates how humanitarian interventions, when integrated into broader social development strategies, can drive cultural change, and help protect future generations (Abdifatah Ali Mohammed, 2024; Dossou, 2024).

A strong example of this dual impact is UNICEF's Emergency Cash Transfer Program (ECTP) in Yemen. While primarily designed to meet immediate needs amid a prolonged conflict, the program also laid the groundwork for longer-term systemic improvements. By supporting local market resilience and strengthening social protection systems, the ECTP illustrates how humanitarian aid can act as a catalyst for sustainable development. Key outcomes included enhanced household purchasing power and community stability. This dual-impact approach illustrates the transformative potential of linking short-term humanitarian aid with long-term socio-economic development goals (UNICEF, 2021c; UNICEF Research Office Innocenti, 2021, 2022; UNICEF Yemen, 2021).

Niger's persistent malnutrition crisis provided the context for a multi-sectoral intervention integrating health, nutrition, and resilience-building activities. UNICEF facilitated the convergence of humanitarian and development strategies under a national policy framework, emphasizing the treatment of severe malnutrition alongside preventive measures. The initiative leveraged local governance structures to enhance community-based service delivery, exemplifying the TN's role in addressing structural vulnerabilities while delivering immediate relief (Plesner Volkdal, 2024c; UNICEF Niger, 2021).

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), UNICEF piloted TN strategies across three conflict-affected regions, blending humanitarian aid with resilience-building and development initiatives. These efforts tackled immediate challenges, such as food insecurity and disease outbreaks, while also strengthening local health and education systems. A key takeaway was the importance of incorporating peacebuilding elements - such as engaging local stakeholders - to ensure sustainable outcomes in the midst of prolonged crises (UNICEF DRC, 2021)

The case studies reveal varying levels of success in integrating immediate humanitarian responses with longer-term development goals. For example, in Ethiopia and Yemen, humanitarian interventions were effectively embedded within broader social and economic systems, creating stronger synergies between relief and development efforts. In contrast, in Niger and the DRC, the focus leaned more toward development-oriented approaches, shaped by persistent issues like chronic malnutrition and ongoing conflict.

Across all cases, one common theme stands out: the vital role of community participation in successfully operationalizing the TN framework. Involving local communities ensures that interventions are context-specific, sustainable, and responsive to real needs (L. Pearce, 2003). Ethiopia's use of child protection committees and Yemen's reliance on local markets highlight the importance of community ownership. Similarly, Niger and DRC leveraged local governance and health systems to align interventions with local priorities.

Community participation is often framed as an inclusive process that integrates local knowledge, priorities, and decision-making into program design and implementation. The rationale for participatory approaches is grounded in principles of equity and efficiency. Scholars argue that involving communities in decision-making ensures that interventions are aligned with their needs and capacities, enhancing both their relevance and sustainability (Golub et al., 2013; Melo, 2005; Padilla, 2002; Pietrzyk-Reeves, 2017; Roussos, 2022). Beyond practical considerations, participation is increasingly seen as an ethical necessity, particularly in contexts where power imbalances can marginalize local voices (Cornwall et al., 2005; Foucault, 1980; Mohr et al., 2009). As Haaz (Haaz, 2018) emphasizes, empowering communities to have a voice in processes that affect them is a fundamental responsibility.

However, the concept of participation is not without its critics. Some argue that it can be reduced to a rhetorical exercise, where community engagement is superficial, masking unequal power dynamics or tokenizing local input (Neufeldt et al., 2021). For participation to be truly transformative, it must go beyond surface-level involvement and foster meaningful collaboration that challenges and redefines existing hierarchies (Neufeldt et al., 2021).

UNICEF's work in Ethiopia to combat Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) illustrates how participatory approaches can address deeply rooted cultural practices. By establishing community child protection committees and engaging local actors, including religious leaders, UNICEF facilitated open dialogues that helped shift entrenched attitudes toward FGM. This initiative highlights the dual power of participation: it meets immediate protection needs while driving broader social change through community ownership and active engagement. However, the process underscored challenges in reconciling divergent community views, particularly in contexts marked by entrenched traditions (Abdifatah Ali Mohammed, 2024; Dossou, 2024).

UNICEF's ECTP program in Yemen illustrates how participatory design can enhance the efficiency of humanitarian assistance (UNICEF Yemen, 2021). By prioritizing local input, this approach not only enhanced the program's legitimacy but also empowered beneficiaries, giving them a greater sense of agency. However, tensions emerged between community-driven priorities and donor-imposed accountability requirements, revealing a need for more flexibility in participatory processes to balance local ownership with external expectations.

In Niger, community participation played a key role in the success of nutrition-sensitive interventions (UNICEF Niger, 2021). By collaborating with local governance structures during the design and delivery of services, UNICEF ensured that program objectives aligned with the community's priorities (UNICEF Niger, 2021). This partnership helped overcome structural barriers, such as inadequate health infrastructure, and contributed to building community resilience against recurring food insecurity (Plesner Volkdal, 2024c). At the same time, the process highlighted a significant challenge: the risk of overburdening community leaders. This underscores the importance of providing adequate support and capacity-building to ensure sustainable and effective participation..

The DRC case offers a complex example of community participation within UNICEF's TN programming. In conflict-affected regions, the involvement of local actors in peacebuilding initiatives facilitated greater buy-in and contextual relevance (UNICEF DRC, 2021). Yet, participation was often constrained by fragmented governance and competing interests among stakeholders (UNICEF DRC, 2021).

These challenges highlight the need for adaptive strategies that can respond to the complex and ever-changing dynamics of fragile contexts while still upholding the integrity of participatory processes. While community participation holds great promise, it is not without its hurdles. A key concern is the risk of unintentionally deepening existing inequalities within communities, as certain voices - often those of marginalized groups - can be overshadowed or excluded. This reinforces the importance of designing participation mechanisms that are inclusive, equitable, and sensitive to local power dynamics.

Dominant groups may disproportionately influence participatory processes, sidelining marginalized voices. Additionally, the overuse of "participation" as a development buzzword (Cornwall, 2007; Cornwall et al., 2010) risks diluting its transformative potential, reducing it to a procedural requirement rather than a meaningful engagement strategy (Cornwall et al., 2005). In resource-scarce environments, achieving deep and inclusive community engagement is often difficult. Programs may prioritize speed and efficiency over meaningful processes, limiting the depth of community involvement. Additionally, the sustainability of participatory initiatives requires long-term commitment, which can clash with short-term project funding cycles (L. Pearce, 2003). When done authentically, community participation has the power to transform humanitarian and development interventions by making them more relevant, effective, and sustainable. However, to realize this potential, it is essential to address inherent challenges such as power imbalances, resource limitations, and competing priorities. Development actors must place equity at the center of their strategies, invest in building local capacity, and adopt adaptive, context-sensitive approaches to participation.

The experiences from Ethiopia, Yemen, Niger, and the DRC highlight both the immense promise and the complexities of participatory practices. These cases provide valuable lessons for improving community engagement in future programming.

While the integration of humanitarian and development goals has made progress, incorporating peacebuilding elements into the Triple Nexus framework remains a significant challenge. Addressing this gap will require innovative approaches that align immediate needs with long-term, conflict-sensitive strategies. In the DRC, efforts to incorporate peacebuilding through stakeholder engagement faced structural and operational barriers (UNICEF DRC, 2021). In contrast, Ethiopia's community dialogue sessions demonstrated a promising model for fostering social cohesion and reducing conflict triggers (Abdifatah Ali Mohammed, 2024).

The success of TN interventions relies on context-sensitive adaptations. Yemen's focus on cash transfers, tailored to the economic realities of conflict (UNICEF Yemen, 2021), contrasts with Niger's emphasis on nutrition-sensitive policies (Plesner Volkdal, 2024c; UNICEF Niger, 2021). Such variations highlight the need for flexible, adaptive strategies that reflect local conditions and priorities.

This review identifies significant gaps in the empirical validation of the TN framework, particularly in protracted crises, where systematic benchmarks for evaluating integration depth, community engagement, and sustainability are lacking. Bridging this gap requires mixed-methods research that can illuminate what works in fragile environments and advance adaptive strategies tailored to localized needs.

Table 1: Key Research Gaps and Contributions

Research Area	Identified Gaps	Contributions from Literature
Integration of TN Components	Limited empirical evidence on fully integrated TN interventions.	Theoretical frameworks and policy recommendations for TN integration (Howe, 2019; Lie, 2020).
Localization in TN Strategies	Lack of in-depth exploration of localized engagement and implementation.	Insights into localization challenges and opportunities (Barakat et al., 2020; Mowjee et al., 2015).
Evaluation Metrics for TN	Ambiguity in measuring effectiveness and outcomes of TN interventions.	Proposed indicators for evaluating resilience, conflict reduction, and social protection (Talisuna et al., 2023).
Operational Challenges in Fragile States	Resource allocation issues, political instability, and inter-agency coordination barriers.	Case studies highlighting adaptive strategies in fragile contexts (UNICEF Yemen, 2021; Mena & Hilhorst, 2022).

Source: Authors' own construction

3. METHODOLOGY

The TN approach is built on a foundation of interdisciplinary theories, drawing insights from humanitarian action, development studies, and peacebuilding. At its core, the framework highlights the deep connections between these three areas and underscores the need for integrated, collaborative responses to crises. The following key concepts and models provide the theoretical backbone for this approach.

Table 2: Theoretical Models Informing the TN

Theoretical Model	Core Concepts	Relevance to TN Framework
Systems Thinking	Interconnected systems, non-linear dynamics.	Encourages holistic approaches to TN, recognizing interconnected crises and promoting adaptive responses.
Complexity Theory	Unpredictable, emergent behaviors.	Supports flexible, multi-dimensional TN strategies to address the dynamic nature of protracted crises.
Resilience Theory	Absorbing shocks, recovering from crises.	Informs nexus-sensitive interventions that balance short-term relief with long-term recovery and sustainability.
Peacebuilding Theories	Addressing root causes of conflict.	Guides the integration of conflict resolution and peacebuilding within humanitarian and development programs to ensure stability and coherence.
Adaptive Governance	Decentralized, flexible decision-making.	Aligns TN strategies with local needs by emphasizing context-sensitive, participatory, and dynamic governance structures.

Source: Authors' own construction

TN framework is grounded in systems thinking, a concept that views humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding efforts as interconnected systems influencing one another (Coetzee et al., 2016, 2012; Morin, 2008; Voinov et al., 2007). This perspective acknowledges that isolated interventions—such as providing humanitarian relief without considering long-term development goals—can have unintended consequences, underscoring the need for a holistic, integrated approach. In today's context, marked by complex global crises like climate change and protracted conflicts, coordinated, cross-sectoral responses are essential to address the dynamic and non-linear nature of these challenges (Hanatani et al., 2018; King, 2023).

Complexity theory further supports the TN approach by recognizing that crises are unpredictable, emergent, and often resistant to traditional, linear responses (Byrne, 1998; Byrne et al., 2023; Douthwaite et al., 2017; Sammut-Bonnici, 2015; Turner et al., 2019). This theory highlights the importance of multi-dimensional interventions that adapt to evolving realities. For example, combining immediate humanitarian relief with long-term development planning and peacebuilding efforts creates a more resilient and adaptive response to emergencies.

At the heart of the TN framework lies resilience theory, which focuses on the ability of systems—whether social, ecological, or economic - to absorb shocks and recover effectively (Achour et al., 2015; Boin et al., 2017; Gaillard, 2010; Masten et al., 2006), which emphasizes the capacity of systems - whether social, ecological, or economic - to absorb shocks and recover from crises. Resilience-informed approaches emphasize both immediate crisis response and long-term recovery, creating systems that are better equipped to withstand future stresses and shocks, particularly in fragile and conflict-affected regions (Hilhorst, 2018). Complementing this is the concept of adaptive governance, which stresses the importance of flexible, decentralized decision-making processes (Mena & Hilhorst, 2022). Adaptive governance aligns with the TN's focus on local engagement and empowers communities to shape interventions that address their specific needs. This approach is particularly critical in protracted crises, where political dynamics and ground realities are constantly shifting.

Traditional, linear approaches to crisis management - where humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding efforts are treated as separate phases - have proven inadequate in addressing the complexities of modern emergencies. The TN framework advocates for simultaneous, adaptive responses. For instance, interventions might combine immediate relief (e.g., food distribution) with resilience-building efforts (e.g., climate-smart agriculture) and conflict resolution initiatives (e.g., community dialogue). Such integrated responses not only meet urgent needs but also build pathways for long-term stability and development. Robust monitoring and evaluation systems are essential for refining these strategies based on emerging insights and changing contexts.

Historically, the TN approach evolved from the LRRD model introduced in the 1990s. The LRRD sought to bridge short-term relief and long-term development by treating them as complementary, rather than sequential, processes (Mosel et al., 2014). However, the LRRD was critiqued for oversimplifying the complexities of modern crises. The TN expands on this model by incorporating peacebuilding, recognizing that sustainable recovery requires addressing the root causes of conflict and instability (J. Barnett, 2008; Lie, 2020).

The concept of boundary objects plays a key role in operationalizing the TN. These shared frameworks or tools enable different actors - such as governments, NGOs, and international organizations—to align their strategies, despite differing mandates or priorities (Çarçani et al., 2018). By fostering collaboration across sectors, boundary objects help bridge gaps, avoid duplication, and ensure that interventions are mutually reinforcing (Howe, 2019).

The inclusion of peacebuilding in the TN is further supported by conflict resolution and post-conflict reconstruction theories, which argue that peace is not merely the absence of violence but the result of addressing underlying social, economic, and political grievances. The UN's Sustaining Peace Agenda reinforces this perspective, advocating for people-centered, conflict-sensitive approaches to humanitarian and development work (Baroncelli, 2023). Peacebuilding theories emphasize that poorly designed interventions can either exacerbate or mitigate conflict. The TN framework incorporates this insight, ensuring that all interventions are conflict-sensitive and intentionally designed to support long-term peace and stability (Cochrane et al., 2023).

The TN framework integrates systems thinking, complexity theory, resilience theory, and adaptive governance to respond to the interconnected and dynamic nature of modern crises. By combining humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding efforts, the TN provides a pathway toward more sustainable and context-sensitive interventions.

The TN is an inherently complex and interdisciplinary field that brings together perspectives from humanitarian action, development studies, peace and conflict studies, and international relations. To navigate this complexity, this study employs a mixed-methods approach that combines a systematic and hybrid literature review with advanced qualitative data analysis tools. In particular, the study uses MAXQDA to analyze qualitative data while deliberately choosing not to apply PRISMA guidelines. The rationale for this decision, along with detailed inclusion and exclusion criteria for the literature reviewed, is outlined in the following sections.

The literature review integrates insights from both academic research and practice-based sources, creating a well-rounded foundation for understanding and operationalizing the TN. Given the emerging and constantly evolving nature of the TN, the review process was designed to be iterative. This allowed for the continuous incorporation of new developments, perspectives, and contributions as they emerged throughout the study. The criteria guiding the selection of literature are discussed in detail below.

Table 3: Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria for Literature Review

Criterion	Inclusion	Exclusion
Keywords	Sources containing terms such as "Triple Nexus," "Humanitarian Development Peace Nexus," and "Humanitarian Development Nexus."	N/A
Relevance	Studies addressing at least one TN component or providing a contextual understanding of its interplay.	Studies with limited practical or theoretical relevance to TN operationalization.
Publication Type	Peer-reviewed journals, practitioner reports, policy briefs, and gray literature.	Redundant or outdated works that did not contribute novel insights.
Temporal Scope	Publications from the last 15 years, prioritizing contemporary perspectives.	N/A
Geographical Scope	Global sources with an emphasis on conflict-affected and disaster-prone regions.	Literature outside the interdisciplinary scope of TN components.

Source: Authors' own construction

While the PRISMA framework (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) (Liberati et al., 2009; Rethlefsen et al., 2021) is widely used for systematic reviews, it was not suitable for this study. PRISMA's strict focus on reproducibility and its exclusion of non-academic sources make it less applicable to interdisciplinary and practice-driven fields like the TN. The evolving and dynamic nature of the TN requires a more flexible, hybrid approach that blends theoretical insights with real-world operational practices. By opting out of PRISMA, this study adopts a tailored methodology designed to capture the nuanced relationship between academic research and practitioner perspectives - gaps that PRISMA's rigid structure is less equipped to address (Page et al., 2021).

To analyze and synthesize the selected literature, MAXQDA, a qualitative data analysis software, was used. This tool played a central role in coding, organizing, and synthesizing data, ensuring that key themes and insights were systematically captured and analyzed. The following steps outline the process:

Table 4: Use of MAXQDA in Data Analysis

Step	Description
Data Importation	Collected sources were systematically organized using Mendeley and imported into MAXQDA. The software's organizational features enabled grouping documents by themes, disciplines, and geographical relevance.
Coding Framework Development	A hierarchical coding structure was established to capture:
	Main Themes: Policy implications, integration strategies, challenges, and stakeholder perspectives.
	Sub-Themes: Context-specific issues like intersectoral coordination, funding challenges, and logistical constraints.
Iterative Coding and Analysis	Sentiments: Optimistic, critical, or neutral perspectives on TN implementation.
	The literature was coded iteratively to ensure a comprehensive synthesis of emerging patterns. This included:
	Highlighting key segments, such as definitions, strategies, and barriers.
	Assigning sentiment codes to assess discourse trends.
Visualization and Interpretation	Using memos to annotate insights and contradictions.
	MAXQDA's visualization tools facilitated the analysis of coding frequency, theme interrelations, and gaps. For instance, stakeholder collaboration dynamics were visually mapped to identify synergies and disconnects.

Source: Authors' own construction

This study adopts a hybrid approach that effectively connects theoretical critique with practical application. By leveraging MAXQDA's advanced capabilities, the research enhances methodological rigor, ensuring transparency, reproducibility, and a detailed synthesis of insights from across disciplines.

The iterative nature of the literature review allowed the study to stay responsive to the evolving discourse on the TN, addressing both academic debates and real-world operational priorities.

Through these methodological refinements, the study establishes a clear and adaptable framework for understanding and implementing the TN in complex and dynamic environments.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The literature on the Triple Nexus (TN) consistently emphasizes the interdependence of humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding efforts. By breaking down the traditional silos of international aid, the TN aims to address the complexities of crises through a more holistic and integrated approach. Scholars such as Hanatani et al. (Hanatani et al., 2018) and Howe (Howe, 2019) highlight those actions within one sector - whether humanitarian relief or development programming - can either reinforce or undermine progress in the others. This interconnected approach is key to building more resilient and sustainable communities.

A central idea in the TN framework is that long-term development cannot succeed without simultaneously addressing immediate humanitarian needs and promoting peace. The literature stresses the importance of tailoring interventions to local contexts, enhancing cross-sector collaboration, and strengthening institutional capacities. For instance, TN case studies demonstrate that initiatives aimed at disaster resilience or conflict prevention are far more effective when they align with long-term development and peacebuilding goals (IASC, 2020).

However, despite its promise, significant research gaps limit the broader application of the TN framework. One major issue is the lack of empirical evidence on the effectiveness of fully integrated TN interventions. While theoretical discussions and case studies point to positive outcomes, there is little concrete research on how these interventions perform in practice, especially in protracted crises. Infante (Infante, 2019) and Lie (Lie, 2020) argue that political instability, resource allocation

challenges, and poor coordination among international actors often hinder the practical application of the TN in fragile states.

Another gap lies in understanding how local actors and governments can meaningfully engage with the TN framework. While studies such as Mowjee et al. (Mowjee et al., 2015) underscore the importance of localization, there is limited analysis of how to operationalize this in diverse socio-political contexts. Addressing this gap requires future research focused on integrating local knowledge and priorities into international strategies, ensuring that interventions are truly context specific.

The TN's emphasis on flexibility and adaptability raises another challenge: how to measure and evaluate success effectively. Existing frameworks often lack clear benchmarks, making it difficult to determine whether TN interventions are achieving their intended outcomes. Developing standardized evaluation metrics that account for the complexities of integrated responses is critical for advancing the TN approach.

The concept of "TN literacy", introduced by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC, 2022) highlights the need for training and capacity-building within organizations. Ensuring that staff fully understand the interconnected nature of humanitarian, development, and peace efforts is essential for improving operational effectiveness and fostering cross-sector collaboration. This is particularly important given the longstanding coordination challenges in international aid efforts.

Another recurring theme in the literature is the critical role of local actors in driving the success of TN interventions. Local governments, NGOs, and community leaders possess invaluable contextual knowledge that can ensure interventions are both effective and sustainable. Without meaningful local participation, top-down approaches risk failing to address the root causes of crises (Mosel et al., 2014). Yet, as current research highlights, practical guidelines for achieving meaningful local integration remain underdeveloped.

The literature also calls for continued innovation in both policy and practice to fully realize the TN's potential. Various scholars ((Bloom and Betts, 2013; Callaghan, 2016; Garnett et al., 2023) emphasize the need for improved inter-sectoral communication, more flexible funding mechanisms, and adaptive strategies that respond to changing realities on the ground. For the TN to succeed, funding mechanisms must allow for flexibility and quick adaptation, while organizations must invest in building the "TN literacy" of their staff (SDC, 2022).

While the TN offers a transformative framework for international aid, its success depends on addressing key challenges: closing research gaps, developing clear evaluation tools, fostering local ownership, and enhancing institutional capacity. By advancing these areas, the TN has the potential to reshape how humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding efforts are delivered, making them more effective, interconnected, and sustainable in addressing today's complex crises.

4.1. Triple Nexus Conceptual Framework

The TN approach highlights the deep connections between humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding efforts, suggesting that when these areas work together, they can create outcomes that strengthen and support one another. Within this framework, several types of TN relationships are identified:

- Triple Nexus: Actions contributing to outcomes in all three domains (humanitarian, development, peace) (Howe, 2019)
- Double TNes: Actions contributing to outcomes in two domains (Howe, 2019)
- TN-Sensitive: Actions primarily focused on one domain but sensitive to impacts on the others (Howe, 2019)

The conceptual framework of the TN highlights the interconnected nature of humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding efforts. It emphasizes the importance of engaging local communities,

continuously adapting to evolving crises, and fostering inclusive participation. By leveraging boundary objects—shared tools or frameworks that bridge differences across sectors—the TN approach aims to make interventions more effective and sustainable in addressing the complexities of global crises (Çarçani et al., 2018; Dirckinck-Holmfeld, 2006).

A key element of this framework is the call for a more nuanced, overlapping model that better reflects reality, particularly between phases like recovery and prevention. As Hanatani et al. (Hanatani et al., 2018) point out, disaster management is rarely linear, and development programs play a crucial role in strengthening resilience to future shocks.

Mainstreaming the TN into frameworks that address vulnerability, risk reduction, and livelihoods is essential for maintaining a long-term perspective in humanitarian work. This integration not only enhances development efforts but also reinforces peace initiatives, ensuring they are aligned and mutually supportive (Buchanan-Smith et al., 2005).

Practical strategies, such as establishing joint humanitarian and development offices and decentralizing TN planning to better respond to local needs, further underscore the importance of local engagement. These strategies demonstrate how humanitarian programs can take on a stronger development orientation, tailored to the realities on the ground (Mosel et al., 2014; Streets, 2011).

Boundary objects play a particularly pivotal role in this process. Acting as shared tools or points of reference, they facilitate communication and collaboration between diverse actors across the humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding sectors. By providing a common understanding and adaptable frameworks, boundary objects enable stakeholders to coordinate effectively, even when their priorities differ (Star et al., 1989). Importantly, these objects are not static; they evolve over time to meet the changing needs of complex crises, deepening understanding and enhancing coordination within the TN context.

In essence, this conceptual framework lays a strong foundation for transforming intervention practices. By focusing on integration, local engagement, and adaptable strategies, it offers a pathway to addressing global crises more holistically and sustainably.

Emphasizes that humanitarian aid, development initiatives, and peacebuilding efforts are interconnected and mutually influential in crisis contexts. Addressing the root causes of crises and promoting sustainable solutions require collaboration across these sectors.

Integration leads to a symbiotic progression where each component reinforces and enhances the effectiveness of the others. For example, addressing immediate humanitarian needs can lay the groundwork for long-term development and peacebuilding efforts by stabilizing communities and creating the conditions necessary for recovery.

Recognizing that crises are diverse and context-specific, the TN framework stresses the importance of adapting interventions to local circumstances and needs. Flexibility and responsiveness to the unique socio-political, economic, and cultural dynamics of crisis-affected areas are essential for success.

The effective implementation of the TN approach relies on the active participation of a wide range of stakeholders, including local communities, governments, NGOs, and international organizations. Their involvement ensures that interventions are shaped by local knowledge, priorities, and capacities, making them more relevant, sustainable, and impactful.

At its core, the TN's conceptual framework offers a structured way to examine how the integration of humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding efforts can transform the way we respond to crises. It highlights the interconnectedness of these three dimensions and the potential for them to reinforce one another. By emphasizing a holistic, flexible, and inclusive approach, informed by local perspectives, the TN framework provides a pathway for managing complex crises more effectively and sustainably.

Table 5: Conceptual Framework of the TN

Aspect	Description
Triple Nexus Conceptualization	Emphasizes the interconnectedness of humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding efforts to produce mutually reinforcing outcomes.
Types of Nexus Relationships	Triple Nexus: Actions contributing to outcomes in all three domains; Double Nexuses: Actions contributing to outcomes in two domains; Nexus-Sensitive: Actions primarily focused on one domain but sensitive to impacts on the others.
Importance of Local Engagement	Stresses the active participation of local communities, governments, NGOs, and international organizations to ensure interventions are informed by local knowledge, priorities, and capacities.
Continuous Adaptation to Crises	Adapting interventions to local circumstances and needs with flexibility and responsiveness to varying socio-political, economic, and cultural dynamics in crisis-affected areas.
Boundary Objects	Facilitates communication and collaboration across diverse fields of humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding initiatives using shared concepts or tools.
Transforming Intervention Practices	Integration of humanitarian aid, development initiatives, and peacebuilding efforts leading to a symbiotic progression where each component reinforces the effectiveness of the others.
Values and Normative Dimension	Understanding the role of values in effective implementation, emphasizing the normative dimension of transdisciplinary cooperation.
Operational and Conceptual Challenges	Addressing challenges such as aligning different organizational mandates, operational methodologies, and funding mechanisms to achieve effective integration.
Case Studies and Sectoral Insights	Highlighting practical applications of the Triple Nexus in various contexts to demonstrate both successes and ongoing challenges.

Source: Authors' own construction

4.2. Indicators for Evaluating Triple Nexus Initiatives

This section outlines a systematic approach for evaluating TN initiatives, highlighting the importance of metrics and benchmarks in turning the TN's theoretical vision into practical, measurable results. Given the challenge of integrating humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding efforts, a strong evaluation framework is essential to ensure accountability, coherence, and real impact.

The TN aims to address the complex challenges of protracted crises by creating synergies across its three key domains. However, without clear and standardized metrics, there is a risk of conceptual ambiguity and inefficiencies in implementation. A well-defined evaluation framework provides a way to measure the effectiveness of interventions, compare results across different contexts, and ensure that efforts align with TN objectives. By embedding measurable indicators into TN initiatives, stakeholders can track progress, identify gaps, and use evidence to improve policies and practices.

The proposed evaluation framework focuses on three interconnected dimensions: resilience, conflict reduction, and social protection. These dimensions reflect the core goals of the TN: strengthening humanitarian response, advancing peacebuilding, and supporting long-term development. Each dimension is broken down into specific indicators that account for the multi-sectoral, dynamic, and context-sensitive nature of TN interventions. This structured approach helps ensure that TN initiatives are not only responsive to immediate needs but also contribute to sustainable, long-term outcomes.

Table 6: Indicators for Evaluating TN Initiatives

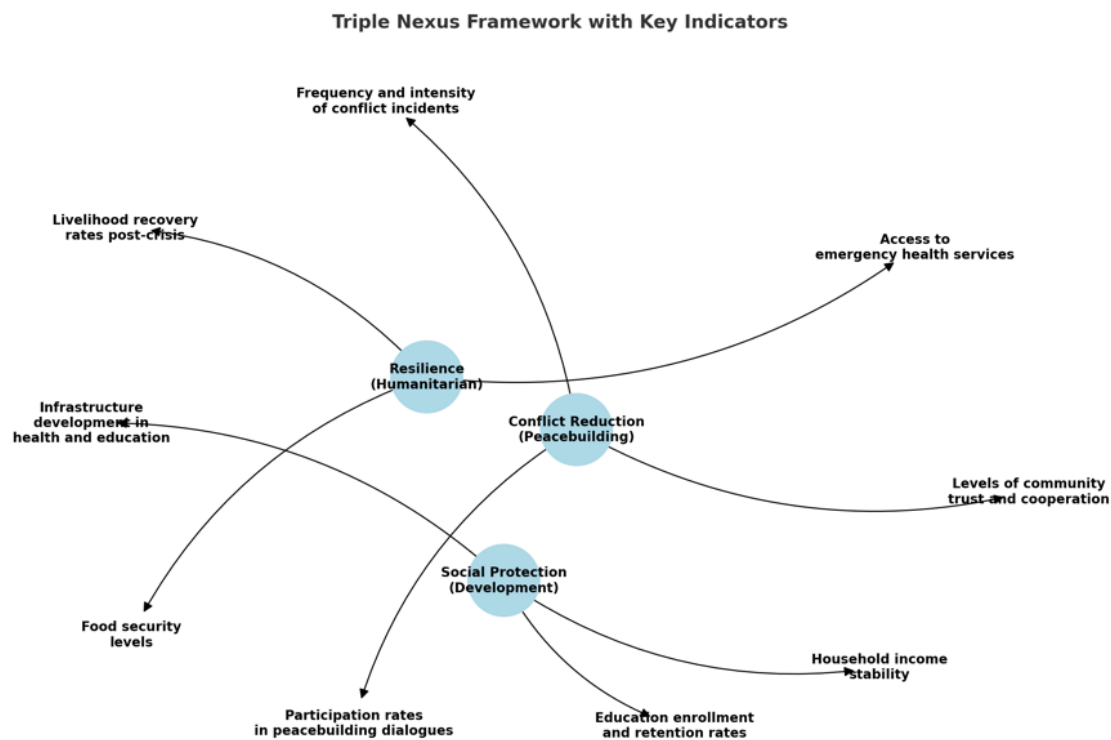
Aspect	Description	Indicators
Resilience	Reflecting the humanitarian dimension, this evaluates the capacity of communities to withstand and recover from crises.	Access to emergency health services.
		Food security levels.
		Livelihood recovery rates post-crisis.
Conflict Reduction	Central to the peacebuilding dimension, this assesses the reduction of violence and the promotion of social cohesion.	Frequency and intensity of conflict incidents.
		Levels of community trust and cooperation.
		Participation rates in peacebuilding dialogues.
Social Protection	Anchored in the development dimension, this measures improvements in systemic structures that enhance long-term well-being.	Education enrollment and retention rates.
		Household income stability.
		Infrastructure development, particularly in health and education sectors.

Source: Authors' own construction

Together, these dimensions support the TN's overarching goal of creating integrated and sustainable interventions. By identifying synergies as well as potential trade-offs between resilience, conflict reduction, and social protection, stakeholders can make better decisions about resource allocation and intervention strategies.

The use of clear metrics ensures that interventions can be adapted to the unique socio-political and economic realities of fragile and conflict-affected regions. Benchmarks offer practical insights that help align efforts with both immediate needs and long-term development objectives. By embedding these metrics into the TN Analytical Framework, the evaluation process becomes more rigorous, flexible, and impactful. This approach not only strengthens accountability but also drives the TN agenda forward, enabling more effective and context-sensitive responses in complex crisis settings.

Figure 2: TN Indicators and Metrics



Source: Authors' own construction

Operationalizing the TN framework requires empirical validation to bridge theoretical constructs with practical application. Using case studies from Ethiopia, Yemen, Niger, and the DRC this section applies the Indicators for Evaluating TN Initiatives to assess its relevance and effectiveness in diverse contexts.

Table 7: Applying the TN Indicators to UNICEF Case Studies

Country	Resilience	Conflict Reduction	Social Protection
Ethiopia	Emergency medical and psychosocial services for FGM survivors enhanced protection and recovery capacities.	Community dialogues with religious leaders fostered trust and reduced harmful practices.	Development initiatives with child protection committees promoted sustainable cultural change.
Yemen	The Emergency Cash Transfer Project (ECTP) stabilized household food security during conflict.	Improved community stability indirectly supported peacebuilding by reducing economic stressors.	Long-term impacts on market resilience and social protection frameworks highlighted development.
Niger	Multi-sectoral interventions provided immediate relief for severe malnutrition.	Resilience-building reduced vulnerabilities that could exacerbate tensions.	Preventive measures and local governance strengthened health and nutrition systems.
DRC	Emergency food and health interventions targeted acute needs in conflict-affected areas.	Local stakeholder engagement supported peacebuilding despite governance challenges.	Strengthened education and health systems exemplified development-oriented strategies.

Source: UNICEF, 2021b; UNICEF DRC, 2021; UNICEF Niger, 2021; UNICEF Yemen, 2021

The case studies highlight the importance of context-sensitive adaptations in effectively implementing the Triple Nexus (TN) framework. In Ethiopia and Yemen, interventions demonstrated a balanced integration of humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding efforts. These initiatives addressed immediate humanitarian needs while also fostering systemic change and strengthening social cohesion. In contrast, programs in Niger and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) placed a stronger emphasis on development-focused approaches, reflecting the specific challenges posed by chronic malnutrition and ongoing conflict in these settings.

Across all contexts, local engagement emerged as a key factor for success, reinforcing the TN framework's emphasis on participatory approaches. For instance, Ethiopia's use of child protection committees and Yemen's active involvement of local stakeholders ensured that interventions were closely aligned with community priorities and needs (Cornwall et al., 2005; UNICEF Yemen, 2021).

However, efforts to integrate peacebuilding - such as community dialogues in Ethiopia and stakeholder engagement in the DRC - often faced structural barriers and competing interests. These challenges constrained outcomes and underscored the need for more robust and coordinated integration strategies to ensure lasting impact (UNICEF DRC, 2021).

Flexible interventions tailored to local realities - such as Yemen's cash transfer program and Niger's nutrition-sensitive policies - illustrate the necessity of aligning metrics and benchmarks with diverse socio-political contexts (Plesner Volkdal, 2024c; UNICEF Niger, 2021).

The application of indicators across these case studies reveals its utility in guiding and evaluating TN interventions. By establishing clear metrics and benchmarks for Resilience, Conflict Reduction, and Social Protection, the framework enables a more detailed and nuanced analysis of outcomes and the synergies between these dimensions. However, the findings also reveal ongoing challenges in balancing these priorities, especially in fragile and conflict-affected settings where resources and capacities are often stretched thin.

These insights are valuable not only for improving the framework itself but also for contributing to the broader conversation on how to effectively operationalize the TN. They highlight the need for adaptive approaches that can respond to the complexities and realities of diverse crisis contexts.

4.3. Triple Nexus Analytical Framework

Building an analytical framework for the Triple Nexus (TN) requires clearly defining independent and dependent variables, exploring causal relationships, and considering multiple levels of analysis—micro, meso, and macro. These levels are essential for understanding how different factors interact and shape outcomes within the TN framework.

The TN framework involves a complex interplay of variables across these levels. For example, at the micro level, individual or community-level factors - such as local participation - can influence the success of interventions. At the meso level, institutional processes and governance structures play a key role, while at the macro level, broader socio-political and economic dynamics determine the overall environment in which interventions take place.

To fully grasp the causal relationships within the TN, it is important to examine how different interventions influence one another and contribute to broader outcomes. This involves analyzing not only the immediate effects of specific actions but also their long-term impacts and interconnected consequences across humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding efforts.

Table 8: Different types of Interrelations among Humanitarian, Development, and Peacebuilding

Interrelation Type	Description	Example
Positive Interrelations (All Synergistic)	Humanitarian, development, and peace efforts all reinforce each other, leading to greater overall effectiveness.	A post-conflict recovery program that provides immediate humanitarian aid, supports long-term development, and fosters community reconciliation.
Mostly Positive, One Negative	Two components positively reinforce each other, but one negatively impacts the third.	Effective development and peace initiatives undermined by prolonged humanitarian aid fostering dependency.
One Positive, Two Negative	One component positively impacts the nexus, while the other two negatively affect each other.	Humanitarian aid is effective, but development efforts are undermined by a lack of peace, and peace efforts are hampered by insufficient development.
All Negative	All three components conflict and undermine each other.	Humanitarian aid creates dependency, development projects escalate conflict, and peace efforts are superficial.
Two Positive, One Negative	Two components have a synergistic relationship, but one negatively impacts the others.	Strong development and peacebuilding efforts are in place, but inappropriate humanitarian interventions create tensions.
One Negative, Two Positive	One component negatively impacts the nexus, while the other two positively influence each other.	Ineffective development strategies and humanitarian aid foster dependency, but strong peacebuilding efforts mitigate these issues.

Source: Authors' own construction

Micro Level: Focuses on individual and community experiences, examining the direct impact of interventions on people's lives.

Meso Level: Bridges micro and macro levels, focusing on regional dynamics and the role of regional policies and organizations.

Macro Level: Considers national and international policies, global trends, and the roles of global stakeholders, analyzing their impact on the TN.

Table 9: TN Analytical Framework

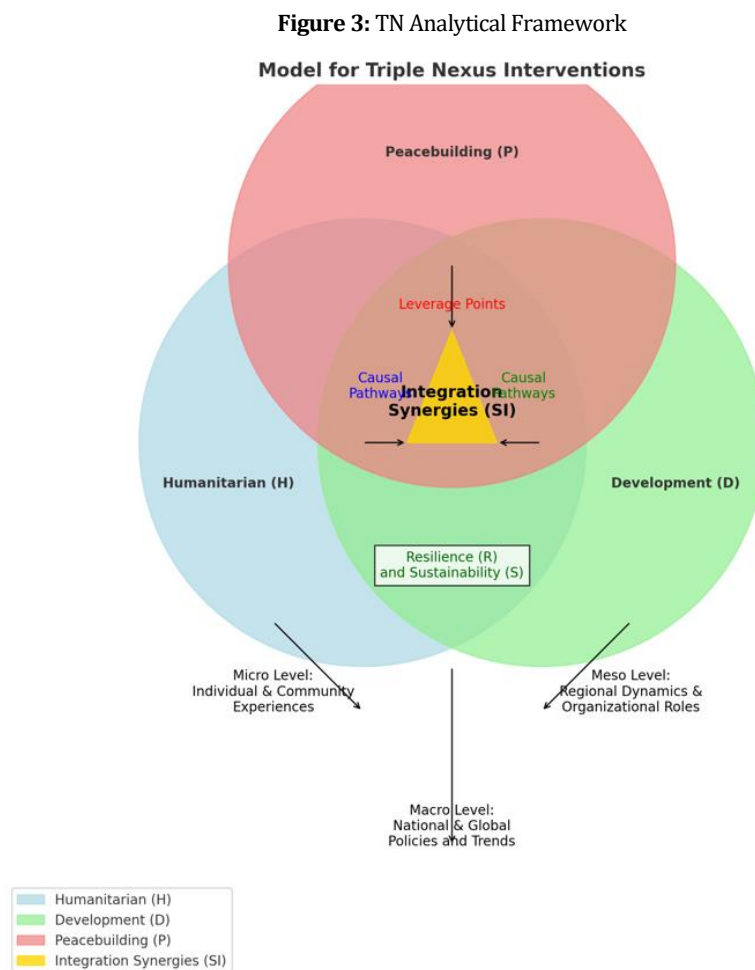
Level	Independent Variables	Dependent Variables	Examples
Micro	Specific local conditions, community needs, cultural norms, immediate environmental factors	Individual and community well-being, immediate humanitarian relief effectiveness, local peace building initiatives	Impact of community-led development projects on local peace
Meso	Regional policies, inter-regional conflicts or cooperation, sector-specific strategies	Regional development outcomes, effectiveness of regional peace initiatives, overall regional stability and prosperity	Role of regional organizations in coordinating humanitarian aid
Macro	National and international policies, global trends, donor strategies, roles of global stakeholders	Global humanitarian indices, international peace and security measures, overall development progress	Influence of international donor policies on national development

Source: Authors' own construction

To effectively apply the analytical model for the TN framework in both academic research and real-world practice, it's crucial to understand how the model operates at different strategic and operational levels. By leveraging this model, researchers and practitioners can gain a deeper understanding of the complexities within the TN, enabling the design of more effective interventions, policies, and programs that address humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding challenges in a holistic manner.

This research introduces a simplified model for developing and measuring TN initiatives, drawing on the TN Triangulation Model as well as conceptual and analytical frameworks. The model integrates humanitarian aid (H), development aid (D), and peacebuilding efforts (P) while focusing on their combined, synergistic impact (SI) - a measure of how strongly these efforts interact to enhance resilience (R) and sustainability (S).

The model offers a practical tool for both academics and practitioners. It supports the design, evaluation, optimization, and monitoring of TN initiatives, providing a structured way to assess their effectiveness. By factoring in the synergistic effects of interventions and weighting them according to contextual factors like resilience and sustainability, the model contributes to a more holistic and adaptive strategy. Ultimately, this model serves as a bridge between theory and practice, offering a clear, adaptable framework for developing TN initiatives that are both evidence-based and responsive to local realities.



Source: Authors' own construction

To effectively put the Triple Nexus (TN) framework into practice, it is essential to validate its concepts with real-world evidence, connecting theory to application. Using case studies from Ethiopia, Yemen, Niger, and the DRC, this analysis applies the TN Analytical Framework to examine how humanitarian (H), development (D), and peacebuilding (P) efforts interact across micro, meso, and macro levels.

The findings highlight both the strengths and limitations of the framework in promoting resilience (R) and sustainability (S) through their combined, synergistic impacts (SI). These case studies reveal how well-coordinated interventions can reinforce each other, creating pathways for stability and long-term development. However, they also expose challenges, such as balancing short-term humanitarian needs with long-term goals and addressing structural barriers in fragile and conflict-affected settings.

By evaluating these interconnections across different levels, the TN framework provides valuable insights into how integrated approaches can be refined to achieve greater impact. This analysis not only demonstrates the framework's potential but also underscores the need for further adaptation to meet the complexities of real-world crises.

In Ethiopia's Somali region, UNICEF integrated child protection committees into broader frameworks for addressing gender-based violence (GBV), including female genital mutilation (FGM). Emergency medical and psychosocial services (H) were complemented by community dialogues and religious leader engagement to challenge harmful cultural practices (Abdifatah Ali Mohammed, 2024; Dossou, 2024).

Table 10: TN Analytical Framework: Ethiopia Case Study

Aspect	Insights
Causal Analysis	H → D: Immediate protection services (H) catalyzed cultural shifts (D) by embedding interventions in local social systems.
	D → P: Development-oriented dialogues (D) promoted social cohesion (P) by addressing systemic drivers of gender inequality and reducing conflict triggers.
Levels of Analysis	Micro: Direct assistance to FGM survivors through emergency support.
	Meso: Strengthened community-based child protection committees as intermediaries.
	Macro: Alignment with national frameworks for GBV and child protection.
Synergistic Impact	High SI was achieved through strong H-D integration, with indirect peacebuilding outcomes. However, entrenched cultural norms posed challenges to transformative change.

Source: UNICEF, 2021b; 2022; 2024.

The Yemen ECTP demonstrated the capacity of humanitarian aid to drive systemic socio-economic development. By addressing immediate household needs (H) and enhancing local market resilience, the program fostered long-term social protection (UNICEF Yemen, 2021).

Table 11: TN Analytical Framework: Yemen Case Study

Aspect	Insights
Causal Analysis	H → D: Emergency cash transfers (H) enhanced household purchasing power and revitalized local market systems (D).
	D → P: Economic stabilization (D) indirectly contributed to peacebuilding (P) by reducing localized tensions.
Levels of Analysis	Micro: Improved financial agency for vulnerable households.
	Meso: Strengthened local market systems and governance mechanisms.
	Macro: Institutionalized social protection frameworks at the national level.
Synergistic Impact	Strong SI between H and D demonstrated how short-term interventions could catalyze structural resilience. However, explicit peacebuilding components remained limited, revealing the need for integration beyond economic stabilization.

Source: UNICEF Yemen, 2021; UNICEF Yemen Country Office, 2018

Niger's persistent malnutrition crisis provided a testing ground for multi-sectoral interventions combining health, nutrition, and resilience-building activities. UNICEF's efforts leveraged local governance structures to deliver humanitarian relief (H) alongside development initiatives targeting structural vulnerabilities (Plesner Volkdal, 2024c; UNICEF Niger, 2021).

Table 12: TN Analytical Framework: Niger Case Study

Aspect	Insights
Causal Analysis	H → D: Emergency nutrition services (H) provided an entry point for strengthening local health systems (D).
	D → P: Community-based governance structures (D) promoted local resilience, indirectly supporting peacebuilding (P).
Levels of Analysis	Micro: Treatment of severe malnutrition in children and vulnerable populations.
	Meso: Strengthened community-based governance for service delivery.
	Macro: Alignment with national nutrition and resilience policies.
Synergistic Impact	Moderate SI was observed, as structural barriers to peacebuilding persisted. The intervention highlighted the need for additional resources to prevent overburdening local actors.

Source: Plesner Volkdal, 2024c; UNICEF Niger, 2021

In the conflict-affected regions of DRC, UNICEF piloted a TN approach by integrating humanitarian assistance with resilience and development interventions. Efforts addressed acute needs (H) while strengthening local systems for health and education (D), and engaging stakeholders in peacebuilding (P) (UNICEF DRC, 2021).

Table 13: TN Analytical Framework: DRC Case Study

Aspect	Insights
Causal Analysis	H → D: Humanitarian assistance (H) strengthened local infrastructure (D) by addressing immediate gaps in food security and healthcare.
	D → P: Development activities (D) incorporated peacebuilding components (P) through stakeholder engagement.
Levels of Analysis	Micro: Provision of life-saving assistance in health and nutrition.
	Meso: Strengthened local governance and service delivery systems.
	Macro: Integrated development and peacebuilding strategies into regional conflict resolution efforts.
Synergistic Impact	Moderate SI was achieved due to operational and governance challenges. The integration of P was hindered by fragmented political structures and competing interests among stakeholders.

Source: UNICEF DRC, 2021.

The four case studies highlight the critical role of context-sensitive adaptations in operationalizing the TN framework.

Table 14: Comparative Insights: TN Case Studies

Category	Insights
1. Humanitarian-Development Synergies (H-D)	Strongest: Yemen and Ethiopia demonstrated the most robust synergies, with immediate relief catalyzing systemic changes.
	Moderate: Niger and DRC showed moderate integration due to operational challenges and resource constraints.
2. Integration of Peacebuilding (P)	Ethiopia: Promising outcomes were observed in fostering social cohesion through community dialogues.
	Yemen and Niger: Indirect contributions to peacebuilding were achieved through economic and governance stabilization.
	DRC: Barriers to effective peacebuilding emerged due to structural fragility and fragmented governance.
3. Synergistic Impact (SI)	High SI: Yemen and Ethiopia achieved high levels of synergistic impact through adaptive strategies and robust community engagement.
	Moderate SI: Niger and DRC demonstrated the need for capacity-building and stakeholder alignment to enhance peacebuilding integration.

Source: Authors' own construction

Applying the TN Analytical Framework across diverse contexts demonstrates its adaptability and relevance in addressing complex crises. However, the findings also highlight key challenges, such as fragmented governance, limited resources, and the often-insufficient integration of peacebuilding efforts. These obstacles can hinder the effectiveness of Triple Nexus interventions.

The case studies offer valuable, practical insights for improving TN approaches. They emphasize the need for context-sensitive strategies that reflect local realities, meaningful community participation to ensure ownership and relevance, and the use of robust evaluation metrics to measure progress and impact effectively.

Looking ahead, future research should focus on developing adaptive models that can respond to the unique dynamics of humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding environments. By prioritizing resilience and sustainability, these models will help advance more integrated and impactful interventions in increasingly complex and fragile settings.

5. CONCLUSION

The review of the Triple Nexus (TN) framework highlights its critical role in addressing the complexities of today's crises by integrating humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding efforts. Fragmented interventions often fail to tackle the root causes of instability, underscoring the need for a holistic and collaborative approach. By emphasizing resilience, coherence, and sustainability, the TN offers a transformative path for international aid. However, implementation—particularly in fragile and conflict-affected regions—continues to face significant challenges, including inflexible funding mechanisms, political instability, and poor coordination. Importantly, the pivotal role of local actors emerges as central to making the TN a reality, highlighting the need for context-specific strategies that empower communities and align interventions with local needs.

To address these challenges and fully realize the TN framework's potential, targeted and actionable recommendations are necessary for donor agencies, governments, and implementing partners.

Donors play a critical role in enabling TN implementation by providing flexible and adaptable funding. Traditional short-term, rigid funding streams often limit the ability to address evolving crises. Instead, multi-year, outcome-driven investments are needed to allow TN programs to respond dynamically, focusing on measurable progress in resilience-building, conflict reduction, and sustainable development.

To support localization, donors must allocate resources directly to local actors and civil society organizations, strengthening their capacity to lead TN interventions effectively. This can be further supported through investments in capacity-building initiatives, including TN literacy programs that ensure staff understand the interconnected nature of humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding efforts. Additionally, collaborative platforms that promote intersectoral coordination and knowledge-sharing among stakeholders should be established to reduce duplication and enhance impact.

Adaptive program design, informed by real-time data and feedback mechanisms, must also become standard practice. This ensures interventions remain relevant to local contexts and evolving needs, fostering more sustainable and impactful outcomes.

Governments are critical in aligning policy and practice with TN principles. At the national level, governments must develop integrated policy frameworks that harmonize emergency response plans with long-term development and peacebuilding objectives. Locally, community-led governance should be prioritized to empower local governments and ensure initiatives reflect the realities and priorities of affected communities.

To enhance transparency and accountability, governments need to establish robust monitoring and evaluation systems. These systems can help track progress, identify inefficiencies, and ensure interventions deliver measurable and sustainable results.

Effective implementation of the TN requires clear, actionable guidelines that prioritize local ownership, collaboration, and innovation. This starts with elevating community voices through participatory processes that integrate local perspectives into planning, implementation, and evaluation.

Developing TN-sensitive metrics is equally critical. Standardized benchmarks for measuring resilience, conflict reduction, and development outcomes will enable evidence-based decision-making and improve accountability across programs.

Collaboration between sectors is key. Building multi-stakeholder coalitions will help streamline resources, avoid duplication, and ensure interventions complement one another. Additionally, technology and innovation - such as digital tools for real-time monitoring, data collection, and adaptive management - should be prioritized, particularly in crisis-affected regions where responsiveness is essential.

Operationalizing the TN framework requires a flexible, localized, and collaborative approach supported by strong governance, outcome-driven strategies, and innovative tools. These recommendations provide a pathway for achieving greater coherence and integration across humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding domains, ensuring more impactful and sustainable outcomes in complex and evolving contexts.

The TN framework represents a fundamental shift in international aid strategy - moving away from siloed interventions toward an integrated, cohesive model for managing crises. By promoting cross-sectoral collaboration, the TN has the potential to significantly enhance the impact and sustainability of interventions, particularly in fragile and conflict-affected regions.

Realizing this vision will require ongoing innovation, research, and partnerships across sectors. By prioritizing local leadership, enabling funding flexibility, and fostering intersectoral coherence, stakeholders can transform the TN into a scalable, practical solution for addressing the multifaceted challenges of today's global crises.

Ultimately, achieving this vision will strengthen global resilience and ensure that the most vulnerable populations benefit from sustained, inclusive progress. This transformation is not just about responding to crises - it is about creating a more equitable, sustainable, and resilient future.

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