World Vision
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OTHERWISE
RESEARCH PRAXIS POIESIS

RELIEF, RECOVERY & RESILIENCE

A STUDY OF WORLD VISION NEXUS PROGRAMMING IN NORTHERN BAHR EL GHAZAL, SOUTH SUDAN

April 2025

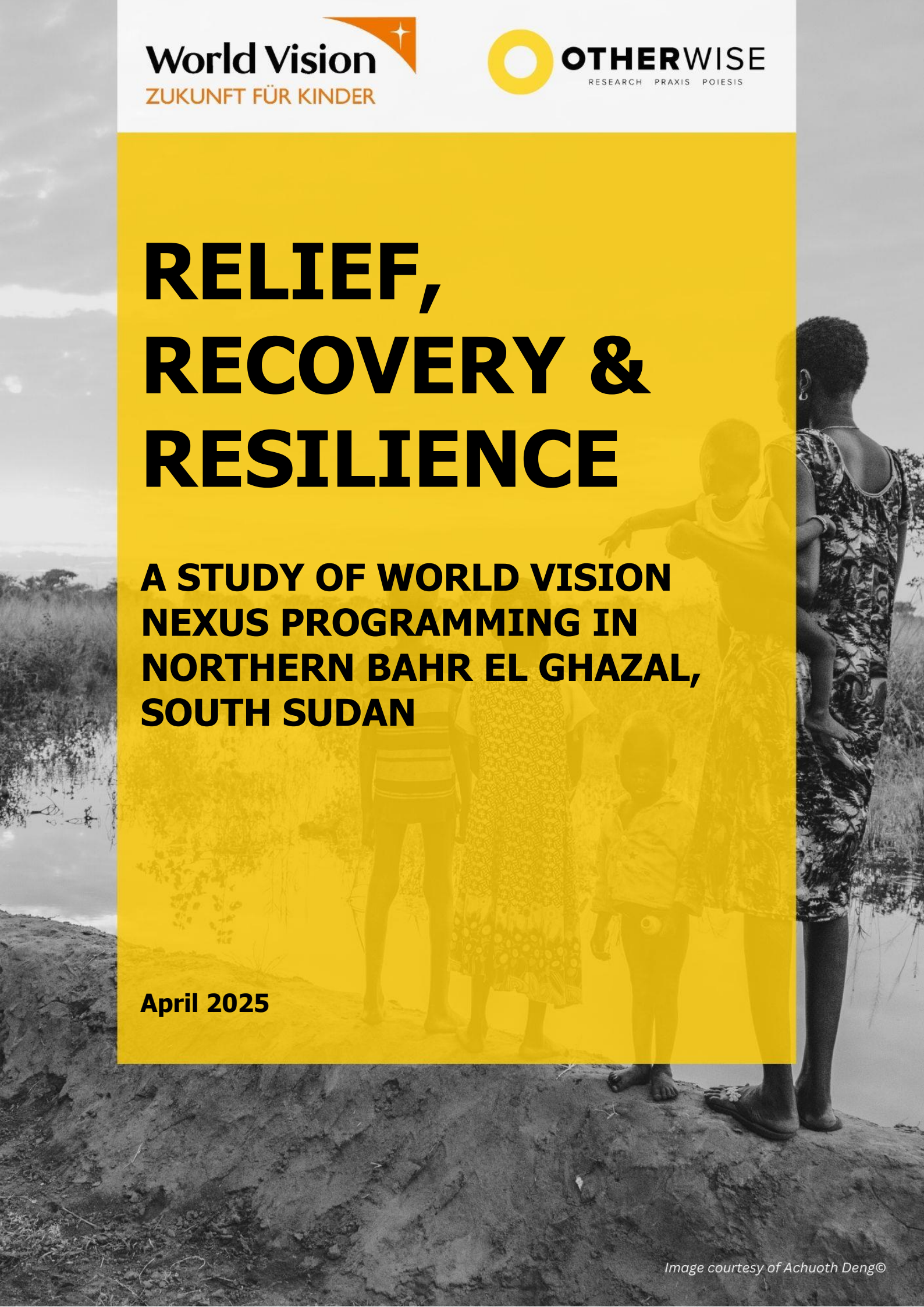

Image courtesy of Achuoth Deng©

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Cover images by Achuoth Deng, *South Sudanese cinematographer and photographer, with an extensive portfolio capturing the life and landscapes of South Sudan.*

View more *at achuothdeng.com.*
Contact*: achuoth.deng@otherwiseresearch.org*

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ABBREVIATIONS & ACRONYMS

ACDF	Action for Children Development Foundation
BMZ-TDA	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
BMZ-TDA project	NEXUS project for accelerated stabilization and resilience strengthening of conflict-affected households, communities and local systems in Aweil East and Aweil North, Northern Bahr el Ghazal, South Sudan
CAD	County Agriculture Department
CARB	Complementary Action for Resilience Building
CMAM	Community-based Management of Acute Malnutrition
COSS-SS	Christian Organization for Sustainable Society South Sudan
COVID 19	Coronavirus disease 2019
CRA	Commission for Refugee Affairs
CRM	Community Response Mechanisms
CSO	Civil Society Organizations
DAP	Data Analysis Plan
FCPA	Fragile Context Programme Approach
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GECARR	Good Enough Context Analysis for Rapid Response
GFFO	German Federal Foreign Office
GFFO Project	Regional humanitarian project to reduce the vulnerability of crisis-affected people, especially IDPs, returnees and the most vulnerable host communities in Baidoa district, Somalia, and East Darfur state, Sudan, and Northern Bahr el Ghazal, South Sudan, through emergency Shelter, WASH, Health, Nutrition & Food Security, Cash Transfer, and Protection interventions
HDP Nexus	Humanitarian-Development-Peace nexus
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
HRP	Humanitarian Response Plan
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization

IPACS	Integration of Peace and Conflict Sensitivity
IPC	Integrated Food Security Phase Classification
KII	Key Informant Interview
L/NNGOs	Local and National Non-Governmental Organizations
LRRD	Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development
MEAL	Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MSTC	Making Sense of Turbulent Contexts
NBG	Northern Bahr el Ghazal
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD-DAC	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development Development Assistance Committee
OHRP	Office for Human Research Protections
PFA	Psychological First Aid
PfRR	Partnership for Recovery and Resilience
PSEA	Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
RSRTF	United Nations Multi-Partner Trust Fund for Reconciliation, Stabilization and Resilience in South Sudan
QA	Quality Assurance
QC	Quality Control
R-ARCSS	Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan
RfRR	Partnership for Recovery and Resilience
R-NDS	Revised National Development Strategy
RSRTF	Reconciliation, Stabilization, and Resilience Trust Fund
RT	Research Team
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SSHF	South Sudan Humanitarian Fund
ToR	Terms of Reference

TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNMISS	United Nations Mission in South Sudan
UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
US	The United States of America
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VSLA	Village Savings and Loan Association
WACRESS	Watershed Approaches for Climate Resilience in Agro-pastoral Landscapes
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WVI	World Vision International
WVG	World Vision Germany
WVSS	World Vision South Sudan

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

Since the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit, donors and UN agencies have pushed for closer integration of humanitarian relief, development programming and peacebuilding—the HDP Nexus—to generate "collective outcomes" that can outlast short funding cycles. Germany operationalised this ambition through its "Chapeau" model, which pairs a German Federal Foreign Office (GFFO) humanitarian-aid grant with a Transitional Development Assistance (TDA) grant by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) under a single umbrella so NGOs can deliver tightly linked relief-to-recovery programmes in the same place and timeframe; each package must articulate a shared results matrix that strengthens collective outcomes, builds sectoral synergies, clarifies roles between the two ministries and the implementing partner, and mandates joint planning, monitoring and an annual "chapeau" progress report.

World Vision Germany (WVG) embraced the model in Northern Bahr el Ghazal, South Sudan, a region grappling with a web of mutually reinforcing shocks—a polycrisis involving prolonged sub-national conflict and political tension, record-breaking floods and droughts triggered by climate change, mass displacement (including returnees fleeing Sudan's 2023 war), economic collapse, and rapidly deteriorating food security—that now overlap in time and space and drive one another in a vicious feedback loop. Between 2022 and 2024 WVG ran:

- a GFFO emergency project delivering life-saving WASH, nutrition and cash support; and
- a BMZ TDA project (ongoing until 2026) focused on strengthening climate-smart livelihoods, community disaster risk reduction (DRR) systems and supporting local peace mechanisms.

Both grants draw on World Vision's Fragile Contexts Programme Approach (FCPA), which stresses adaptability, participatory planning and community-led delivery—principles that mirror the Nexus recommendations developed by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC).

Yet translating theory into field reality remains difficult. Persistent funding silos, ambiguous definitions of "peace", and weak accountability frameworks hinder fully joined-up programming worldwide. South Sudan exemplifies these obstacles: over 311 million people now need aid globally, 80 % of them in protracted crises, while 91 % of inter-agency funding appeals in 2024 target such contexts. Traditional, siloed models cannot keep pace.

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Against this backdrop, WVG commissioned the present study to interrogate:

- how effectively the two projects by GFFO and BMZ were linked;
- where complementarities or gaps emerged; and
- what transferable lessons can improve future Nexus design in South Sudan and similar fragile settings.

Aligned with the overarching purpose, the study is guided four primary objectives:

1. To contribute to the global evidence on effective Nexus programming, thereby reinforcing WVG's position as a thought leader in this field.
2. To provide concrete recommendations that improve coherence and effectiveness in WVG's future Nexus projects.
3. To evaluate the coordination and synergy fostered through the Nexus Chapeau approach between the two distinct yet interconnected projects funded by GFFO and BMZ.
4. To derive effective practices and lessons learned applicable to future interventions.

By grounding the analysis in both global Nexus debates and the lived realities of Aweil East and Aweil North, and identifying complementarities, gaps, and missed opportunities, the research aims to strengthen evidence-based practice, refine WVG's next generation of programmes, and add empirically-grounded insights to the broader HDP Nexus discourse.

METHODOLOGY

This study followed a qualitative research design anchored in a thorough desk review, thirty purposively selected key-informant interviews and eight focus-group discussions with staff, partners, authorities, and community representatives in Northern Bahr el Ghazal. A structured coding framework guided analysis; findings were then triangulated and refined through revision cycles, ensuring credibility and immediate utility for programme adaptation.

Key limitations include: (i) the still-nascent evidence base on Nexus effectiveness, (ii) the divergent objectives, timelines, and frameworks of the BMZ-TDA and GFFO projects, which limited comparability, and (iii) a deliberate emphasis on the views of World Vision and partner staff rather than beneficiaries limiting insight into how end-users experienced the interventions.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following nine research questions guided this study

1. How were the HDP Nexus, FCPA, and Chapeau approach integrated into both projects?
2. To what extent did coordination and synergy occur between the two projects?
3. How did the projects interact with external stakeholders for cohesive implementation?
4. Which FCPA tools and principles were applied, and how effectively?
5. Did HDP and FCPA approaches enhance project adaptability, and if so, how?
6. Did these approaches improve accountability and consultation with communities?
7. Did implementation of HDP/FCPA frameworks enhance management agility among staff?
8. Did these frameworks contribute to long-term sustainability, and if so, in what ways?
9. How closely aligned is local staff understanding of Nexus concepts with donor country perspectives?

FINDINGS

World Vision Germany's twin projects—GFFO's humanitarian grant and BMZ-TDA's longer-term programme—delivered a genuinely 'nested' Nexus response. GFFO interventions met urgent needs (cash, CMAM, borehole repairs), while BMZ investments built resilience and social cohesion (solar-powered water systems, livelihoods packages, DRR committees). By co-locating staff and activities, the teams engineered a practical hand-off from relief to recovery: cash-for-food transitioned into animal restocking and market linkage; repaired boreholes were later upgraded with solar pumps; nutrition treatment was followed by kitchen gardens and bio-fortified seeds.

Organic, often unexpected, complementarity also emerged. Feeder roads built under BMZ unexpectedly eased GFFO commodity flows; shared borehole sites let returnees settle, farm and integrate; community-based organisations and the Commission for Refugee Affairs stepped in as unplanned but pivotal partners, illustrating how field-level flexibility can amplify the Chapeau design.

Stakeholder engagement skewed toward implementation; communities and local authorities were seldom involved early enough in design, leading to mis-aligned site choices and variable trust in feedback mechanisms. Formal accountability tools existed, yet their value hinged on diligent follow-up and face-to-face dialogue in low-literacy settings. Digital hotlines and SMS polls worked well where connectivity allowed, but coverage remained patchy.

A ternary mapping of all activities confirms a deliberate division of labour: GFFO clusters on the Humanitarian–Development axis, BMZ on Development–Peace, with a visible 'handover zone' where both projects overlap—kitchen gardens, DRR committees, integrated WASH-nutrition—demonstrating Nexus in

action. Peace elements remained thinner than desired, signalling room to deepen conflict-sensitive and governance work.

Institutionalising FCPA tools: Field teams value GEOCARR, MSTC, scenario planning and crisis-modifier budgets, yet staff turnover and limited refresher training mean many of these assets are triggered only during shocks instead of being baked into routine practice. Regular capacity-building and clearer SOPs are needed to lock in their use.

Adaptive management vs. compliance: Shared staffing, vehicles and data systems flattened internal barriers and allowed quick pivots during floods and border influxes, but dual-donor procurement rules and parallel reporting cycles slowed re-allocation of resources. Pre-approved crisis-modifier funds and harmonised logframes would lighten this drag.

Accountability innovation, uneven reach: Where connectivity is good, WhatsApp lines, tablet help-desks and SMS surveys shorten feedback loops and boost transparency; elsewhere, communities still rely on in-person channels. Ensuring systematic follow-through on grievances across all payams emerged as the next frontier for trust-building.

Shared understanding of fragility: Local staff show nuanced, experience-based readings of conflict dynamics that mirror donor frameworks, but many request deeper orientation on Nexus/FCPA to translate tacit insight into structured analysis and reporting. This is a low-cost, high-return investment for future coherence.

EFFECTIVE PRACTICES

The projects' most transferable successes share three traits: they sequence aid, layer sectors, and anchor action in community structures.

1. Teams purposely paired short-term relief (e.g., unconditional cash, CMAM, borehole repairs) with follow-on investments—solar-powered water systems, livelihoods packages, DRR committees—so that the same households could pivot from survival to recovery without service gaps.
2. Multi-sector "bundles" (WASH + food security + protection) were delivered through integrated field teams, while shared staffing, joint monitoring visits, and regular learning exchanges kept BMZ and GFFO work streams coherent and duplication-free.
3. Critically, chiefs, women's groups and youth networks were embedded in targeting, dispute resolution and feedback loops, cementing local ownership and making accountability mechanisms—suggestion boxes, help desks, WhatsApp hot-lines—more trusted and responsive.
4. Flexible budgeting (up to 20 % intra-country transfers) and crisis-modifier clauses enabled rapid reallocations during the 2023 floods, demonstrating the value of ring-fenced contingency lines and delegated spending authority to field level.

LESSONS LEARNED

Five main operational take-aways are highlighted below among the extended list of lessons learned:

1. Coordination must be formalised, not left to goodwill. Shared vehicles and cross-project rosters improved efficiency, but without clear workload limits staff risked burnout and beneficiary hand-overs were ad hoc.
2. Early, continuous community engagement is non-negotiable. Late consultation led to mis-sited tree-planting plots and beneficiary grievances; involving local actors at design stage prevents costly course-corrections.
3. Accountability systems work only if feedback is closed. Suggestion boxes and digital CRMs raised expectations; where follow-up lagged, trust risked eroding, underscoring the need for county-level accountability focal points and a two-week closure target.
4. Flexibility collides with compliance. Dual donor templates and rigid procurement rules slowed adaptive shifts; a single indicator matrix, joint reporting calendar and pre-approved procurement waivers would protect the adaptive space field teams need.
5. Capacity gains require tracking. Training pump mechanics, DRR committees and nursery groups boosted self-reliance, but without a post-training registry it is unclear how many skills were retained or institutionalised, pointing to the need for simple follow-up dashboards.

Taken together, these insights show that sequenced, community-owned programming can deliver visible Nexus gains—provided coordination is codified, accountability loops stay tight, and donor frameworks give field teams the latitude to act on real-time intelligence.

CONCLUSIONS

World Vision's paired GFFO and BMZ grants **proved the HDP Nexus can work in practice**, but only when front-line flexibility compensates for top-down constraints.

Core Question	Synthesis of Evidence
Integration of Nexus/FCPA/Chapeau	The Chapeau gave the two grants a common geographic and temporal spine, allowing smooth hand-offs from relief to recovery; day-to-day, staff relied on FCPA principles—scenario planning, crisis modifiers, SAT dials—without always labelling them as such.
Coordination & Synergy	Documented "handover" synergies (e.g., water, DRR, nutrition) were reinforced by bottom-up linkages—shared boreholes, feeder roads, mothers' groups—created by local actors. Peacebuilding outputs were least connected, signalling a gap.
Stakeholder Engagement	Communities, chiefs and local government were effective co-implementers once activities began, but late involvement in design led to mis-sited assets and beneficiary grievances. Accountability tools worked where follow-up was prompt and face-to-face options remained available.
Use of FCPA Tools	Context dashboards, GEOCARR and MSTC informed monthly pivots; crisis modifiers were activated only when donor rules allowed. Inconsistent training means tool uptake depends on individual staff experience rather than SOPa.
Adaptability	Shared staffing, joint monitoring and delegated decision-making let teams re-programme quickly during floods and new displacement. Dual donor procurement and reporting cycles still slowed budget shifts and asset repurposing .
Accountability & Consultation	CRMs, help desks and WhatsApp lines triggered tangible changes (e.g., revising fishing kits), but trust eroded when feedback loops weren't closed within two weeks. Low-connectivity payams still rely on baraza-style meetings .
Management Agility	Flexible "one team–two grants" staffing model reduced duplication and allowed expertise sharing, yet staff warned of burnout without clearer workload ceilings and unified indicator sets .
Sustainability	Water-user groups, DRR committees and local pump mechanics now manage infrastructure and early warning, but success varies with follow-up mentoring and access to spares; tree nurseries sited far from water show what happens when local realities are missed .
Shared Understanding of Fragility	Field teams frame fragility in concrete risks paired with community resilience, whereas donors favour macro political metrics. Bridging these lenses is essential for coherent design, reporting and risk analysis .

Layered, locality-driven programming shifted many households from crisis to recovery, but future Chapeau packages will deliver more if (i) FCPA tools are standardised and budgeted, (ii) donor compliance is harmonised to protect adaptive space, (iii) accountability loops guarantee timely closure, (iv) peace outputs are integrated as deliberately as WASH and livelihoods, and (v) design starts—and ends—with community priorities.

PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Build flexible, crisis-ready budgets
   - Include a ring-fenced crisis-modifier line and clear hand-over milestones in every new grant, allowing field teams to reallocate up to 20 % of funds within 72 hours of a shock.
   - Pair short grants with a light multi-year extension option so longer-term investments (e.g., solar pumps, livelihoods) are not stranded when humanitarian financing ends.

2. Speak with a unified voice to donors
   - Table a joint BMZ–GFFO proposal for a single logframe, indicator set and reporting calendar; use that model to lobby other donors for pooled or at-least harmonised Nexus windows.
   - Coordinate advocacy through existing INGO and faith-based networks to normalise contingency funding and dual-use procurement waivers.

3. Standardise core Nexus/FCPA skills
   - Make context-monitoring, scenario planning and conflict sensitivity mandatory induction modules (refreshed annually) for staff and partners; host quarterly peer clinics where teams troubleshoot live cases.
   - Create a searchable 'playbook' of GEOCARR dashboards, SAT decision trees and sample crisis-modifier requests on Teams/SharePoint for rapid uptake.

4. Put communities in the driver's seat
   - Require a locally led assessment workshop before finalising designs; co-sign site-selection minutes with chiefs, women's groups and youth leaders.
   - Commit to closing every CRM or baraza feedback loop within two weeks and publish resolution rates on noticeboards and WhatsApp groups.

5. Invest in localisation and peace as core pillars
   - Allocate at least 25 % of each budget to local partners, with mentoring plans and joint monitoring; ensure peace outputs (dialogue forums, trauma support, mediation training) have dedicated staff and indicators, not ad-hoc add-ons.

6. Mainstream climate and gender lenses
   - Embed a rapid climate-risk screen and gender analysis in all logframes; prioritise climate-smart agriculture, flood-resilient infrastructure and women-led Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) as default options in livelihood packages.

7. Unify terminology and knowledge flows
   - Issue a two-page Nexus/FCPA glossary and indicator menu for field and donor use; update power-BI dashboards to tag activities against humanitarian, development and peace outcomes so staff track synergy in real time.

These seven steps draw from the findings, conclusions and recommendations emerging from this research, and in dialogue with the desk review material translate the study's findings into practical, measurable actions that will hard-wire agility, deepen local ownership and peace dividends, and make future Nexus programming easier to fund and deliver in future programming in South Sudan and similar contexts.

1. INTRODUCTION

This opening section presents the study's background and rationale in the context of World Vision Germany's HDP programming in South Sudan, followed by the study's purpose, objectives and the key research questions that guided data collection and analysis.

1.1. BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

In recent years, the Humanitarian–Development–Peace (HDP) Nexus has gained significant traction as a guiding paradigm for aid effectiveness in fragile and conflict-affected contexts. Endorsed during the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016 and subsequently integrated into donor strategies such as the German Federal Foreign Office's (GFFO) "Chapeau" approach, the Nexus calls for deeper integration of humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding interventions to strengthen collective outcomes.

World Vision Germany (WVG) has positioned itself as a key actor in advancing Nexus-aligned programming, with two major projects implemented in South Sudan between 2022 and 2024—one funded by the GFFO and the other by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ TDA). These projects were conceptualized as complementary, operating under a shared "Chapeau" framework and drawing from World Vision's own Fragile Contexts Programming Approach (FCPA), which emphasizes adaptability, participatory planning, and community-led development.

Against this backdrop, WVG commissioned this research study to critically examine the linkages, complementarities, and missed opportunities between the two projects, with a view to informing future programmatic design, enhancing evidence-based practice, and contributing to the global body of knowledge on operationalizing the HDP Nexus in protracted crises.

1.2. RESEARCH PURPOSE

This study seeks to make a critical contribution to the ongoing debate about evidence-based Nexus programming more broadly, and within conflict and protracted-crisis affected context of South Sudan in particular. The study explores the interlinkages between two projects implemented by WVG in South Sudan, funded by the GFFO and the BMZ. These projects were financed in parallel under the "Nexus Chapeau" approach, which aims to enhance:

1. Collective outcomes, ensuring that interventions contribute to shared, long-term objectives;
2. Synergies, fostering better alignment between humanitarian, development, and peace efforts;
3. Division of labour, clarifying roles and responsibilities across different implementing actors;
4. Transparency, improving information-sharing and accountability; and
5. Coordinated project planning and implementation, including monitoring and evaluation. [1]

By analysing the complementarities, gaps, and missed opportunities between these projects, the study will support WVG in refining its Nexus programming approach while contributing to the broader evidence base on practice-informed, field-driven HDP Nexus implementation

1.3. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This study has four primary objectives:

1. Strengthen the evidence base on HDP Nexus programming, positioning World Vision as a leading actor in the field;

[1] BMZ (2023a)

2. Enhance World Vision Germany's future program design and coherence by evaluating current practices and providing targeted recommendations;
3. Assess the effectiveness of the Nexus Chapeau linkage, focusing on coordination, synergy and learning across the two projects funded by GFFO and BMZ;
4. Extract key transferable lessons for future Nexus-oriented interventions in South Sudan and comparable settings.

1.4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research is guided by a set of nine refined questions (originally outlined in the TOR), which span conceptual clarity, implementation practice, accountability, adaptability, and sustainability.

1. How were the HDP Nexus, FCPA, and/or Chapeau approach integrated into both projects?
2. To what extent did coordination and synergy occur between the two projects?
3. What interactions took place with other stakeholders to ensure a cohesive and coordinated approach?
4. Which FCPA tools and principles were applied, and how were they implemented?
5. Did the HDP and/or FCPA approaches enhance project adaptability in response to changing circumstances? If so, how?
6. Did these approaches strengthen accountability and consultation between World Vision and the communities? If so, in what ways?
7. Did the implementation of HDP and/or FCPA improve management agility among World Vision program staff? If so, how?
8. Did the application of these frameworks contribute to the sustainability of the projects? If so, in what ways?
9. To what extent does local staff's understanding of fragility and other key Nexus/FCPA concepts align with perspectives held in donor countries?

Addressing these questions will provide practical insights into the effectiveness of Nexus programming while offering recommendations for improving future HDP-aligned interventions in South Sudan and comparable contexts.

1.5. STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

The report is structured as follows:

Chapter 2: Desk Review: A synthesis of key literature on Nexus and FCPA programming and the targeted projects, contextualizing World Vision's work in South Sudan within the broader theoretical and operational debates.

Chapter 3: Methodology: Description of the data sources, tools, and analytical strategies employed in this study.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis & Reporting: Description of the approach taken to analyse the data collected for this study and outlines key methodological considerations that shaped the findings.

Chapter 5: Findings: Evidence-based examination of the nine research questions on how the GFFO and BMZ TDA projects operationalized the HDP Nexus, FCPA, and Chapeau frameworks in South Sudan

Chapter 6: Effective Practices and Lessons Learned: A presentation of the most effective, innovative, and transferable strategies that have contributed significantly to the projects' successes.

Chapter 7: Conclusions: Integrating findings with broader sectoral debates and literature on HDP/FCPA approaches, this section revisits and answers the core research questions.

Chapter 8: Recommendations: Presentation of evidence-based and actionable recommendations on how World Vision could enhance future programming and HDP/FCPA approaches in alignment with donor priorities.

List of References

Annexes: TOR, Instruments, and supporting documentation.

2. DESK REVIEW

This section provides the conceptual grounding for the study by tracing the emergence of the Humanitarian Development Peace (HDP) Nexus and its growing relevance in protracted crisis settings. It introduces World Vision's interpretation of the Nexus through the Fragile Contexts Programme Approach (FCPA) and assesses the alignment between FCPA principles and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) Nexus recommendations. The section then distils key lessons from the implementation of the FCPA across diverse contexts. Moving from the conceptual to the contextual, the operationalisation of the HDP Nexus in South Sudan is presented, with attention to the country's fragility landscape and governance challenges. Germany's funding instrument, the Nexus Chapeau, is then outlined, as it provides the framework through which World Vision Germany implemented the two projects this study focuses on. The section concludes by presenting World Vision's work in South Sudan and the targeted interventions in Northern Bahr el Ghazal, setting the stage for the analysis of synergies, linkages, and gaps in their implementation.

2.1. THE EMERGENCE OF THE HDP NEXUS

Humanitarian response needs have surged in recent years, with the levels reached in 2023 being the highest on record thus far.[2] As of August 2024, 311 million people required humanitarian assistance, marking the highest recorded global demand to date, according to UN estimates.[3] More than 80% of people in need of humanitarian assistance are living in countries that experience protracted crisis.[4] In line with that, in 2024, 91% of all funding required for interagency appeals was for protracted crises, compared to only 29% in 2014, reflecting a global trend where protracted crises have become the norm[5,6] As the complexity of humanitarian response grows and humanitarian needs become increasingly chronic and recurrent, traditional aid delivery models—where humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding efforts remain piecemeal and siloed—are facing growing limitations, calling for a more integrated and adaptive response framework has never been more urgent.

In response to the ever-changing and complex nature of crises that are often multi-faceted, the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus (HDP Nexus, or Triple Nexus) approach is a way of working with the populations affected by crisis to reduce their humanitarian needs by addressing key root causes and decreasing risks and vulnerabilities they face. First conceptualized as the 'New Way of Working', it was proposed by the United Nations (UN) at the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit, coined by UN Secretary General António Guterres in 2016, and further elaborated by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development in 2019. [7]

The HDP Nexus builds on earlier frameworks such as Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development (LRRD), Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and Resilience, all of which recognised the importance of addressing urgent humanitarian needs alongside the underlying causes of crises.[8] However, the HDP Nexus differs in two critical ways: it was initiated and remains driven by the UN, emphasising structural reform and a "new way of working" as previously mentioned, and it incorporates "peace" as a third pillar,

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[2] Development Initiatives (2023) "Global Humanitarian Assistance Report 2023: Key trends in humanitarian need and funding".

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Development Initiatives (2024) "Falling Short? Humanitarian Funding and Reform".

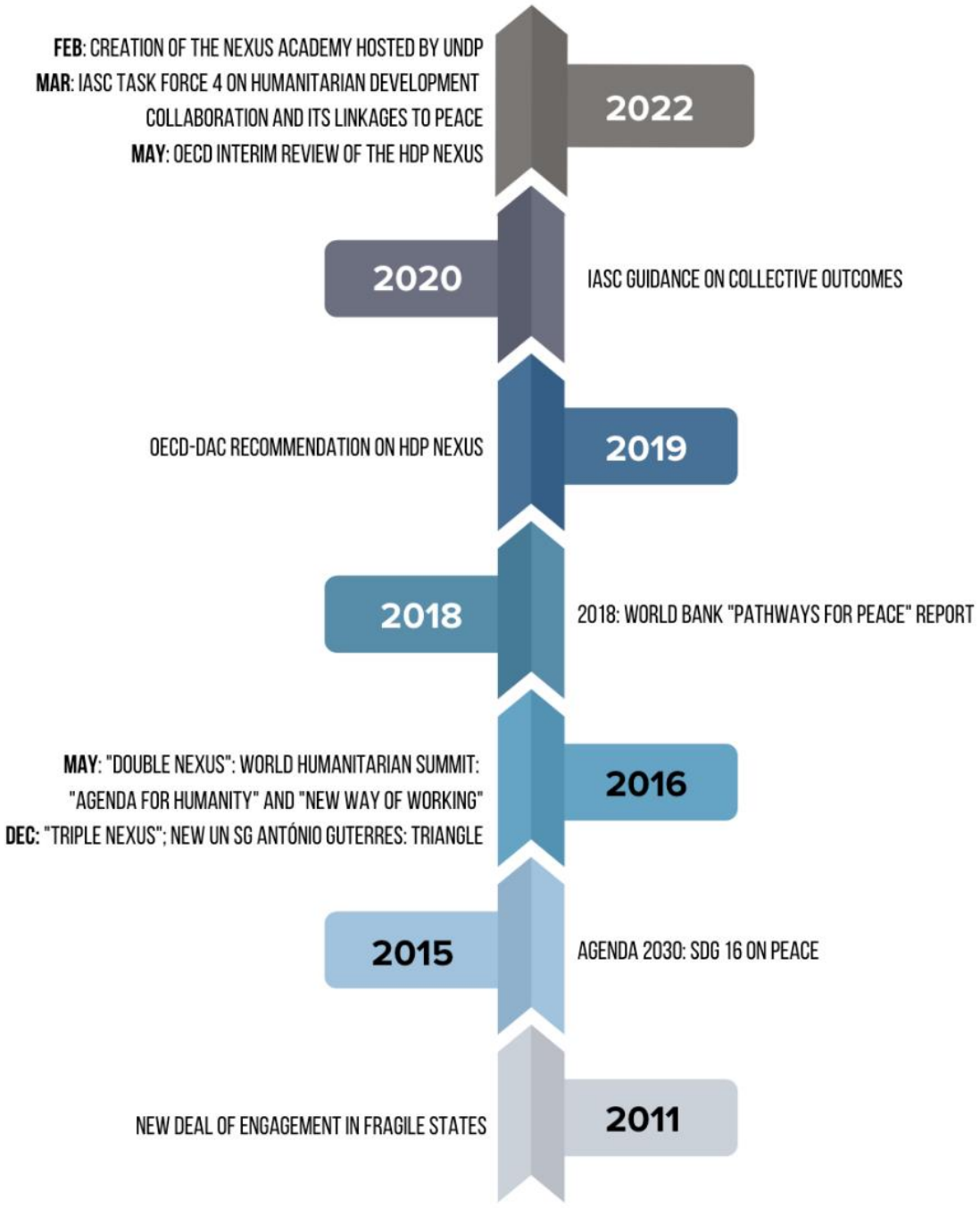
[6] UN OCHA (2024) "Global Humanitarian Overview 2024 -. August Update".

[7] UN (2016) "Secretary-General-Designate António Guterres' Remarks to the General Assembly on Taking the Oath of Office | United Nations Secretary-General" December 12, 2016.

[8] Macrae (2019), "'Linking Thinking' - Why Is It so Hard and What Can We Do about It? Reflections on Current Debates on the Humanitarian, Development and Peace Nexus". KUNO.

going beyond previous conversations about humanitarian-development linkages.[9] The approach aims to strengthen "collaboration, coherence, and complementarity" across humanitarian, development, and peace interventions to reduce vulnerability, increase resilience, and address the root causes of conflict by reducing unmet needs, strengthening risk management capacities, and promoting "collective outcomes" that move beyond short-term emergency relief toward long-term recovery and stability. [10,11]

Figure 1: Timeline of the HDP Nexus [12]



[9] Fitzpatrick et al. (2021) "Making the Nexus Real: Moving from Theory to Practice". Boston: Feinstein International Center, Tufts University,

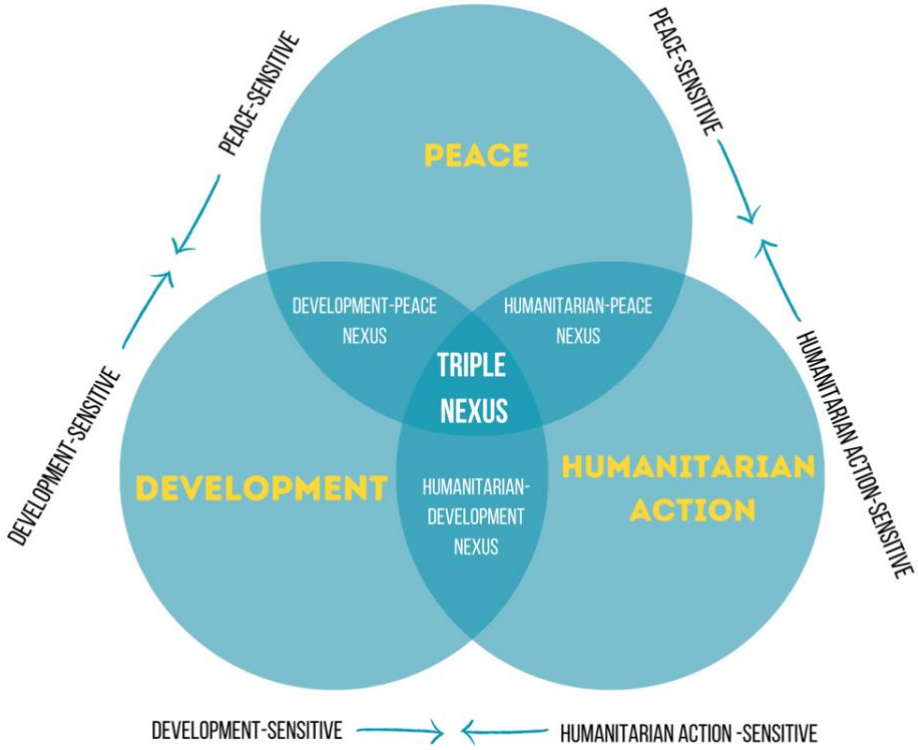
[10] OECD (2019) "DAC Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus," OECD/LEGAL/5019

[11] Ibid.

[12] Adopted from Kemmerling (2024) "Spotlight on Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus Implementation in South Sudan: Localisation from a Decolonial Perspective" Bonn: BICC.

Figure 2 illustrates the HDP framework, highlighting its focus on greater integration across humanitarian, development, and peace efforts to create more sustainable and effective responses to crises. At the heart of the framework is the "Triple Nexus," where all three sectors intersect to address vulnerabilities, build resilience, and tackle root causes of crises for affected populations. Surrounding this core are three key overlaps: the Humanitarian-Development Nexus, which ensures emergency aid transitions into sustainable recovery; the Development-Peace Nexus, which strengthens governance and social cohesion; and the Humanitarian-Peace Nexus, ensuring aid efforts do not fuel instability. This framework emphasizes multidirectional programming —humanitarian programs must be development- and peace-aware, while development and peace initiatives should account for humanitarian realities—reflecting the growing understanding that no single sector can solve complex crises alone.

Figure 2: The triple nexus framework. Source : Howe 2019, p 5, adapted by the Research Team



Despite high-level buy-in and broad consensus on the necessity of a more integrated response, operationalizing the HDP Nexus has proven challenging, particularly with integrating the "peace" pillar. [13] The OECD-DAC recommendations provide useful guidance for international agencies, donors, and governments, but each actor must translate these into concrete actions, considering organizational mandates, sectoral foci, and contextual realities. [14] A systematic literature review highlights persistent challenges, including:

- Siloed funding structures, as donors often maintain separate financing streams for humanitarian, development, and peace programs, limiting cross-sector integration.
- Institutional and bureaucratic barriers, where non-aligned mandates and strategic priorities lead to inefficiencies in coordination, programming, and resource allocation, with variable translation of recommendations into actions.

[13] IASC (2020) "Exploring Peace within the Humanitarian-Development- Peace Nexus (HDPN)". Issue Paper; IASC (2024) "Second Mapping of Good Practice in the Implementation of Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus Approaches".

[14] Weishaupt (2020) "The Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus: Towards Differentiated Configurations". Geneva: UNRISD.

- **The absence of a shared definition of "peace**" that results in a lack of coherence between peacebuilding efforts and humanitarian/development interventions.
- **Weak accountability mechanisms and collective outcomes that are difficult to measure,** which leads to impact assessments of nexus programming remaining limited.

Nearly a decade after the World Humanitarian Summit paved the way for the Nexus, and several years after the OECD DAC recommendations were adopted, progress remains mixed.[15] Donor countries including but not limited to Germany, Switzerland, Canada and Ireland have adjusted their funding mechanisms to encourage Nexus programming, implementing organizations have piloted projects that cut across silos, and there is a growing understanding and application of conflict sensitivity.[16] However, the evidence base on effectiveness is weak, with recent publications noting that *"it is not yet possible to assess […] if taking an HDP Nexus approach has led to improved outcomes […] for affected populations."* [17]

The study at hand contributes to the ongoing conversation about the operationalisation of the HDP Nexus by examining World Vision's approach and its implementation in South Sudan through two complementary projects funded by the Germany Federal Foreign Office (GFFO) and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). The following sections below introduce World Vision's Nexus approach, outline the Nexus environment of South Sudan and describe the two implemented projects.

2.2. THE HDP NEXUS IN THE CONTEXT OF SOUTH SUDAN

South Sudan, the world's youngest nation, gained independence from Sudan in July 2011 following the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) of 2005, which ended the Second Sudanese Civil War (1983–2005). However, hopes for stability were short-lived, as a civil war erupted in December 2013. This conflict, layered with ethnic tensions and resource disputes, displaced over 4.5 million people—2.3 million as refugees and 2.2 million internally—and plunged the country into a protracted humanitarian crisis. The Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS), signed in 2018, formally ended the war, marking a critical step toward addressing political and social challenges by fostering peace and setting the groundwork for longer-term stability and development. Despite this, sub-national and inter-communal violence persist, including farmer-herder conflicts, cattle raids, land disputes, and disputes over resources like water, further exacerbated by climate-induced disasters like flooding and drought.[18]

Over a decade after gaining independence, South Sudan remains gripped by a severe humanitarian polycrisis fuelled by a convergence of armed conflict, intercommunal violence, food insecurity, and climatic shocks. According to the 2024 INFORM Risk Index, South Sudan ranks as the second most vulnerable country to natural hazards in the world, which was sadly evidenced in mid-November by devastating floodings that affected up to 1.4 million people. At the same time, nearly 36 per cent of the population are affected by drought-like situations, which is assumed to increase in 2025. By 2023, over 9.4 million people—three-quarters of the population—relied on humanitarian aid, with 6.6 million facing acute food insecurity.[19]

The country's socio-economic landscape is dire, ranking last on the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Human Development Index in 2021. South Sudan struggles with weak infrastructure, limited access to healthcare (75% of the population lacks access), and high illiteracy rates (70% of adults). Governance is hampered by corruption, political instability, and a transitional government, posing dilemmas for bilateral donors and humanitarian actors, who *view "the transitional government in South Sudan [as] not a reliable partner, mainly due to high levels of corruption and the perpetuation of aid dependency".*[20] Following the outbreaks of violence in 2013 and 2016, Germany adjusted its approach to South Sudan by halting direct cooperation with the government. Instead, it focused on expanding transitional development assistance, including crisis recovery, rehabilitation, and special initiatives

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[15] Weishaupt (2020) "The Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus: Towards Differentiated Configurations". Geneva: UNRISD.

[16] FAO, NRC and UNDP (2019) "Financing the Nexus - Gaps and Opportunities from a Field Perspective".

[17] Morinière and Morrison-Métois (2023) "Working across the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus: What Can We Learn from Evaluations?". London: ODI/ALNAP, December 5, 2023, p. 8.

[18] OCHA (2024) "South Sudan: Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan 2025"- December 16, 2024.

[19] UN OCHA (2022). Humanitarian Needs Overview: South Sudan 2022. OCHA.

[20] Ibid. p. 7.

addressing displacement and hunger. In line with that, South Sudan is considered a "Nexus and Peace Partner" rather than a bilateral or global partner. [21]

The insufficient capacity of the South Sudanese government to absorb, manage, and mitigate these risks exacerbates the country's perceived fragility, perpetuating aid dependency.[22] Official Development Assistance (ODA) between 2011 and 2021 reflects a heavy skew toward humanitarian aid (US$10.4 billion) over development (US$6.3 billion) and peacebuilding (under US$2 billion), highlighting the challenge of shifting from emergency response to sustainable recovery. [23]

Given this context, the HDP nexus, developed with countries like South Sudan in mind, **gained traction after its introduction post-R-ARCSS in 2018**, as it seeks to address this imbalance by aligning aid with long-term peace and development goals. Driven by the UN, the Nexus has been integrated into national development plans, UN frameworks, donor guidelines and programs by international and local NGOs, as outlined in Table 1. [24]

Table 1 : Implementation of the HDP Nexus in South Sudan [25]

Category	Details
Political milestone that paved the way for conversations about the HDP nexus in South Sudan	Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS) in 2018
Key UN documents on the HDP Nexus in South Sudan	• 2019-2021/22 UN Cooperation Framework • 2023-2025 United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) • 2023 Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP)
Key government documents on the HDP nexus in South Sudan on HDP	2021-24 Revised National Development Strategy (R-NDS)

Implementation of the HDP Nexus by the UN	• Top-down
	• One-way capacity transfer from international to local actors. Localisation attempts within
	  ○ United Nations Multi-Partner Trust Fund for Reconciliation,
	  ○ Stabilization and Resilience in South Sudan (RSRTF),
	  ○ South Sudan Humanitarian Fund (SSHF) and
	  ○ Partnership for Recovery and Resilience (PfRR).

Key documents include the 2019-2021/22 UN Cooperation Framework, the 2023-2025, the UNSDCF, the 2023 HRP, and the Government's 2021-24 R-NDS. [26] The 2023–2025 United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) positions the HDP nexus as a central principle, and the 2023 HRP formulates three collective outcomes for a more coordinated response: a 20% reduction in IPC Phase 4 populations and no Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) Phase 5 by the 2023 lean season; improved access to Gender-Based Violence (GBV) prevention and response in 80% of priority locations by 2023; and a 30% reduction in climate change-related displacement effects by 2025 compared to 2021.[27]

Implementation of the HDP Nexus in South Sudan, however, has been largely top-down and state-centric, raising accountability concerns.[28] The UN's approach often involves one-way capacity transfer from

[21] BMZ (2023b), "*Länderliste Für Die Staatliche Zusammenarbeit Des BMZ*".

[22] OECD (2025) *"States of Fragility 2025"* OECD Publishing.

[23] OECD (2022). "*ODA Levels in 2022 - Preliminary Data (Detailed Summary Note)*". Paris: OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC). Published April 12, 2023.

[24] Kemmerling (2024) *"Spotlight on Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus Implementation in South Sudan: Localisation from a Decolonial Perspective."* Bonn: BICC.

[25] Adopted from Kemmerling (2024)

[26] Kemmerling (2024)

[27] OCHA (2023) *"South Sudan Humanitarian Response Plan 2023,"* Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP), December 20, 2022, 75.

[28] Kemmerling (2024) "p.4.

international to local actors, with localization attempts within mechanisms like the RSRTF, SSHF, and PfRR. Conversely, some non-UN organizations adopt bottom-up, community-based approaches, implemented by International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) in partnership with L/NNGOs, funded by bilateral donors. Despite these efforts, siloed funding, short-term projects, lack of flexibility, and weak accountability mechanisms restrict meaningful community engagement.[29] Power imbalances persist between international actors, local organizations, and communities, highlighting the need for more genuinely local-led initiatives and greater integration of local perspectives throughout the project cycle. [30]

The high-level emphasis on the HDP Nexus has also influenced the programming of national and international NGOs in South Sudan, with a shift from a dual to a Triple Nexus, integrating peacebuilding with humanitarian and development activities, perceived as positive or even "essential for meaningful action", although hampered by a lack of capacities.[31] Activities like establishing or supporting conflict resolution mechanisms, peace committees, community dialogue or counselling services have, been found to enhance resilience.[32] However, the limited engagement of national and local actors remains a critical challenge. Kemmerling (2004) notes that only 2.4% of humanitarian funding in 2019 went directly to L/NNGOs, with pooled funds like the SSHF channelling just 10% to local actors between 2016 and 2020.[33] To work toward a more localized operationalization of the HDP Nexus, Kemmerling suggests a context and conflict analysis that builds knowledge with local communities based on their concepts of conflict, peace, and resilience, socio-spatial relationships, and existing agendas for conflict resolution, peacebuilding, and development.[34]

2.3. THE HDP NEXUS IN THE CONTEXT OF NBG

The state of Northern Bahr el Ghazal (NBG), with its administrative center in Aweil, exemplifies South Sudan's intersecting crises, making it a critical case study for the HDP Nexus. Located in the northwest of the country and bordering Sudan's Darfur region, the state has historically been a flashpoint for conflict and displacement. During the Second Sudanese Civil War, NBG was a frontline area, and post-independence, it has consistently faced recurrent inter-communal violence, often over land, cattle, and resources, exacerbated by the influx of returnees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) since 2011. The 2013 civil war further destabilized the region, with Aweil serving as a hub for humanitarian operations amid widespread food insecurity and displacement. The 2023 Sudan crisis has driven additional cross-border displacement into NBG, intensifying the need for integrated humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding interventions.

NBG's environmental fragility compounds these challenges, with seasonal flooding along the Lol and Bahr el Ghazal rivers disrupting agriculture—a lifeline for over 80% of its population—and displacing communities. In 2021 and 2022, floods affected over 300,000 people in the state, intensifying chronic poverty and malnutrition.[35] The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) has consistently flagged the NBG region as at risk of famine, with livelihoods undermined by conflict and climate shocks.[36] Politically, the state has been relatively stable compared to neighbouring states like Jonglei or Unity, but tensions with local authorities and distrust in the government mirror national governance issues.

NBG holds strategic importance for peacebuilding and development efforts due to its geographic and socio-political significance as a border region with Sudan, playing a key role in cross-border trade, migration, and regional stability, that make it a focal point for conflict prevention and economic development initiatives. In Northern Bahr el Ghazal, programs like the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)-funded Complementary Action for Resilience Building (CARB) and

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[29] CSRF and Dectro (2023) "Community Engagement and Inter-Agency Collaboration across the Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) Nexus in South Sudan," May 25, 2023.

[30] Kemmerling (2024)

[31] Adopted from Kemmerling (2024)

[32] Norman and Mikhael (2023) *"Rethinking the Triple-Nexus: Integrating Peacebuilding and Resilience Initiatives in Conflict Contexts."* Journal of Peacebuilding & Development 18, no. 3 (December 1, 2023): 248–63.

[33] Kemmerling (2024)

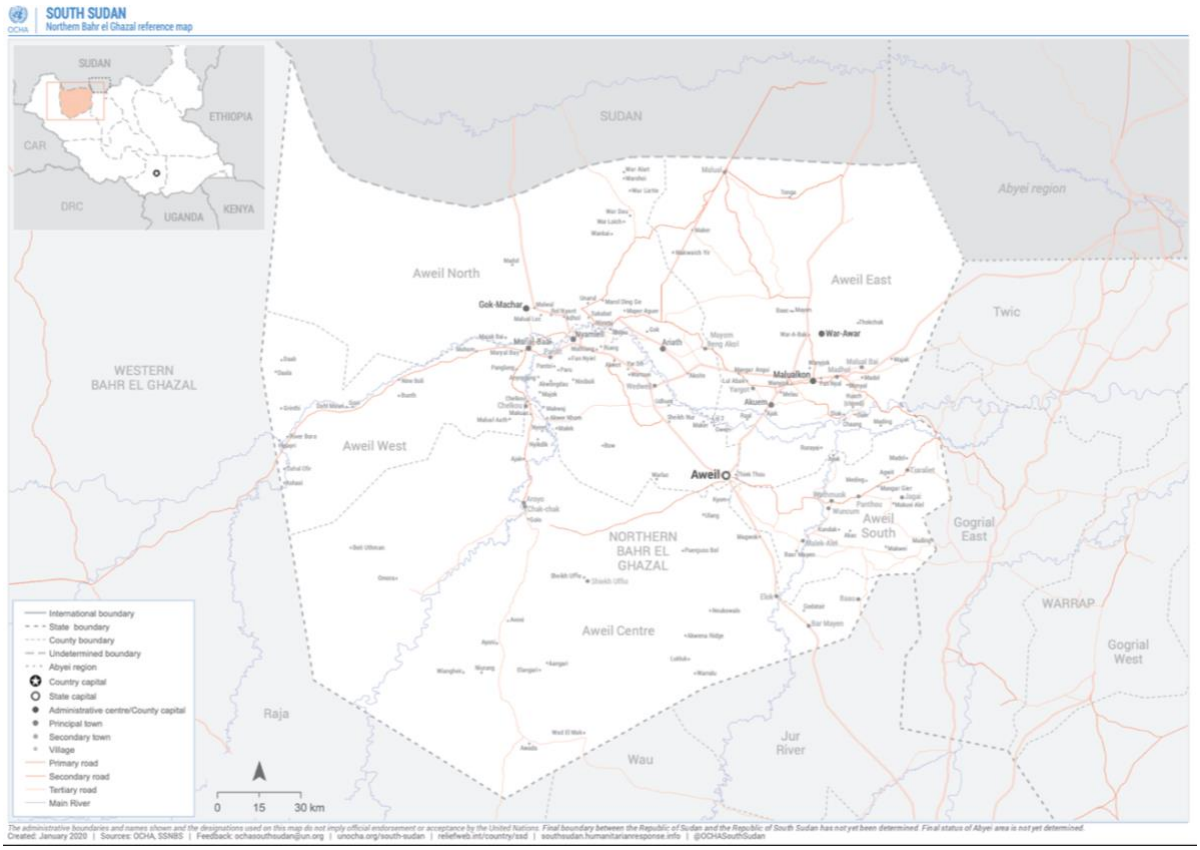
[34] Ibid. p.13

[35] UN OCHA (2022)

[36] IPC Technical Working Group South Sudan (2023) *"South Sudan IPC Acute Food Insecurity and Acute Malnutrition Analysis: January - July 2023."*

community-based peace initiatives illustrate attempts to integrate humanitarian aid (e.g., food security), development (e.g., livelihoods), and peacebuilding (e.g., peace committees).

Figure 3: The state of Northern Bahr el Ghazal in South Sudan.



Source: OCHA

However, the top-down nature of these efforts, often led by UN agencies like United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) or International Non-Governmental Organization (INGOs), has limited localization—defined as the empowerment of Local and National Non-Governmental Organizations (L/NNGOs) and communities to lead aid efforts.[37] However, the top-down nature of these efforts, often led by UN agencies like UNMISS or INGOs, limits localization—the empowerment of L/NNGOs and communities to lead aid efforts. Localization is particularly pertinent in Aweil, where local actors, including grassroots organizations and traditional leaders, have deep contextual knowledge but lack resources and decision-making power, underscoring the need for more inclusive approaches.

2.4. WORLD VISION'S APPROACH TO THE HDP NEXUS

2.4.1. The Fragile Contexts Programme Approach (FCPA)

According to the OECD, fragility "*is the combination of exposure to risk and the insufficient capacity of the state, systems and/or communities to manage, absorb or mitigate those risks*". As a consequence of that, "poverty, violence and environmental degradation are concentrated in fragile contexts"[38]. For World Vision – like for many others – operating in fragile contexts is particularly challenging since traditional development programs focus primarily on stable environments, while fragile contexts were "*once the near*

[37] Müller-Koné et al. (2024) *"How can the HDP Nexus work from the bottom-up? A discussion paper on implementation challenges from a decolonial perspective - Insights from Iraq, Mali and South Sudan."* Bonn: BICC.
[38] OECD (2022) *"Engaging in fragile contexts,"* Case Study, July 18, 2022, Available at:

sole preserve of humanitarian actors." [39] World Vision's idea of a Nexus approach was first and foremost to challenge the concept of linearity, which previously assumed that crises and disasters go through linear cycles. In fragile contexts, there are continuous shocks and events that require of practitioners to be adaptable and flexible to the contextual realities.

Figure 4: The three FCPA 'Dials'[40]

Programming options that allow a quick and effective response to rapidly deteriorating situations to ensure the survival of the most vulnerable children, families and communities.

Programming most likely implemented when a situation has begun to stabilise; primarily focused on resilience and recovery, social cohesion, access to basic services, and re-establishing livelihoods.

Programming seeking to deal with the root causes of fragility, to promote recovery, reduce dependency on aid, improve governance and service provision, strengthen risk management and coping mechanisms, prevent or mitigate future disasters, strengthen local civil society networks and build peace. (World Vision, 2022b)

While the HDP Nexus emerged from debates about programming in fragile contexts, "Nexus thinking" is not confined to a specific context, such as fragile or conflict-affected areas, as it refers to an overarching sensitivity towards the effects of programs on humanitarian needs, development and peace. [41] Nonetheless, early attempts to put the HDP Nexus into practice focused primarily on fragile contexts and protracted crises, like Chad,[42] Somalia [43] and South Sudan.[44]

At World Vision, the engagement with the HDP Nexus culminated in the development of the FCPA. FCPA started taking shape in 2017 as staff from disaster management and development teams came together

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[39] Macrae (2019), *"'Linking Thinking' - Why is it so hard and what can we do about it? Reflections on current debates on the Humanitarian, Development and Peace Nexus"*. KUNO, p. 10.

[40] World Vision International. (2022c). *"FCPA: Fragile Contexts Programming Approach: Designing for impact in fragile contexts."*

[41] DuBois (2020) *"The Triple Nexus - Threat or opportunity for the humanitarian principles?"* Discussion paper, Berlin: CHA.; Fitzpatrick et al. (2021) "*Making the Nexus real: Moving from theory to practice*". Boston: Feinstein International Center, Tufts University.

[42] Jones and Mazzara (2018) "All Together Now? EU institutions and member states' cooperation in fragile situations and protracted crises," April 6, 2018.

[43] Perret (2019) "Operationalizing the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus: Lessons from Colombia, Mali, Nigeria, Somalia and Turkey" Geneva: IOM, June 19, 2019.

[44] Fanning and Fullwood-Thomas (2019) "*The Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus: What does it mean for multi-mandated organizations*?". Oxfam, June 26, 2019.; Wilkinson, et al . (2019) "The Triple Nexus and local faith actors in South Sudan: Findings from primary research". Washington DC: DanChurch Aid.

to discuss options for more integrated programming. Design in close collaboration with ALNAP, the approach was officially adopted in 2018 and piloted in several countries between 2019 and 2024. [45] Through the FCPA, WV seeks to work *in* fragile contexts (by protecting lives and meeting humanitarian needs), and *on* fragility (which requires addressing the causes and drivers of conflict, risk and vulnerability). To do so, the FCPA offers three clusters of programming options – the "FCPA dials":

These programming options and their underlying intention to work both *in* and *on* fragility to address short- as well as long-term needs, align with the basic idea of the HDP Nexus (as outlined above). Activities from the "Survive" dial are essentially humanitarian, while activities from the "Adapt" and "Thrive" dials address either development or peace. As such, the FCPA provides guidance for programming that cuts-across silos and therefore aligns with the HDP Nexus. When the approach was first applied, it was meant to be a full-on programming approach with specific guidance on steps that needed to be taken at various points of the project cycle management, to make sure that the programme is designed with all the right elements in place. This very first iteration of the FCPA was called 'Track 1' and was used primarily for field offices wanting to start new programming in fragile contexts. Track 1 consists of 6 different steps starting from assessments to programme implementation and learning.

Table 2: FCPA Tools and their definitions

Tool	Description
Scenario Planning	A forward-looking tool used to anticipate potential shifts in context and prepare accordingly. This allows teams to consider "what-if" situations, such as mass displacement, renewed violence, or climatic shocks, and design contingency plans and thresholds for action in advance.
Crisis Modifiers	Flexible mechanisms built into development programs that allow them to quickly scale humanitarian components or shift modalities in response to sudden shocks. This enables seamless adaptation without requiring a completely new project or funding line.
Context Monitoring Dashboards	Used to enable ongoing understanding of the context through regular tracking of predefined environmental, political, economic, and social indicators. These dashboards are updated at frequent intervals to inform program adjustments and trigger early warnings in dynamic settings.
GEOCARR (Good Enough Context Analysis for Rapid Response)	A context analysis tool designed for rapid, participatory assessments of the operating environment. GEOCARR synthesizes qualitative data from field teams and local stakeholders to provide a structured snapshot of conflict, governance, social dynamics, and vulnerabilities, typically used at the onset of programming or major shifts in context.
Risk Matrix and Risk-Informed Programming Tools	These help identify, assess, and prioritize risks that might affect the program, such as insecurity, resource constraints, or environmental hazards. The output informs how programs are designed and how risks are mitigated over time.
Peace and Conflict Sensitivity Tools (e.g., Do No Harm, Connector Frameworks)	These frameworks guide teams to analyze how interventions may interact with existing tensions or social divisions and identify opportunities to reinforce cohesion. They ensure that programs contribute positively to peace while avoiding unintended harm.
Stakeholder Mapping and Power Analysis	Used to understand the roles, interests, and influence of different stakeholders, including local authorities, informal leaders, and community groups. This informs engagement strategies and helps in designing inclusive, locally owned programming.
Community Feedback and Accountability Mechanisms	Tools like complaint hotlines, help desks, and community forums not only gather feedback but also provide real-time insight into shifting community dynamics,

[45] Dupras et al. (2024) "*Research on World Vision's Nexus Approach: The Fragile Context Programming Approach*". World Vision.

	grievances, or unmet needs, feeding into adaptive decision-making loops and thus help support efforts for conflict sensitive programming.
Adaptive Learning Loops / Reflective Pause Tools	These tools are structured moments within program cycles that allow teams to reflect on context shifts, implementation challenges, and learning. They enable timely course corrections and institutionalize continuous improvement.

This application of the FCPA is tied to certain conditions, including a high level of volatility that renders traditional sponsorship programmes impossible, available seed funding for at least 18 months, and manageable security risks. With the coming of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the organisation realised that the need for adaptation and change goes beyond fragile contexts. There were offices with sponsorship programming witnessing sudden wars, conflict, and disasters that needed to adapt to the new realities. FCPA track 1 could not respond to those demands, as it described a full project management cycle with the assumption of starting completely new programmes in fragile contexts. There needed to be a compromise, where elements of the FCPA could be used for different situations such as deteriorating sponsorship programmes, bilateral grants that have certain restrictions, and/or other situations. This is when Track II was developed. [46]

Track II was based on the FCPA principles (see below), which were put together after a learning session with countries having implemented FCPA track I. The principles were also meant to be in alignment with the OECD-DAC Nexus principles, but with more emphasis on community engagement and empowerment. Track II is a much more flexible iteration of the FCPA and can be used for sponsorship programmes, bilateral grants, or any other situations when programme adaptations are necessary. The alignment with OECD-DAC recommendations have made the FCPA a credible Nexus approach externally to World Vision. Below are some of the similarities and differences between the FCPA principles and the OECD DAC recommendations.

2.4.2. The FCPA and the OECD-DAC Recommendations

Comparing the recommendations formulated by the OECD-DAC for the operationalisation of the HDP nexus with the principles of the FCPA allows to shed some light on the broader alignment of the two concepts. That is to say, the recommendations of the OECD-DAC provide a useful framework to assess in how far the FCPA addresses programming, coordination and financing in line with the Nexus:

Table 3: Comparing FCPA Principles with OECD-DAC Nexus Recommendations

FCPA Principles (and Tools) [47]	OECD-DAC Nexus Recommendations [48]
Understand the context with local actors (MSTC, GEOCARR, IPACS, etc.),[49] which leads to conflict-sensitive recommendations and in some cases, to specific peacebuilding interventions	Undertake joint, risk-informed, and gender-sensitive analysis of root causes and resilience factors (III. 1.)
	Ensure that activities "do no harm" and are conflict-sensitive (III. 3.)
Design and implement Integrated Programming with local actors and partners	Align humanitarian, development, and peace programming to achieve collective outcomes (IV. 1.)
Enable shared decision-making with local actors on risk and adaptation (real-time, collaborative context monitoring and adapted Monitoring Evaluation Accountability and Learning (MEAL)	Incentivising joined-up approaches (III. 2.)
	Put people at the centre and strengthen participation (IV. 2.)

[46] World Vision (2022) *"Fragile Contexts Programme Approach: Field Office Starter Kit"*, p. 2.

[47] World Vision (2022).

[48] OECD (2019) "*DAC Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus*," OECD/LEGAL/5019.

[49] Good Enough Context Analysis for Rapid Response (GECARR), Making Sense of Turbulent Contexts (MSTC), Integration of Peace and Conflict Sensitivity (IPACS).

Empower staff, local actors, and partners to make adjustments when needed	Ensure that joined-up programming is risk-focused, flexible and adaptable to the context (IV. 4.)
	Strengthen national and local capacities (IV. 5.) Invest in iterative learning to facilitate evidence-based adjustments (IV. 6)
Ensure funding is diverse and flexible	Provide multi-year, predictable, and flexible financing (V. 2.)
	Leverage diverse funding sources, including private and public sectors (V. 2.)

Overall, there are a few areas where the FCPA does not fully address or emphasize certain aspects of the OECD recommendations:

- The FCPA does not include strategies for leveraging diplomatic or political influence (III. 3.), which can be explained by its focus on field-level operations rather than high-level politics.
- The FCPA does not explicitly address cross-border dynamics or regional interventions (IV. 1.). However, while Track I of the FCPA advocates for an area-based response, Track II has no geographic limitation which could actually be used beyond a confined geographical area or boundary.
- The FCPA does not explicitly advocate for alignment with global or regional financing strategies beyond local contexts (V. 1.). However, conversations about such global funding strategies that align with the idea of the HDP Nexus are ongoing at World Vision at large.

While the comparison of the OECD recommendations and the FCPA appears to be useful to situate the FCPA within the broader conceptualisation of the Nexus, it should be noted that the HDP Nexus was initially proposed and conceptualized by (and to some extent for) the UN and OECD member states. As such, the starting point of the conversation about the HDP Nexus was a reflection about the humanitarian, development and peace sector at large – its (mal)functioning and ways of working. In light of this conversation, earlier concepts, such as resilience, early recovery and DRR, which have shaped programming over the past decades have been repacked in the discourse about the HDP Nexus. Therefore, it should not be surprising that many elements of the Nexus – as well as the FCPA – are common sense for practitioners.[50]

2.4.3. Lessons from the FCPA

Since its adoption in 2018, the FCPA has been piloted and rolled out in various contexts. Previous studies on and reviews of the FCPA have shed some light on the potential of and the challenges for implementing the FCPA Most notably, World Vision has recently commissioned a research on the FCPA,[51] which follows on a learning paper conducted by World Vision Ireland,[52] an internal evidence overview[53] and a study on flexibility in humanitarian programming that explored World Vision's FCPA alongside other approaches.[54] Some of the main lessons from these papers are briefly summarized in the following:

- The FCPA advances integrated programming but is still confronted by entrenched silos: Implementing the FCPA has demonstrated significant progress in terms of integrating the three pillars of the Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) Nexus. This integration has been positively received by communities and highlights the potential of the approach to address complex needs in fragile contexts, as seen in South Sudan and the DRC.[55] However, the collaborative nature of the FCPA is often undermined by entrenched silos within the aid sector and program implementation.[56] Staff accustomed to rigid, sectoral approaches, such as those in

[50] Fitzpatrick et al. (2021)
[51] Dupras et al. (2024)
[52] World Vision (2023) "*Critical reflections on World Vision Ireland's Nexus methodology: Is it really worth it*". Learning Paper.
[53] World Vision (2022a) "*Fragile Contexts Programme Approach: Evidence overview*".
[54] Alcayna (2019) "*Ready to change? Building flexibility into the Triple Nexus*," Spotlight Study, London:ALNAP/ODI.
[55] Dupras et al. (2024)
[56] World Vision (2022b)

sponsorship programs, find it difficult to adapt to the FCPA's integrated methods. Addressing these silos is essential for realizing the full potential of the FCPA's collaborative goals.

- The FCPA's adaptability supports rapid responses in fragile contexts: The possibility to adapt programmes rapidly to changing circumstances – primarily on basis of the context monitoring tool – was highlighted as a major added value of the FCPA.[57] In South Sudan, for example, the FCPA allowed to better anticipate, plan for and respond to conflict and displacement. Similarly, it enabled the World Vision team in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) to rapidly respond to emerging needs.[58]
- The FCPA facilitates thinking and acting across silos but faces resistance from ingrained practices: The FCPA encourages frontline staff to make informed decisions based on available information, fostering a shift in thinking about program design and success that seeks to go beyond silos.[59] As one participant of the FCPA pilot in Honduras stated: "The FCPA represents a change in mindset for our way of planning and designing programmes".[60] This "change of mindset" aligns well with what Du Bois (2019) called nexus-thinking, referring to "a future culture and ideology, where the mindset within the three sectors is sufficiently cross-pollinated that the differences become technical, not normative and not hierarchical" At the same time, internal culture still is a key challenge, "as ingrained practices continue to slow down decision-making processes." [61]
- The evolving nature of the FCPA allows for contextualisation but also challenges consistency: The evolving nature of the FCPA has led to diverse interpretations across the organization, which can be both a strength and a challenge [62]. While it reflects contextually appropriate nexus approaches, the lack of a unified understanding has also hindered flexibility and speed [63]. Guidance documents, such as the Starter Kit, have been criticized as overly complex and disconnected from field realities, further complicating implementation. [64]
- The FCPA's success depends on meaningful community engagement and communication with stakeholders: Regular discussions with communities are essential for monitoring contextual changes and ensuring flexibility in programming.[65]. To be truly responsive, "it is critical to consider engaging community stakeholders at every step of the process." [66] However, a strong commitment to communities and collaboration with multiple partners can also "lead to hesitation in making necessary adjustments, out of concern for disappointing stakeholders". [67] Clear communication with all relevant stakeholders is therefore vital for effective collaboration in fragile contexts.
- Rigid systems within World Vision limit the FCPA's adaptive potential: There appears to be a *"tension between the FCPA's push for flexibility and the rigid structures of World Vision's traditional project management frameworks"*. [68]Rigid logframes, budgeting processes, and procurement systems limit adaptive management, causing frustration among staff. "Despite ongoing efforts to introduce more flexibility, bureaucratic hurdles persist, limiting the full potential of the FCPA's agile approach". [69] Addressing these systemic barriers is necessary to unlock the full potential of the FCPA. [70]
- Flexible funding is essential for sustaining the implementation of the FCPA: Strategic, consistent, and flexible funding is essential for piloting and implementing the FCPA. Project budgets must allow sufficient flexibility to adapt to changing circumstances and shift between scenarios, which many institutional funding mechanisms lack. [71]

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[57] World Vision (2023) p.11; Dupras et al. (2024) p. 2.
[58] World Vision (2022a); Alcayna (2019)
[59] Alcayna (2019) p.25, Available at:
[60] World Vision (2022a)
[61] Dupras et al. (2024)
[62] World Vision (2023) p. 18.
[63] Alcayna (2019)
[64] Dupras et al. (2024) p.3
[65] World Vision (2022a)
[66] Ibid.
[67] Dupras et al. (2024) p.2
[68] Ibid.
[69] Ibid.
[70] World Vision (2022a)
[71] Ibid.

- **The FCPA overlooks critical opportunities to strengthen leadership, enhance joint analysis, and integrate financing mechanisms:** The authors of an internal learning paper suggest that: *"World Vision Teams must transition from a process-centric view to embracing values promoting wider coordination and collaboration to embody the Nexus approach. This shift is key to breaking away from operational silos and moving towards a more interconnected approach across humanitarian, development, and peace initiatives. […] A significant opportunity lies in broadening the Fragile Context Programming Approach beyond data collection and context monitoring. This would involve delving into enhanced stakeholder coordination, flexible planning, and inclusive emergency response mechanisms."*[72]

Taken together, the lessons from the implementation of the FCPA highlight both its potential and the challenges it faces. The FCPA has proven effective in integrating the pillars of the HDP Nexus and fostering adaptability, enabling more responsive and cohesive programming in fragile contexts. Its focus on empowering staff and engaging communities underscores its potential to drive meaningful change at the ground level. Key enablers have underpinned the FCPA's adaptability, include:

1. Flexible funding mechanisms such as the Nexus Accelerator Fund and the Childhood Rescue initiative, which allowed country offices to respond dynamically to emerging needs; [73]
2. Context monitoring tools, which enabled real-time analysis and adaptation by incorporating community feedback and multi-source data; [74]
3. A deliberate shift in organizational mindset and internal culture, gradually encouraging staff to operate beyond rigid sectoral silos and adopt a more agile, context-driven approach to programming.[75]
4. Decentralized, localized and trust-based decision-making, supported by defined decision rights and adaptive leadership practices, that is crucial for rapid responses. [76]
5. Cross-functional and multi-sectoral teams that through their collaboration enabled a more holistic response to community needs in real time. [77]
6. Scenario planning through the use of tools like GECARR and MSTC helped field teams model different future scenarios and prepare contingency plans, while surge capacity support enabled rapid scaling during crises.[78]

However, significant barriers remain. Entrenched silos within the aid sector, rigid organizational processes, and inconsistent understanding of the FCPA's approach hinder its effectiveness. Additionally, challenges in securing flexible funding, fully engaging communities, and addressing systemic issues such as leadership and coordination limit the FCPA's ability to reach its full potential.

To maximize impact, FCPA-informed programming must prioritize breaking down operational silos, fostering cultural and organizational change, and promoting a unified understanding across contexts. Greater investment in leadership, flexible funding mechanisms, and inclusive approaches that prioritize community involvement at every stage are essential. Addressing these areas will enable the FCPA to become a more adaptive, integrated, and effective framework for operating in fragile contexts.

2.5. WORLD VISION IN SOUTH SUDAN

World Vision has been active in South Sudan since 1989, initially providing humanitarian assistance during the conflict in what was then Southern Sudan, and continuing its efforts after the country's independence in 2011. The organization operates in four major zones— Central Equatoria (including Juba), Upper Nile, Greater Bahr El Gazal, and Western Equatoria—delivering multi-sectoral programs that

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[72] World Vision (2023) *Critical Reflections on World Vision Ireland's Nexus Methodology: Is It Really Worth It."* Learning Paper, p. 11

[73] World Vision (2024) *'Research on World Vision's Nexus approach: The Fragile Context Programming Approach'*

[74] Ibid

[75] Ibid.

[76] World Vision (2022b) "*Fragile Contexts Programme Approach: Field Office Starter Kit."*

[77] Ibid.

[78] Ibid.

address the needs of over 3.1 million people, including 2.6 million children, as of 2023.[79] These programs focus on food security and livelihoods, health and nutrition, protection, education, and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH).

Against the backdrop of evolving approaches to address the challenges of protracted and complex crises affecting local populations, World Vision has emphasized both immediate humanitarian relief and long-term resilience-building in its approach in South Sudan. In 2021, 2.1 million people were reached through various interventions, including 1.4 million through livelihood programs and 380,000 with WASH services. Education challenges were also tackled through the provision of learning opportunities amidst disruptions, while protection interventions included reaching 147,667 people in 2021 with advocacy and protection programs, particularly focusing on the estimated 19,000 children associated with armed groups. Food assistance efforts reached nearly 300,000 people by 2019, and by 2021, 1.4 million people were assisted in response to a looming hunger crisis, while in locations such as Upper Nile, and Warrap, malnourished children and mothers were targeted with specialized feeding programs. The organization has also prioritized climate resilience, launching initiatives like the Watershed Approaches for Climate Resilience in Agro-pastoral Landscapes (WACRESS) Project in 2024, a $33 million effort in Aweil Centre and Aweil East, NBG, aimed at benefiting 75,000 people and restoring 15,000 hectares of land through ecosystem restoration, market linkages, and climate-smart agriculture.

2.6. WORLD VISION GERMANY'S NEXUS CHAPEAU PROJECTS IN SOUTH SUDAN

Before diving into World Vision's projects in South Sudan, Germany's adaptation of the HDP Nexus – the Nexus Chapeau – will be outlined briefly, since it is through this funding instrument that World Vision implemented the projects that are at the core of this study.

2.6.1. The Nexus Chapeau

In Germany, humanitarian assistance and development cooperation are, for the most part, managed separately. While BMZ is responsible for development cooperation, GFFO is responsible for humanitarian assistance, reflecting a somewhat "siloed" funding structure. Bridging these silos has been at the centre of the Nexus conversation and, as a major donor and a member of the OECD-DAC, Germany has worked on ways to create collaboration and complementarity between its funding streams by introducing the Nexus Chapeau approach [80]. This approach allows non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) to submit two complementary project proposals: one for humanitarian funding from GFFO and another for Transitional Development Assistance (Übergangshilfe) from BMZ – this can be done simultaneously or subsequently, submitting a proposal that complements an existing project. Initially intended to connect humanitarian and development efforts, the German government has increasingly leveraged the chapeau approach to advance the HDP Nexus and incorporate peacebuilding into programming. [81] With parallel funding from both ministries, projects are supposed to strengthen collective outcomes, synergies, division of labour, transparency, andcoordinated project planning and implementation (including monitoring and evaluation).

As existing documentation has indicated, to be applicable for funding under the Nexus Chapeau, it is preferable for the two projects to be linked in terms of their content and the time frame, although this is not a strict requirement. Projects without a content-related or regional link do not require the chapeau format. The following configurations are thereby identified as possible:

1. Linking to an ongoing project of the other ministry;
2. Linking two new projects through the following possible content-related links:
    i. A close geographical and target group context (same/neighbouring region, same or complementary target groups), and
    ii. The same/complementary sectors (e.g. water and health). [82]

[79] World Vision South Sudan (2024) "*Annual Report FY 2024*".

[80] GFFO (2024) "Federal Foreign Office strategy on humanitarian assistance abroad"

[81] Müller-Koné et al. (2024)

[82] BMZ (2023a) *"Information for NGOs on the Nexus Chapeau Approach for Humanitarian Aid and Transitional Development Assistance (TDA) Projects"*.

2.7. WORLD VISION GERMANY's WORK IN NBG

World Vision Germany (WVG) has played a significant role in South Sudan, focusing on integrating humanitarian aid, development, and peacebuilding to address the complex, protracted crises in South Sudan, with a particular emphasis on NBG, through the following two projects:

1. The BMZ TDA Project (August 2022 – December 2026) in Aweil East and Aweil North, targeting WASH, food security, DRR, livelihoods, and conflict mitigation,
2. The GFFO Nexus Project (July 2022 – June 2024), which operated across South Sudan, Sudan, and Somalia, focusing on emergency shelter, WASH, food security, nutrition, cash transfers, DRR, and protection, with a strong emphasis on reducing vulnerability among IDPs, returnees, and host communities in NBG and Warrap.

Focusing on Aweil East and Aweil North counties, both of World Vision's HDP Nexus initiatives aimed to strengthen community resilience through targeted multisectoral programs addressing livelihoods, food security, social cohesion, and DRR. Given the NBG region's susceptibility to climate shocks, including recurrent droughts and flooding, these efforts were deemed crucial for fostering adaptive capacity and long-term stability through the implementation of integrated activities that would bridge emergency relief with sustainable development and local conflict resolution mechanisms.

2.8. THE WORLD VISION GERMANY HDP NEXUS PROJECTS IN AWEIL

2.8.1. The BMZ TDA Project[83]

The BMZ TDA Project[84] is a multi-year intervention (August 2022 – December 2026) funded by BMZ TDA and implemented by WVG in partnership with World Vision South Sudan (WVSS) and the Action for Children Development Foundation (ACDF). Operating in Aweil East and Aweil North, NBG, South Sudan, the project used an FCPA approach designed to strengthen community resilience to both natural and man-made shocks, and work flexibly towards shared outcomes for children.

The project aims to strengthen the resilience of vulnerable populations and thus contributes directly to the priorities defined in the WVSS strategy, while all activities are also aligned with the Humanitarian Response Plan 2021 for South Sudan. In the project areas, acute humanitarian needs and potential for long-term resilience building exist simultaneously, with households particularly affected by 2022 flood, displacement, and recent returnees from Sudan crisis since April 2023 living in the same communities with already more resilient households. The BMZ TDA project specifically responds to this complex context by addressing immediate humanitarian needs for survival through the GFFO-funded component and contributing to addressing root causes through BMZ TDA-the transitional assistance component.

The intended outcomes of the project are:

- Improved access to community-managed water systems for mixed uses and im-proved hygiene practices.

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[83] Information for this section was drawn from project documentation, more specifically :

BMZ - Amended Top-Up Proposal (2024). "*NEXUS Project for Accelerated Stabilization and Resilience Strengthening of Conflict-Affected Households, Communities, and Local Systems in Aweil East and Aweil North, Northern Bahr el Ghazal, South Sudan"*. World Vision Germany & World Vision South Sudan.

BMZ - SSDN 220118 BMZ TDA Nexus Annual Report 2023 (2024). "*Annual Report for the NEXUS Project for the period 01/01/2023 – 31/12/2023*." World Vision Germany & World Vision South Sudan.

BMZ - SSDN 220118 MBZ TDA Nexus Mid-Term Evaluation Report (2024). "*Mid-Term Evaluation Report for the NEXUS Project for Accelerated Stabilization and Resilience Strengthening of Conflict-Affected Households, Communities, and Local Systems in Aweil East and Aweil North, Northern Bahr el Ghazal, South Sudan*." Prepared by KenRo Team Consults Ltd for World Vision South Sudan.

BMZ - 220118 SSDN BMZ TDA Contract Amendment (2024). "*Contract Amendment for the NEXUS Project*" Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), Germany.

[84] The complete name of the project is: "NEXUS project for accelerated stabilization and resilience strengthening of conflict-affected households, communities and local systems in Aweil East and Aweil North, Northern Bahr el Ghazal, South Sudan."

- Improved household access to food and resilient livelihoods through climate-smart agricultural techniques and diversified livelihoods.
- Strengthened community-managed conflict mitigation and disaster risk reduction mechanisms.

The project strengthens stabilization capacities by ensuring access to safe water, hygiene, and basic services. Adaptive capacities are enhanced through DRR training, climate-resilient agriculture, savings groups, and the introduction of market-driven livelihood models. Finally, transformational capacities focus on longer-term systems change by empowering local governance, promoting peacebuilding structures, and supporting inclusive decision-making mechanisms at community level. Emphasis is also placed on anticipatory action—preparing communities to absorb and respond to future shocks, particularly through early warning systems and conflict-sensitive programming.

A complete list of the BMZ TDA project's activities, outputs and outcomes please see Annex 3.

2.8.2. The GFFO Project[85]

The GFFO Nexus Project[86] was funded by the German Federal Foreign Office and implemented by WVG in collaboration with WVSS and local partners in South Sudan (Aweil East and Aweil North), Sudan (East Darfur), and Somalia (Baidoa). Running from July 2022 to June 2024 the project aimed to reduce vulnerability among crisis-affected populations, including IDPs, returnees, and host communities by addressing their most pressing humanitarian needs across five key sectors.

The first component focuses on emergency shelter and WASH, providing critical infrastructure and supplies such as rehabilitated latrines, hygiene kits, and access to clean water through borehole repair and community hygiene promotion. The second component addresses nutrition and food security, using cash transfers to support food-insecure households, establishing household and community gardens, and delivering treatment for acute malnutrition through Community-based Management of Acute Malnutrition (CMAM) approaches. Children under five and pregnant or lactating women are specifically targeted for screening and care.

DRR and early warning mechanisms form the third pillar of the intervention, equipping communities with tools and plans to anticipate and respond to shocks. In parallel, the project supports the provision of primary health care services through fixed and mobile health units, offering a package of services including reproductive health, immunization, and infectious disease prevention.

Finally, the project emphasizes protection by raising community awareness on child protection and gender-based violence (GBV), training service providers on prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA), and supporting child-friendly spaces and case management for vulnerable children, including unaccompanied minors.

Altogether, the GFFO project reached 46,663 people in South Sudan, with a particular focus on women, children, older persons, and persons with disabilities—ensuring that assistance is both life-saving and protection-sensitive.. For a complete list of the GFFO project's activities, outputs and outcomes please see Annex 3.

2.8.3. Initial insights of project linkages

Based on the RT's initial insights that derived solely from the desk review,[87] the following draft diagram was produced during the inception of this study, that illustrates the relative placement of some GFFO-

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[85] Information for this section was drawn from project documentation, more specifically :

GFFO - Anlage 02 Antrag Regionalprojekt World Vision - 2022 (2022). *"Project Proposal for the Regional Humanitarian Project to Reduce Vulnerability of Crisis-Affected People in Somalia, Sudan, and South Sudan through Emergency Shelter, WASH, Health, Nutrition, Food Security, Cash Transfers, and Protection Measures."* World Vision Deutschland e.V.

GFFO - Antragsanlage - 03 Logframe_010622 (2022). *"Logical Framework for the Regional Humanitarian Project, Outlining Expected Outcomes, Indicators, and Implementation Strategies in Somalia, Sudan, and South Sudan."* World Vision Deutschland e.V.

GFFO - Anlage 3_Chapeau Nexus-Ansatz_AA-BMZ (2022). *"Strategic Document on the Integration of Humanitarian Aid and Development within the Nexus Framework, Highlighting Coordination between GFFO and BMZ-funded Projects in South Sudan."* World Vision Deutschland e.V.

[86] The full name of the project is: "Regional humanitarian project to reduce the vulnerability of crisis-affected people, especially IDPs, returnees and the most vulnerable host communities in Baidoa district, Somalia, and East Darfur state, Sudan, and Northern Bahr el Ghazal, South Sudan, through emergency Shelter, WASH, Health, Nutrition & Food Security, Cash Transfer, and Protection interventions"

[87] For other examples describing activities through a Nexus-lens, see IASC (2024), p.18

and BMZ TDA project activities across the HDP Nexus. Activity placement in this graph should be understood as an approximation that visualises some overarching tendencies, namely:

- The GFFO project focuses primarily on lifesaving humanitarian support (e.g. survival kits). However, some activities pave the way for development-oriented changes (e.g. kitchen, school and community gardens). Peace is not addressed directly, but social cohesion and the principles of do no harm and conflict-sensitivity were considered for the design of the project, which suggests that all activities are "peace-sensitive".
- The BMZ TDA project focuses both on development and on peace,[88] with little, but some overlap to lifesaving support (e.g. Psychological First Aid (PFA) trainings).

Taken together, the activities implemented as part of the two projects spread across the three spheres and point towards programmatic synergies. Moving from the conceptual to the factual, the midterm Evaluation of the BMZ TDA project identified Integrated approach to programming",[89] i.e. working across sectoral silos, as a success factor and points towards several synergies between the two projects, which are based on (partial) overlaps of target groups, geographies, personnel, and knowledge:[90]

- **Target groups**: The mother support groups established by the GFFO project were also targeted by the BMZ TDA project. While the GFFO project focused on kitchen gardens, the BMZ TDA project provided income generating activities. The complementarity of the two projects enabled members of these groups to grow food for their own households and, at the same time, earn an income which helps to meet other basic household needs.

- **Geographies**: The GFFO project provided multipurpose cash to returnees as its core target group. Many of the returnees were residing with host communities' households. When such cash was provided, the food purchased would be shared with host household members who are targeted by BMZ TDA project. Similarly, the BMZ TDA project targeted households who were hosting returnees. The benefits from the project supported interventions such as vegetable cultivation, S4T and conditional cash transfers also benefited GFFO supported returnees residing with host communities.

    - **The NEXUS Project constructed water facilities such as water yards and hand pumps where GFFO beneficiaries were located**. NEXUS and GFFO targeted the same geographic areas in the two counties. While direct participants for the two projects are different, such participants are likely to be indirect beneficiaries of each project. In so doing, the project enabled IDPs and returnees to access safe water together with the host communities.
    - **GFFO set up and trained DRR Management Committees in different locations where the activities were implemented**. Where these very locations were targeted by the NEXUS Project, such committees were embraced and strengthened. This enabled the project to avoid duplication and contribute to long term capacity building of the community in identifying disaster risks and undertaking measures to mitigate the impact of such disasters.

- **Personnel & Knowledge**: Some of World Vision's staff worked on both the GFFO and the BMZ TDA project (e.g. WASH engineer, Food Security and Livelihoods (FSL) officer, quality assurance officer, grants coordinator), which removed institutional barriers. Where possible, resources such as vehicles have been shared between the two projects to enable smooth activity implementation on both projects.
    - While the WASH component of GFFO is implemented by a partner, the BMZ TDA Project renders technical support (technical designs, developing Bills of Quantities and supervision of water structure construction under GFFO) to the partner in delivery of such activities (examples of technical support). In addition, soft elements of the WASH component (hygiene and sanitation awareness creation within the community) of GFFO are also technically supervised by BMZ WASH officer (Engineer).

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[88] Peace here is understood in terms of the 'little p', which entails "actions focused on building the capacity for peace within societies" as opposed to "'Big P' actions that support and sustain political solutions and securitised responses to violent conflict"- IASC, "Exploring Peace within the Humanitarian-Development- Peace Nexus (HDPN)."

[89] KenRo (2024), "*Mid-Term evaluation report: NEXUS-Project for accelerated stabilization and resilience strengthening of conflict-affected households, communities and local systems in Aweil East and Aweil North, Northern Bahr El Ghazal, World Vision South Sudan*", p. 38.

[90] Ibid. p. 45.

Overall, it should be noted that there is very little reference to FCPA (tools, dials, etc.) and limited concrete reference to the HDP Nexus in the project documentation, leaving space for the study at hand to address gaps in the understanding of the application of these concepts within the two projects and explore bottom-up emergence of linkages and synergies, as emerging from the implementation of the projects on the ground.

3. METHODOLOGY

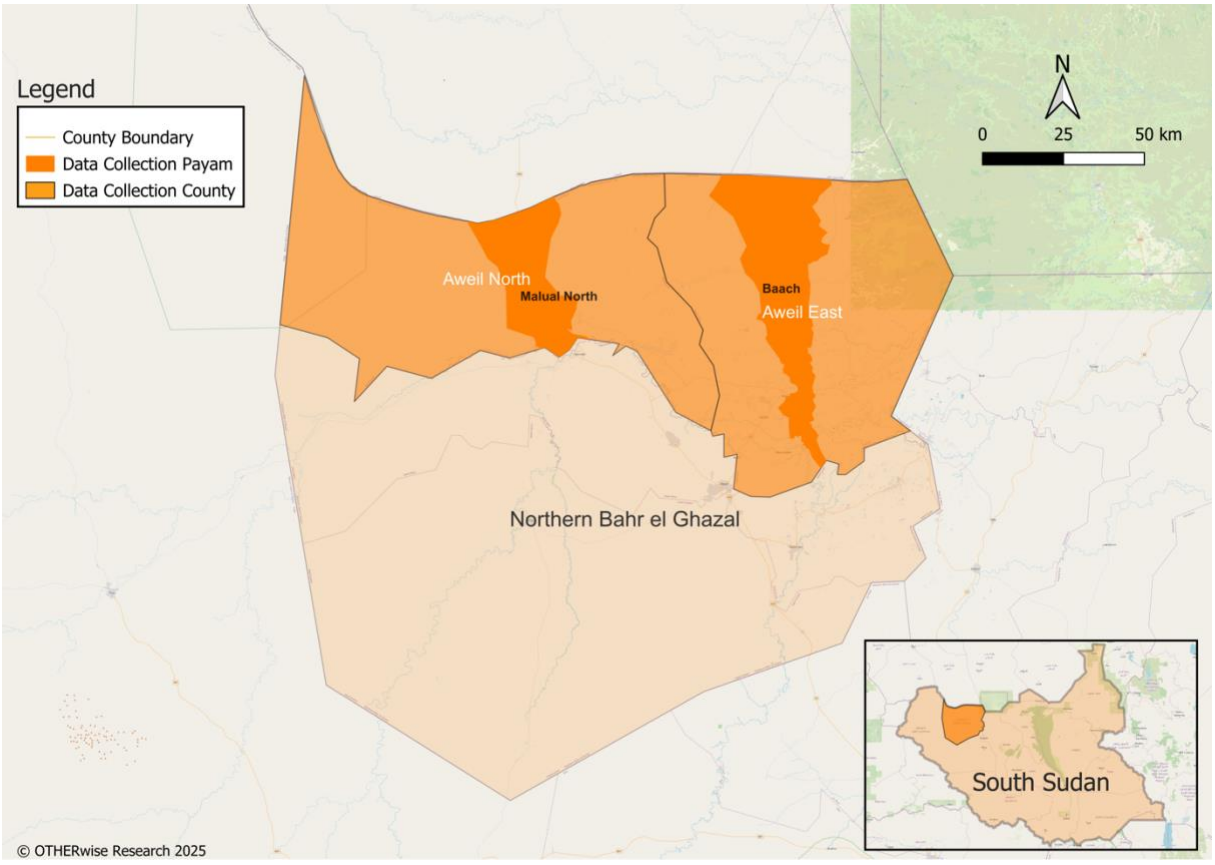
This section outlines the methodology employed to examine the linkages, complementarities, and operational realities of the two Nexus projects implemented by World Vision Germany in South Sudan. It presents the study's mixed-methods approach, detailing the selection of research sites, data collection tools, and stakeholder engagement processes. Emphasis is placed on the integration of desk-based analysis with field-level insights gathered through key informant interviews and focus group discussions. Ethical considerations, sampling strategies, and the triangulation of findings are also described to ensure methodological rigor and transparency.

The study employs a mixed-methods qualitative approach to examine the linkages between two projects implemented by WVG in South Sudan. To ensure a comprehensive understanding and triangulation of findings, data collection combined a systematic desk review, key informant interviews (KIIs), and focus group discussions (FGDs). The research draws on insights from a diverse set of stakeholders, including World Vision staff at different operational levels—field, national, regional, and international—as well as representatives of partner organizations active in NBG, South Sudan.

3.1. STUDY LOCATIONS

Location selection was driven by the core objectives of this study, and primary data was collected on-site at both project's primary implementation locations (Aweil North [Gok Machar] and Aweil East [Malualkon]) through personal interviews and group discussions to capture the on-the-ground realities and local perspectives.

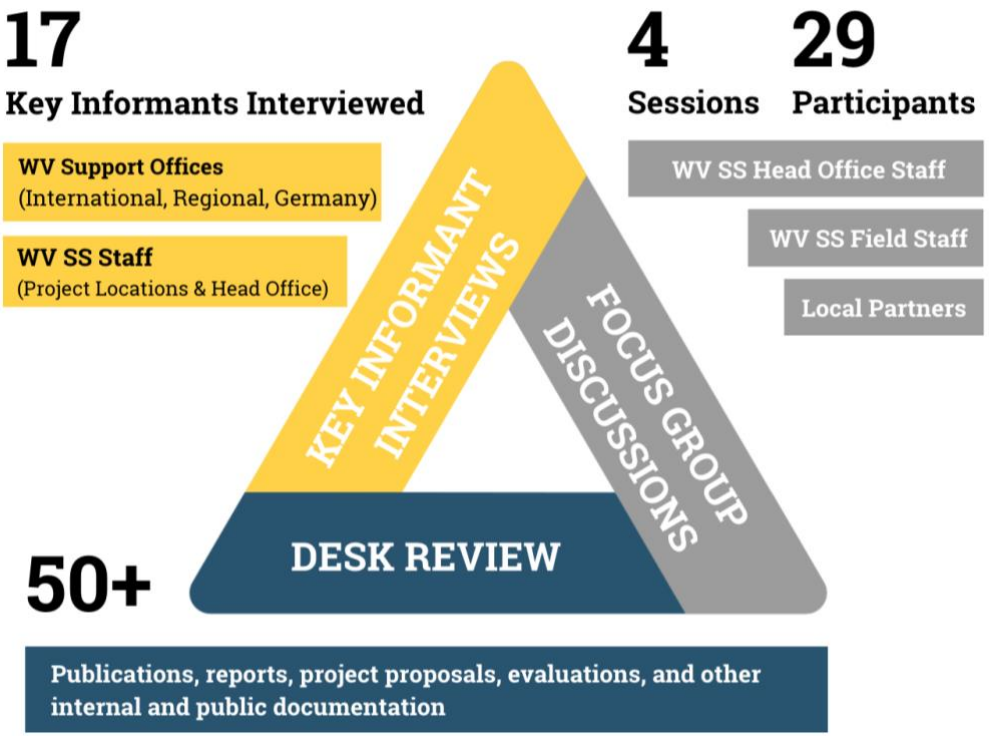
Figure 5: Data collection counties (Aweil North and Aweil East) on the map of Northern Bahr el Ghazal, with fieldwork locations



3.2. DESK REVIEW

The literature review encompassed a wide range of sources, including previous studies, international policy frameworks, and organizational guidelines relevant to the HDP Nexus. Two categories of publications were prioritized: (1) key international and organization-specific guiding documents on HDP Nexus implementation, which provided a conceptual foundation for analysing Nexus programming in NBG; and (2) evaluations and reports on previous HDP programs by World Vision, ensuring that the study builds on existing lessons learned. This process enabled the research team to contextualize findings and integrate secondary data with primary evidence collected through interviews and discussions.

Figure 6: Triangulation of methods



3.3. KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS (KIIS)

A total of 17 semi-structured KIIs were conducted, both in-person at project locations in NBG and remotely where necessary. Interview participants included WVG staff based in South Sudan (both at Juba-headquarters and project levels), Germany, as well as staff at regional support offices and internationally. Additionally, representatives from partner organizations involved in project implementation or closely coordinating with WVG contributed their perspectives. Purposive sampling ensured that key individuals with direct experience in project design, execution, and evaluation were included. Interviews followed a semi-structured format that followed the interview guide, while allowing for open-ended discussions to capture nuanced insights.

3.4. FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS (FGDS)

Three FGDs were carried out in Aweil East and Aweil North, each comprising 6-8 participants. These discussions brought together WVG project staff and representatives from partner organizations actively engaged in HDP Nexus programming. Selection criteria were based on participants' level of involvement, expertise in project implementation, and availability. FGDs provided a platform to explore shared Nexus programming experiences, challenges, and opportunities from multiple stakeholder perspectives.

3.5. CONFIDENTIALITY, ANONYMITY & CONSENT

To safeguard confidentiality and encourage candid participation, all interview and FGD data have been anonymized. Research ethics were central to the study design, with voluntary participation, informed consent, and the right to withdraw emphasized throughout.

3.6. SAMPLING

Participants for interviews and group discussions were purposely selected based on their expertise, role, and their availability to provide substantial insights into the topics under study. An initial contact list was provided by WV, and the RT sought additional respondents with proven relevance to this project during their fieldwork on-site visits.

Each KII interview lasted approximately one hour, with FGDs ranging from 2 to 3 hours, including a break, depending on the interest of the respondents to cover the questions comprehensively and was facilitated in a participatory manner by the Research team comprising of both a South Sudanese researcher (local KIIs and FGDs) and international team members. Respondents were encouraged to freely and confidentially share their experiences and reflections in relation to a broad range of aspects of the targeted projects as well as their collaboration with other stakeholders while the RT guided the conversation through interview tools that had been reviewed and approved by WVG during inception, in a semi-structured format to ensure thematic coverage.

Table 4: Sampling

Data Collection Method	Respondents	Location	Sessions Planned	Sessions Achieved	Sample Planned	Sample Achieved
Key Informant Interviews	WV program and technical staff at local, national and international level	Juba Aweil East, Aweil North Remote	15	17	15	17
Focus Group Discussions	Partner organization staff	Aweil East, Aweil North	2 *(1 per location)*	4	12–18	29
TOTAL		-	17	21	27–23	46

4. DATA ANALYSIS & REPORTING

This section presents the approach taken to analyse the data collected for this study and outlines key methodological considerations that shaped the findings. It describes how qualitative data from interviews and focus group discussions were systematically coded and interpreted to assess the performance and complementarity of the BMZ and GFFO projects under the HDP Nexus framework. It also highlights the limitations encountered during data collection and analysis, ranging from contextual constraints to methodological challenges, and explains how these were mitigated. Finally, the section identifies emerging themes that guided the analysis, offering insight into the enabling and inhibiting factors for Nexus programming in South Sudan.

The RT adopted a mixed-methods qualitative approach to assess the effectiveness of the BMZ and GFFO projects in achieving their objectives within the HDP Nexus framework, extract lessons learned, evaluate their impact on humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding outcomes, and provide recommendations for refining World Vision's Nexus programming in South Sudan and beyond. The study began with a systematic desk review of project documents, prior HDP Nexus research, and international frameworks, such as the OECD-DAC recommendations, to contextualize the analysis within the broader discourse on integrated humanitarian, development, and peace interventions. This review informed the development of research tools, research questions, data collection methods, and the analysis plan, ensuring alignment with the study's focus on coherence, collaboration, and complementarity across sectors.

4.1. TREATMENT OF QUALITATIVE DATA

All data from the recorded KIIs and FGDs conducted in Aweil East and Aweil North, as well as remotely with respondents globally were transcribed, translated where necessary, cleaned, and systematically coded. An exploratory coding scheme was employed as the primary analytical approach, using an inductive method to allow themes to emerge naturally from the perspectives of stakeholders, including World Vision staff at the project- national- and international level, as well as partner organizations. These initial themes were broadly coded and progressively refined to extract anecdotal, narrative, and process-based evidence relevant to the HDP Nexus implementation. The analysis specifically focused on identifying outcomes and changes related to the projects' contributions to collective outcomes, such as reduced vulnerability, increased resilience, and strengthened social cohesion, as well as gaps in operationalizing the Nexus approach in NBG.

The coding process emphasized capturing insights into how the BMZ and GFFO projects fostered synergy across humanitarian, development, and peace efforts, while also probing into pre-identified challenges such as siloed funding structures and institutional barriers, as noted in the broader HDP Nexus literature. The iterative coding of KIIs and FGDs involved identifying and classifying data related to the projects' outcomes, including improvements in water access, food security, DRR, and conflict mitigation, as well as unintended effects or missed opportunities for greater integration. The coding approach was designed to refine preliminary themes while remaining open to significant findings, such as the role of women in water management committees or the impact of climate shocks on livelihoods, to develop additional indicators capturing successes, challenges, and lessons learned. This method enhanced the evaluative and strategic framework for World Vision's future Nexus programming.

Additionally, all interview transcripts were processed using wordcloud generation software to create visual representations of textual data, emphasizing the frequency of key themes relevant to the HDP Nexus. In the visualization (see Figure 7on the following page), more frequently mentioned words—such as "project," "GFFO" "BMZ," and "South Sudan"—appear larger, signifying their prominence, with the colour scheme aligning with World Vision's branding.

Figure 7: Wordcloud based on transcripts.


project
community
South Sudan
Nexus
need
GFFO
ECPA
context
people
water
BMZ
donor
work
different
activities
good
team
support
training
program
implementation
development
stakeholders
HDP
working
engagement
humanitarian
management
coordination
understanding
beneficiaries
emergency
monitoring
information
fragility
world vision
funding
knowledge
organization
together
challenge
countries
fragile
discussion
unknown
IDP
staff
adaptability
conflict
local
partners
give
year
cash
tree
flexible
coherence
access
future
concern
approaches
long-term
agile
risk
committee
idea
Germany
Aweil
role
tools
areas
collaborate
involved
vision
complementarity
implementing
vulnerability
improve
assistance
peace
resilience
perspective
ensure
better

4.2. STUDY LIMITATIONS

The study encountered several limitations, many of which were anticipated during the inception phase and mitigated to the extent possible (see Annex 8 for a detailed mitigation plan). These challenges reflect both the specific context of the study in NBG and South Sudan more broadly, and the broader difficulties in operationalizing and evaluating HDP Nexus programming, as noted in the introduction.

Scholarship and Knowledge Gaps

1. Limited scholarly evidence on HDP Nexus effectiveness: The evidence base on the effectiveness of HDP Nexus programming remains limited, as highlighted in the introduction. The relative scarcity of robust scholarship limited the study's ability to draw on comparative studies or established benchmarks for assessing the BMZ and GFFO projects' contributions and their synergies.

2. Lack of in-depth HDP perspectives in prior evaluations: The desk review was constrained by the limited integration of HDP Nexus perspectives in previous project evaluations of World Vision's initiatives in NBG. This gap reduced the availability of secondary data for comparative analysis, making it challenging to contextualize the current study's findings within a broader framework of Nexus programming in the region.

3. Independent design of projects: The BMZ and GFFO projects were designed independently of each other, with distinct objectives, timelines, and operational frameworks, despite being analysed under the "Nexus Chapeau" approach. This lack of initial alignment limited the study's ability to assess synergies and complementarities systematically, as the projects were not originally structured to operate cohesively and by design within an integrated HDP framework.

4. Differing project stages: The GFFO project concluded in June 2024, while the BMZ TDA project was at a mid-stage of implementation (August 2022 – December 2026) during the time of this study. This temporal misalignment meant that the evaluation captured the GFFO project's outcomes retrospectively, while the BMZ TDA project's activities, such as long-term market linkages and peacebuilding efforts, were still ongoing. As a result, the study could not fully assess the BMZ TDA project's final impact, and comparisons between the two projects were complicated by their differing stages of maturity.

Methodological and Scope Limitations

5. Omission of community perspectives: Due to the study's focus on the operationalization of the HDP Nexus from an organizational perspective, the perspectives of communities and beneficiaries in Aweil East and Aweil North were intentionally excluded. The evaluation prioritized insights from World Vision staff, technical experts, and implementing partners to assess coordination, synergy, and institutional challenges. While this focus aligned with the research objectives, it limited the study's ability to capture the lived experiences of affected populations, potentially overlooking critical feedback on the projects' impact on vulnerability, resilience, and social cohesion.

6. Staff turnover and access to key personnel: The GFFO project's completion in June 2024 meant that critical staff involved in its implementation had moved on and were no longer present in the project locations for interviews. This staff turnover restricted the RT's access to firsthand insights into the GFFO project's design and early implementation phases. To mitigate this, senior program managers participated in online interviews, providing high-level perspectives, though these could not fully substitute for the detailed, on-the-ground insights of field staff.

Bias Considerations

7. Confirmation bias: Interviewees, particularly World Vision staff and partners, may have recalled information in ways that confirmed pre-existing beliefs about the HDP Nexus's potential, especially given the global push for integrated approaches. This bias could have influenced the emphasis on successes over challenges in their responses.
8. Observer/Hawthorne effect during interviews: Participants' behaviour and responses may have been influenced by the group setting and the presence of the researcher and other participants, particularly

during the FGDs. This observer/Hawthorne effect, where individuals alter their behaviour due to being observed, was particularly relevant in discussions about sensitive topics like conflict mitigation and social cohesion, potentially leading to socially desirable responses.

Logistical and Contextual Challenges

9. IRB and security-related delays: Obtaining research permissions at the study's onset was a time-consuming procedure. Further delays were also caused during the time of initiation of data analysis, when elevated security concerns across South Sudan diverted the RT's attention to pressing security matters rather than the continuation of analysis tasks as planned. These issues, common in a protracted crisis context, extended the consultancy period. This was mitigated through a no-cost extension of the contract, allowing the study to proceed, though the delays impacted the overall timeline.
10. Operational context in NBG and logistical/budgetary limitations: The region's poor transport and timeline/budget considerations limited the evaluation team's ability to conduct extensive fieldwork across all project implementation payams, particularly for the BMZ TDA project's ongoing activities.

Despite these limitations, the RT employed several strategies to ensure a robust research design. Triangulation of data from KIIs, FGDs, and the desk review helped validate findings, while purposive sampling ensured diverse perspectives from World Vision staff and partners. Online interviews with senior managers mitigated the impact of staff turnover, and the no-cost extension addressed delays. However, these limitations should be carefully considered when interpreting the findings, particularly in light of the broader challenges of operationalizing the HDP Nexus.

4.3. TERNARY PLOT VISUALIZATION

During the analysis phase, a ternary plot was used to visualize and accurately map the full range of activities across both projects, enabling a comparative representation of their distribution and emphasis (see Figure 8). The process began by compiling a comprehensive list of activities for both projects (presented in Annex 3), supplemented by textual data from project descriptions, objectives, and reported outcomes, as well as contextual insights from existing scholarship. The ML model examined patterns in the text—identifying terms like "emergency aid" for Humanitarian, "sustainable livelihoods" for Development, and "reconciliation" for Peacebuilding—to assign scores from 0 to 100 for each area. Initially, the model generated these scores automatically by grouping similar activities, then refined them through repeated analysis. A sample of the scores was reviewed and, score adjustments were made in case of misrating.

The scores were then adjusted to fit a triangular chart (ternary plot), where each corner represents one HDP area (top one 100% humanitarian, bottom left 100% development and bottom left 100% peacebuilding). Each dot on the plot represents any given activity's balance across Humanitarian, Development, and Peacebuilding, with colour groups indicating the project: orange to red for GFFO and blue to green for BMZ. Larger circles represent the mean value tendency for the activities under each project's outcome, using the same colours, to highlight their overall focus without meaning to reflect the full extent and overlapping of each project outcome's impact with other outcomes.

5. FINDINGS & ANALYSIS

This section presents a structured examination of how the GFFO and BMZ TDA projects operationalized the HDP Nexus, FCPA, and Chapeau frameworks in South Sudan, moving from conceptual design to practical implementation. It begins by unpacking how these three frameworks were integrated into the project architecture—both intentionally and organically—across design and implementation stages. The application of specific FCPA tools in practice is then explored, the extent to which their integration was intentional or emergent, and how Nexus coherence was achieved across activities, using visual mappings and grounded examples of synergy between the projects. It then shifts focus to stakeholder engagement, examining participation, feedback loops, and local ownership structures. This is followed by an assessment of management practices and organizational agility, highlighting decision-making flexibility, shared staffing, and adaptive field operations. The analysis concludes with a discussion of sustainability and long-term outcomes, and a comparison of how fragility is conceptualized at field and donor levels, closing with enabling factors and barriers that shaped the overall effectiveness of Nexus delivery in South Sudan.

5.1. CONCEPTUAL INTEGRATION AND PROJECT DESIGN

5.1.1. Incorporation of HDP Nexus, FCPA, and Chapeau frameworks into the project design

The integration of the HDP Nexus, the FCPA, and the Nexus Chapeau framework into the BMZ and GFFO projects in South Sudan reflects a multi-dimensional process, where formal design intent integrates with emergent, field-driven practice. These frameworks have not been adopted as rigid blueprints; rather, they have functioned as a scaffolding within which synergies have materialized—sometimes by design, and often by necessity.

5.1.1.1. The Chapeau approach

The Chapeau approach was explicitly built into the design architecture of both projects. It is clear from both the documentation and interviews that WVG, in collaboration with WVSS submitted and implemented these projects with an eye toward temporal and thematic complementarity. The projects exhibited close alignment in terms of geography, target groups, and even personnel. As one grants manager described:

> *"It was clear from the start: GFFO would focus on urgent needs, BMZ would follow with more durable solutions." – KII 12*

This sequencing was evident in instances where, for example, GFFO-supported emergency cash assistance, shelter, and malnutrition treatment were followed by BMZ investments in food production, water infrastructure, and market linkages. This intentional overlap only allowed for a smooth handover from relief to recovery, and enabled shared use of resources, such as staff, vehicles, and WASH infrastructure—reducing duplication and enhancing cost-efficiency. Yet, while the Chapeau mechanism enabled synergy, its implementation was not without challenges. Field officers noted the complexity of managing separate reporting requirements and donor timelines, with one WVSS team member admitting:

> *"Sometimes we get lost in which indicator belongs to which project—but at least we're in the same village." – KII 15*

5.1.1.2. HDP Nexus

The HDP Nexus, at least as a conceptual framework, was deeply embedded in the operational fabric of both projects, even if it was rarely referenced explicitly in documentation or interviews. The design and implementation of the projects reflect a clear alignment with Nexus logic: GFFO's humanitarian focus (Outcome 1) was deliberately paired with BMZ's development and peacebuilding thrust (Outcomes 2 and 3), targeting the same households, often simultaneously.

This was perhaps most vividly illustrated through activities such as:

- Cash and Livelihoods: Cash-for-food under GFFO allowed immediate survival, while BMZ-supported small ruminant distribution, farmer field schools, and market development created the pathway toward economic recovery.
- WASH and DRR: Boreholes drilled by GFFO were later expanded by BMZ with solar pumps and piping systems, while DRR committees initiated under one project were absorbed and strengthened by the other.
- Nutrition and Agriculture: CMAM under GFFO was complemented by the introduction of biofortified seeds and kitchen gardens under BMZ, creating a continuum from treatment to prevention.

As one WV staff member put it with regard to linkages between the pillars:

> *"We're doing WASH for both IDPs and returnees, but we also have agricultural support for host communities. So the same households benefit from both emergency and development support." – FGD 1*

Another respondent noted about integrated planning:

> *"There was a coordinated effort to align the humanitarian activities with longer-term development goals… the team made sure that activities complemented one another." – FGD 3*

And lastly, the peace dimension was also present, albeit often indirectly:

> *"We trained youth groups and formed community disaster committees, and they are now solving small disputes themselves." – FGD 2*

This horizontal and vertical integration—sometimes emerging organically, sometimes intentionally—demonstrates that the Nexus is not just a theoretical ambition but a lived, operational reality in these settings. What is particularly notable is how the projects achieved a form of "nested synergy," with short-term interventions embedded within longer-term systems-building efforts. This was also reflected in the staff model: many individuals worked across both grants, fostering coherence and learning in real time.

5.1.1.3. FCPA

The FCPA was both "everywhere and nowhere" in the documentation and interviews. Data repeatedly indicated, FCPA, just as the broader HDP Nexus, are being implemented in practice—sometimes intuitively rather than explicitly. As one respondent indicated, many programs already integrate both short-term emergency response and longer-term resilience-building. However, they also point out a disconnect between practice and intentionality: program designers are often not aware that what they're doing aligns with FCPA principles. This suggests that while FCPA is not always formally named or framed during the design process, its core concepts are already embedded in field-level approaches—and at the same time, field level staff with awareness of FCPA and tools may adopt FCPA tools and approaches even if they are not explicitly included in a project's design.

> *"I think most of our programs right now, by the way, have somehow both components of survive and adapt. We have most of our programs, except for those in [Upper Nile] which are addressing real, immediate emergency response, a lot of our programs are already designed to focus on both emergency response and also resilience and sustainability and things like that. Sometimes the people designing this have no clue that this is related to FCPA. But they are actually addressing some of the*

> *FCPA approach—as we are designing. One of the important points is why we are designing SOMETHING—because it's at this point THAT the designers of these programs must determine: what is our first priority, and at what point are we going to prioritize… Scenario-building needs to happen at the design stage. Maybe a needs assessment has been done and we understand what's happening, so we are addressing the needs. But then we say, okay, based on our understanding of the overall context of this place, what are the likely scenarios? Will these people go away in the next three months, or are they staying for the next three years?" – KII 8*

The quote also underlines the importance of scenario planning during the design phase. As the respondent argues, understanding the context isn't just about reacting to current needs, but also anticipating likely futures—a foundational principle in both FCPA and Nexus thinking. The decision to design for displaced populations that might stay three months versus three years requires different programming logic, timelines, and flexibility that needs to be taken carefully into consideration.

While few of the interviewees referred directly to "FCPA tools" or the "three dials" of Survive, Adapt, and Thrive, unless prompted, many described practices that are unmistakably FCPA in essence, and others recalled specific tools and approaches directly connected to it, with varying degrees of familiarity.

Scenario planning, for instance, featured prominently in how teams adapted activities during seasonal flooding or political unrest:

> *"The adaptive learning loop is something we apply naturally – for instance, after the floods, we reallocated the food aid to the more affected areas. We didn't wait for a new grant." – FGD 2*

Likewise, adaptive programming, context monitoring, and community-led targeting were common themes in both projects. One respondent summarized:

> *"We never used the word FCPA, but we did scenario planning and context monitoring weekly with the field teams." – FGD 4*

The real strength of FCPA in this context, therefore, lies not in its formal application, but in its influence on mindset. The projects reflected a shift from rigid project cycles toward more iterative, adaptive approaches—characteristics central to FCPA. Yet, this was often in spite of, rather than because of, internal systems. Several staff raised concerns about bureaucratic constraints within WV itself:

> *"Even though we're encouraged to be flexible, our donor templates don't always allow changes. That's where FCPA tools could be more helpful." — KII 10*

Thus, while the FCPA's spirit is evident in the way programming adapted to contextual realities, the structure of the FCPA—its tools, steps, and language—was largely absent in both design and implementation.

Taken together, the integration of these frameworks can best be described as layered, asymmetrical, and pragmatically driven. The Chapeau framework served as the formal backbone enabling coordinated, dual-stream programming. The HDP Nexus was embedded in practice, even if not in name. The FCPA provided conceptual underpinnings—particularly in how staff thought about adaptation, community feedback, and sequencing—but was not applied systematically or with explicit reference.

Importantly, the strongest integration of these frameworks occurred not at the design table, but in the field—through the ingenuity of frontline staff, the pragmatism of local partners, and the resilience of community actors navigating the blurred lines between crisis and recovery.

As one respondent noted, perhaps unintentionally summarizing the entire HDP-FCPA-Chapeau implementation:

> *"Most of our programs now address both survival and adaptation. Sometimes the people designing them don't even know it's FCPA—but we're doing it anyway." — KII 16*

5.1.2. Application of FCPA tools: Intent, adaptation and operational realities

While the FCPA approach was designed to serve as World Vision's operationalization of the HDP Nexus, its practical implementation in the BMZ and GFFO projects in South Sudan demonstrates a hybrid reality: formal elements of the FCPA are present and being applied, but often through tacit practice rather than structured adherence to toolkits or procedural checklists. Indeed, one of the most revealing insights from this study is that FCPA tools are being used—sometimes widely—but they are rarely labeled as such by field staff. They are experienced as practical strategies for survival and adaptation, not branded methodologies, despite how they are framed from a top-down perspective:

> *"FCPA can never be a standalone… It's a model that has to be integrated into general programming." — KII 17*

5.1.2.1. Context monitoring tools

Of all FCPA tools, context monitoring emerges as the most widely recognized and frequently applied. From the Good Enough Online Context Analysis for Rapid Response (GEOCARR) tool to dashboards in Kobo Collect, WV staff in South Sudan reported actively gathering real-time data to inform their programming. In practice, this often takes the form of disaster risk committees or staff and local enumerators tracking flood patterns, displacement shifts, or market fluctuations.

> *"We use context dashboards that show changes as they happen—especially in Childhood Rescue areas. These tools help us determine how to respond quickly." — KII 4*

The dashboards were reportedly simplified for community use—an important act of localization—especially in contexts with low literacy levels. Disaster committees not only reported data but also fed that information into adaptive programming pipelines. These grassroots-led systems formed the essential first loop in adaptive learning.

> *"Community DRR committees help us monitor the environment and prioritize activities when things change." — KII 12*

5.1.2.2. GEOCARR and Scenario Planning

The GEOCARR tool, originally designed to provide a "good enough" overview of fragile contexts, was mentioned multiple times as a useful but resource-intensive tool. Its primary application was in pre-grant development stages, especially in 2021, and for scenario planning—what-if frameworks for designing contingency thresholds.

> *"We used GEOCARR to collect context data at national and sub-national levels. It helped us build scenarios and flag risks ahead of time." — FGD 3*

One respondent recalled their direct involvement in a GEOCARR assessment for Aweil East, which was then used to inform planning for neighboring Aweil North. This illustrates how GEOCARR was applied not only to immediate target areas but also as a basis for broader regional planning.

> *"I'm familiar with GEOCARR. It's one of the tools we used when developing the two grants we're discussing. Back in 2021, I was part of the team that carried out the GEOCARR assessment and helped develop the report that fed into our scenario mapping and planning. The tool is used to gather information about the context in a specific area—it can be applied at the national, state, or county level. In our case, we focused on Aweil East, and used those findings to also inform planning for Aweil North.*
>
> *GEOCARR is quite flexible and useful, but it's also a large and complex tool. It really requires someone who understands it well and has had proper training. You can't just give it to someone with a rough idea and expect to get reliable data—it needs experience and the right skills to be used properly.*

> *Scenario planning was often integrated into GEOCARR, producing actionable insights such as identifying when to shift from survival to adaptation programming, or preparing for the return of displaced populations. The most successful application occurred when scenario planning was directly tied to community-driven planning tools like the Anticipated Action Plan." — KII 11*

In more practical terms, field staff described how context monitoring—a lighter-touch, more immediate method—was often used alongside or following GEOCARR assessments to update or validate assumptions. Scenario planning was described as relatively straightforward once local dynamics were understood. Staff emphasized the importance of building rapport with communities, observing seasonal changes, and considering social norms when interpreting findings or deciding on next steps. Both tools—when applied thoughtfully—were seen as essential for planning interventions that are timely, appropriate, and responsive to local realities, as demonstrated in the extended excerpt below:

> *"I'm happy to use context monitoring tools. Context monitoring is basically when you go to the field to assess the situation on the ground where activities are being implemented. You look at things like the living conditions of the community, the general security situation, and whether the area is peaceful and accessible. That's what we mean by context monitoring—understanding the actual environment and how it might affect implementation.*
>
> *Scenario planning, on the other hand, is more about looking ahead. It involves studying the seasonal patterns and trends in a specific area—like what usually happens during the rainy season or dry season—and using that knowledge to plan which types of activities make sense in that context. It helps you understand when and where people are likely to be, and what kind of interventions would be most effective.*
>
> *To apply these tools properly, you really need to understand the local context—who lives there, their cultural norms, gender roles, and how responsibilities are usually divided. For example, in some places, irrigation work might typically be done by men, while other tasks might fall to women. These are important things to consider when planning.*
>
> *In fact, scenario planning isn't that complicated—it's like what we did here. You go into a new place, introduce yourself, explain your purpose, and if the community accepts your presence, you move forward. Meanwhile, context monitoring also includes making your own judgment about accessibility and any potential challenges you might face getting there. So yes, both tools are straightforward once you're familiar with the local context." — FGD 1*

5.1.2.3. Survive–Adapt–Thrive (SAT) Dials

The SAT dials are arguably the most internally familiar conceptual tool from the FCPA. Staff across the projects referred to them directly, using them as a decision-making heuristic to assess program posture.

> *"We had to move a school because of floods—and that's what the dials help us do: recognize when to adapt and when to focus on just survival." — KII 8*

More importantly, these dials weren't static; staff used them to guide regular reflection sessions and pause-and-adapt mechanisms—hallmarks of adaptive management.

> *"We review our dials in problem-solving reviews. If we see a shift in context, we shift our activities accordingly." — KII 11*

This structure has allowed teams to stay responsive, even within rigid donor constraints, suggesting a quiet but meaningful success in internalizing Nexus logic across operations.

5.1.2.4. Crisis Modifiers

Crisis modifiers—pre-agreed mechanisms to shift programming in response to sudden shocks—are mentioned as both vital and politically delicate. While they were not explicitly built into BMZ and GFFO project designs, respondents expressed strong support in their inclusion in the future:

> *"Crisis modifiers allow us to repurpose activities fast. But getting donor buy-in is still a challenge." —KII 13*
>
> *"In fragile contexts, project design must prioritize bottom-up planning and community-driven prioritization, allowing local stakeholders to identify and rank their needs. Additionally, built-in flexibility and crisis modifiers are critical for adaptive programming. Projects like BMZ, while focused on resilience, highlight the gap that arises when mechanisms for responding to unexpected shocks are missing. Ensuring community involvement from the outset and embedding flexibility—including tools like crisis modifiers—enhances relevance, responsiveness, and sustainability in volatile environments." – KII 1*

The flexibility these tools could provide is widely understood and advocated for. One FSL officer noted that this was the only way to realistically operate in South Sudan's polycrisis environment:

> *"We need crisis modifiers in every project—otherwise we can't adjust when the rains or violence come." — KII 14*

5.1.2.5. Peace and Conflict Sensitivity Tools

Conflict sensitivity, a core principle of Nexus-aligned programming, was integrated throughout the design, implementation, and adaptation of the BMZ and GFFO projects. Rather than being confined to standalone tools or trainings, conflict sensitivity emerged as a cross-cutting approach, operationalized through multiple reinforcing mechanisms across the project cycle.

At the early program design stage, Peace and conflict sensitivity tools such as the "Making Sense of Turbulent Contexts" (MSTC), and IPACS (Integrating Peacebuilding and Conflict Sensitivity) to analyze conflict dynamics, actor relationships, and scenario risks. These were instrumental in designing activities aligned with peacebuilding principles, as well as identifying geographic and sectoral risks that could exacerbate tensions. Several respondents noted their value in enabling early scenario planning and stakeholder analysis, particularly during the initial phases of project development:

> *"We used GEOCARR to collect context data at national and sub-national levels. It helped us build scenarios and flag risks ahead of time." — FGD 3*
>
> *"We've used MSTC and the Positive Peace Framework in design stages, but field teams need more training to apply these continuously." — KII 4*

Although these tools were highly regarded for initial context analysis, respondents indicated they were often treated as one-off exercises rather than integrated processes. Nevertheless, they informed foundational aspects of the program, including the formation of DRR committees and improved targeting of vulnerable groups.

> *"Several outcomes were designed to work together, but outcome three on social cohesion and disaster risk management became the base for the success of the two other outcomes… we cannot implement farming when the community is not stable." – KII 1*

During implementation, conflict sensitivity was embedded through structured mechanisms, such as DRR committees that were trained to act as early responders and help with early warning and action:

> *"They act as early responders to any conflict setting, and help us in early warning and early action… especially where conflict is a common driver." — FGD 4*

World Vision's Do No Harm framework is another of those mechanisms, as part of the IPACS manual, supported staff in analyzing community connectors and dividers:

> *"This manual traditionally had two parts… the first is a Do No Harm part, which consists of an assessment that will allow your programs to be conflict sensitive." — KII 3*

Moreover, it was mentioned that staff were instructed to avoid exacerbating tensions and remain politically neutral:

> *"Our staff don't participate in politics… you're not allowed to discuss issues that will cause more fire." — KII 13*

Conflict sensitivity was not only designed for static assessments but adapted in real-time through ongoing context monitoring systems:

> *"We start by identifying key indicators for context monitoring and put triggers with thresholds… so we know when it's okay and when to act." — FGD 4*

This was complemented by the FCPA, which used a "dial" approach to shift between "survive," "adapt," and "thrive" modes depending on the security context.

> *"FCPA… allows projects to integrate and become adaptive… when it is in red, we are on a survival mode; green is thriving, and yellow is adapt." — FGD 4*

To ensure flexibility in volatile settings, projects also included crisis modifiers:

> *"Sometimes they do have… a crisis modifier, so that in the event that things change, we bring in the fragility and ensure we support the community." — KII 12*

Conflict sensitivity was also embedded in evaluation design and learning processes: Baseline and endline evaluations were intentionally separated to allow clearer measurement of results and attribution, while learning was built into the project through technical working groups, joint program monitoring, and change logs:

> *"We separated the evaluation… to avoid mixing… so we could measure how each of the projects contributed." — FGD 4*
>
> *"What has been achieved must be documented and reported better… not just as a project completion activity, but for learning." — KII 6*

Despite the strong frameworks and intentions, several constraints limited continuous application: Data management challenges affected the tracking of conflict sensitivity outcomes.

> *"Most of the time, when working within the Nexus approach, data management becomes a real challenge. The teams or consultants you're working with often miss that part—and when it's missed, the analysis suffers. You end up missing key lessons learned, and lose sight of how the program was designed and how it actually functions. If the data management and analysis aren't solid, it really affects your ability to support adaptive management and to make decisions based on your findings." – KII 10*

Staff capacity in peacebuilding was reported as somewhat uneven. This prompted respondents to recommend the creation of dedicated or hybrid roles to bridge gaps between humanitarian and development functions. As one respondent explained, working across the HDP spectrum requires intentional support and skill-building, especially for staff whose backgrounds are rooted in a single domain, highlighting the need for structured support to equip staff with the ability to navigate and

integrate humanitarian and development approaches—an essential component of effective Nexus programming:

> *"I think for staff who have been mainly doing humanitarian work or mainly doing development work, it's about providing them with some capacity-building—online learning, conversations, dialogue—not just expecting them to know. We need to be aware that staff have been in certain roles for a long time…" — KII 2*

For conflict monitoring to succeed however, securing flexible funding was noted as an issue of critical importance, which would allow teams to redirect resources during sudden conflict escalations:

> *"A conflict monitoring tool without some flexible funding that has not been earmarked is not sufficient." — KII 2*

5.1.2.6. Community Feedback and Accountability Mechanisms: Embedded and Digitalized

Community Response Mechanisms (CRMs) and digital accountability platforms have become central to feedback loops. These systems were cited frequently by staff in Aweil as part of both registration and ongoing monitoring processes.

> *"We use CRM forms to resolve issues during registration, especially around eligibility."— FGD 1*
>
> *"We now have digital platforms to log complaints, and we adjust based on what communities tell us."— KII 13*

This systematized feedback represents one of the most operationalized parts of the FCPA's accountability pillar and demonstrates a critical shift from donor-facing monitoring to community-driven responsiveness.

5.1.2.7. Integration and Tool Synergy

Perhaps the most significant theme across the interviews is that the success of FCPA tool use depends less on formal training and more on culture, integration, and mindset. Many staff noted that the tools only work when adapted to the local context, made accessible to community members, and reinforced through ongoing mentorship.

> *"These tools aren't magic. You have to simplify them for low-literacy communities and use them together—not in silos." — KII 9*

One respondent summarized this ethos succinctly:

> *"It's not about whether we ticked a box that says FCPA—it's about whether our response adapted and delivered what people actually needed." — KII 4*

The evidence shows that FCPA tools are functionally embedded, selectively formalized, and culturally absorbed within the GFFO and BMZ Nexus projects in South Sudan. While the structured language of FCPA is inconsistently applied, its principles—adaptability, community-centeredness, scenario foresight, and feedback accountability—are alive in the daily work of World Vision field teams.

5.1.2.8. Cross-Cutting Domains and Principles: Staffing, Procurement & "Do No Harm"

Staffing

From the earliest stages, World Vision embedded local staff and leaders into the design and roll-out of these projects—an important element of conflict-sensitive programming that helps build trust and anticipates local tensions. Local government and RRC representatives were invited to identify and brief community volunteers, ensuring that field teams included familiar, trusted faces rather than outsiders.

> *"When WV came and started the project, the first thing they gave us to do was the mobilization." – (FGD1)*

Further to that, by co-facilitating training with line-ministry staff, World Vision both built local capacity and reduced the chance that a single individual would become a flashpoint in a tense area. Although interviewees did not explicitly describe a "conflict-sensitivity training," several noted that World Vision staff remained flexible and responsive when tensions arose—an indirect sign that CSP principles were cascading through the team.

Staffing and operations were also adjusted to strengthen both projects in several ways, allowing the organization to make the most out of their human resources:

> *[The project manager] stepped in to lead the BMZ side of the project, but also brought valuable expertise to support the GFFO side. So instead of sending two separate staff members to handle activities for each project, we could just send one person—because they understood both projects well and had the right experience. That kind of synergy helped us make the most of our human resources." – KII 5*

Procurement

Procurement in fragile contexts can unintentionally reinforce local inequities or spark disputes if it is opaque or over-centralized. There were reports that vendor selection was taking place with local input, such as engaging local authorities in tender evaluation. This helped forestall accusations of favouritism—but there were also hiccups. For example, fishers protested when they discovered kits had gone to non-fisher beneficiaries, prompting an immediate redistribution.

Transparent distribution of goods was also reported, such as in when seeds, tools, or NFIs were distributed, chief and RRC representatives "witnessed" the hand-over, which proved to be a simple but effective accountability mechanism that doubled as a conflict-mitigation tool.

> *"They call us to witness… and if I see someone missing, I step in and make sure the right beneficiary gets their share."– FGD 1*

5.1.2.9. Do No Harm

DNH underpins all conflict sensitivity practice, by way of constantly checking that aid does not exacerbate local grievances. Participants mentioned that projects established multiple feedback channels—written letters via the RRC, phone calls to project staff, and cluster-level meetings—so that emerging disputes (over water points, latrines, cash payments) could be surfaced and corrected in real time.

It was also mentioned that the team regularly revisited project design when problems emerged. After community complaints about collapsed latrines or mis-distributed fishing kits, World Vision "listened to us and addressed the challenges" rather than insisting on rigid plans. That responsiveness is a hallmark of DNH in practice.

However, while several stakeholders praised WV's flexibility in the field, none mentioned formal Do No Harm training or organizational audits. In future, a structured "DNH refresher" for all staff—and a periodic internal culture check—would help ensure that every team member recognizes their role in preventing harm.

5.1.3. Intentionality vs. organic integration

The integration of tools such as GEOCARR, scenario planning, and context monitoring has often occurred both organically and by design, with varying levels of coherence and coordination across teams and grants. In several instances, tools were used intentionally during pre-grant phases to inform strategic design and risk mitigation. GEOCARR, in particular, played a pivotal role in scenario mapping and identifying thresholds for adaptation.

However, organic synergies also emerged in the field, often driven by local staff familiar with community dynamics. Scenario planning, for instance, was described in more intuitive terms:

> *"You look at the seasons, the local norms, and what kind of activities are possible when. Once you know the area, it's easy to apply." — FGD 3*

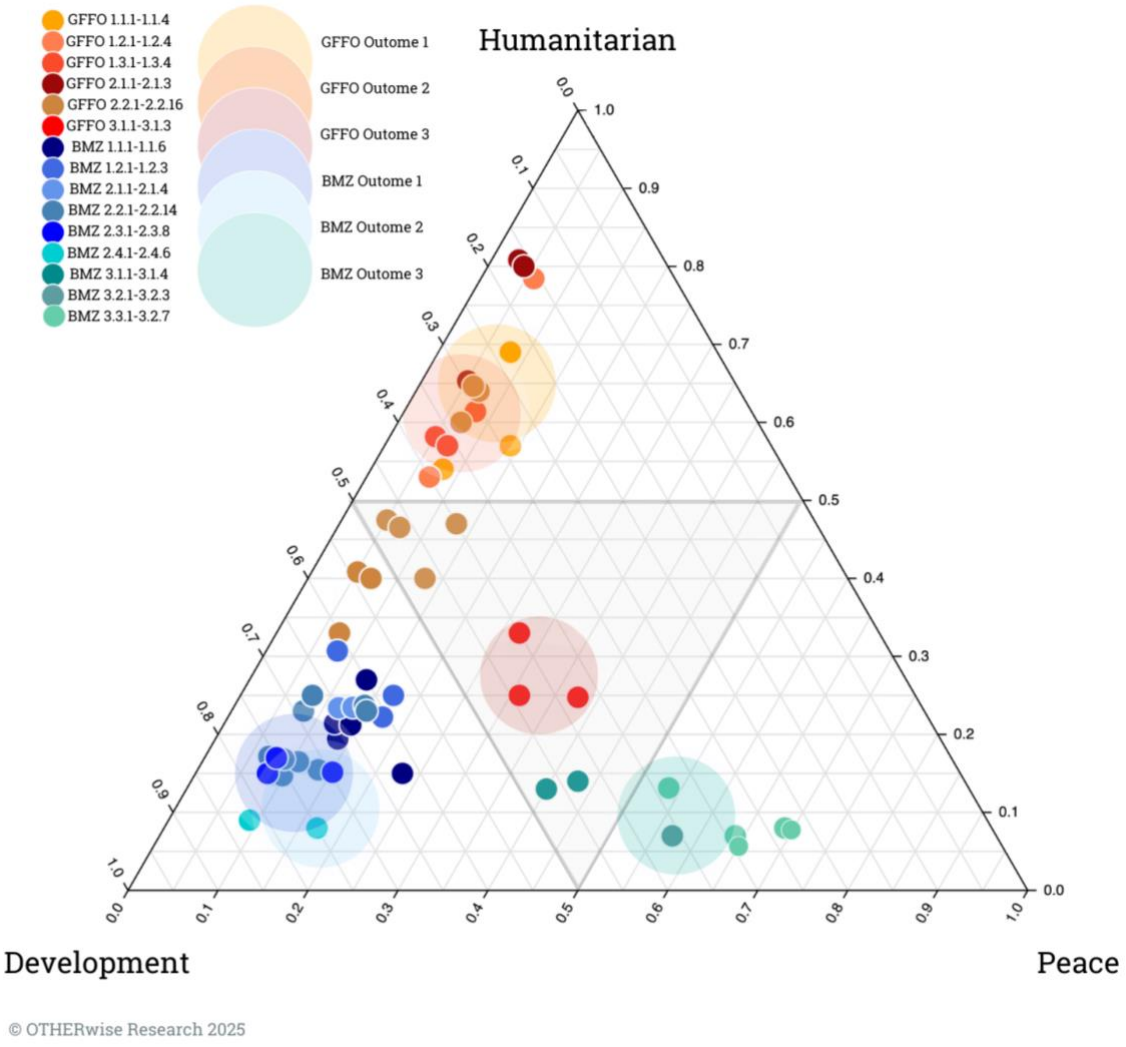
Similarly, context monitoring was seen as a natural extension of day-to-day presence in communities, helping teams adapt to shifting realities in real time. Despite this, the lack of structured guidance sometimes limited the full potential of these tools.

5.2. MAPPING OF COORDINATION AND SYNERGIES

5.2.1. Situating project activities within the HDP Nexus

Building on the visualisation exercise of charting some project activities on the HDP Nexus, Figure 8 below reflects an attempt to situate all of the activities of the GFFO and the BMZ TDA project within the three spheres of the Nexus. To assess the HDP efforts of both projects' activities in South Sudan, a structured Machine Learning (ML) approach was followed, complemented by human verification, to rate all of their activities across three parameters—Humanitarian, Development, and Peacebuilding—using only existing project documentation and deduced content.

Figure 8: Plotting of WVG activities in South Sudan on the HDP Nexus spheres.



At a glance, the chart illustrates three important points:

1. GFFO activities are strongly weighted towards the Humanitarian-Development axis, especially leaning humanitarian (top left quadrant) which aligns with its emergency-focused mandate
2. BMZ activities cluster in the Development-Peacebuilding quadrant, revealing its long-term, resilience-building orientation.
3. There is a visible "handover zone" or transition space, where some GFFO and BMZ activities sit close together – especially along the Humanitarian-Development axis – indicating operational and thematic complementarity
4. There are relatively few activities drifting toward the Peace apex, especially under GFFO. However, BMZ Outcome 3 shows the strongest tilt towards Peace, indicative of activities like community-level DRR; governance capacity building, and social cohesion efforts. This also aligns with findings from the desk review and the interviews that peacebuilding was underrepresented and possibly less visible at community level, suggesting a gap in either communication or operational integration of peace components.

The chart confirms that the projects were not duplicates, but designed to be functionally complementary. The mid-zone clustering, where GFFO and BMZ dots overlap near 40-60% humanitarian and 30-50% development, represent the practical Nexus at work. These are activities such as school gardens, kitchen gardens, DRR committees, and integrated WASH-Nutrition work, which field interviews confirmed were deliberately or organically linked across grants. The convergence zone also illustrates that while designed separately, the two projects effectively created sequenced or layered programming, aligning with the Chapeau vision, even when not formally co-planned.

5.2.2. Synergies & Complementarities

This analysis assesses the operational interactions between two complementary yet distinct projects implemented by World Vision in South Sudan—funded by GFFO and BMZ respectively. By reviewing project documentation and insights from primary data, the study explores how the activities of each project not only align with but actively enhance one another, creating a cohesive strategy that addresses both immediate humanitarian needs and longer-term development goals.

Initially, the analysis focuses on complementarities identified through a thorough review of project documentation. It highlights specific instances where activities from one project either support, enhance, or align with those of the other. This part of the analysis maps out where these connections occur, such as in water access initiatives or community resilience building and discusses how these interactions contribute to the projects' overall objectives.

Following the documentation review, the analysis incorporates findings from primary data, offering a more grounded view of how these synergies and complementarities manifest on the ground. This section explores real-world examples of how project teams, community stakeholders, and local systems adaptively manage these project linkages to maximize impact.

Concluding the analysis, factors that enable or challenge the realization of identified synergies and complementarities are discussed. This includes examining organizational practices, adaptive management strategies, and coordination efforts that facilitate or obstruct effective integration and implementation of project activities.

5.2.2.1. Synergies & complementarities identified through project documentation

The following list identifies synergies, linkages, and complementarities between the two projects, derived from an analysis of project documentation.[91] Connections were identified where an activity from either project was explicitly or implicitly mentioned in project-related documentation as supporting, enhancing,

[91] BMZ. (n.d.). Chapeau zum Umsetzt: Strategische Zusammenarbeit zwischen BMZ und Auswärtigem Amt zur Förderung des HDP-Nexus. [Framework for Implementation: Strategic Collaboration between BMZ and the Federal Foreign Office to Promote the HDP Nexus] Bonn: BMZ.

or aligning with an activity from the other. The list below summarizes activities where complementarities were evident.

GFFO 1.2.4	BMZ 1.1.1
Full rehabilitation of 10 boreholes and drilling of 4 new boreholes	Expansion of boreholes with solar-powered pumps, tanks, and pipelines

The narrative under BMZ Outcome 1 states that *"improved water supply will benefit some of the internally displaced persons (IDPs) and returnees affected by flooding,"* which aligns with GFFO's focus on providing water access to crisis-affected populations (GFFO Outcome 1). The rehabilitation and drilling of boreholes (GFFO 1.2.4) provide immediate water access, while the expansion with solar-powered systems (BMZ 1.1.1) builds long-term sustainability, complementing emergency response with resilient infrastructure.

GFFO 1.2.4	BMZ 1.1.4
Full rehabilitation of 10 boreholes and drilling of 4 new boreholes	Repair of existing boreholes in the communities

Both activities focus on borehole rehabilitation, with GFFO 1.2.4 addressing immediate needs for displaced and flood-affected households and BMZ 1.1.4 enhancing existing community boreholes for sustained use. Documentation implies that water infrastructure benefits extended to humanitarian beneficiaries, suggesting that GFFO's emergency repairs laid the groundwork for BMZ's longer-term repairs and maintenance.

GFFO 1.2.4	BMZ 1.1.6
Full rehabilitation of 10 boreholes and drilling of 4 new boreholes	Establishment, repair or strengthening of water user committees for new or repaired water points in the communities

GFFO 1.2.4 provided the physical water infrastructure (boreholes), while BMZ 1.1.6 established community management structures to ensure equitable and sustainable use. The narrative under BMZ Outcome 1 notes that *"improved water management through water user committees"* supports diverse needs (human, animal, agricultural), complementing GFFO's immediate water provision with governance mechanisms.

GFFO 1.3.4	BMZ 1.2.1
Distribution of handwashing facilities	Formation and training of hygiene clubs in the communities

The narrative under BMZ Outcome 1 mentioned *that "hygiene clubs will be formed to raise awareness on hygiene and sanitation in both emergency and recovery situations"* and will be *"linked with CMDRR committees."* GFFO 1.3.4 provided immediate hygiene infrastructure (handwashing facilities) to crisis-affected populations, while BMZ 1.2.1 builds community capacity for sustained hygiene practices, creating a complementary bridge from emergency response to recovery.

GFFO 3.1.1	BMZ 1.2.1
Mobilization of communities to identify risks and raise awareness for early warning signs	Formation and training of hygiene clubs in the communities

Documentation connected hygiene clubs (BMZ 1.2.1) with CMDRR committees, which align with GFFO's early warning efforts (GFFO Outcome 3). GFFO 3.1.1 mobilized communities for immediate risk awareness, while BMZ 1.2.1 integrates hygiene awareness into broader disaster risk reduction, enhancing community preparedness over time.

GFFO 2.2.10	BMZ 2.2.2
Implementation of CMAM (OTPs, screening, referral, TSFP)	Provision of seeds and tools for vulnerable smallholder farmers

Under Outcome 2, documentation states that *"while humanitarian nutrition interventions (GFFO) aim to reduce morbidity and mortality due to malnutrition, BMZ measures under Outcome 2 address underlying causes, including sustainable access to and consumption of nutritious foods."* GFFO 2.2.10 treated acute

malnutrition in the short term, while BMZ 2.2.2 supports long-term food production, creating a complementary continuum from emergency nutrition to sustainable food security.

GFFO 2.2.3	BMZ 2.2.2
Support for kitchen garden groups with vegetable seeds and tools	Provision of seeds and tools for vulnerable smallholder farmers

Both activities provided seeds and tools, with GFFO 2.2.3 targeting immediate nutritional improvements through kitchen gardens for vulnerable groups (e.g., mothers), and BMZ 2.2.2 supporting broader agricultural production for smallholders. The BMZ narrative highlights addressing "underlying causes" of malnutrition, complementing GFFO's emergency focus with sustainable livelihoods.

GFFO 3.1.2	BMZ 3.1.1
Establishment of early warning committees to establish warning systems for specific shocks	Mobilization or strengthening of community-based DRR committees at Boma level

GFFO 3.1.2 sets up early warning committees for immediate shock detection (GFFO Outcome 3), while BMZ 3.1.1 strengthened community-based DRR committees for long-term resilience (BMZ Outcome 3). Documentation on BMZ Outcome 3 notes *"improved integrated early warning and disaster protection systems,"* suggesting that GFFO's initial committee establishment is enhanced by BMZ's broader DRR framework.

GFFO 3.1.3	BMZ 3.1.2
Development of an early warning database in collaboration with local authorities	Conducting (CMDRR analyses to identify disaster risks and response capacities

GFFO 3.1.3 created an early warning database for immediate use, while BMZ 3.1.2 conducts CMDRR analyses to inform long-term risk management. The BMZ Outcome 3 narrative mentions *"better recording of disaster data"* for planning, indicating that GFFO's database complements BMZ's analytical approach.

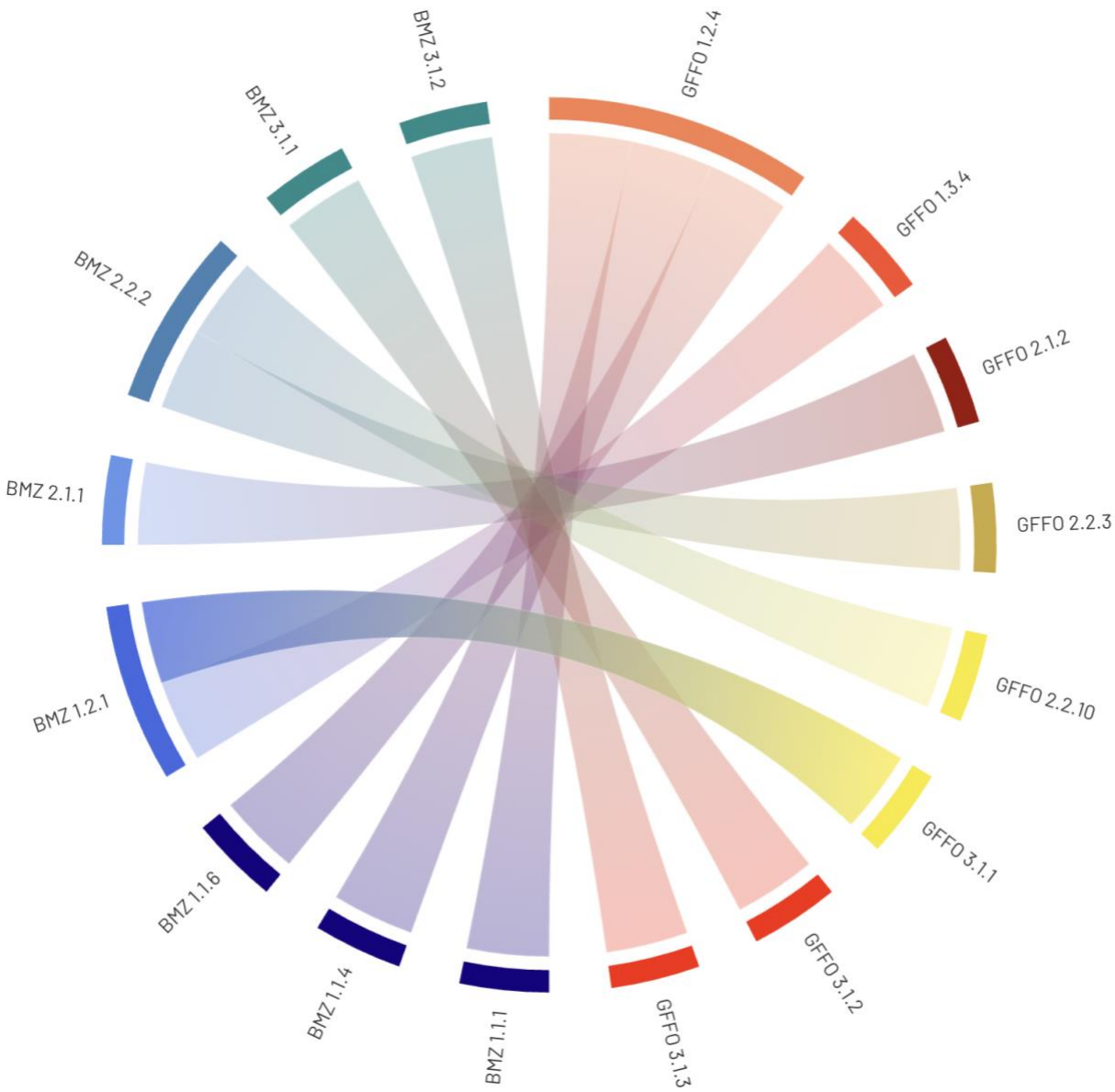
GFFO 2.1.2	BMZ 2.1.1
Distribution of unconditional cash transfers to food-insecure households	Conducting community mobilization and mapping activities to identify productive assets to be (re-) built with CfA/CfW

GFFO 2.1.2 provided immediate cash to meet basic needs, while BMZ 2.1.1 uses cash-for-work (CfW) to rebuild productive infrastructure. The Outcome 2 narrative notes that *"CfW/CfA creates a foundation for resilient livelihoods that benefit GFFO beneficiaries in the medium term,"* linking GFFO's emergency cash support with BMZ's asset-building efforts.

5.2.2.2. Visualising complementarities from the desk review

The chord diagram in Figure 9 provides a visual representation of the complementary activities undertaken by the GFFO and BMZ TDA projects in Aweil North and Aweil East, as part of WVG's HDP Nexus programming. The graph illustrates the synergies and complementarities among the activities of each project, as captured in project documentation, indicating how these two funding streams worked in tandem to address both immediate humanitarian needs and longer-term development goals, particularly in WASH. Each arc around the circle corresponds to a specific project activity (e.g., GFFO 1.2.4, BMZ 2.1.1), and the connecting ribbons represent identified linkages between activities across the two projects.

Figure 9: Linkages between project activities based on project documentation



Based on the desk review findings, there is interconnectivity between the two projects, moving from emergency response to longer-term development outcomes, in support of the HDP Nexus approach. The two projects were not just co-located but they exhibit functional complementarity, even if not widespread in scope, with short-term interventions being 'nested' within longer term strategies.

- GFFO 1.2.4 appears as a key node, with multiple linkages to BMZ components (e.g., BMZ 1.1.1, 1.1.4, 1.1.6), showing how immediate water access (via borehole drilling and rehabilitation) under GFFO transitions into infrastructure expansion and governance support under BMZ, indicating the sequenced transition from short-term service delivery to sustainable water resource management.
- The connection between GFFO 2.2.10 and 2.2.3, focused on emergency nutrition (e.g., CMAM, kitchen gardens), are linked with BMZ 2.2.2, which provides agricultural inputs for long-term food security—indicating a clear vertical complementarity from treatment of acute needs to prevention and resilience-building.
- The connections between GFFO 3.1.2 and 3.1.3 (early warning systems and data) and BMZ 3.1.1 and 3.1.2 (DRR committees and CMDRR analysis) reflect a strengthening of risk reduction systems, with GFFO laying the foundation and BMZ institutionalizing and expanding it.

- Cross-cutting themes like hygiene and governance are captured in linkages between GFFO 1.3.4 (handwashing facilities) and BMZ 1.2.1 (hygiene clubs), showing the integration of infrastructure and behavioral change—essential in transitioning from crisis to recovery.
- The connection between GFFO 2.1.2 (cash transfers) and BMZ 2.1.1 (cash-for-work) shows a continuum of economic support, linking basic needs provision to community asset creation and economic participation, which reinforces resilience.

5.2.2.3. Synergies & complementarities identified through primary interview data

While the documentation-based analysis reveals programmatically intended complementarities between GFFO and BMZ activities, insights from primary interview data offer a more grounded, bottom-up perspective. The following section explores how field-level synergies and adaptive practices emerged organically—often beyond formal project design—highlighting the practical ingenuity and contextual creativity of frontline staff and local actors in translating Nexus principles into everyday operations. It is worth noting that all synergies previously identified through project documentation were also echoed in participant interviews. However, in the interest of brevity, the following section focuses only on additional insights and emerging synergies that were not already captured in the documentation review.

GFFO 1.2.4	BMZ 1.1.4
Full rehabilitation of 10 boreholes and drilling of 4 new boreholes	Expansion of boreholes with solar-powered pumps, tanks, and pipelines

The synergy between GFFO 1.2.4 and BMZ 1.1.4 centers on expanding access to safe and sustainable water sources, benefiting local communities with potable water as well as water for agricultural use. While GFFO focused on the immediate rehabilitation and drilling of boreholes to meet urgent needs, BMZ built on this foundation by upgrading these water points with solar-powered pumps, tanks, and pipelines, ensuring long-term functionality and sustainability.

Field insights reinforce this complementarity: staff noted that BMZ-installed water points serve both BMZ and GFFO beneficiaries, particularly for vegetable production—a key component of GFFO activities.

> *"BMZ drills water points which both its beneficiaries and those of GFFO use together... BMZ constructs water which they the GFFO beneficiaries use for the crop production." – FGD 1*

Moreover, coordination in training and infrastructure oversight, as mentioned by the Director for Water, indicates a shared operational ecosystem.

> *"I attend water user committee training and also do side inspection for the installation of a water point." – FGD 1*

GFFO 2.2.3	BMZ 2.2.2
Support for kitchen garden groups with vegetable seeds and tools	Provision of seeds and tools to smallholder farmers

Both the GFFO and BMZ TDA projects contributed to food security by providing seeds and tools for vegetable production, targeting similar beneficiary groups such as kitchen gardeners and smallholder farmers. This overlap in resources and objectives amplified the reach and impact of agricultural support across communities. Field staff confirmed this alignment, noting:

> *"The same vegetable production that we do is equally the same that they do… the same seeds distribution that they do is what we do as well." – FGD 1*

Local officials also recognized the coherence, with the Agriculture Director in Aweil North stating:

> *"The activities which they came with such as vegetable gardening… are closely related to the department of Agriculture." – KII 1*

Additionally, a County Agriculture Department (CAD) representative from Aweil East highlighted,

> *"We also participated in the distribution of tools and seeds, ensuring that the seeds provided by World Vision were viable and free from issues." – FGD 1*

These testimonies point to a convergence in programming that strengthened household nutrition and income while it also reduced duplication and enhanced coordination across sectors.

GFFO 3.1.2 Establishment of early warning committees	BMZ 3.1.1 Mobilization/strengthening of DRR committees

Both GFFO and BMZ contributed to building community resilience by establishing or strengthening local structures focused on early warning and DRR. These committees were reported to occasionally overlap in membership and function, as do their participants' roles, creating a more unified and effective mechanism for preparedness and response. Projects were reported working together to train community committees in DRR and using tools to inform program implementation (KII 12); involving community and church leaders in DRR committees (FGD 2); and creating linkages with local stakeholders such as through the close collaboration with the RRC to mobilize and train enumerators for accurate data collection (FGD 1). DRR was identified as a core sector where both projects aligned well, as one participant emphasized:

> *"In the two projects, there is one thing that was really well integrated there: the disaster risk reduction." DRR was deliberately included in both projects with budget allocations in both BMZ and GFFO, allowing for coordinated implementation" – KII 9*

This synergy was most evident and proved especially effective during the Sudan crisis, when

> *"GFFO could address urgent humanitarian needs of displaced populations in terms of WASH, shelter, and formation and training for early warning committees, while BMZ continued with ongoing development activities like water yard construction, farmer training and strengthening of DRR committees." – FGD 4*

GFFO 2.1.2 Distribution of unconditional cash transfers	BMZ 2.1.1 Mobilization & mapping to identify assets for rebuilding

Synergies were identified also between the distribution of unconditional cash transfers under GFFO and the mobilization and mapping to identify assets for rebuilding under BMZ. The GFFO cash transfers provided immediate support to vulnerable households, including IDPs, returnees, and host communities, allowing them to meet urgent needs such as food, shelter, and basic services. This was complemented by the BMZ's more structured cash-for-work (CfW) or asset-building activities, which focused on engaging communities in rebuilding productive infrastructure like feeder roads, dykes, and community gardens. As one official from the Agriculture Department noted:

> *"They [BMZ] help some groups with the means of transport and the same thing with GFFO, they constructed dykes and feeder road and also vegetable gardens in the schools and paying cash to the elderly" – FGD 1*

While the previous quote highlights how both forms of cash support were deployed simultaneously for different purposes, another respondent emphasized the alignment between cash transfers and service delivery, pointing to how GFFO's cash was paired with tangible service delivery, complementing BMZ's asset-focused recovery efforts in a layered approach:

> *"GFFO has consistently stood with local authorities, providing cash assistance to vulnerable host communities, IDPs, and returnees… Additionally, they have funded the drilling and rehabilitation of boreholes" – FGD 1*

This synergy extended beyond individual projects to an integrated Nexus delivery model. As one interviewee shared:

> *"Having the Regional Program Manager for GFFO being the lead, also for the Nexus approach… he was able to integrate… making sure that the target group of the beneficiaries that we are having are the same beneficiary being targeted in the BMZ, and making sure that they get… humanitarian assistance from the GFFO but also… development assistance in terms of the seed fund" – KII 12*

The effects of this complementary approach were visible on the ground, as a participant indicated how this layered approach went beyond supporting survival towards reinforcing dignity and community cohesion:

> *"Returnees and IDPs who received cash assistance from World Vision experienced an immediate improvement in their well-being. On the day they received the assistance, there was a noticeable sense of happiness, and many began sharing with their neighbors, strengthening social bonds" – FGD 3*

The most comprehensive articulation of this synergy came from a respondent who described how GFFO's cash and shelter interventions were directly connected to BMZ's broader development investments like market store construction and farmer group support. The following narrative illustrates a seamless emergency-to-development transition and underlines the interdependence of shelter, cash, and water infrastructure:

> *"GFFO has provided… cash, and then through BMZ now there is market linkages and the construction of market stores… You have the purchasing power because you've been given some money, but now you also have the access to components and products promoted through BMZ." – FGD 4*

GFFO 2.2.6 Establishment of school gardens with seeds, tools, and training	**BMZ 2.2.5** Establishment of farmer field schools/demonstration plots

Synergies between the establishment of school gardens with seeds, tools, and training (under GFFO) and the establishment of farmer field schools or demonstration plots (under BMZ) were also identified through their complementarities in the alignment of objectives, coordination in resource provision, as well as the cross-learning that was reportedbetween targeted groups (students, mothers, farmers). GFFO was reported to have laid the groundwork through school and household gardens with a focus on nutrition and education, while BMZ expanded and institutionalized these efforts via larger-scale farmer field schools, technical support, and sustainability mechanisms. This created a mutually reinforcing system that facilitated agricultural learning across generations, while also addressing food security, resilience, and nutrition

Several respondents highlighted how school gardens were not standalone initiatives, but rather formed part of a broader ecosystem of agricultural training and demonstration. One interviewee explained:

> *"BMZ and GFFO are working with institutions like schools. Like GFFO is currently working with schools by setting up school gardens for children and teachers, plus Parent-Teacher Associations. Then BMZ is supplying this school with seeds for vegetable gardens, then giving training on hygiene and how to cook those substances for nutrition." – FGD 1*

Other evidence points to an even more intentional synergy, indicated through BMZ investments in water infrastructure that were deliberately designed to sustain GFFO's school garden activities:

> *"If I take an example of the Nexus programming with the GFFO, where GFFO implements some activities like the school gardens, we [BMZ] have tried to put some water gutters, some water storage tanks in those schools… to complement them to make sure that they succeed" – KII 1*

Furthermore, community-level nutritional education linked the two types of demonstration spaces:

> *"I work on World Vision as nutrition/FSL assistant… we establish kitchen gardens for mother-to-mother support groups and school kids, and carry out MYFCN training for teachers, PTA and children." – FGD 1*

Additionally, field staff explained that while GFFO emphasized kitchen gardens targeting vulnerable groups and immediate nutritional outcomes, BMZ took these models forward at scale through farmer field schools:

> *"The kitchen gardens supported by GFFO focus on nutritious food, but BMZ interventions go further… demonstration farms were quite big… BMZ supported farmer groups for recovery and production at scale." – FGD 4*

GFFO 1.3.3
Distribution of handwashing facilities

BMZ 1.2.2
Development of hygiene and sanitation messages for radio

Synergies between GFFO's distribution of handwashing facilities (GFFO 1.3.3) and BMZ's development of hygiene and sanitation radio messages (BMZ 1.2.2) were also identified, as these two interventions worked together to enhance both the infrastructure ("hardware") and behaviour change ("software") elements of hygiene promotion in the target communities.

GFFO focused on the immediate provision of hygiene infrastructure—such as handwashing stations—while BMZ emphasized long-term behaviour change through hygiene messaging, including radio campaigns. This integration was confirmed by a BMZ-related WASH stakeholder representative who described their role in supporting both projects in terms of the hygiene strategy:

> *"I work as a [BMZ] WASH assistant officer, focusing on hygiene training for school clubs and water users committees for newly established or rehabilitated water points… I also support other projects like GFFO, training sanitation committees and community groups on solid waste management." – FGD 1*

Training was a key linkage point, and the habit formation of hygiene messages disseminated through BMZ programming were reinforced by the presence of handwashing facilities provided by GFFO. A participant reflected:

> *"School hygiene clubs have established a very good responsibility in ensuring communities are safe from contracting diseases. Operation and management of water usage committees is another contributing factor to the resilience of the people in the community." – FGD 3*

Media where also reported to be used in tandem with community feedback mechanisms to monitor the effectiveness and reach of hygiene-related activities, by not just promoting hygiene, but also collecting community sentiment, creating feedback loops that reinforced GFFO and BMZ interventions:

> *"Committees and local stakeholders regularly give feedback during cluster meetings, and community reactions to activities—like hygiene messaging—are also tracked through radio talk shows." – KII 1*

The projects were also reported to share common platforms for community engagement, including WASH committees and local authorities. One respondent noted:

> *"The department ensures that pump mechanics receive personal protective equipment, and also works with World Vision to train water management committees, and oversee water testing at Aweil Central Lab." – KII 12*

The role of partners like ACDF was also highlighted in the implementation of joint peacebuilding and awareness-raising activities:

> *"ACDF, as World Vision's implementing partner, took the lead in certain Outcome 3 activities focused on social cohesion and peacebuilding—like inter-community dialogues and football tournaments—but they also supported Outcome 1 activities by broadcasting hygiene awareness messages on the radio." – KII 1*

GFFO 2.2.10 Implementation of CMAM (OTPs, screening, referral, TSFP)	**BMZ 2.2.14** Support with biofortified seeds

Clear and intentional synergies between GFFO 2.2.10 (Community Management of Acute Malnutrition – CMAM) and BMZ 2.2.14 (Support with biofortified seeds) were also identified, representing a textbook example of Nexus programming—where short term humanitarian assistance through malnutrition treatment is directly linked to longer-term recovery and resilience, addressing root causes through nutrition-sensitive agriculture and nutrition education.

As participants noted, both projects focused on the same vulnerable populations, particularly women and children, but at different points along the nutrition spectrum. GFFO provided immediate treatment for malnutrition through OTPs, TSFPs, and referrals, while BMZ enhanced households' ability to grow and consume more nutritious food using biofortified seeds, a pairing that allowed families to manage malnutrition when it occurred as well as protecting themselves in the future.

> *"Before this project was launched, children used to suffer from malnutrition but after the launch of the project, children now stay healthy from eating vegetables rich in nutrients." – FGD1*
>
> *"One thing I would say is the key takeaway is the vegetable production—the training provided to the vegetable growers because it has helped reduce malnutrition among children." – FGD2*

Mother support groups formed a critical connection point between the two interventions. GFFO targeted them for nutrition education and support, while BMZ engaged them in food production and recovery activities.

> *"GFFO targeted mother support groups to improve nutrition status of mothers and children under five, while BMZ supported farmer groups for recovery and production at scale." – FGD 4*

GFFO established kitchen gardens at health facilities to promote direct access to nutritious foods. BMZ then complemented this by enhancing post-harvest practices and food storage, helping preserve the gains made through the gardens.

> *"GFFO established kitchen gardens at health facilities focused on nutritious food, but BMZ interventions go further with training on post-harvest handling and storage to reduce losses." – FGD 4*

The projects also represented a pathway from emergency intervention (malnutrition treatment, cash for food) to development support (sustainable food production and income generation). As one respondent illustrated, one project laid the groundwork for the other to build upon, reinforcing resilience over time:

> *"GFFO is doing kitchen garden, BMZ is doing kitchen garden… after floods, GFFO helps IDPs with emergency items then BMZ comes in with seeds." – FGD 1*

GFFO 1.1.3 Distribution of local construction materials/tools for shelters	**BMZ 2.1.3** Construction/rehabilitation of small water/irrigation infrastructure

Synergies between GFFO 1.1.3 (distribution of local construction materials/tools for shelters) and BMZ 2.1.3 (construction/rehabilitation of small water/irrigation infrastructure), were also indicated, as interviews indicated that the two projects aligned their support to ensure that returnees and IDPs received

both shelter and access to water, critical for both protection and livelihood recovery. GFFO provided materials for emergency shelters, while BMZ invested in water infrastructure in the same locations, indicating spatial and beneficiary overlap, as one FGD participant indicated.

> *"GFFO has also contributed to shelter distribution, particularly in Mathiang Dut Akot and Hong Ajok, where well-constructed shelters have been provided for returnees… Additionally, water infrastructure was funded there." – FGD 1*

Another participant indicated that BMZ's irrigation structures such as dykes and feeder roads were deliberately placed in or near areas served by GFFO's shelter distributions, making these settlements more viable for long-term habitation and agricultural recovery through multipurpose infrastructure — sheltered families could engage in nearby livelihood activities, particularly vegetable production supported by irrigation.

> *"They constructed dykes and feeder road and also vegetable gardens in the schools and paying cash to the elderly." – FGD2*

The two projects also shared community management structures, particularly water user committees, which managed access to water points near new settlements and not only sustained infrastructure use but also fostered peaceful coexistence among diverse groups.

> *"As part of the project, water management committees were trained to handle any repairs and conflicts that arise around the borehole. This process fosters peaceful coexistence, as access to water unites people under a shared responsibility."— FGD 3*

GFFO 3.1.1
Mobilization of communities to identify risks and raise awareness

BMZ 3.3.4
Bimonthly awareness campaigns in local media/radio

Synergies between GFFO 3.1.1 (Mobilization of communities to identify risks and raise awareness) and BMZ 3.3.4 (Bimonthly awareness campaigns in local media/radio) were operationalized through complementary approaches that combined grassroots community engagement with mass communication strategies to reinforce risk awareness and disaster preparedness across different population segments.

Based on the narratives, GFFO activities focused on face-to-face community mobilization through disaster committees and local trainings that served as frontline agents for early warning and awareness, while BMZ activities leveraged radio talk shows and bimonthly campaigns to reinforce and spread consistent, accessible messages at scale. In this way, messages reached both those actively involved in community structures and the broader population, including more remote or less engaged individuals.

> *"The community also provides feedback during Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) visits. Additionally, feedback is shared through radio talk shows, as seen in the case of concerns raised when a dyke was constructed. These communication methods ensure that community voices are heard and that project-related concerns are effectively addressed." – FGD 3*

The importance of these mutually reinforcing activities was highlighted by another participant who indicated ways in which this approach could be implemented in future activities:

> *"During the planting process, such as tree planting, a dedicated committee should be established to oversee the management of tree seedlings. This committee will be responsible for training the community and conducting awareness campaigns through radio talk shows." – FGD 3*

Although radio activities were technically under BMZ and community mobilization under GFFO, staff interviews revealed operational coordination across these boundaries, using shared implementation

platforms and overlapping messaging calendars. This integration was particularly visible in joint disaster risk reduction efforts. As a respondent mentions:

> *"We used radio station... awareness creation was created equally through the local stations, awareness creation on flooding, awareness creation on disasters was also successfully done." — FGD 4*

Another WV SS staff noted:

> *"The BMZ TDA project had one component of peace building within it, which included sports... A local partner was working with us through sports radio broadcast and this peacebuilding initiative provided good platforms for community dialogues. Displaced people were integrated through sports, and awareness creation was created equally through the local stations about disasters, flooding and other community messaging." – FGD 4*

The quotes above indicate how synergy between GFFO's localized mobilization and BMZ's broader awareness campaigns amplified risk communication and resilience messaging in a dual-track approach that enabled a more inclusive, multi-tiered awareness strategy that demonstrate a Nexus approach in linking humanitarian preparedness with development-oriented communication infrastructures.

GFFO 2.2.9 **Procurement of CMAM materials and supplies**	**BMZ 2.2.9** **Restocking smallholder households with small ruminants**

Complementary synergies were also identified between GFFO 2.2.9 (Procurement of CMAM materials and supplies) such as therapeutic food, equipment for screening, and support for outpatient treatment of malnourished children, and BMZ 2.2.9 (Restocking smallholder households with small ruminants), such as goats, which provided milk, meat, and income. Participants' narratives indicated how these activities reduced the risk of relapse into malnutrition and created sustainable food sources in a complementary manner, bridging emergency nutrition treatment with longer-term food security and economic resilience.

> *"The distribution of goats has been incredibly helpful. Those who were able to secure livestock are now in a better position financially and in terms of food security. They can sell their animals whenever necessary to meet their needs. Livestock also provide manure, which is beneficial for farming." — FGD 3*

Both projects targeted the same vulnerable populations—particularly women, children under five, and poor households affected by displacement or floods. CMAM interventions addressed acute cases, while small ruminants helped those same families build back better. As a participant highlighted, GFFO's short-term inputs transitioned into BMZ's long-term asset building, including market systems and income-generating assets like livestock.

> *"GFFO started by setting up kitchen gardens at health facilities, particularly in areas like Warrap, Aweil East, and Aweil North, focusing on growing nutritious food to improve community diets. BMZ then built on this by supporting activities that expanded food production—like training on better post-harvest practices and storage methods to reduce losses. While GFFO didn't include savings groups like Savings for Transformation (S4T), BMZ stepped in to support those larger farmer groups with demonstration plots, economic development initiatives, and livestock restocking. BMZ also introduced climate-smart agriculture and reforestation efforts linked to water infrastructure. Overall, this approach combined nutrition with income generation and environmental resilience, helping communities address and prevent malnutrition more sustainably."— FGD 4*

The projects also collaborated with relevant ministries to ensure livestock sustainability, including training veterinarians and distributing veterinary supplies.

> *"In the BMZ TDA project, we collaborate with them in area of veterinary services. BMZ carried out refresher training twice one in 2023 and another one in 2024. They trained veterinarians and give them drugs for the animals. The drugs distributed are free of charge and there is availability of drugs provided*

> *under BMZ TDA project. BMZ also provided the protective attires such as gumboot and overall…" — FGD 3*

Importantly, however, the impact of these interventions extended beyond individual health and food security outcomes—they also contributed to broader social well-being and family cohesion. As one participant explained:

> *"Livestock restocking has significantly improved household well-being. When poverty affects a family, it can strain relationships, particularly when a husband is unable to provide for his family. However, with the distribution of livestock, many of these challenges have been addressed. Families can now use their livestock to cover essential needs such as school fees for their children and food for their households, ultimately creating a more stable and supportive home environment." – FGD 3*

Another respondent emphasized how this impact was not only practical but had emotional and cultural ripple effects across households and communities, noting:

> *"Livestock is a key success aspect of this project, and we strongly recommend its continuation, especially for returnees and IDPs who are in urgent need of these services for effective integration. In this community, livestock is not just a source of livelihood but also a source of pride and happiness." – FGD 3*

GFFO 1.3.1
Construction of gender-sensitive VIP latrines

BMZ 1.2.1
Formation and training of hygiene clubs

GFFO 1.3.1 (Construction of gender-sensitive VIP latrines) and BMZ 1.2.1 (Formation and training of hygiene clubs) activities worked together to improve both the availability and proper use of sanitation facilities in a way that connected emergency responses with long-term behaviour change. As previously mentioned regarding WASH-related synergies, GFFO provided the hardware—emergency WASH infrastructure like VIP latrines—particularly in IDP and returnee sites. As one community leader in Aweil East noted:

> *"World Vision's support has been tremendous, particularly in areas such as … assistance with shelter and latrine construction in IDP and returnee camps." – FGD 3*

Meanwhile, BMZ formed and trained hygiene clubs, which functioned as the software for promoting proper sanitation practices, ensuring the infrastructure provided by GFFO was used effectively and sustained over time. This cross-training helped ensure that sanitation infrastructure, such as the VIP latrines, was not only constructed but also properly maintained and understood by the community. The hygiene clubs formed under BMZ took on responsibility for promoting safe hygiene behaviour in schools and communities, reinforcing the health benefits of the latrines constructed under GFFO:

> *"School hygiene clubs have established a very good responsibility in ensuring the community is safe from contracting diseases." – FGD 2*

Institutional actors confirmed that coordination between World Vision and local authorities enabled sustainability around these activities.

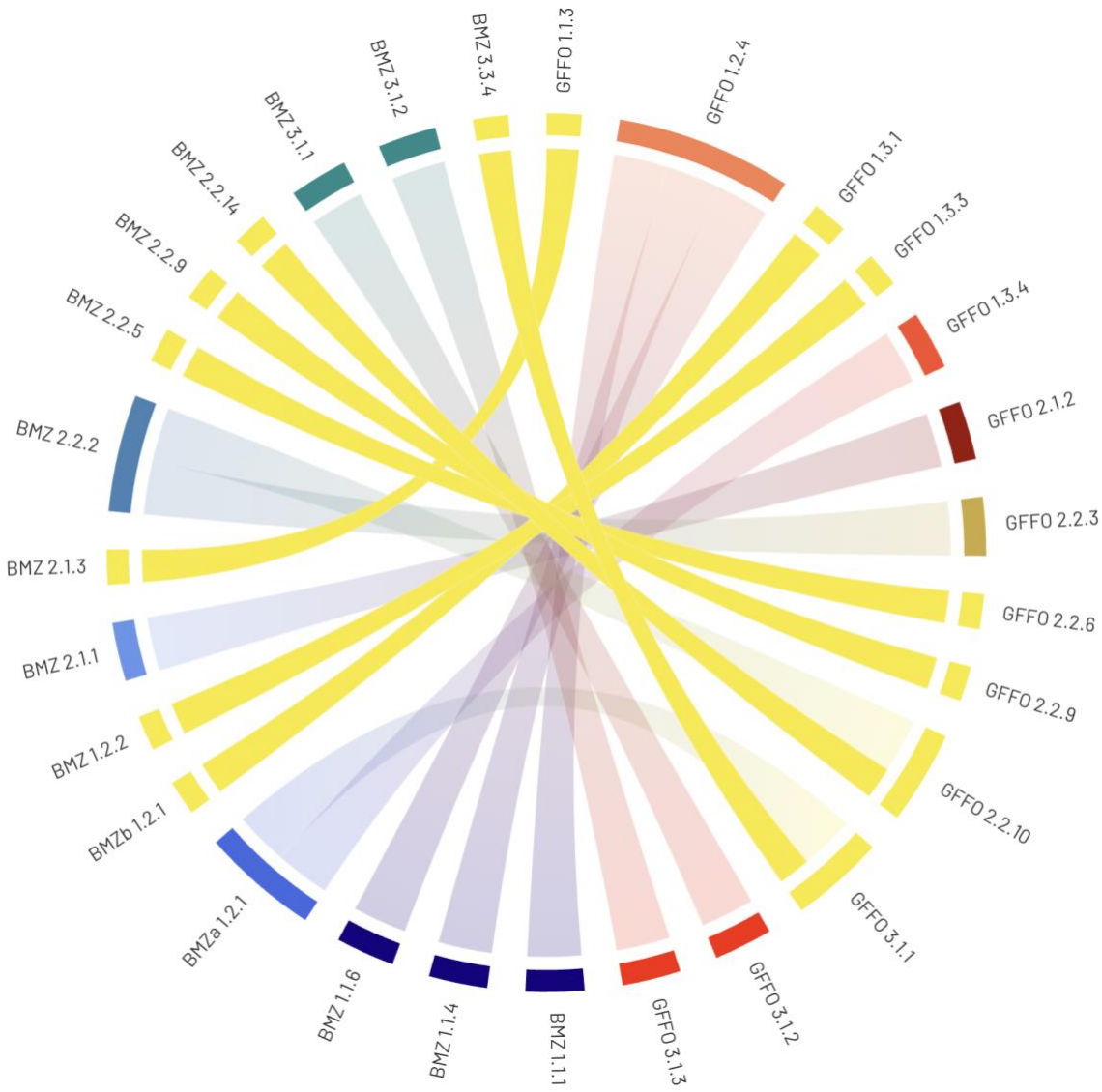
> *"We collaborated with World Vision through knowledge and skill-sharing, particularly in training water management committees and school hygiene clubs." – FGD 3*

Despite the synergy, some implementation issues were raised, particularly concerning the structural quality of latrines, suggesting that quality control and environmental adaptation needed further attention:

> *"One challenge related to the latrines is that they were not properly built from the inside. Instead, they were simply dug and covered with soil, which often leads to their collapse due to poor soil conditions." – FGD 3*

5.2.2.4. Visualising complementarities from participants' narratives

Figure 10: Linkages between project activities as emerging from participants' narratives (yellow) projected with linkages identified through project documentation (orange, red, blue, green).



The updated chord diagram in Figure 10 extends the previous findings by layering primary data-derived synergies (in yellow) onto the original documentation-based complementarities (in blue, red, green, and orange). This shift from the previously identified complementarities 'by design' to emergent, operational ones that were observed and reported by field staff, community stakeholders, and implementing actors, tells a deeper story about how these projects have been delivered, adapted, and expanded in practice.

Before diving into contextualization, it is important to repeat that all of the previously documented linkages in Figure 9 reappear in Figure 10 (in green/blue/red/orange shades) as *all* of them were validated through the primary data aside from the pre-existing documentation, suggesting that **planned synergies were successfully operationalized on the ground**. This alone is notable in the South Sudanese context, where siloed programming, duplication, and donor-driven fragmentation are chronic challenges.

Only linkages that were not previously identified in literature are marked with yellow arcs below, reflecting bottom-up insights and the adaptive capacity of implementing teams to forge linkages even when they

weren't programmatically mandated—embodying the "working together" spirit of the Nexus in real-time. These reflect a much bigger success, reflecting that the HDP Nexus isn't just a framework on paper with regard to the projects in question—it was internalized and enacted at operational levels, especially through shared staff, aligned targeting, and adaptive collaboration. Some of them include:

- The shared use of boreholes between smallholder farmers (BMZ 1.1.1) and CMAM-supported households (GFFO 2.2.10),
- Hygiene clubs (BMZ 1.2.1) reinforcing latrine use (GFFO 1.3.1),
- Farmer field schools (BMZ 2.2.5) supporting mother groups' nutrition gardens (GFFO 2.2.3),
- The link between DRR structures (BMZ 3.1.1) and early warning mechanisms (GFFO 3.1.2).

These connections reveal how frontline practitioners translated the Nexus into action, often working creatively to bridge sectoral divides, align targeting, or merge trainings and committees.

The earlier version of the chord diagram suggested a linear or vertical layering of activities—emergency feeding into development. That logic still holds. However, Figure 10 introduces a more web-like structure of mutual reinforcement and cross-sector interaction reflecting:

- Greater cross-sectoral integration (e.g., nutrition linked to agriculture, DRR linked to infrastructure),
- Multi-purpose use of infrastructure (e.g., water points serving both human and livestock needs),
- Cross-functional teams facilitating shared knowledge and reduced duplication,
- Emergent coordination platforms across project sites (e.g., DRR committees, hygiene clubs, PTA-led garden management).

Importantly, this was not driven by HQ blueprints but by field actors themselves who noticed overlaps, gaps, and opportunities—and acted on them.

The emergence of bottom-up synergies as highlighted in this diagram indicates the application of key tools, including those of FCPA, even if not explicitly mentioned:

- Context Monitoring allowed staff to spot opportunities for integration,
- Scenario Planning helped teams prepare multi-use infrastructure,
- Crisis Modifiers enabled real-time reallocation of inputs (e.g., goats, seeds) across sectors,
- Stakeholder Mapping revealed shared community actors across interventions,
- Adaptive Learning Loops led to decisions to co-locate trainings or merge committee memberships.

5.2.3. Unanticipated synergies

The overview of synergies and complementarities between the GFFO and BMZ TDA projects in South Sudan reveals a layered interplay between intended and emergent collaboration, which enhanced the operationalization of the HDP Nexus across sectors, even if with varied intensity. Figure 10 presents a dense web of cross-sectoral and multi-directional linkages with greater integration across sectors (WASH, agriculture, nutrition, livelihoods, DRR), affirms that the Nexus approach has moved beyond basic alignment into a more networked operational model with often broader, and more contextually tailored interactions 'from below', even if not by design. Some of these unanticipated synergies with various stakeholders are mentioned by a respondent:

> *"There are these CBOs, the community-based organizations. They became part of the DRR committees that we formed and really supported the committee… they play a leadership role… we were not expecting them to perform to that level, but they exceeded our expectations, and we can say they are unexpected stakeholders." – FGD 1*
>
> *"We did not expect to work with the Commission for Refugee Affairs (CRA)… but with the trigger, they were always there at the border… passed the analysis through GFFO to come in and support with the emergency response. So I believe it's one of the partners which we did not expect to be part of the programming, but at the end of the day, they supported" – KII 1*

Unanticipated synergies included the inclusion of additional beneficiaries, for instance in the training sessions on vegetable production that initially targeted project beneficiaries, yet respondents mentioned they also unexpectedly benefited non-beneficiaries who observed demonstrations and applied the

techniques. This knowledge dissemination enhanced community-wide resilience, an unintended complementarity that extended the development impact of both BMZ and GFFO projects.

> *"In the Demo, even those who are not part of the project are allowed to come and watch and then are able to apply the techniques learned in their own home vegetable gardens. That way, wide knowledge is spread." – FGD 2*

The unanticipated complementary effects of infrastructure created through the projects was also mentioned, as feeder roads constructed under the BMZ TDA project, primarily for development purposes, unexpectedly supported GFFO's humanitarian efforts by improving access to markets for vulnerable groups like IDPs and returnees.

GFFO's shelter distribution for returnees and BMZ's borehole drilling also unexpectedly complemented each other by enabling returnees to settle and engage in nursery gardening. This synergy linked humanitarian (shelter and water access) and development (agricultural productivity) efforts, supporting community integration and resilience, as one respondent mentioned:

> *"GFFO has also contributed to shelter distribution, particularly in Mathiang Dut Akot and Hong Ajok, where well-constructed shelters have been provided for returnees… The irrigation infrastructure has facilitated the establishment of nursery gardens in areas where boreholes have been constructed, such as in Rumdhal." – FGD 3*

As one participant highlighted, this growth is viewed as organic and attributed as a result of the Chapeau approach:

> *"I think it's mostly how it developed organically, maybe not necessarily by design, but the fact that Chapeau approach brought that synergy and connections between the projects…" – KII 9*

Importantly, these operational synergies were enabled not only by formal structures but by shared staffing, field-level coordination, beneficiary overlap, and grassroots initiatives, suggesting that future program designs should lean into adaptive, field-driven complementarity—rather than only top-down sequencing. These findings also strengthen the case for investing in flexible implementation teams, shared learning mechanisms, and cross-grant coordination platforms that allow the Nexus to truly live across project cycles and funding lines.

5.3. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND COORDINATION

5.3.1. Involvement of local stakeholders

Local stakeholder engagement—both at the community and leadership levels—was clearly acknowledged as essential, yet its depth and consistency varied significantly across project phases and geographies. In many cases, engagement appeared to be strongest during implementation, where local leaders, government officials, and community members played a visible role in supporting outreach, mobilization, and delivery. However, several respondents expressed concern that this involvement often came too late in the project cycle. As one respondent reflected:

> *"Government actors and community leaders were involved during implementation, but not consistently during project design, affecting alignment with local priorities." — FGD 1*

This points to a recurring pattern: inclusion was sometimes reactive rather than proactive. While field teams made efforts to consult and involve local actors on the ground, the initial design and planning stages—particularly at the proposal and budgeting level—were often shaped at the national level or externally, limiting the meaningful input of those closest to the context. This was particularly evident in

decisions around site selection. One participant highlighted that lack of early consultation led to critical missteps:

> *"There was no proper consultation for tree planting sites. The community wasn't engaged at the start, and the sites selected had no water access, so the trees dried up." — FGD 3*

At the community level, engagement was more organically embedded in day-to-day practice, particularly through structures like VSLAs, water management committees, and feedback mechanisms. Respondents noted that community buy-in and ownership were generally strong when activities were visible, tangible, and directly aligned with local needs. However, the quality of coordination depended on how well feedback was not only collected, but acted upon. For example:

> *"CRM platforms like suggestion boxes and help desks were widely used, but their functionality depended on consistent follow-up… Some communities still preferred face-to-face feedback." — FGD 2*

This signals a need for adaptive and culturally attuned engagement strategies, especially in low-literacy or rural settings where digital or anonymous systems may not be trusted or accessible. Encouragingly, some synergies emerged organically when community groups were given room to connect program components in ways that made sense locally:

> *"Mothers' groups supported both health and education. That wasn't planned—it just happened, but it worked well." — FGD 1*

Still, such organic integration was not always tracked or intentionally supported, pointing to an opportunity for more systematic learning from local practices.

5.3.2. Use of complaints mechanisms, community consultations, local committees

Across the project areas, there was clear evidence of multiple accountability structures being in place—including complaints mechanisms, community consultations, and the use of local committees—but their effectiveness varied depending on follow-through, local trust, and accessibility.

Complaints mechanisms such as suggestion boxes, help desks, and feedback desks were commonly cited by respondents. Their presence was viewed positively as a way to foster transparency and community voice. However, their functionality was uneven, largely depending on whether there was consistent follow-up. Communities valued the idea of being heard, but trust in these systems was conditional. In more remote or low-literacy settings, there was a marked preference for in-person communication, where people could speak directly with staff. In some cases, the physical presence of field teams and approachable frontline staff made a bigger difference than the formal mechanisms themselves.

Respondents also frequently emphasized that consulting communities early on, especially during targeting, site selection, and activity design, was essential for effectiveness. However, consultations were often retrospective, taking place after key decisions had already been made at higher levels. Where consultations were meaningful and ongoing, they helped ensure greater community ownership and smoother implementation. In fact, communities often initiated adaptations to make activities work better on the ground, demonstrating both capability and a desire to co-lead.

Local committees, such as water management groups, VSLA leadership teams, and livelihood groups—played a critical role in sustaining project activities and organizing community participation. These committees were often the most trusted structures for information sharing, mobilization, and grievance handling.

> *"The water committee now knows how to handle minor repairs. They collect small contributions from users and keep spare parts." — KII 1*

This shows that where committees were properly trained, resourced, and reinforced, they could become self-sustaining and reduce dependency on external actors. However, concerns were raised around the need for ongoing support and capacity building. In a few cases, committees were formed but lacked the follow-up training or resources needed to be fully effective over time.

5.3.3. Accountability pathways and feedback loops

Accountability mechanisms were broadly recognized as an important feature of the projects under review, but the strength and consistency of feedback loops, i.e., the extent to which community feedback resulted in action—varied significantly. In practice, accountability pathways often existed in structure, but not always in function, especially when follow-through was weak or when feedback processes were unclear to communities.

Multiple respondents referenced accountability structures such as CRMs, field visits by staff, and local committee engagement. These were typically seen as entry points for feedback and information sharing. However, community members and frontline staff alike pointed to a gap between collecting feedback and closing the loop, that is, letting communities know how their input was used or responded to.

> *"They have the help desks and suggestion boxes, but sometimes people don't know what happens after they submit something. There's no update." — FGD 2*

This lack of feedback can weaken trust in accountability systems. Even when mechanisms were technically functional, communities often perceived them as one-directional if there was no visible response or communication back. In some areas, this contributed to the continued preference for face-to-face dialogue over formal channels. In some cases, teams were able to adapt activities in response to grievances or input from communities—demonstrating accountability in action. For example, one participant shared how complaints about fishing kits were addressed:

> *"After some complaints, they adjusted the fishing kits. They listened and changed it." — KII 1*

This kind of responsive adaptation not only improves program relevance, but also reinforces trust and encourages continued community engagement. It also shows that feedback loops are not just about collecting information, but about creating a dialogue between communities and implementers.

In several locations, local structures—such as water committees or VSLA leadership groups—served as bridges between the community and the project team. These groups were often more approachable and embedded in the local context, enabling more informal and frequent channels of accountability. However, these committees also needed clarity on their roles and the support to escalate concerns when needed.

> *"The water committee helped solve problems fast, especially when staff weren't around. But sometimes they didn't know where to take bigger issues." — FGD 1*

This points to the need for clearer vertical accountability pathways—i.e., how local issues can be elevated through the project structure for resolution.

5.4. MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AND ORGANIZATIONAL AGILITY

5.4.1. Changes in staff roles, decision-making flexibility, and coordination structures

The two projects demonstrated significant evolution in staffing approaches, field-level decision-making, and coordination structures, reflecting a broader shift toward adaptive management and operational agility in fragile and rapidly changing environments.

Staff roles became increasingly fluid and interdependent, with individuals stepping across project lines based on technical expertise rather than rigid job descriptions maximizing human resource capacity and allowed for more integrated service delivery at the field level.

> *"We've been flexible with our human resources—someone can support a sister project based on their skills. If I'm away, the GFFO manager or another staff member steps in to support both projects."— KII 1*

This flexible staffing model was particularly effective in maintaining continuity and avoiding duplication in areas where GFFO and BMZ overlapped. The approach allowed World Vision to reduce redundancy—such as avoiding two staff traveling to the same location—and to make use of shared knowledge across funding streams.

> *"Instead of sending two staff to the same area, why not send one person who understands both projects very well? It ensures we're utilizing our human resources efficiently." — KII 12*

A major shift was the deliberate decentralization of decision-making power to field teams, embedded in FCPA. By building scenario-based decision options into project designs, staff were empowered to respond to changes on the ground without lengthy approval chains.

> *"One of the reasons this approach was created was to give as much decision-making power as possible to the people at field level… If the scenario changes, your design already includes what you'd do differently, so you can act fast." — KII 3*

This approach proved especially valuable in contexts of rapid-onset crisis or shifting conflict dynamics. Teams were able to adapt programming in real time, using tools like context monitoring to inform programmatic pivots. Both humanitarian and development work. Enhanced coordination was visible both internally—between project teams—and externally, through alignment with local government and other actors. Weekly movement plans, shared leadership roles, and joint reporting structures supported better coherence across teams.

> *"We have a weekly movement plan to align staff going to the same locations, using shared transport and coordinating our presence efficiently." — FGD 1*

Moreover, integrated leadership roles also allowed for intentional alignment between the humanitarian (GFFO) and development (BMZ) interventions, with shared targeting and complementary activity planning.

> *"The Regional Program Manager led both GFFO and Nexus efforts, making sure we reached the same target groups across both projects."— KII 12*

At a broader level, engagement in cluster coordination meetings and joint planning with government authorities ensured that programming remained relevant and accountable to local and national priorities.

> *"Both GFFO and BMZ teams coordinated with the relevant government offices and participated in clusters—not just at Aweil level, but at Juba level too." — KII 12*

Despite these positive shifts, teams faced structural challenges that limited full operational flexibility. In particular, rigid budget structures and donor requirements sometimes constrained adaptive responses, especially where crises required short-term pivots in otherwise long-term resilience programs.

> *"We need budget flexibility. Even a resilience project has to take into account fast-changing issues in the landscape." — FGD 4*

In parallel, there was recognition of the need for ongoing staff capacity development, especially to shift from a purely humanitarian mindset toward longer-term development and peacebuilding approaches.

> *"We also need to support staff to change mindset… community engagement may not have been a strong skill if they've worked mostly in life-saving contexts." — KII 2*

5.4.2. Examples of adaptive management at field and coordination level

A defining feature of adaptive management has been its grounding in scenario-based planning. Multiple respondents reiterated that this begins at the design stage. As one experienced staff member put it:

> *"What the FCPA approach did was look at, if the scenario were to worsen or get better, what would you do differently, and put that already within your design description… so that if you need to change, it's already accepted, because your design has been accepted." – KII 2*

This anticipatory logic, embedded in program design, allows teams to switch approaches mid-course without violating the original parameters of donor-approved programming. The survive-adapt-thrive framework, frequently mentioned across interviews, is not a theoretical lens but a practical tool—applied monthly through context monitoring using Power BI dashboards. One field manager illustrated this:

> *"We are doing monthly context monitoring… analyzed through Power BI. It tells us whether an area is thriving, adapting, or still in survival. For instance, economic crisis is still in red because of soaring inflation." – FGD 4*

Adaptivity at the field level is also deeply tied to sustainability. Respondents emphasized that local ownership and embedded capacities act as a buffer against fragility and as enablers of adaptive practice. As one field staff member explained:

> *"We've trained community animal health workers, established DRM committees in all 12 payams… given equipment for early warning. Even if World Vision isn't there in the future, they [the communities] can continue by themselves." – KII 1*

This investment in localized systems enables more agile responses to emerging risks, including floods, drought, and locust invasions. Flexibility, however, is not merely internal—it extends to frontline relationships. Staff described how communities themselves engaged voluntarily in project adjustments, such as contributing tools for road clearing or taking ownership of land for feeder roads:

> *"In the rainy season, we crossed swamps to reach remote communities… community members voluntarily helped clear land for roads and contributed tools. That's part of the agility." – FGD 1*

Even within grants with limited formal flexibility—such as BMZ—teams managed to reallocate interventions to flood-prone areas and deploy cash-for-work activities to address immediate household needs. This dual-purpose design allowed both community infrastructure and livelihood recovery:

> *"Cash-for-Work lets people use the cash for whatever livelihood they need. So that brings some flexibility into the project." – KII 1*

One of the most innovative adaptations at the coordination level involves cross-project staffing. A regional manager, for example, originally overseeing one project, routinely stepped in to support others—facilitating alignment in targeting and implementation:

> *"When the Nexus Manager is away, I step in to support both GFFO and BMZ. Also, if I'm away, the GFFO manager or any trained staff steps in. So we've been flexible in human resources." – KII 1*

Joint program monitoring also emerged as a critical mechanism for adaptation at scale. Through shared analysis and ongoing dialogue with WVG, the South Sudan teams adjusted approaches in response to field realities. As one coordinator noted:

> *"We do context analysis and scenario planning jointly, and there is also monthly joint program monitoring… we share ideas, best practices, and challenges." – KII 2*

These processes are complemented by strong vertical coordination—World Vision holds leadership positions in multiple clusters (Cash, Protection, WASH, Nutrition), which enables rapid alignment when conditions shift:

> *"We are chair of the Cash Working Group… part of the FSL, WASH, Shelter, Nutrition, and Protection Clusters. Our presence is always felt in every coordination forum." – FGD 1*

Operational flexibility is also seen in how targeting strategies are adjusted. In response to changing needs and population movements, registration and payment strategies were modified dynamically:

> *"We adjusted payments—one round for some, three rounds for others. And then we closed out. We used coordination and government stakeholders to reallocate figures." – FGD 3*

Such modifications are not isolated—they are embedded in structured, decentralized mechanisms involving chiefs, local leaders, and RRC officials, reflecting a governance-conscious form of adaptivity.

Adaptation, however, has not been without challenges. Several staff flagged bureaucratic rigidity, delayed donor approvals, and static program designs as key bottlenecks:

> *"Sometimes we are very static in our approach… Can we do a rapid cash transfer or a rapid food packet to deliver to them? But then, if that has not been thought through, by the time you're done with the process, the emergency is over." – KII 16*

To mitigate this, multiple respondents emphasized the need for pre-designed crisis modifiers and untied funding that can be rapidly deployed:

> *"A conflict monitoring tool without flexible funding is not sufficient… [one must] create a contingency fund within your project. Call it whatever the donor prefers." – KII 2*

What these narratives make clear is that adaptive management is not a theoretical overlay on top of conventional programming. It is deeply embedded in how World Vision's teams in NBG navigate complexity, collaborate across functions, and localize decision-making. The FCPA framework and Nexus orientation have provided the structural rationale for such adaptivity, but it is the operational agility—of individuals, of teams, and of communities—that sustains it. In the words of one participant:

> *"FCPA cannot be a standalone. It has to be integrated. That's how you say you've adapted to change—by continuing what you were doing, but in a modified way."*

Yet another respondent reflects a deeply grounded understanding of adaptive management as a tool not only for operational responsiveness, but for improving the quality and sustainability of impact at the household level. Rather than advocating for sweeping project redesigns, the speaker articulates a subtler, more iterative view of adaptation—one that hinges on how projects are implemented, reinforced, and made relevant to real people's lives:

> *"Yes, for example, with a long-term project, you need to ask: what does all this planning and reviewing really mean for families on the ground? Do households actually understand why things like supplementary feeding or having a variety in their diet are important? And should that learning stop when people just attend a group training or activity? Or can we find ways to make sure that knowledge sticks and is used at home too? That's where things like mother groups or project staff doing home visits come in—those are ways to reinforce the learning in people's daily lives. These are practical things that households can do. So this is what I mean—it's not about changing the whole project, but about*

> *how it's managed and adjusted regularly to work better for real people, without changing its overall goals." – KII 8*

5.4.3. Role of shared staffing and integration across grants

The practice of cross-grant staffing—where personnel serve roles across both humanitarian and development streams—was cited frequently as a strength of World Vision's integrated approach. As a participant described:

> *"We have been a bit flexible in terms of our human resource, where someone can support the sister project. If I today [am] FSL officer for this supporting GFFO, the WASH engineers were purely under the BMZ, but they did WASH technical activities also for GFFO. So there is that covering of gaps among ourselves" – KII 1*

Rather than maintaining rigid silos by grant, staff rotated or were dual-tasked depending on technical need, emergent gaps, or surge requirements. This allowed World Vision to optimize capacity in a resource-constrained environment. Another respondent elaborated:

> *"Instead of sending two staff [to] the same area, why not send one person, because they understand the two projects very well… so using those synergies ensured that we [were] utilizing the human resource aspect of it" – FGD 3*

The GFFO and BMZ grants were often managed under overlapping leadership, an example of which was previously mentioned when a responded noted how when they are away the GFFO manager steps in, or any staff they assign comes to support both projects. The benefits of this approach are twofold. First, it enables continuity and knowledge retention across grants, and second, it reinforced coherence in implementation across sectors, ensuring that programming retained consistency regardless of which grant it technically fell under, to the extent possible.

Beyond program implementation, staff sharing extended into cross-cutting functions such as monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and quality assurance. One respondent was described as working across both grants:

> *"He had coordinated monitoring of activities… He spread himself to support both projects." – FGD 2*

.Another respondent also reported working across both initiatives, facilitating cross-learning and smoother coordination. This minimized duplication and reinforced coherence in implementation.

> *"I handle the monitoring, evaluation, accountability and the learning aspect of the GFFO, but I interact with the BMZ because the two projects are being implemented in cohesion with each other." – KII 12*

Quarterly coordination meetings were held jointly across grants, where staff "shared challenges" and monitored progress. These shared spaces were not only efficient but also promoted cross-learning:

> *"We convene together for the two grants, convene together and share our challenges—that's how we coordinate." – FGD 3*

Another strength of the shared staffing model is its ability to blur rigid technical boundaries. Staff moved between WASH, FSL, DRR, and shelter work depending on the evolving needs on the ground.

> *"Like now, I'm in BMZ taking lead on quality assurance work. I can support the two on post-distribution monitoring or baseline or data collection… I can't sit here and say I only belong to BMZ." – FGD 3*

This flexibility is foundational to adaptive management. It allows human resources to follow need rather than structure, and it ensures that technical silos don't impede field responsiveness.

The integration of staff across BMZ and GFFO also addressed a critical challenge in humanitarian-development programming: duplication. By sharing assets such as vehicles and field offices, as well as personnel, the projects were able to maximize resource use:

> *"The same with the assets which are shared, like the vehicle—we contribute efforts in their servicing and repairing." – KII 1*

Moreover, it reduced community fatigue and confusion. Field staff were able to deliver messaging, services, and follow-up under a unified operational identity, even if the funding streams differed.

Perhaps the most compelling evidence of success comes not from staff job descriptions, but from the outcomes that this model enabled. In places like Wunkwunklot and Ayam, field integration was fully achieved, while another noted the degree of multitasking:

> *"They have done collaborative or integrated work… GFFO doing kitchen gardening and nutrition, BMZ working on water infrastructure. It was all in one place." – KII 12*
>
> *"We are just integrated. We are doing the same duty with different assignments. You will be assigned to any, and likewise, you may be taken to do P2 [another concurrently-running World Vision project] activities." -- FGD 2*

5.5. SUSTAINABILITY AND LONG TERM-OUTCOMES

5.5.1. How the projects contributed to resilience, local capacity building and system strengthening

The GFFO and BMZ TDA projects have made measurable contributions to resilience, local capacity building, and system strengthening in South Sudan. While many of these contributions emerged through operational practice rather than being formally embedded in project frameworks, the cumulative effect has been the establishment of local systems and structures capable of absorbing shocks and sustaining gains beyond external support.

One of the most evident areas of progress has been in community-led resilience. Across implementation sites, World Vision prioritized forming and training local committees—particularly Water Management Committees, DRR Committees, and agricultural cooperatives—to take ownership of services and infrastructure. As one respondent put it:

> *"We have formed committees in all the infrastructures… Each has a trained pump mechanic to maintain the boreholes or water yards." – KII 1*

This deliberate structuring of community oversight mechanisms—often coupled with tools, equipment, and technical training—ensured that project assets were not only delivered but also sustained.

Similarly, DRR committees established in all 12 payams were trained and equipped to manage early warning systems, reinforcing anticipatory action. These groups, embedded within the communities themselves, became key actors in maintaining situational awareness and triggering appropriate responses:

> *"We upgrade the capacity… trained and tasked on early warning systems. So it is them to support the community—to be aware when there is any trigger, be it flood, drought, or locust invasion." – KII 1*

These grassroots institutions represent an important pivot away from dependency, signalling a shift toward self-sustaining resilience at the local level.

Capacity-building efforts extended beyond community groups to local government actors and sectoral professionals. Extension officers, Payam-level agriculture supervisors, and community animal health workers were engaged not as external stakeholders but as integral participants in the delivery and sustainability of project activities:

> *"We worked with line ministries. Extension workers and Payam supervisors were part of the groups tasked with monitoring and community training." – KII 1*

This co-implementation model not only built credibility but also reinforced vertical linkages between local authorities and community-based actors, enhancing the legitimacy and long-term viability of interventions.

A deeper layer of system strengthening came through community-based risk mapping and group-based service delivery. The participatory mapping of threats—such as communal conflict or floods—helped communities conceptualize fragility and begin to articulate locally grounded resilience strategies:

> *"Risk mapping informed communities of their own fragility… they identified threats making them more vulnerable, like communal violence." – FGD 4*

Equally important was the use of group-based models—such as farmer field schools and cooperative livelihoods groups—which allowed for shared responsibility and continuity in the face of individual shocks:

> *"If you're a single farmer and you have a personal emergency, the activity dies. But in a group, it continues." – KII 1*

This recognition of collective resilience aligns well with Nexus principles, reinforcing the link between social cohesion and service sustainability.

The BMZ TDA project, in particular, was noted for integrating vocational training and livelihood support into its resilience-building agenda. By enrolling over 300 youth in skills training and providing startup kits, the project contributed to both economic self-reliance and conflict prevention:

> *"Most youth who passed through vocational training are already engaged in business—avoiding insecurity." – KII 10*

Importantly, even when funding cycles ended, vocational institutions supported by the project continued to serve as entry points for other World Vision initiatives—an indicator of embedded capacity:

> *"The project was no longer funded, but we still use the vocational training institutions as entry points." – KII 17*

The integration of emergency response with long-term development—through what staff described as a cyclical SAT model—was repeatedly cited as a key enabler of relevance and longevity:

> *"It helps programming to be relevant at all times… you assess, redesign, adapt, and continue to thrive." – KII 17*

This approach, encompassing shelter, WASH, nutrition, and DRR, allowed communities to gradually move from vulnerability toward more robust, systematized forms of resilience. In some cases, organic integration emerged from the ground up—for instance, where mothers' groups voluntarily bridged health and education components, further underscoring local ownership.

Despite these gains, respondents also highlighted gaps in staff capacity and the need for more deliberate south-south learning:

> *"Staff should have been trained better. You can't be thrown into deep water when you don't know what you're doing." – FGD 1*
>
> *"We need to take staff from South Sudan to Somalia to share ideas." – FGD 1*

5.5.2. Perceptions of sustainability by staff and stakeholders

Sustainability, as understood by World Vision staff and stakeholders, across multiple levels as continuity, ownership, and resilience, goes beyond infrastructure maintenance—it is about embedded ownership, knowledge transfer, functional handover, and strategic integration into local systems. The concept of sustainability was widely referenced by both World Vision staff and community stakeholders throughout the Nexus project evaluation. However, perceptions of its effectiveness and longevity varied, shaped by experience, proximity to implementation, and the degree of community participation embedded in each initiative.

For many project staff, sustainability was understood as more than the durability of infrastructure or inputs; it was defined by ownership, capability, and institutionalized local structures. As one respondent explained:

> *"Sustainability is a factor of many things—ownership, knowledge, capability development… It's about communities taking up some of these key roles the project implemented." — KII 8*

Sustainability, in this view, is not an endpoint but a process of empowerment—one built through continuous capacity strengthening, community structuring, and integrated planning with local authorities. Equally important was the deliberate partnership with line ministries and local extension workers, positioned to take over after project closeout. This not only legitimized project efforts but also helped position local actors as co-owners of outcomes:

> *"We worked with Payam agriculture supervisors and extension workers—they're tasked with monitoring and training the community when World Vision does not go to the ground." — KII 1*

Sustainability was also seen as a product of time and intentional sequencing, particularly within the FCPA framework. Staff highlighted how the SAT logic provided a roadmap for phasing in resilience:

> *"The multi-nature of the project gives enough time for continuous development of capacities… toward resilience." — KII 8*
>
> *"FCPA helps make appropriate decisions. Nexus leads to development, which is the sustainability aspect of programming." — KII 18*

Among community members and local stakeholders, sustainability was most often expressed in terms of self-reliance, practical continuity, and intergenerational responsibility. One FGD participant captured this succinctly:

> *"Sustainability means now and future. We need to disseminate skills through training. We cannot just give inputs—we need to train them to stand on their own." — FGD 1*

This view was reinforced through examples of community contributions—such as local fencing of vegetable gardens—and long-term behavioral changes, like continued tree planting and maintenance of access roads, even after World Vision's direct involvement ended:

> *"People are still planting trees where we started that initiative. That shows the impact of the project is still in the community." — FGD 1*

> *"The community access roads have gone down, but the community continues to renovate them. That's part of our sustainability plan." — FGD 1*

There was also strong appreciation for the intentional handover process, which ensured continuity through structured exit strategies:

> *"When World Vision is exiting, we hand over all the facilities, beneficiaries, and tools to the community, in presence of the government." — FGD 1*

Despite these strengths, several stakeholders flagged instances where sustainability faltered—not because of lack of intention, but due to disconnects between centralized project design and local implementation realities. For instance, a tree-planting initiative failed in multiple locations due to lack of proximity to water:

> *"The trees were planted without considering access to water points… If they had been planted closer to water, they would have survived." — FGD 3*

Such shortcomings highlighted a critical flaw in top-down design approaches, where local feasibility assessments were either missing or deprioritized, as this participant pointed out:

> *"The project was designed in Juba, and there's been no flexibility… Those in Juba may not have sufficient knowledge about the local context." — FGD 3*

This insight aligns with wider calls for greater localization of design, especially if sustainability is to be more than rhetorical.

5.6. FIELD-LEVEL AND DONOR-HELD PERSPECTIVES ON FRAGILITY

Based on the collected data, the way in which fragility is conceptualized among World Vision field staff in South Sudan reflects a notable difference between their perception and that of donors.

At the field level, fragility is not viewed as an abstract framework—it is felt. Staff and partners on the ground describe fragility in highly concrete, visceral terms. As a respondent, puts it:

> *"Fragility, I will give an example of a glass. A glass is fragile. When it falls down, it breaks. So South Sudan is like that glass." – KII 18*

This metaphor reflects the constant precarity that communities face: political instability, conflict, displacement, and environmental shocks are not merely contextual features—they are daily realities that threaten to upend fragile gains. Others echoed this localized understanding. A staff member in Aweil North stated:

> *"One of the major causes of fragility, is political instability… There is also this communion conflict… especially in Northern Bahr el Ghazal, we have the cross-border issue with Sudan." – FGD 1*

This view of fragility is multi-dimensional—linking weak governance, recurrent violence, economic deterioration, and climatic stress. Importantly, it is often discussed in tandem with resilience. As another respondent explained, while also challenging the overemphasis on fragility alone:

> *"The causes of fragility in South Sudan include political instability, weak governance, ethnic violence, economic crisis, and environmental vulnerability. But instead of saying a fragile context, it could be like a*

> *resilient context program approach… if we talk about fragility all the time, where do we leave the light… the resilience in all this?" – KII 10*

This insistence on duality—acknowledging both fragility and resilience—is a defining feature of how local staff view the landscape.

In contrast, donors and their representatives often approach fragility through a more strategic, conceptual lens (although the BMZ TDA grant facility explicitly recognizes the conceptual interplay between needs and resilience capacities, focusing on investing in communal capacities to strengthen resilience at various levels). As another respondent noted:

> *"The understanding of even the fragility context is completely different… Donors have a different understanding of what the Nexus should look like." – KII 9*

Fragility in donor discourse is typically framed in terms of governance indicators, institutional benchmarks, and macroeconomic risk profiles. While valid at a systems level, this framing can sometimes feel distant from community reality, especially when not calibrated with local voices.

Others highlighted the terminological drift between donors and practitioners. A technical expert referenced the emerging preference for foresight frameworks and tools deriving from the international business landscape like VUCA (Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, Ambiguity)[92,93] over the traditional "fragility" label, suggesting that even within donor circles, conceptual clarity is contested, and that the term 'fragility' is not universally accepted. This vagueness, as another respondent pointed out, can itself become a barrier:

> *"The subjective definition of fragility could change… it's sort of vague and not too specific." – KII 7*

These contrasting conceptions of fragility have real programmatic consequences:

- First, they shape how interventions are designed and justified. When fragility is viewed through a structural lens (as donors often do), responses may prioritize governance reform, system rebuilding, or macro-level resilience. However, when field staff define fragility as immediate, overlapping risks—conflict, drought, lack of services—the logical response is often community-centered, adaptive, and integrated.
- Second, the political dimensions of fragility influence donor positioning. Shifting foreign policy priorities—such as Germany's evolving feminist development approach—reshape how fragility is framed and which entry points are privileged. As a participant notes:

> *"Politics change. Sometimes strategies also change… Even between ministries, there is no clear line of how the Nexus should look like." – KII 9*

Finally, these differences can complicate coordination, reporting, and design coherence. With multiple donor regulations and visions at play, even well-integrated programs like BMZ and GFFO can struggle to maintain unified approaches:

> *"We have two donors with different regulations… If they don't synergize, it's difficult to work together." – KII 9*

For HDP Nexus and FCPA approaches to succeed, a reconciled understanding of fragility is essential—one that embraces both the structural causes and lived realities of instability. One WV SS respondent offers a helpful reframing:

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[92] Sindila, A., Foss, N. J., & Zhan, X. (2023) "*Building Resilience for Surviving and Thriving in a VUCA Context*". AIB Insights, 23(3);

[93] Cavusgil, S. T., van der Vegt, S., Dakhli, M., De Farias, S., Doria, E., et al. 2021. International Business in an Accelerated VUCA World: Trends, Disruptions, and Coping Strategies. Rutgers Business Review, 6(3): 219–243.

> *"The misconception about fragility is that we tend to put it on others… We forget about aspects of resilience." – KII 16*

He and others call for contextualized processes and systems that fit the fragile contexts in which they operate—rather than applying generic models. Another key informant further suggests that operational clarity must follow from strategic alignment:

> *"It's not sufficient to have it in a document. It has to be reflected in our engagement, in our communication, and in how projects are designed." – KII 8*

The frequent disconnect between donor expectations—often shaped by stable environments—and the volatile realities on the ground is highlighted in the following quote by a respondent who explains that donor countries operate under conditions of relative predictability, making it difficult for them to fully grasp the unpredictability, risk, and fluidity that define program implementation in settings like South Sudan. As a result, there is often a mismatch between the rigid structures of donor frameworks and the adaptive responses required in the field.

> *"In donor countries, things are usually very stable, and I don't think their realities match ours. That's why, when designing projects for fragile contexts like ours, I believe donor flexibility should be a top priority—because we never know what might happen next. The good thing with the grant we're implementing is that we stay in regular contact with our support office. We need to design projects that really reflect the needs of the community and how they live. And going forward, all projects should include something like a crisis modifier. BMZ is a resilience-focused grant, yes—but even so, unexpected things can happen." – KII 1*

Within this tension, support offices play a crucial bridging role. The quote points to the value of consistent engagement with the support office, which acts as a mediator—translating the lived realities of local teams and communities to donors and advocating for more flexible, context-responsive programming. The call for crisis modifiers—even in resilience-oriented grants like BMZ—further emphasizes the need for donor frameworks to build in contingency and adaptation mechanisms from the outset.

5.6.1. Enabling factors

Several operational and structural factors enabled effective coordination, synergy, and complementarity between the two projects, the main one being the overlap in target groups and geographies between them. Both projects were co-located in neighbouring counties such (Aweil East and Aweil North), allowing for direct layering of humanitarian and development interventions in the same communities. This spatial alignment facilitated shared beneficiary targeting, reduced logistical costs, and enabled continuity of support from relief to recovery.

Moreover, deliberate efforts were made to align targeting criteria across both grants, ensuring that the same vulnerable households benefited from both immediate assistance (e.g. cash, NFIs) and longer-term investments (e.g. vocational training, irrigation). This reinforced coherence and minimized fragmentation.

As previously mentioned, staff often worked fluidly across both grants, filling technical or geographical gaps irrespective of the original funding stream. This adaptability—facilitated by leadership under the Chapeau approach—allowed for consistent messaging, technical continuity, and efficient use of limited human resources.

At the same time, the Chapeau framework served as the formal mechanism for aligning strategy, staffing, targeting, and reporting. It also enabled cross-learning and communication between the two grants, supported by regional coordination roles that oversaw both portfolios and the use of nexus friendly tools and logic to provide a shared conceptual and operational language between projects.

> *"No, I actually think it was really helpful in terms of overlap — especially when it came to targeting and geographic areas. It supported the Chapeau approach by allowing us to reach more people using two different funding sources and approaches, which helped address needs more quickly. And the*

> *communities were always involved. For example, when doing sensitization, it was the same people being reached, so the process moved faster." – KII 16*

5.6.2. Challenges & barriers

Despite notable progress in aligning humanitarian and development programming under the HDP Nexus and FCPA frameworks, the GFFO and BMZ TDA projects faced significant structural, contextual, and operational challenges that impeded seamless coordination and adaptive delivery.

1. **Fragmented project design and asynchronous planning**

Perhaps the most fundamental barrier was the lack of joint design. The two projects, while later framed as complementary under the Chapeau logic, were not designed together, leading to inconsistencies in objectives, timelines, and sectoral scopes. This created missed opportunities for strategic layering and burdened staff with harmonizing intentions post hoc, rather than from inception.

2. **Divergent donor frameworks and regulatory coherence**

GFFO and BMZ were governed by distinct donor requirements, compliance frameworks, and reporting formats. Staff frequently cited budgetary rigidity, slow donor approvals, and disjointed communication between donor ministries (e.g., Foreign Affairs vs. Development) as barriers to timely adaptation. These regulatory silos complicated the application of shared staffing, resource pooling, and programmatic flexibility. While programming and coordination pillars of the HDP Nexus were actively pursued, financing remained a notable gap—both in terms of donor commitment and systemic alignment. As one respondent noted, closing this gap will require proactive engagement with donors to shift the funding landscape itself:

> *"Another recommendation that I would want to put forward for World Vision's resource acquisition team is to continue to develop the donor landscape, to ensure that donors have agreed and have signed into funding the HDP Nexus. One of the key pillars of the HDP Nexus is financing—it has three key pillars: programming, coordination, and financing. So World Vision and other organizations are doing the two parts, programming and coordination. But to effectively roll out this HDP Nexus approach, we also need donors to finance proposals that ensure we serve the most vulnerable people." — FGD 1*

3. **Geographical and operational overlap: a double-edged sword**

While geographical co-location of the two programs enabled shared staffing, common targeting, and joint monitoring, it also strained limited resources and exacerbated coordination fatigue. In areas of overlap, staff had to navigate parallel systems, dual accountability structures, and competing demands, often without adequate capacity support.

4. **Political instability and insecurity**

Recurrent political instability and localized violence—especially in Northern Bahr el Ghazal and areas bordering Sudan—frequently disrupted implementation. Access constraints, displacement, and security risks necessitated continual re-planning but often without sufficient crisis modifiers or contingency funds. As one participant noted:

> *"Insecurity remains a significant challenge, particularly in areas affected by political tensions. This affects our ability to access certain communities and implement planned activities safely." – KII 1*

5. **Environmental and climatic disruptions**

Floods, droughts, and erratic weather patterns challenged agricultural and infrastructure components of both programs. For instance, tree planting initiatives failed in areas without water access, pointing to a design–context mismatch and underscoring the need for more robust feasibility assessments during project planning.

> *"Climatic factors like flooding and drought contribute to insecurity and displacement, affecting community stability and project targets. The project has to adapt to these challenges" – KII 1*

6. **Coordination gaps and missed opportunities**

Field-level coordination was often strong, but higher-level alignment and stakeholder engagement lagged. Communities were not always engaged in inception planning, and local authorities were brought in only during implementation, limiting ownership. Coordination gaps during the Sudan crisis further revealed how fragmented responses weaken synergy when flexible, rapid extensions are most needed.

7. **Stakeholder and community engagement challenges**

Effective consultation was undermined in some areas by poor communication infrastructure, attempts to navigate and avoid conflicts of interest among stakeholders, and the need to manage expectations related to financial compensation or preferential access to resources. Additionally, some community members reported fears of retaliation when using complaint mechanisms. Others noted concerns about exclusion during registration processes, which may reflect perceived inconsistencies or limitations in implementation processes., rather than intentional exclusion.

8. **Capacity gaps and staff turnover**

High turnover of both WV staff and local government personnel disrupted continuity, while sub-grantee capacity varied widely. The lack of consistent capacity building and mentorship was cited as a major barrier to deepening local ownership and sustaining gains.

9. **Rigid mindsets and institutional inertia**

Internally, many staff remained grounded in linear development paradigms, struggling to operationalize FCPA's adaptive and iterative approach. As one interviewee remarked:

> *"Even though we're encouraged to be flexible, the systems don't always allow it" – KII 4*

10. **Tensions between donor requirements and local norms**

Efforts to align with donor priorities around gender equality and child protection sometimes clashed with local social norms. Field teams were left to negotiate the tension between programmatic fidelity and culturally appropriate delivery.

6. EFFECTIVE PRACTICES AND LESSONS LEARNED

In this section, some of the good practices and lessons learned from the implementation of the two HDP Nexus projects in NBG, as identified by the respondents, are presented. These include the most effective, innovative, and transferable strategies that have contributed significantly to the projects' successes.

6.1. EFFECTIVE PRACTICES

The following effective practices highlight key strategies that emerged from the implementation of World Vision's HDP Nexus projects in NBG, showcasing approaches that successfully integrated humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding efforts, as they emerged from the primary data collected for this study.

Implementing Nexus-aligned interventions that sequence emergency and development interventions, enabling communities to transition smoothly from immediate relief to long-term resilience-building.

Integrating multi-sectoral programming by combining WASH, FSL, shelter, DRR, protection and peacebuilding to deliver layered programming that addresses interconnected community needs.

1. Adaptability was demonstrated through flexible budgeting and programming—including reallocating resources during crises, adjusting targeting in response to emerging vulnerabilities, and enabling up to 20% intra-country budget transfers.
2. Strengthening coordination between BMZ and GFFO teams through shared staffing, joint monitoring visits, and regular learning exchanges to ensure program coherence and avoid duplication.
3. Leveraging community structures, including chiefs, church leaders, RRC, women's groups, and youth networks, for beneficiary identification, mobilization, dispute resolution, and feedback gathering, ensuring local ownership and relevance.
4. Promoting inclusive stakeholder engagement by involving local authorities, line ministries, CBOs, and community groups in planning, implementation, and accountability processes.
5. Establishing community-led structures such as DRR committees, Water User Committees, and Project Management Committees to oversee infrastructure, lead local monitoring, and manage risk reduction efforts.
6. Embedding community feedback and complaints mechanisms (CRM) like suggestion boxes, Complaint Help Desks, and digital tracking platforms to enhance accountability and responsiveness and transparent resolution of issues.
7. Enabling synergies between sectors and actors by encouraging organic linkages—for example, connecting nutrition-trained mothers' groups to schools and health facilities for broader impact.
8. Deploying CBOs and partners strategically with clearly defined responsibilities (e.g., Action for Children Development Foundation (ACDF) on hygiene and peacebuilding, Christian Organization for Sustainable Society South Sudan (COSS-SS) on shelter) to maximize efficiency and local technical capacity.
9. Building sustainability through targeted capacity strengthening in agroforestry, water system maintenance, nursery management, and income-generating activities, helping reduce long-term aid dependence.
10. Equipping community members with market and disaster risk information to strengthen resilience and facilitate peer-to-peer dissemination of knowledge and early warning.
11. Using local understandings of fragility—including ethnic conflict, flooding, economic precarity, and weak governance—to inform programming and strengthen contextual relevance.

12. Applying FCPA tools such as scenario planning and context monitoring to inform targeting and activity design, enabling real-time adjustments in response to seasonal shocks and displacement trends.

6.2. LESSONS LEARNED

Effective collaboration through shared staffing, joint resource usage, and movement plans between the GFFO and BMZ TDA projects, whether formal or informal, enhanced operational efficiency and reduced duplication. However, for such efforts to be sustained and scaled, robust coordination is required to manage workloads, avoid burnout, and ensure clarity of mandates and structured processes for transitioning beneficiaries between emergency and development phases.

Clear, regular, and reliable communication through stakeholder clusters, formal meetings, informal channels, and tools like airtime, phones capable of field documentation, and wireless internet access are essential to facilitate coordination, enabling rapid response, issue resolution, effective monitoring, real-time reporting, and accountability across stakeholders.

Early and consistent involvement of community stakeholders, local authorities, and government actors was crucial for aligning interventions with local priorities, ensuring community buy-in, and improving coordination and legitimacy but early involvement is key to improve effectiveness.

Transparent and inclusive beneficiary selection processes positively influenced community satisfaction and project success overall, despite occasional mentions of shortcomings in these processes. However, ongoing review of beneficiary lists was necessary to prevent grievances, particularly during project phase transitions, such as from GFFO to BMZ activities.

Robust community feedback mechanisms can foster accountability and responsiveness, but uptake and responsiveness varied. Effectiveness heavily depends on consistent follow-up, responsiveness, and community trust in these systems, and while CRM platforms like suggestion boxes and help desks were widely used, their functionality depended on consistent follow-up, and some communities still preferred face-to-face feedback.

Project teams demonstrated adaptability in response to unexpected circumstances (e.g., flooding, displacement, or community grievances). However, their ability to provide context-sensitive responses was reported as being occasionally hampered by centralized decision-making, and restricted by donor frameworks and limited budgeting

Flexibility in resource allocation, including the existence of contingency funds or rapid response mechanisms, and greater delegation of authority to field teams was highlighted as was crucial in addressing unforeseen needs and shocks, and ensuring relevance and effectiveness during program implementation.

Shared infrastructure (e.g., water points, community gardens) incidentally fostered peaceful coexistence and improved social bonds. However, deliberate design and implementation of structured peacebuilding activities require intentional integration into Nexus strategies for sustained impact.

Women's active involvement in economic and community activities (e.g., vegetable production, VSLA groups) was crucial. Women's participation significantly enhanced their economic empowerment, resilience, with spillover effects in overall community social cohesion.

Understanding of fragility varies between local implementers and donor frameworks. Field teams identified fragility in terms of tangible, immediate challenges. At the same time, they emphasized community resilience and adaptive capacity in the face of hardships. In contrast, donor definitions were perceived as broader and more political, creating challenges in shared language and priorities.

Training and local capacity building contributed to sustainability but need tracking. Capacity-building efforts, such as training local pump mechanics or DRR committees, were appreciated, but systematic tracking is needed to assess whether these skills were retained or institutionalized post-project.

Context monitoring and scenario planning improve adaptability but require broader staff capacity. Tools like GEOCARR and informal scenario planning helped teams adapt, but not all staff had yet received training in these methods, limiting consistent use across locations.

Partnership with local CBOs added value but required clearer coordination structures. Collaboration with organizations like ACDF and COSS was beneficial, yet differing expectations and communication gaps occasionally slowed down implementation or caused role confusion.

Layered interventions promote resilience, but community messaging remains crucial. For their success. Beneficiaries appreciated the combined support (e.g., FSL + WASH + shelter), but were not always aware these efforts were part of a unified strategy, reducing perceived coherence.

In fragile contexts, project design must prioritize bottom-up planning and community-driven prioritization, allowing local stakeholders to identify and rank their needs. Additionally, built-in flexibility and crisis modifiers are critical for adaptive programming as respondents highlighted the gap that arises when mechanisms for responding to unexpected shocks are missing.

Donor reporting requirements may limit flexibility and innovation. Field teams noted that standardized templates sometimes limited their ability to respond innovatively to complex problems, especially in contexts affected by overlapping shocks that do not easily fit into existing reporting formats.

7. CONCLUSIONS

This concluding chapter revisits the core research questions outlined in the study's TOR, integrating findings from the preceding chapters with broader sectoral debates and literature on HDP Nexus and FCPA programming in fragile contexts. The study set out to interrogate how World Vision Germany's BMZ and GFFO-funded projects in South Sudan implemented Nexus-aligned principles under the Chapeau framework, with a particular focus on complementarity, coherence, adaptability, sustainability, and localization. Through an integrated review of project documentation, primary qualitative data, and external evidence, the analysis aimed to surface not only the operational manifestations of HDP and FCPA frameworks but also the underlying mechanisms—formal and informal—that enabled or constrained them.

What emerges from the synthesis is a layered picture. The projects achieved meaningful alignment across humanitarian and development domains, with pockets of promising synergy and adaptive practice, particularly at field level. At the same time, the implementation surfaced a set of structural and contextual constraints that are commonly encountered in operationalizing the Nexus in fragile and protracted settings—such as limited flexibility in donor frameworks, varying ability to apply conflict sensitivity approaches, and opportunities to further strengthen localized engagement and joint analysis across partners.

How were the HDP Nexus, FCPA, and Chapeau approach integrated into the projects?

The BMZ and GFFO projects in South Sudan integrated the HDP Nexus, FCPA, and Chapeau approaches in layered and complementary ways. The Chapeau framework provided the structural basis for geographic, temporal, and programmatic alignment between the two projects, enabling smooth handovers from humanitarian to development activities. The HDP Nexus was operationalized through coherent, field-level linkages across sectors (e.g., WASH, livelihoods, nutrition), targeting the same households with both emergency and longer-term support. While the FCPA was not explicitly planned into the projects, its principles—adaptive planning, scenario-based adjustments, and community-led targeting—were organically embedded in practice. Overall, integration was driven more by frontline adaptation and contextual pragmatism than by formal frameworks.

To what extent did coordination and synergy occur between the two projects?

The overview of synergies and complementarities between the GFFO and BMZ TDA projects indicates a layered interplay between them that includes both previously documented, as well as emergent synergies and complementarities at the grassroot level, that enhanced the operationalization of the HDP Nexus, albeit with different intensity across various sectors.

The document analysis identified clear linkages, such as the complementary water infrastructure interventions between the two projects, as well as in hygiene and DRR, nutrition and food security, and infrastructure and livelihoods. These synergies demonstrate how GFFO's humanitarian focus aligned with BMZ's development-oriented efforts, and reflect the Chapeau approach's intent to bridge siloed approaches. However, these linkages primarily reflect instances of top-down planning, consistent with the broader critique of HDP implementation in South Sudan.

The material that emerged from the interviews provided a finer sieve, capturing grassroots and bottom-up manifestations of synergies that were not previously captured elsewhere. These emergent complementarities, such as community-driven coordination in water point maintenance or

the integration of local knowledge into borehole site selection, highlight the important role of local actors in enhancing project alignment across the HDP Nexus, particularly across projects implemented within the geographical vicinity of each other and addressing the same demographics. This finding aligns with previous scholarship's emphasis on localization[94] as a cornerstone of the Nexus, where local actors' contextual knowledge can bridge gaps left by top-down frameworks in practice, even if community consultations at the design phase were not integrated prominently at the outset.

Some coordination gaps as well as logistical challenges and limited community participation in planning phases that emerged through the data suggest missed opportunities and contextual factors that undermined ever-closer collaboration. Lastly, the limited mention of some activities (e.g. hygiene clubs, radio campaigns) in the transcripts suggests potential uneven awareness or visibility, while the similarly rare mentions of peacebuilding activities (e.g. BMZ 3.2 or 3.3 outputs) indicate that synergies in this pillar of the HDP Nexus may be underdeveloped still, compared to humanitarian and development efforts.

Comparatively, these findings echo experiences in other fragile contexts like Mali,[95] where previous studies note that grassroots synergies often emerge organically to address coordination challenges, yet remain under-documented due to donor-driven reporting structures. In South Sudan, the interview insights suggest a similar dynamic, where local agency enhances Nexus outcomes but is constrained by limited direct funding to L/NNGOs.

What interactions took place with other stakeholders to ensure a cohesive and coordinated approach?

Community engagement was a cornerstone of both the GFFO and BMZ TDA projects in South Sudan, but its depth and timing varied widely. Local actors were frequently involved during implementation—supporting outreach, mobilization, and delivery—yet their participation in project design and site selection was often limited or absent. This reactive inclusion, as one respondent put it, led to missteps such as selecting tree planting sites without water access, reflecting a broader disconnect between top-down planning and local realities.

While complaints mechanisms such as suggestion boxes and help desks were widely implemented, their impact hinged on consistent follow-up. In many cases, face-to-face engagement was preferred—particularly in low-literacy or remote communities—suggesting a need for culturally responsive accountability strategies. Encouragingly, examples of adaptive responsiveness emerged, such as the revision of fishing kits in response to community complaints, showing that accountability loops can drive tangible program changes when followed through.

Local committees—especially water user groups, VSLAs, and DRR structures—proved to be critical anchors for sustainability. When well-supported, they collected contributions, managed minor repairs, and organized community feedback. However, gaps in training and unclear escalation pathways sometimes limited their effectiveness. The absence of structured feedback to communities—i.e., the "closing of the loop"—was a recurring weakness, undermining trust in formal systems. Stronger vertical accountability mechanisms and clearer roles for local intermediaries will be essential to institutionalizing meaningful community voice within project cycles.

Which FCPA tools and principles were applied, and how were they implemented?

The application of FCPA was both widespread and under-acknowledged—"everywhere and nowhere," as one might say. While the structured language and formal branding of the FCPA were rarely invoked explicitly by field teams or in project documentation, its core logic—scenario-based planning, adaptive management, and community-centered programming—was clearly embedded in operational practice.

[94] Kemmerling (2004)

[95] Müller-Koné et al. (2024)

This implementation often occurred intuitively. Staff frequently applied FCPA-aligned tools such as scenario planning, context monitoring, and the SAT dials without formally naming them. As one respondent put it, "*We never used the word FCPA, but we did scenario planning and context monitoring weekly with the field teams.*" This tacit adoption suggests that FCPA has diffused as a mindset—shaping how teams think, not just how they label their actions.

Among the most consistently applied tools were context monitoring dashboards (e.g., through Kobo Collect), GEOCARR assessments, and anticipated action plans—each used to track shifting environments, design forward-looking interventions, and prepare flexible responses to crises. These were often deployed by DRR committees and local enumerators, and adapted for use in low-literacy, community-driven settings. In this way, FCPA tools helped anchor a real-time understanding of fragility at the grassroots level.

The SAT framework was actively used in problem-solving reviews and decision-making forums, enabling teams to shift project posture based on flooding, displacement, or economic shocks. Likewise, crisis modifiers, where permitted would enable program pivots without needing new grants—though donor resistance occasionally limited their activation.

The peace and conflict sensitivity tools—including MSTC, Do No Harm, and the IPACs framework—were acknowledged by field teams, especially during design and early implementation phases. As context analysis tools, their use was generally limited to initial assessments or triggered by notable contextual shifts, rather than applied consistently throughout, an approach that aligns with broader programmatic practice, where such tools are activated during critical junctures such as redesign, scenario planning or major shifts.

World Vision employed a broader set of mechanisms throughout implementation to ensure interventions were conflict-sensitive, inclusive, and socially cohesive. Participants mentioned a robust context monitoring system that collected monthly data on political, economic, and displacement trends, analyzed through Power BI to categorize locations into "survive," "adapt," or "thrive" zones. This enabled real-time adaptation, such as relocating a school affected by flooding or suspending activities in conflict-affected areas (KII_13; KII_8). Security assessments and disaster risk reduction committees at local and state levels further supported anticipatory action and conflict risk mitigation (FGD 4 HQ).

Learning was institutionalized through monthly joint monitoring updates between the BMZ and GFFO projects, technical working groups, and regular coordination forums (KII_8; FGD_1). These mechanisms created space for surfacing and responding to operational challenges. For instance, revisions to fishing kits and water container sizes were made following feedback through Community Response Mechanisms (KII_8).

With regard to Inclusion, participation and dialogue, an inclusive targeting approach was adopted, ensuring the participation of people with disabilities, women, and youth through dedicated community committees (KII_1; FGD_1). Feedback was captured through CRMs, church leaders, radio talk shows, and field visits, promoting two-way accountability and contextual alignment (KII_1; FGD_1). Community dialogue was also facilitated regularly through in-person meetings, enabling community ownership and early identification of risks.

The FCPA approach explicitly integrated the "Do No Harm" principle, with scenario planning and context monitoring shaping decisions to avoid exacerbating local tensions. This included suspending programming in areas facing inter-communal violence and involving local peace actors to support conflict-sensitive implementation (KII_13; KII_8).

Did the HDP and/or FCPA approaches enhance project adaptability in response to changing circumstances? If so, how?

The HDP Nexus and FCPA approaches enhanced the adaptability of the GFFO and BMZ TDA projects in South Sudan by embedding flexible, scenario-based planning and enabling decentralized decision-making at the field level. While not always labelled explicitly, FCPA tools such as context monitoring, scenario planning, and the SAT framework were widely used to inform program adjustments in real time.

Adaptability was most evident in how field teams responded to emerging risks, such as floods or displacement, by reallocating resources, adjusting delivery modalities, or shifting geographic focus. For example, monthly context monitoring using Power BI dashboards helped staff track dynamic conditions and align activities accordingly. The SAT dials were used as a practical reflection tool to guide strategic shifts without compromising project goals.

Flexible staffing arrangements across the two grants further reinforced agility. Staff routinely stepped in across projects, avoiding duplication and enabling knowledge transfer, especially in areas where both GFFO and BMZ interventions overlapped. This operational flexibility ensured consistent service delivery even amid external shocks.

At the coordination level, adaptability was enabled through joint program monitoring, shared leadership, and cross-grant learning. These mechanisms supported rapid response while aligning with broader strategic goals. However, rigid donor requirements and limited crisis modifier activation occasionally hindered full flexibility.

Did these approaches strengthen accountability and consultation between World Vision and the communities? If so, in what ways?

The Nexus and FCPA approaches contributed meaningfully to strengthening accountability and community consultation in World Vision's projects, though the results were uneven. Field-level mechanisms—such as CRMs, local committees, and direct staff engagement—enabled more consistent feedback and responsiveness, especially when tied to adaptations in implementation. Communities reported instances where feedback led to tangible change, such as adjusting distributions or reselecting sites, signalling operational improvements in participatory practice.

However, these gains were often dependent on individual staff initiative and local team dynamics rather than being uniformly systematized. In more remote areas, formal mechanisms like help desks or suggestion boxes were less trusted or understood, leading to a continued reliance on informal, face-to-face consultations. Where follow-up was weak, trust in accountability structures reportedly faltered.

Furthermore, while local committees (e.g., WASH or DRR groups) played important bridging roles between communities and implementers, their functionality varied based on the support and clarity they received. Without sustained capacity-building or clearly defined escalation pathways, some committees struggled to move beyond basic grievance handling. Overall, while the approaches helped reframe accountability as a shared responsibility, some implementation gaps and structural limitations undermined the full potential of community-driven consultation.

Did the implementation of HDP and/or FCPA improve management agility among World Vision program staff? If so, how?

Adaptive management and operational agility were reported, particularly in how staff, decision-making, and coordination were structured. A flexible staffing model allowed individuals to work across both grants based on expertise, enabling resource efficiency, continuity, and reduced duplication. *"We've been flexible in terms of human resources… someone can support the sister project"* noted staff members, illustrating how shared roles were the norm, not the exception.

This approach was reinforced by scenario-based planning embedded in project design. Teams used context monitoring tools and real-time data (e.g., Power BI dashboards) to track shifts and adjust programming dynamically. Decision-making was intentionally decentralized, enabling field staff to act quickly during crises—whether that meant relocating schools, redirecting cash-for-work activities, or activating disaster response mechanisms.

Coordination mechanisms were equally adaptive. Joint movement plans, shared reporting, and cross-functional meetings enabled cohesive action across projects. Staff integration extended into M&E, quality assurance, and logistics, blurring the lines between humanitarian and development streams and reinforcing Nexus coherence. Despite challenges—particularly in budget flexibility and donor responsiveness—the combination of integrated staffing, local ownership, and real-time adaptation created a management ecosystem capable of responding effectively to fragility.

Did the application of these frameworks contribute to the sustainability of the projects? If so, in what ways?

The GFFO and BMZ TDA projects in South Sudan contributed meaningfully to resilience, local capacity building, and system strengthening, often through practical field-based adaptations rather than formal frameworks. Key achievements included the formation and training of community-led structures—such as Water Management and DRR Committees—equipped to sustain services, monitor risks, and lead local responses.

Projects engaged local government actors, including extension workers and Payam-level supervisors, as co-implementers. This deepened institutional linkages and helped embed project functions into existing systems. Vocational training and youth employment initiatives enhanced self-reliance and contributed to stability by reducing economic precarity.

For both staff and communities, sustainability was understood not just as maintaining infrastructure but as fostering ownership, knowledge transfer, and independence. *"We need to train them to stand on their own,"* stakeholders emphasized. Evidence of success included community-led maintenance of roads and ongoing tree-planting without external support.

However, sustainability faltered when design decisions failed to capture local realities, such as siting tree nurseries far from water sources. These challenges point at the need for locally grounded planning and greater flexibility during implementation. Overall, the projects demonstrated that lasting resilience emerges from trusted local partnerships, responsive systems, and community leadership—not simply from external inputs or planning.

To what extent does local staff's understanding of fragility and other key Nexus/FCPA concepts align with perspectives held in donor countries?

Field staff and donors hold markedly different conceptualizations of fragility, with significant implications for how HDP Nexus and FCPA-aligned programs are designed, communicated, and implemented. For World Vision staff and local partners in South Sudan, fragility is not an abstract term but a daily, embodied reality—described through tangible risks like political instability, communal violence, environmental shocks, and economic hardship. One staff member likened the country to a glass: "When it falls, it breaks"— pointing at the acute precarity faced by communities.

Field staff do not frame fragility in isolation; they often pair it with resilience, reflecting a dual lived reality. This emphasis on community strength and adaptive capacity contrasts with mainstream donor framings that often remain strategic, institutional, and technically defined—focusing on governance benchmarks, macro-level risk profiles, or international policy frameworks, and risk distancing interventions from lived experience on the ground.

This disconnect between strategic abstraction and operational reality can have several consequences:

- It complicates the design of coherent programs, especially when donor definitions prioritize structural reforms while field staff seek immediate, community-centered, adaptive responses.
- It creates communication gaps in coordination and reporting, especially when multiple donors apply divergent regulations, templates and terminologies.
- It inhibits shared language, which is essential for integrated Nexus programming to function smoothly across humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding efforts.

Both donor and field perspectives are valid—but bridging them is critical. This would require:

- Co-created definitions of fragility that balance systemic approaches with ground-level realities.
- A shift from labelling contexts as "fragile" to recognizing them as dynamic and resilient.
- Greater investment in contextualized design, language harmonization, and operational flexibility, ensuring that strategy is not only documented but reflected in practice.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations emerge from the findings of this study, drawing from primary data analysis and the desk review. They suggest ways to enhance World Vision's future HDP programming, improve alignment with donor priorities and implementing partners, and provide guidance for scaling and replicating similar programming in other contexts.

1	**Enhance adaptable programming and flexible funding including contingency and anticipatory action funds for rapid reallocation in crises.**
	Explicitly design funding modalities that accommodate short-term emergency responses and long-term development and peacebuilding goals, allowing quick shifts in response to evolving man-made or climate-driven needs. Consider longer-term funding with smaller amounts rather than short-term intensive funding to ensure sustainability and full implementation. Include crisis modifiers in project design to cover unexpected needs that arise during implementation, and strengthen transition mechanisms that ensure a smooth shift from emergency response to development programming, enabling continuity for communities and avoiding service gaps during handovers between phases.
2	**Develop the donor landscape by proactively advocating for donor financing aligned with effective Nexus principles, promoting harmonized funding modalities, strategic coherence, and coordinated or pooled mechanisms.**
	Collaborate actively with peer organizations and civil society networks to amplify collective advocacy, strengthen internal coordination among country delegations and donor agencies, and promote the integration of Nexus principles into policies, funding instruments, and operational practices.
3	**Strengthen staff capacity and knowledge management for staff and sub-grantees through comprehensive, standardized training on HDP Nexus and FCPA approaches—particularly context monitoring and scenario planning—prior to and throughout implementation.**
	Ensure training is practical, ongoing, contextually tailored, and complemented by structured peer-to-peer learning and knowledge-sharing platforms, facilitating internal dialogue, collective reflection, and bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge acquisition and its practical application in daily operations. Establish technical working groups that include different projects and stakeholders to facilitate sharing of ideas, challenges, and innovations. Integrate training on innovative tools, such as mobile technology for monitoring and digital accountability platforms, to enhance responsiveness and improve feedback loops. Scale up training programs for implementing partners and country teams, strengthening their analytical capacity and strategic thinking to improve decision-making in response to changing contexts, and ensuring a uniform understanding and application of Nexus and FCPA methodologies.

	Systematically involve local stakeholders—including marginalized groups, women, youth, civil society, and traditional structures (chiefs, church leaders, RRC, and women's groups)—in all phases from assessment and design to implementation, monitoring, and evaluation
4	Prioritize beneficiary-led and participatory approaches, actively involving communities in decision-making processes to ensure interventions are contextually relevant, responsive, and sustainable, particularly during crises or rapid contextual changes. Establish culturally appropriate feedback mechanisms, grievance processes, and incentive structures that foster sustained participation, legitimacy, and long-term ownership by local communities. Proactively map, engage with and maintain networks of local stakeholders to build trust and be prepositioned for crisis coordination.
	Explicitly prioritize localization by investing in the capacities, leadership, and agency of local and national actors.
5	Strengthen local organizations, civil society, and government counterparts through targeted support, enabling them to lead design, delivery, and monitoring of Nexus activities. Facilitate their access to forums and decision-making processes, bridging community realities and global frameworks. Promote internal awareness of local capacities and available resources among World Vision staff, so that needs can be matched with local solutions and actors. Institutionalize structured, joint monitoring mechanisms involving humanitarian, development, peace actors, government counterparts, and local stakeholders, and clarify and communicate division of labor, mandates and responsibilities between partners, particularly regarding technical specializations to ensure complementarity and reduce redundancies.
	Prioritize strategic infrastructure investments (roads, water facilities, market infrastructure) and economic stability initiatives informed by thorough, inclusive community assessments and feasibility studies involving local stakeholders.
6	Ensure investments meet immediate needs by emphasizing context relevance and community contribution and ownership. Prioritize initiatives that promote local economic stability as a key enabler for sustained community engagement and contribution to development efforts, recognizing that economic security forms a foundation for broader participation, trust, and peacebuilding outcomes. Document and share indigenous knowledge and practices around those activities among local authorities, communities and inter/national stakeholders.
	Mainstream conflict sensitivity and robust context monitoring as core components of program quality across all Nexus interventions.
7	Strengthen the mainstreaming of conflict sensitivity by embedding its principles into all aspects of program delivery and organizational operations. Beyond the use of context monitoring tools like GEOCARR or MSTC, this includes integrating conflict sensitivity indicators into monitoring frameworks, after action reviews, and monthly learning meetings; facilitating

community dialogue to maintain a two-way understanding between context and project delivery; and incorporating conflict sensitivity into risk management, procurement, and staffing decisions.

Ensure that all activities, behaviors, tools, and methodologies are designed and implemented in ways that do not exacerbate tensions, and wherever possible, contribute positively to social cohesion. Where gaps in understanding of conflict sensitivity approaches exist, invest in capacity strengthening through accessible training resources such as World Vision's online conflict sensitivity course, and create space for reflective learning on conflict sensitivity practices within teams.

8

Position peacebuilding as a foundational and strategic programming component in conflict-affected contexts, embedding such activities centrally rather than as supplementary add-ons.

Position peacebuilding not as a supplementary or siloed component, but as a central and strategic element of programming in fragile and conflict-affected settings. Integrate dedicated peacebuilding activities—such as community dialogue sessions, local peace committees, conflict mediation training, and trauma-informed approaches—deliberately into program design alongside humanitarian and development interventions.

Allocate dedicated resources to peacebuilding efforts, particularly in areas affected by inter-communal violence. Strengthen partnerships with churches, religious institutions, and traditional authorities, and build their capacityto amplify locally grounded peace strategies. Ensure that these efforts are sustained beyond the project cycle, and that peace outcomes are tracked through appropriate indicators and community engagement.

Systematically embed these principles into organizational practices and project designs to improve effectiveness, responsiveness, and sustainability, prioritizing programming that addresses root causes of fragility rather than solely reacting to immediate crises.

9

Develop clear, unified terminology, indicators, and reporting templates specifically tailored for the HDP Nexus.

Use consistent internal and external language around the Nexus, FCPA and Chapeau approaches to foster a unified and consistent understanding and shared vocabulary across all organizational levels. Standardise and indicators measuring conflict sensitivity, social cohesion, resilience, and governance, as well as the impact of the HDP Nexus and FCPA approaches at outcome and goal levels, not just outputs, allowing flexibility to adapt to evolving contexts, and explicitly capturing peace contributions across Nexus activities. Support the establishment of common reporting mechanisms between donors to reduce administrative burden and improve efficiency. Develop simplified guidance materials on these approaches for field staff to ensure practical application. Consider the use of vocabulary around fragility to highlight resilience and strengths rather than focusing on preconceived vulnerabilities.

10

Embed explicit gender-sensitive considerations into all programming phases, directly addressing distinct vulnerabilities and needs of women and girls disproportionately impacted by conflict, displacement, and climate shocks

Prioritize women's empowerment through targeted interventions—livelihood training, protection initiatives, resource access—and meaningfully include women in local decision-making, community committees, and peacebuilding processes.

Integrate climate risk assessments into all Nexus programming, recognizing climate shocks as key conflict and vulnerability drivers—particularly regarding resource tensions.

11

Systematically incorporate climate considerations into strategic planning, intervention design, conflict analyses, early warning systems, and adaptive responses to ensure resilience and responsiveness to current and anticipated climate impacts that intensify existing communal conflicts and displacement. Adapt programming to climate change trends, particularly in areas prone to flooding and drought and implement more climate-smart agriculture techniques and crops to build resilience against environmental shocks and desertification.

Shift from project-level to strategic-level Nexus implementation, by adopting holistic, area-based or country-wide approaches that proactively address the root causes of fragility—working *on* fragility, not just *in* it—even in more stable settings.

12

Review and adapt organizational policies, administrative systems, and bureaucratic procedures to support adaptive management, timely response, and sustained alignment with Nexus and FCPA objectives. Apply the HDP Nexus approach across all contexts, not only as a responce to crises but to strengthen resilience and prevent them from occurring.

Strengthen internal coordination and multidirectional learning on Nexus and FCPA within World Vision.

13

Break down internal silos by integrating workflows and promoting multidirectional communication (top-down, bottom-up, horizontal), developing "two-way capacity building", where field teams also educate global leadership. Invest in internal knowledge management systems and regular, inclusive in-person and online learning forums to facilitate effective collaboration, knowledge sharing, adaptation, and coherent organizational application of Nexus principles.

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ANNEX 1: TERMS OF REFERENCE

Terms Of Reference
Research Consultancy
HDP NEXUS Project, South Sudan 2024

July 2024

1. Background and Rationale

World Vision Germany (WVG) seeks a deeper understanding about challenges and good practices in the implementation of the HDP-Nexus (or respectively CHAPEAU) approach in order to improve programming strength and organizational learning. Doing so, WVG attempts to not only measure impact, but also (and in connection with impact evaluation efforts) contribute to the more theory-driven research on the topic. This research consultancy follows upon the separately contracted endline evaluation of a project funded under the German Federal Foreign Office (GFFO) and a (separately contracted) mid-term evaluation of a project in South Sudan (Northern Bahr el Ghazal) funded by German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development Transitional Aid (BMZ ÜH).

In order to achieve this, the purpose of this research project is to (1) analyse evaluation data of the two aforementioned evaluations to shed light on the research questions (see below under section 4) and to (2) triangulate the findings through a literature review as well as a limited number of Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). The research should be conducted and presented in the context of current literature on the HDP Nexus. A transdisciplinary research design should be employed to generate knowledge from and for the perspectives of humanitarian practice, academic inquiry and policy.

2. Aims and Objectives

Against the aforementioned background, this study aims to achieve the following:

1. Contribute to the evidence base on and for NEXUS programming through a research output that helps to establish World Vision as a key factor in the field
2. Contribute to further shaping and informing WVG's HDP Nexus programming
3. Assess how well the Chapeau linkage between the two projects (GFFO and BMZ -ÜH) was implemented

3. Problem Statement and Research Gap

The HDP Nexus has become a programmatic and strategic paradigm endorsed by several institutional humanitarian and development aid donors, particularly since the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016. It aims to increasingly interlink the three sectors synergistically to increase aid effectiveness and efficiency. To date, strategic and operational challenges and issues abound, for instance, in terms of funding, strategic, operational and funding-related considerations, it is still too often hindered by separate and siloed ways of thinking and working. While the potential of better coordination between the three fields of relief, development and peace programming is evident, a broad research and evidence base on the HDP Nexus, particularly in operational contexts, is still lacking. In the context of local and regional Nexus programming, it is therefore relevant to inquire how projects set up to operationalise the Nexus succeed in or fail at connecting over the boundaries of relief, development and peace interventions.

Since 2022, World Vision has been running two projects in South Sudan which were designed as Nexus projects under the Chapeau approach of the GFFO, incorporating elements of World Vision's own Nexus-related Fragile Contexts Programming Approach (FCPA). The knowledge gap to be addressed in the research emerges around the degree of interaction between the two projects, specifically considering how they were adapted to changing circumstances, reviewing usage of distinct tools of the FCPA, as well as discussing existing assumptions and common practices of the Chapeau Approach and

HDP Nexus. Furthermore, it is hoped that the research can shed light on how essential concepts of the FCPA / Nexus are understood, interpreted and applied locally, and what wider lessons for the aid sector can be drawn from World Vision's experience.

4. Assessment Methodology and Research Questions

This research project draws from two data sources. Firstly, the separate evaluation data of the two projects shall be analysed. This data will be collected by a different team at an earlier stage. In addition to this raw data, it is hoped that the evaluation report will be finalised and available as a resource to the research project. Secondly, based on an initial review of the evaluation data, the researcher should conduct approximately 10-15 KIIs and 1-2 FGDs with local and regional stakeholders and WV staff in South Sudan. These are expected to take place in Juba as well as the project region (Northern Bahr el Ghazal).

The final research questions should be defined together with the WVG advisory team, based on the following **indicative** list, using the OECD DAC recommendations on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus [1] and FCPA framework as context. Gender equality, disability and social inclusion should be employed as cross-sectional analytical lenses.

Tentative Research Questions

Concept

1. To what extent was the Theory of Change of the projects operationalized in the sense of the HDP Nexus (general), the Chapeau Approach (specific GFFO / BMZ approach to Nexus) , and the FCPA (specific WVI approach to Nexus)?
2. To what extent does the conceptual understanding of local staff concerning fragility and other key notions of the Nexus match those held in donor countries?
3. How and to what extent did the projects complement and coordinate with each other across the three pillars of the H-D-P spectrum?

Implementation

4. Was there any interaction with other stakeholders in the area to work towards a coordinated and cohesive approach and if so, how can it be characterised?
5. How and to what degree did the projects adaptin line with changing circumstances? What were positive examples? What were missed opportunities?
6. What tools and approaches (steering and monitoring, but potentially also others) for adaptation and HDP coordination proved effective and why?

Effectiveness, Sustainability, Inclusion, Do-No-Harm

7. How and to what extent were the needs, views and interests of the local community, authorities and other stakeholders considered in adapting the project and in monitoring the context of the project's implementation & general situation?
8. To what extent was the FCPA approach integrated into both projects?
9. To what extent and how did the FCPA approach build the agile management capacity of World Vision program staff?
10. Did the HDP Nexus / FCPA approach increase risk of any harm in the context of the two projects, and if so, which harm?

[1] Cf. Executive Summary, points 4.-9., https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/2f620ca5-en/index.html?itemId=/content/publication/2f620ca5-en.

11. Did the HDP Nexus / FCPA approach add anything towards growing accountability between communities and WV within the project, and if so, how?
12. Did the HDP Nexus / FCPA approach increase sustainability of the project's efforts, and if so, how?
13. How did the two approaches, HDP Nexus and FCPA, work in synergy or otherwise in contributing to projects' (GFFO and BMZ) realization if their goals? What lessons can be learnt for future similar projects?

5. Outputs & Deliverables

The expected deliverables and milestones will include:

1. Review of the TORs and (if required) proposal of changes to improve research design
2. Kick-off meeting (in-person or via Zoom)
3. Inception Report (including research plan, methodology, primary and secondary data collection plan, stakeholder engagement and analysis timeline) ten days after the start of the consultancy
4. 1st draft of the research paper (including literature review)
5. Final research paper of approximately 30-40 pages; including final section focusing on policy-related and strategic recommendations concerning the HDP Nexus (excluding additional annexes)
6. Notes and transcription of primary data collection
7. 5-page executive summary
8. Presentation workshop to WV staff (90 mins, in-person or via Zoom).

Language for all outputs is English.

WV Germany legally owns all collected data, and the consultant is expected to hand over all data sets and notes of the interviews to the organization. The Consultant shall maintain confidentiality and protect all information provided to him/her by WVG, its employees, and beneficiaries. The consultant may only disclose such information to the extent necessary to perform the assignment.

6. Tentative Timeframe

The consultant or consultancy is expected to provide the detailed timeline of all the Research activities until the end of the contract. The approximate number of estimated working days is 20-25 days, 5-7 of which are estimated to be spent in the project country.

Task	Tentative Timing
Start of Consultancy	2 Sep 2024
Inception Report	19 Sep2024
Literature and Secondary Data Review	30 Sep 2024
Field Work	10th Oct2024
Project Reports Review and Validation	20 Oct 2024
Submission of all Deliverables	Latest 10 Nov 2024

7. Child Protection, Data Confidentiality and other Ethical considerations

The consultant, along with all enumerators and sub-contractors, will be required to sign and follow World Vision International´s child protection standards and protocols of behaviour, which will be provided to the research team selected.

The consultant must obtain consent from respondents ahead of any data collection exercise that involves surveys, FGD and KII. All primary data collected by this evaluation process is to remain confidential and not be shared with third parties. The deliverables and materials linked to this assignment are confidential and remain the property of WV.

Protection of personally Identifiable Information (PII) shall be ensured: Any technologies, digital platforms, or other methods employed should include sufficient data security and privacy protocols to ensure that PII is protected.

8. Roles and Responsibilities

Phase	Responsible	Role
Planning	Consultant	Review TOR, produce and present inception report
		Lead kick-off Meeting
		Conduct literature review & Review of project documentation
	WVSSDN	Review inception report
		Input to TOR preparation
	WVG	Convene kick-off meeting
		Review inception report
		Review literature report
		Research TOR preparation
		Provide project documentation
Data Collection	Consultant	Produce and share data collection and stakeholder engagement plan including all logistical concerns
		Arrange flight to Juba
		Produce data collection tools in timely manner for review
		If needed, train data collection facilitators
		Arrange research permit
		Conduct KIIs and FGDs
	WVSSDN	Arrange flights Juba – Aweel and accommodation in Juba and Aweel
		Arrange accommodation in Juba and Aweel
		Arrange ground transport in Juba and Aweel
		Assist with research permit
		Review data collection tools
		If needed, assist with hiring translator and data collection assistants
	WVG	Review data collection tools
Reporting	Consultant	Process and analyse data
		Produce main report

		Arrange at least one round of review of main report with WVG and WVSSDN
		Produce 5-page summary
		Make notes and raw data available to WVG and WVSSDN
	WVSSDN	Review report
	WVG	Review report
Validation and Learning	Consultant	Present findings in 90-min Workshop
		Share Workshop PPT
	WVSSDN	Attend virtual workshop
	WVG	Attend virtual workshop

9. Conflict of Interest

The service provider must be impartial and independent from all aspects of management or financial interests in the entity being monitored. During the tenancy period, the evaluator should not be employed by or have any financial or close business relationships with any of the entities being assessed. The service provider should declare any potential conflicts of interest which may affect or compromise their ability to conduct neutral and independent service.

Such conflicts of interest may include, but are not limited to:

- Business interests in a community included in the study.
- Financial, family, political and business affiliation with local authorities included in the study

In such a scenario or similar, the service provider is expected to declare the conflict of interest to the contractor who will present to WV GER. Declaration of conflict of interest will not be viewed negatively but will be considered in the programming of activities. Failure to declare a conflict of interest may be considered and may lead to a review of the expected deliverables from the service provider, thus with a possible negative impact on the contract of the service provider.

10. Qualifications and Expertise of the Consultant/Principal Researcher

- Registered legally in the European Union
- A minimum of 5 years of demonstrated professional experience as a researcher and/or development cooperation consultant in development cooperation and humanitarian aid
- Previous experience in conducting similar research assignments, including literature reviews, primary data collection and networking experience within the scope of the assignment
- Have proven experience in conducting qualitative and quantitative multi-sectoral needs assessment studies and have access to technical expertise related to sectors under study
- Hold a minimum educational qualification equivalent to an MA in a relevant field; PhD is desirable
- Extensive knowledge of HDP Nexus themes, debates and issues is desirable and would be seen as an asset

11. Application

The consultant should submit a proposal to the following email address:

Ekkardt.sonntag@wveu.org

Subject Line:
"Proposal Research Consultancy HDP NEXUS Project South Sudan 2024"

The proposal should include the following:

- Cover Letter
- Capacity statement detailing the consultant´s ability to deliver such work within the given timeframe, including an overview of relevant work and technical experience
- At least two samples of previous relevant work undertaken, including at least one study that was 100% led by the consultant / consultancy
- Contact details for 2 references for similar assignments done not more than five years ago
- CVs of the consultant / consultancy team
- A financial offer with a detailed break-down and explanations about the line items
- Any appendices the consultant considers relevant to the application.

12. Assessment Criteria

The proposal will be evaluated against a combination of technical and financial criteria (combined scoring method). The maximum score is 100%, out of which technical criteria are weighted at 70% and financial criteria at 30%. Applications will be assessed with particular focus on

- Overall methodology
- Subject matter expertise (proven knowledge in HDP Nexus programming, research and policy)
- Years of experience in relevant research subject(s)
- Regional and country experience
- Relevant academic background

13. Management of the Assignment and Deadline

Researchers' primary focal point will be WVG's Senior Researcher International Programmes. World Vision International South Sudan will coordinate the field level operations.

The deadline for proposals is 25. August 2024, 23:59 CET

ANNEX 2: OVERVIEW OF KIIS AND FGDS CONDUCTED

Table 5: Overview of KII and FGD participants and corresponding codes

Interview Code	Location	Type of Stakeholder
Key Informant Interviews		
KII_1	Aweil East	WV SS Project Staff Aweil
KII_2	Remote	WVI Technical Expert
KII_3	Remote	WV Germany Technical Expert
KII_4	Remote	WVI Technical Expert
KII_5	Remote	WV Germany Technical Expert
KII_6	Remote	WV SS Headquarters Staff
KII_7	Remote	WV Germany Technical Expert
KI_8	Remote	WV SS Staff Upper Nile
KII_9	Remote	WV Support Office (International)
KII_10	Remote	WV Regional Technical Expert
KII_11	Remote	WV SS Staff
KII_12	Remote	WV Germany Technical Expert
KII_13	Remote	WV SS Staff
KII_14	Remote	WV SS Staff
KII_15	Remote	WV SS Staff
KII_16	Remote	WV SS Staff
KII_17	Remote	WV SS Staff
Focus Group Discussions		
FGD1_AWE_ST1	Aweil North – Gok Machar	World Vision Staff
FGD_AWE_ST2	Aweil East – Malual Kon	Local Stakeholders
FGD_AWE_WV	Aweil East – Malual Kon	World Vision Staff
FGD_WV	Juba/Remote	World Vision HQ Staff

ANNEX 3: GFFO & BMZ TDA PROJECT ACTIVITIES

GFFO Project Activities

	Outcome / Output / Activity
	Outcome 1: Improved access to critical shelter, NFI, and WASH basic needs
	Output 1.1: Improved access to critical shelter, safe water supply, sanitation, and NFIs
1.1.1	Identification and registration of beneficiaries for shelter activities
1.1.2	Conducting participatory assessment and planning for shelters
1.1.3	Distribution of local construction materials/tools for shelters
1.1.4	Capacity building and awareness-raising for appropriate local construction techniques
	Output 1.2: Safe water supply and provision of basic WASH and NFI items
1.2.1	Selection and registration of beneficiaries
1.2.2	Distribution of emergency WASH and NFI survival kits
1.2.3	Conducting post-distribution monitoring
1.2.4	Full rehabilitation of 10 boreholes and drilling of 4 new boreholes
	Output 1.3: Construction of sanitation facilities and improvement of hygiene practices
1.3.1	Construction of gender-sensitive VIP latrines
1.3.2	Construction of gender-sensitive community bathing facilities
1.3.1.	Distribution of solid waste disposal containers
1.3.3	Distribution of handwashing facilities
	Outcome 2: Improved nutritional status and food security of households
	Output 2.1: Unconditional cash assistance to meet basic food and other needs
2.1.1	Selection and registration of beneficiary households
2.1.2	Distribution of unconditional cash transfers
2.1.3	Conducting post-distribution monitoring
	Output 2.2: Care for PLW and children with malnutrition, and inputs for nutritious food
2.2.1	Mobilization of mothers and establishment of mother-to-mother support groups
2.2.2	Training group members in kitchen gardening and GAP
2.2.3	Support for kitchen garden groups with vegetable seeds and tools
2.2.4	Training in preparing nutrient-rich foods
2.2.5	Training and support in post-harvest management
2.2.6	Establishment of school gardens with seeds, tools, and training
2.2.7	Training and demonstration of nutrient-rich food preparation
2.2.9	Procurement of CMAM materials and supplies
2.2.10	Implementation of CMAM (OTPs, screening, referral, TSFP)
2.2.12	Support for referral pathways with transport and caregiver assistance
2.2.16	Capacity building for nutrition staff and volunteers
	Outcome 3: Improved community capacities for early detection and response to shocks
	Output 3.1: Strengthened early warning systems and community structures
3.1.1	Mobilization of communities to identify risks and raise awareness
3.1.2	Establishment of early warning committees
3.1.3	Development of an early warning database with local authorities

BMZ TDA project Activities

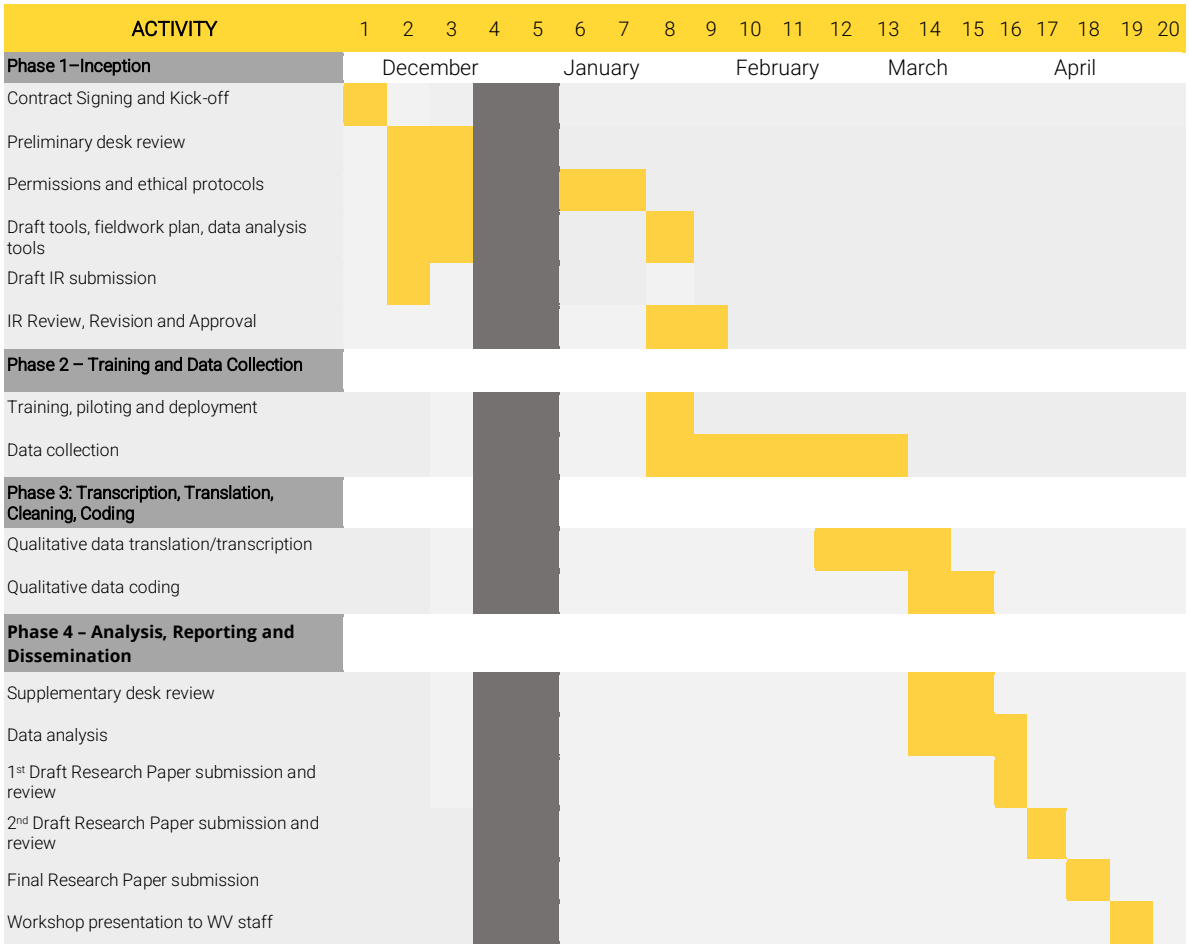
	Outcome / Output / Activity
	Outcome 1: Improved safe access to water for mixed household and agricultural use
	Output 1.1: Target communities have water systems for mixed use and sustainable maintenance
1.1.1	Expansion of boreholes with solar-powered pumps, tanks, and pipelines
1.1.2	Rehabilitation of community spring water projects
1.1.3	Development of irrigation systems for agriculture and income
1.1.4	Repair of existing boreholes
1.1.5	Installation of water troughs and storage tanks
1.1.6	Establishment/strengthening of water user committees
	Output 1.2: Participatory management structures for hygiene and sanitation
1.2.1	Formation and training of hygiene clubs
1.2.2	Development of hygiene and sanitation messages for radio
1.2.3	Construction/rehabilitation of waste pits
	Outcome 2: Improved household access to food through climate-smart agriculture
	Output 2.1: Productive community infrastructure rebuilt through Cash-for-Work
2.1.1	Mobilization and mapping to identify assets for rebuilding
2.1.2	Road rehabilitation to connect farmers to markets
2.1.3	Construction/rehabilitation of small water/irrigation infrastructure
2.1.4	Construction/rehabilitation of market stalls
	Output 2.2: Improved knowledge and inputs for increased and diversified food production
2.2.1	Awareness workshops on food production
2.2.2	Provision of seeds and tools to smallholder farmers
2.2.3	Training in Good Agricultural Practices (GAP)
2.2.4	Training in Integrated Pest Management (IPM)
2.2.5	Establishment of farmer field schools/demonstration plots
2.2.6	Linkages between farmer groups and agribusinesses
2.2.7	Refresher training for Community Animal Health Workers
2.2.8	Support for CAHWs with kits
2.2.9	Restocking smallholder households with small ruminants
2.2.10	Improving livestock feed quality
2.2.11	Training households in poultry, sheep, and goat rearing
2.2.12	Support with improved poultry breeds
2.2.13	Support for fishermen with kits and training
2.2.14	Support with biofortified seeds
	Output 2.3: Improved knowledge and skills in Climate-Smart Agriculture and agribusiness
2.3.1	CSA training for smallholder farmers and youth
2.3.2	Development of local value chains
2.3.3	Training in income-generating agricultural activities
2.3.4	Business development training
2.3.5	Startup income support for agribusiness
2.3.6	Training in Farmer-Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR)
2.3.7	Equipping SSRC volunteers for fruit tree nurseries
2.3.8	Training volunteers in seedling production

	Output 2.4: Skills and equipment for women and youth in diversified income opportunities
2.4.1	Training and establishment of S4T groups
2.4.2	Labor market and skills analyses for youth
2.4.3	Creating vocational training opportunities
2.4.4	Promoting TVET and computer skills training
2.4.5	Provision of startup kits for TVET graduates
2.4.6	Bookkeeping and planning training
	Outcome 3: Reduced escalation of conflicts and impacts of future disaster risks
	Output 3.1: Strengthened/established community-managed disaster risk reduction systems
3.1.1	Mobilization/strengthening of DRR committees
3.1.2	Conducting CMDRR analyses
3.1.3	Mapping and strengthening disaster prevention structures
3.1.4	Support for implementing CMDRR plans
	Output 3.2: Strengthened community-based mechanisms for conflict mitigation and justice
3.2.1.	Training children as peacebuilders
3.2.2	Training local authorities on basic rights
3.2.3	Facilitating dialogue between justice mechanisms and communities
3.2.4	Promoting civic education on law and justice
	Output 3.3: Improved skills for dialogue and social cohesion
3.3.1.	Training women and youth in Empowered Worldview
3.3.2.	Training religious actors in peacebuilding
3.3.3	Facilitating dialogue between communities
3.3.4	Bimonthly awareness campaigns in local media/radio
3.3.5	Supporting youth sports events
3.3.6	Supporting essay competitions for youth
3.3.7	Training community leaders in PFA and psychosocial support

ANNEX 4: TIMELINE AND WORKPLAN

The updated work plan, with the updated duration of tasks associated with the study, is outlined in the Table below.

Table 6: Workplan



RESEARCHER TRAINING

One experienced South Sudanese male researcher as selected to undertake this assignment. He participated in a comprehensive two-day training session in Juba, alongside a representative researcher from the Ministry of Health of South Sudan, and a substitute researcher from our roster, facilitated by the Team Leader. The training was designed to thoroughly acquaint the researcher with the specific objectives and nature of the study. Key components of the training included an overview of the study's background, an in-depth review of the research tools for the FGDs and KIIs, and the overall methodology, as well as a refresher on interview facilitation techniques and best practices. Additionally, the session covered essential topics such as research ethics, safeguarding practices, and detailed protocols for managing risks and ensuring security during fieldwork.

TOOL PILOT

To ensure the robustness and effectiveness of our data collection methods, a pilot was implemented for all of the qualitative data collection tools. This pilot phase was a crucial step in refining and validating the data collection instruments before full-scale deployment. The pilot allowed the RT to assess the clarity,

relevance, and appropriateness of our questions, ensuring they capture the nuanced perspectives essential for a comprehensive data collection. Additionally, piloting helped identify and address any potential ambiguities, redundancies, or challenges that could emerge during data collection. The feedback and insights gathered during the pilot were critical in fine-tuning the instruments, enhancing their reliability, and ultimately contributing to the overall success and credibility of the research process.

The piloting process also allowed the field researcher, alongside their Ministry of Health counterpart and substitute researcher to:

- Get hands on experience with the research tools;
- Learn experientially and from their peers, gaining insights into different approaches to conducting qualitative research thereby improving their skills and broadening their knowledge;
- Foster collaboration and teamwork across the team, leading to better communication, problem solving in the field, and idea-sharing skills;
- Increase engagement and motivation, by providing opportunities to take an active role in the research process early on.

DEBRIEFING AND FEEDBACK

Once the pilot was complete, the Team Leader held a debrief meeting with the research team to discuss any challenges encountered before or during the pilot, including any potential changes that should be made to the tools. The group openly discussed and settled on contextually-appropriate responses to any challenges faced during the pilot, and the Research Officer reviewed proper procedures and processes for responding to other common challenges.

Through this process, the RT also provided detailed personalized feedback to each training participant, an approach that we feel is beneficial both for building the capacity of our staff. Some examples of feedback included highlighting for them the areas where they could or should have probed more, noting questions that seem to not be fully understood by the Researcher or the other participants, and clarifying which techniques could be used in different scenarios the Researcher may have faced (e.g. handling a single dominant FGD participant).

RESEARCH PERMISSIONS AND CONSENT

At the national level, the RT secured Institutional Review Board permissions by the Ministry of Health of South Sudan after providing a comprehensive package of details about the study, including clarifications about the purpose of the study/research, research procedures, sampling, ethical and administrative considerations that should be addressed during data collection, and the tools used for data collection.

At the community level, upon the field researcher's arrival in Aweil, verbal consent was obtained from community leaders and subsequently from the key informants using a prewritten script. An introduction text was read, explaining the purpose of the study and addressing issues related to confidentiality. In case of refusal, the team expressed gratitude and proceed to the next respondent following the study protocol. The questionnaire was designed to be anonymous, with no unique identifiers for individuals.

All responses provided by participants in the study was handled with the utmost confidentiality, and participants were explicitly informed of this. The privacy of potential participants has been safeguarded to the extent practicable, with participants being informed of their freedom to withhold information they deem sensitive or uncomfortable to discuss. Even if participants had already consented to be interviewed, they were reminded of their option not to answer specific questions.

DATA COLLECTION

The KIIs and FGDs comprised approximately 10-12 questions, along with relevant prompting instructions to assist participants in recalling and narrating their experiences and perspectives. The average duration of a KII was approximately 60 minutes and of an FGD 90 minutes. RT members both in the field and those conducting interviews remotely/online, were able to complete on average three KIIs or 1 FGDs per working day. Fieldwork in Aweil East and North was completed within the allocated period of time, however

scheduling conflicts and respondent unavailability resulted in the slight prolongation of the remote data collection phase.

MONITORING AND DOCUMENTING DATA COLLECTION

During implementation, the Researchers recorded all interviews (of participants who consent) on recording devices. The Researchers were trained on how to handle recording device failures, including scenarios in which the interview or survey was conducted but the recording failed. The Researchers were responsible for checking for these issues and flagging them to the Research Officer so that it can be ascertained whether a given FGD or KII should be redone.

Monitoring the data collection process was a critical step in ensuring the quality of the data collected. The Team Leader regularly checked in with the other members of the research team to ensure that they are following the same procedures and protocols outlined in the research design. The Team Leader was also available to answer any questions that rose during the data collection process and provided daily feedback and guidance to the Researchers as needed.

Daily debriefings were conducted with the field researcher throughout the duration of the data collection, supplemented by direct communication channels via WhatsApp. This setup enabled the RT to submit fieldwork reports to WV promptly, providing preliminary results for each phase of the data collection.

ANNEX 5: CONSENT FORM

CONSENT FORM

Respondent Details	
Fill out respondent details before or after the interview	
Geographical Area *(State, county, city)*	
Role *(e.g. Ministry of Health)*	
Organisation *(e.g. name of NGO, type of authority, community group, etc.)*	

Consent Form	5 mins
Introduce yourself and Explain the project	

[READ/SHARE WITH RESPONDENT TO READ] Good day, my name is [Name], and I am a researcher participating in the evaluation of the HDP Nexus Project in South Sudan (2022–2024), commissioned by World Vision Germany (WVG). This project aims to understand and improve the implementation of the Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) Nexus approach in South Sudan, particularly focusing on its impact in [specific areas, e.g., Northern Bahr el Ghazal].

The purpose of this research is to analyze how the project contributed to better coordination between humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding efforts. We are particularly interested in understanding the experiences and perspectives of key stakeholders, including local authorities, community members, and organizations like yours.

The information you share today will be used to improve similar projects in the future and enhance programming strategies. Your input is highly valued, and we appreciate your time and honesty.

Obtain written consent
[READ/SHARE WITH RESPONDENT TO READ] Now I would like to discuss with you the important topic of your rights as a participant in our research, and how these will be protected.

- Before we start, I would like to let you know that, if it is okay with you I would like to audio record our conversation. Having a recording would help me accurately write up the notes after the discussion.
- Notes from the discussion will not include any of the information that can identify you. Key takeaways from this discussion will be combined with the themes that emerge from other interviews and written up in a summary report. No one will know how you responded in the final report as none of the comments you make during today's discussion will be linked with your name in any way. Your participation in this session is voluntary, and there will be no direct or indirect individual benefit from your participation. There will not be any negative effects if you decide you do not want to participate.
- I would like to hear your honest opinions about the topics we discuss. There are no right or wrong answers to any of our questions.

- You can choose not to respond to a question at any time. You can also end the discussion at any time. If one of my questions is unclear, please stop me and I'll ask it in a different way.
- All information collected from these sessions will be stored securely and kept confidential. The notes will be deleted after 6 months of us writing up the final report.
- The discussion should take between 60-70 minutes. If you have any questions, you can please ask now or at any time during the discussion. You can also contact the Fieldwork Manager of this project [Kur Kur Dut] at <kur.kur@otherwiseresearch.org>.

Ask for consent

[READ/SHARE WITH RESPONDENT TO READ] *At this point, I would like to confirm your willingness to engage in our research, as previously outlined, and kindly ask for your consent to proceed.*

- Do you have any questions about the research project or the interview?
  [Address questions or concerns]
- Can I check that you are still happy to take part in this research?
  ☐ Yes ☐ No Signed _____
- Would be it okay to make an audio recording of our discussion?
  ☐ Yes ☐ No Signed _____

Thank you, we can now proceed to the interview

RESEARCH STUDY ON THE HDP NEXUS PROJECTS SOUTH SUDAN 2024

Focus Group Discussion Guide

January 19th, 2025

RESPONDENT DETAILS	
Fill out details before or after the interview	
Date	
Location *(State, county)*	
Facilitator	
Note-taker/translator	
Stakeholder (group) represented	

RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS			
Total number of participants		**Men:**	**Women:**

INTRODUCTION Duration: 5 mins

Introduce yourself and Explain the project:

[READ/SHARE WITH RESPONDENT(s) TO READ] Good day, my name is [name]. I am a researcher working with [OTHERwise]. I appreciate you taking the time to speak with us today.

This interview is part of the ongoing research study on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) Nexus projects implemented by World Vision in South Sudan in Northern Bahr el Ghazal, in 2024.

Our study seeks to deepen our understanding of how projects funded by the German Federal Foreign Office (GFFO) and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) have been executed, and how they interconnect under the Chapeau approach.

Our goals are the following three:

1. Evidence generation: Your insights will contribute to a body of knowledge that positions World Vision as a global player in Nexus programming.
2. Programmatic insight: Your experiences and feedback will inform and refine World Vision's ongoing and future Nexus programming efforts.
3. Implementation review: We aim to assess the integration and effectiveness of the Chapeau linkage between the GFFO and BMZ TDA projects in the programs undertaken in the region.

Your honest opinions are invaluable as they will enable us to create a comprehensive report that not only reflects on the practical aspects of these initiatives but also contributes to broader strategic and operational improvements.

We look forward to a candid and constructive conversation.

Participant's Rights

[READ/SHARE WITH RESPONDENT TO READ] *Now I would like to discuss with you the important topic of your rights as a participant in our research, and how these will be protected.*

- Before we start, I would like to let you know that, if it is okay with you, I would like to take notes or audio record our conversation. Having a recording would help me accurately write up the notes after the discussion.
- Notes from the discussion will not include any of the information that can identify you. Key takeaways from this discussion will be combined with the themes that emerge from other interviews and written up in a summary report. No one will know how you responded in the final

report as none of the comments you make during today's discussion will be linked with your name in any way.

- Your participation in this session is voluntary, and there will be no direct or indirect individual benefit from your participation. There will not be any negative effects if you decide you do not want to participate. In the case of injury during the interview, Forcier's standard injury protocol will apply.
- I would like to hear your honest opinions about the topics we discuss. There are no right or wrong answers to any of our questions.
- You can choose not to respond to a question at any time. You can also end the discussion at any time. If one of my questions is unclear, please stop me and I'll ask it in a different way.
- All information collected from these sessions will be stored securely and kept confidential. The notes will be deleted after 6 months of us writing up the final report.
- The discussion should take between 60 minutes. If you have any questions, you can please ask now or at any time during the discussion. You can also contact the Research Director of this project [Ioanna Wagner Tsoni] at OTHERwise Research (Ioanna.wagnertsoni@otherwiseresearch.org).

Consent Questions:

Before we proceed, I would like to ask the following questions:

1. Do you understand the purpose of this discussion and agree to participate?
   (Pause for verbal "Yes" or "No" response and note response)
2. Do you consent to the audio recording of this discussion?
   (Pause for verbal "Yes" or "No" response and note response)

Thank you, we can now proceed to the discussion.

1. PARTICIPANT AND ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND QUICK ROUND
Duration: 5 mins

[INTRO - READ] *To begin with, before we proceed to the main questionnaire, I would like to better understand your work and engagement with the HDP Nexus projects undertaken by World Vision in Northern Bahr el Ghazal.*

1.1. Could you please briefly mention:

1. **Your role and responsibilities** in [World Vision/Partner Organization name]?
2. **How long** have you been involved in this role?
3. **How do your responsibilities relate to the two projects** targeted by this research, namely:
   a. The project supported by the German Federal Foreign Office (GFFO) [GFFO project], and/or
   b. The project supported by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) [BMZ TDA project]

[NOTE] *Try to establish an understanding of whether the respondent was involved in one or both projects, and the scope of their engagement, to be able to steer the discussion later.*

2. UNDERSTANDING PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION AND COLLABORATION
Duration: 20 mins

[INTRO-READ] *We would like to hear about your experiences working on the [BMZ/GFFO/both] projects and how collaboration has been managed:*

2.1. How did your organization work with World Vision on these projects?

- What was your role in planning and implementation?

2.2. How were roles and responsibilities divided between World Vision and your organization?

- What aspects of collaboration worked well?

- What challenges did you face? How were those mitigated?

2.3. Were adjustments made during the project to respond to changes or challenges?
- Can you provide examples?
- How could flexibility be improved in future projects?

2.4. How did coordination and communication take place between stakeholders?
- Were there regular meetings or updates?
- What improvements could enhance coordination?

3. ACHIEVING PROJECT GOALS AND SYNERGIES **Duration:** 15 mins

[INTRO-READ] *Now, let's talk about how the projects contributed to meeting community needs and achieving their goals.*

3.1. Were the activities of a) your organization and the WV project(s) b) the two WV projects aligned in their efforts to achieve shared goals (such as helping communities meet their basic needs while building long-term resilience)?
- If so, how? If not, what were the challenges?

3.2. In what ways did the projects complement each other?
- Were there examples of shared resources, skills, or knowledge?

3.3. In your opinion, were the projects effective in improving cooperation between humanitarian, development, and peace efforts?
- What could have been done better?

4. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY **Duration**: 15 mins

[READ] *We'd like to hear about how the projects engaged with communities and addressed their needs.*

4.1. How were community members involved in project planning and decision-making?
- Were they consulted during planning and decision-making?

4.2. What mechanisms were used to gather feedback from the communities?
- How effective were they in your opinion?

4.3. What challenges did you face in engaging with communities?
- How were these challenges addressed?

4.4. What improvements woudl you suggest to strengthen community participation and accountability in future projects?

5. CHALLENGES AND AGILITY/ADAPTABILITY **Duration**: 20 mins

READ] *In complex environments like South Sudan, projects often face unexpected challenges. Let's discuss how the projects adapted to changing circumstances.*

5.1. Were there significant changes in the project context that required adjustments?
- How did the project teams respond?

5.2. How flexible was the project in adapting to emerging challenges or needs?

5.3. Were any specific tools or processes (such as regular check-ins, scenario planning, or adjustments in timelines) used to adapt to challenges?
- Were they effective?

5.4. What could have been done differently to better respond to changes?
- Were there any areas where improvements could have made a significant difference?

6. SUSTAINABILITY AND LONG TERM IMPACT **Duration**: 15 mins

[READ] Thinking about the future, let's discuss the project's sustainability and long-term impact.

6.1. Do you think the project helped communities become more independent and resileint?
- Can you share any examples?

6.2. What efforts were made to ensure that the project's benefits would last beyond its completion?

6.3. What recommendations do you have for improving the sustainability of future projects?

7. LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS	**Duration**: 10 mins

[READ] We'd now like to gather your recommendations based on your experiences.

7.1. What were the key takeaways from your involvement in this project?

7.2. What aspects of the project should be maintained or expanded in future projects?

7.3. What recommendations would you make to improve coordination, implementation and impact in future projects?

END	
Thank you. In the time remaining, is there anything you want to add or any topics related to the HDP projects in NBG that you think we should briefly discuss? **[PLEASE CHECK TIME IF STARTING A NEW DISCUSSION]**	[any time remaining]
Thank participant and conclude interview	3 min

Thank you so much for sharing your insights with me today, that was very helpful. I do not have any further questions at this point. Do you have any questions for me or anything else to add?

If appropriate, ask consent for recontact:

If I have any questions about what we have discussed today, would it be okay if I reached out to you via email/phone for clarifications?

Tell them about the next steps in the research project:

- In terms of next steps for the research project, we are going to combine your insights with what we have learned from other participants in a written report. Just to reassure you, all of your data will be kept anonymous and your name will not be mentioned anywhere in the notes or in the report.
- The notes and the recording will be deleted securely within 6 months of us finalising the report.
- If you would like to learn more about the project, you can do so online by looking up HDP Nexus approach of World Vision in South Sudan or emailing kur.kur@otherwiseresearch.org or ioanna.wagnertsoni@otherwiseresearch.org.

Additional Notes for the facilitator (after the interview)	
Any specific considerations about the group (e.g., language needs, power dynamics, group dynamics)	
Observations on group engagement	

World Vision

RESEARCH STUDY ON THE HDP NEXUS PROJECTS SOUTH SUDAN 2024

Project Implementation Team

January 19th, 2025

OTHERWISE
RESEARCH PRAXIS POIESIS

RESPONDENT DETAILS	
Fill out details before or after the interview	
Date	
Location *(State, county)*	
Facilitator	
Note-taker/translator	
Name	
Role/Stakeholder	
Gender (don't ask, observe)	

INTRODUCTION

Duration: 5 mins

Introduce yourself and Explain the project:

[READ/SHARE WITH RESPONDENT(s) TO READ] Good day, my name is [name]. I am a researcher working with [OTHERwise]. I appreciate you taking the time to speak with us today.

This interview is part of the ongoing research study on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) Nexus projects implemented by World Vision in South Sudan in Northern Bahr el Ghazal, in 2024.

Our study seeks to deepen our understanding of how projects funded by the German Federal Foreign Office (GFFO) and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) have been executed, and how they interconnect under the Chapeau approach.

Our goals are the following three:

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2. Programmatic insight: Your experiences and feedback will inform and refine World Vision's ongoing and future Nexus programming efforts.
3. Implementation review: We aim to assess the integration and effectiveness of the Chapeau linkage between the GFFO and BMZ TDA projects in the programs undertaken in the region.

Your honest opinions are invaluable as they will enable us to create a comprehensive report that not only reflects on the practical aspects of these initiatives but also contributes to broader strategic and operational improvements.

We look forward to a candid and constructive conversation.

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- Your participation in this session is voluntary, and there will be no direct or indirect individual benefit from your participation. There will not be any negative effects if you decide you do not want to participate. In the case of injury during the interview, Forcier's standard injury protocol will apply.

- I would like to hear your honest opinions about the topics we discuss. There are no right or wrong answers to any of our questions.
- You can choose not to respond to a question at any time. You can also end the discussion at any time. If one of my questions is unclear, please stop me and I'll ask it in a different way.
- All information collected from these sessions will be stored securely and kept confidential. The notes will be deleted after 6 months of us writing up the final report.
- The discussion should take between 60 minutes. If you have any questions, you can please ask now or at any time during the discussion. You can also contact the Research Director of this project [Ioanna Wagner Tsoni] at OTHERwise Research (Ioanna.wagnertsoni@otherwiseresearch.org).

Consent Questions:

Before we proceed, I would like to ask the following questions:

1. ***Do you understand the purpose of this discussion and agree to participate?***
   (Pause for verbal "Yes" or "No" response and note response)
2. ***Do you consent to the audio recording of this discussion?***
   (Pause for verbal "Yes" or "No" response and note response)

Thank you, we can now proceed to the discussion.

1. PARTICIPANT AND ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND QUICK ROUND **Duration**: 5 mins

[INTRO - READ] *To begin with, before we proceed to the main questionnaire, I would like to better understand your work and engagement with the HDP Nexus projects undertaken by World Vision in Northern Bahr el Ghazal.*

1.1. Could you please briefly mention:

1. **Your role and responsibilities** in [World Vision/Partner Organization name]?
2. **How long** have you been involved in this role?
3. **Your engagement with the two projects (GFFO and BMZ) ?**
   i. **Did your role involve working across both projects, or primarily within one?**

[NOTE] *Try to establish an understanding of whether the respondent was involved in one or both projects, and the scope of their engagement, to be able to steer the discussion later.*

2. CONCEPTUAL MAPPING OF HDP NEXUS, FCPA, CHAPEAU IN WV PROJECTS. **Duration**: 20 mins

Objective: Gather individual insights on the understanding of key concepts.

[INTRO-READ] *Thank you. I'd like to start this conversation discussing your understanding of the HDP Nexus/FCPA and Chapeau approaches in relation to your work, and World Vision's work more generally). Then, we will look into how these approaches have been operationalized and implemented vis a vis each other in the targeted projects.*

2.1. How do you understand the following principles in your work? (Choose the most relevant to your role)

- **Coherence**
- **Complementarity**
- **Sustainability**
- **Agility/Flexibility**
- **Coordination**
- **Social Cohesion**
- **Do no Harm**

- Can you share examples where these principles were effectively applied?
- Were there instances where these principles were challenged or difficult to implement?

2.2. Fragility and project adaptation:

- What do you see as the key factors driving **fragility in South Sudan**?
- How do these factors impact the projects?
- Were there differences in how **fragility was perceived** by local teams vs. donor agencies?

- What mechanisms helped **bridge these differences** in understanding?

3. INTERACTION AND INTEGRATION OF GFFO & BMZ TDA PROJECTS. Duration: 20 mins
Objective: Examine project linkages, stakeholder engagement, and pathways of interaction

3.1. Let's start by identifying the main stakeholders and partnerships involved in the WV project(s).
- Who were the key **actors at different levels** (international, national, local, community)?
- Were there any **unexpected stakeholders** that played a role in the project?

3.2. Now, let's discuss how these stakeholders interacted with the project.
- How did the GFFO and BMZ TDA projects **interact**?
- Did this interaction happen **by design or organically** over time?
- **What mechanisms** facilitated integration? (e.g., joint planning, shared staff, funding overlaps, coordination meetings?)

3.3. Effectiveness and challenges
- What were some **successes** in working across the two projects?
- What were the biggest **challenges** in integrating efforts?
- Were there missed opportunities for **better collaboration**?

4. IMPLEMENTATION OF HDP NEXUS/FCPA/CHAPEAU APPROACHES IN PROJECTS
Duration: 20 mins

Objective: Examine how the Nexus approach was applied in practice

4.1 Application of Key Principles

- Was there a **shared understanding** of the local context across teams?
- Were there examples **of joint programming** between the two projects?
- How well was **coordination** and **role division** managed?

4.2. Tools and Adaptability
- Are you familiar with any FCPA tools (e.g., **scenario planning, context monitoring, GECARR, Survive-Adapt-Thrive dial**)?
- Have you used any of these tools? Were they **helpful or difficult to apply**?
- How adaptable was the project to **changing contexts**?

4.3. Inclusivity & Accountability
- How were **community voices integrated** into project decisions?
- What steps were taken to **ensure inclusivity** (e.g., marginalized groups)?

4.4 Long-Term Impact
- How do you see the projects contributing to **long-term solutions**?
- What efforts were made to **reduce dependency on aid** and build **resilience**?

5. RECOMMENDATIONS, BEST PRACTICES & LESSONS LEARNED
Objective: Gather reflections on successes, gaps, and improvements
Duration: 20 mins

[READ] *Thank you. We are now in the final part of our discussion, where I'd like to hear your reflections on the project(s) and the HDP Nexus approach as a whole. This is an opportunity to share what worked well, what could be improved, and what recommendations you have for future projects.*

5.1. Best Practices & Lessons Learned

- What **key lessons** emerged from implementing these projects?
- Were there **any innovative approaches** that should be scaled up?

5.2. Opportunities for Improvement

- What could have been done **differently** to enhance implementation?
- Were there **missed opportunities** for efficiency or better impact?

5.3. Future Recommendations

- Based on your experience, what **recommendations** would you give for improving:
  - The HDP Nexus approach?
  - The Chapeau model?
  - Project coordination & integration?

END

Thank you. In the time remaining, is there anything you want to add or any topics related to the HDP projects in NBG that you think we should briefly discuss? **[PLEASE CHECK TIME IF STARTING A NEW DISCUSSION]**	[any time remaining]
Thank participant and conclude interview	3 min

Thank you so much for sharing your insights with me today, that was very helpful. I do not have any further questions at this point. Do you have any questions for me or anything else to add?

If appropriate, ask consent for recontact:

If I have any questions about what we have discussed today, would it be okay if I reached out to you via email/phone for clarifications?

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- In terms of next steps for the research project, we are going to combine your insights with what we have learned from other participants in a written report. Just to reassure you, all of your data will be kept anonymous and your name will not be mentioned anywhere in the notes or in the report.
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World Vision

Research Study on the HDP Nexus Projects South Sudan 2024

Draft Guide

Regional and International Technical Support and Advisory Staff

January 19th, 2025

OTHERWISE
RESEARCH PRAXIS POIESIS

RESPONDENT DETAILS	
Fill out details before or after the interview	
Date	
Location *(State, county)*	
Facilitator	
Note-taker/translator	
Name	
Role/Stakeholder	
Gender (don't ask, observe)	

INTRODUCTION

Duration: 5 mins

Introduce yourself and explain the project:

[READ/SHARE WITH RESPONDENT(s) TO READ] Good day, my name is [name]. I am a researcher working with [OTHERwise]. I appreciate you taking the time to speak with us today.

This interview is part of the ongoing research study on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) Nexus projects implemented by World Vision in South Sudan in Northern Bahr el Ghazal, in 2024.

Our study seeks to deepen our understanding of how projects funded by the German Federal Foreign Office (GFFO) and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) have been executed, and how they interconnect under the Chapeau approach.

Our goals are the following three:

1. Evidence generation: Your insights will contribute to a body of knowledge that positions World Vision as a global player in Nexus programming.
2. Programmatic insight: Your experiences and feedback will inform and refine World Vision's ongoing and future Nexus programming efforts.
3. Implementation review: We aim to assess the integration and effectiveness of the Chapeau linkage between the GFFO and BMZ TDA projects in the programs undertaken in the region.

Your honest opinions are invaluable as they will enable us to create a comprehensive report that not only reflects on the practical aspects of these initiatives but also contributes to broader strategic and operational improvements.

We look forward to a candid and constructive conversation.

Participant's Rights

[READ/SHARE WITH RESPONDENT TO READ] *Now I would like to discuss with you the important topic of your rights as a participant in our research, and how these will be protected.*

- Before we start, I would like to let you know that, if it is okay with you, I would like to take notes or audio record our conversation. Having a recording would help me accurately write up the notes after the discussion.
- Notes from the discussion will not include any of the information that can identify you. Key takeaways from this discussion will be combined with the themes that emerge from other interviews and written up in a summary report. No one will know how you responded in the final

report as none of the comments you make during today's discussion will be linked with your name in any way.

- Your participation in this session is voluntary, and there will be no direct or indirect individual benefit from your participation. There will not be any negative effects if you decide you do not want to participate. In the case of injury during the interview, Forcier's standard injury protocol will apply.
- I would like to hear your honest opinions about the topics we discuss. There are no right or wrong answers to any of our questions.
- You can choose not to respond to a question at any time. You can also end the discussion at any time. If one of my questions is unclear, please stop me and I'll ask it in a different way.
- All information collected from these sessions will be stored securely and kept confidential. The notes will be deleted after 6 months of us writing up the final report.
- The discussion should take between 60 minutes. If you have any questions, you can please ask now or at any time during the discussion. You can also contact the Research Director of this project [Ioanna Wagner Tsoni] at OTHERwise Research (Ioanna.wagnertsoni@otherwiseresearch.org).

Consent Questions:

Before we proceed, I would like to ask the following questions:

1. ***Do you understand the purpose of this discussion and agree to participate?***

   (Pause for verbal "Yes" or "No" response and note response)

2. ***Do you consent to the audio recording of this discussion?***

   (Pause for verbal "Yes" or "No" response and note response)

Thank you, we can now proceed to the discussion.

1. PARTICIPANT AND ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND QUICK ROUND **Duration**: 5 mins

[INTRO - READ] *To begin with, I would like to understand your role and experience with the HDP Nexus*

To start, I would like to understand your role and experience in relation to HDP Nexus programming.

- Can you briefly describe your role and responsibilities in [World Vision/Partner Organization]?
- How does your work relate to HDP Nexus and/or FCPA programming?
- Have you been involved in strategic discussions or policy work on HDP/FCPA within South Sudan or globally?

[NOTE] *Try to establish an understanding of whether the respondent was involved in one or both projects, and the scope of their engagement, to be able to steer the discussion later.*

2. PERSPECTIVES O HDP NEXUS, FCPA IMPLEMENTATION **Duration**: 15 mins

[READ] *Thank you. I'd like to start this conversation discussing your perspective on key principles within the HDP nexus and FCPA approaches and how they have been applied in the targeted projects.*

2.1. General Nexus & FCPA Reflections

- How do you see the **HDP Nexus approach** evolving within World Vision's /global programming?
- How does **FCPA** support or challenge the Nexus approach?

2.2. Alignment & Adaptation

- How well does the **HDP Nexus approach align with donor expectations**?
- Are there areas where **donor strategies and local implementation realities** diverge?
- How could this alinment be improved?

3.3 Programmatic Synergies

- What are the **key enablers or barriers** to integrating humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding efforts?

- How can organizations like World Vision **strengthen programmatic synergies** across funding streams?

3. CROSS-PROJECT LINKAGES AND COORDINATION **Duration**: 15 mins

[READ] *Now, I would like us to reflect on one of the key goals of this research, which is the exploration of linkages between the GFFO and BMZ-funded projects."*

3.1. HDP Nexus Across Different Projects

- How have you seen linkages between humanitarian and development projects emerge within World Vision or other organizations?
- What are the most effective coordination mechanisms you have seen in similar settings?

3.2. Application of the Chapeau Approach

- Are you familiar with the Chapeau model as applied in World Vision?
- How effective do you think this approach is for bridging humanitarian and development programming?

4. EFFECTIVENESS OF FCPA TOOLS IN SUPPORTING THE NEXUS APPROACH

Duration: 15 mins

[READ] *The FCPA provides several tools to enhance project effectiveness in fragile contexts. I'd like to understand how these tools were applied in the targeted projects.*

1. **What tools have been most relevant and useful in adapting the projects to the complex and protracted crisis context of South Sudan?**
2. **How effectively were they integrated into project planning and implementantion?**
3. **Were there challenges in applying these tools in the context of these projects? If you have experience from other FCPA or HDP-centered projects, what would you say are the main differences?**
4. **How can the design and use of these tools be improved to better support future programming?**
5. **Were there any innovative approaches/tools that emerged through these projects that should be repeated/capitalized on in the future?**

5. RECOMMENDATIONS, BEST PRACTICES & LESSONS LEARNED

Duration: 20 mins

[READ] *Thank you. We are now in the final part of our discussion, where I'd like to gather your recommendations for refining World Vision's nexus programming.*

5.1. Scaling HDP Nexus Programming

- What are the key enabling factors for Nexus programming at an institutional level?
- What should organizations prioritize when expanding HDP Nexus approaches?

5.2. Lessons for Donor Engagement

- How can donors better support organizations in bridging humanitarian and development efforts?
- What adjustments in funding mechanisms or reporting could improve integration?

5.3. Strategic Priorities for World Vision

- Based on your experience, what strategic shifts should World Vision consider in its Nexus approach?
- What areas require more research or pilot initiatives to improve HDP programming?

END

Thank you for your time and valuable insights. Before we conclude, is there anything else you'd like to add? **Would you be open to a follow-up discussion if needed?** **[PLEASE CHECK TIME IF STARTING A NEW DISCUSSION]**	[any time remaining]

Thank participant and conclude interview
3 min

Thank you so much for sharing your insights with me today, that was very helpful. I do not have any further questions at this point. Do you have any questions for me or anything else to add?

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Additional Notes for the facilitator (after the interview)

Any specific considerations about the discussion (e.g., language needs, power dynamics)	
Observations on interviewee engagement	

RESEARCH STUDY ON THE HDP NEXUS PROJECTS SOUTH SUDAN 2024

Draft Guide
Donor Focal Points

January 19th, 2025

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Fill out details before or after the interview	
Date	
Location *(State, county)*	
Facilitator	
Note-taker/translator	
Name	
Role/Stakeholder	
Gender (don't ask, observe)	

INTRODUCTION

Duration: 5 mins

Introduce yourself and explain the project:

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2. ***Do you consent to the audio recording of this discussion?***
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Thank you, we can now proceed to the discussion.

2. PARTICIPANT AND ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND QUICK ROUND **Duration**: 5 mins

[INTRO - READ] *To begin with, I would like to understand your role and experience with the HDP Nexus projects of World Vision in Northern Bahr el Ghazal.*

2.1. Can you please briefly describe:

- **Can you briefly describe your role and responsibilities related to the GFFO/BMZ-funded projects in South Sudan?**
- **How long** have you been involved in this role?
- **How has your engagement evolved over the course of the project?**

3. EXPECTATIONS AND ALIGNMENT WITH DONOR STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Duration: 15 mins

[READ] *Thank you. First, I would like to understand, from your and your organization's perspective, how well the projects aligned with donor expectations and strategic objectives.*

3.1. What were the key donor priorities and strategic objectives for funding the projects?
3.2. How did these priorities shape expectations for HDP Nexus programming?
3.3. To what extent do you think the projects have aligned with the strategic objectives of GFFO/BMZ regarding:
Synergies: How well did the two projects complement and reinforce each other?
Division of labor: Were roles and responsibilities clearly defined and efficiently executed?
Transparency: Were information-sharing and reporting mechanisms effective?
Coordinated planning and implementation: How well were planning, implementation, and M&E efforts aligned?

3.3. Were there any particular expectations or commitments that were notable successes?

3.4. Do you think the projects contributed to broader donor goals, such as resilience-building and long-term sustainability?

4. EFFECTIVENESS OF THE CHAPEAU LINKAGE **Duration**: 15 mins

[READ] *"The Chapeau approach aimed to create linkages between the GFFO and BMZ TDA projects. I'd like to hear your thoughts on its effectiveness.*

9.1. How well do you think the Chapeau linkage was executed in the context of the GFFO and BMZ TDA projects?
9.2. Did it enhance operational efficiency and resource utilization?
9.3. What were the key strengths of the Chapeau approach?
9.4. What challenges/missed opportunities emerged in implementing this model?
9.5. Were there any areas where the approach could have been improved or where opportunities were missed?
9.6. What have been the benefits and challenges of combining different funding streams on their outcomes?
9.7. How can future projects better integrate multiple funding sources to improve outcomes?

10. TRANSPARENCY, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND REPORTING MECHANISMS
Duration: 15 mins

[READ] *Transparency and accountability are key donor priorities in the HDP/FCPA/Chapeau approach. Let's discuss how they were maintained throughout the project:*

10.1. How satisfied re you with the project's reporting mechanisms (timeliness, accuracy, relevance of information)?
10.2. Were the financial and operational reports aligned with donor expectations?
10.3. In your opinion, were there sufficient accountability mechanisms in place to ensure responsible use of funds?
10.4. Did the projects provide sufficient visibility and oversight for donor partners?
10.5. Were there any gaps in financial transparency or stakeholder accountability?

11. IMPACT AND SUSTAINABILITY OF PROJECT OUTCOMES
Duration: 5 mins

7.1 Long-Term Impact
How well have the projects contributed to sustainable, long-term outcomes for communities?
Were efforts made to transition from humanitarian aid to development and peacebuilding?

7.2 Exit Strategies
- How well were exit strategies designed and communicated?
- What factors could strengthen the sustainability of future projects?

12. CHALLENGES, GAPS, AND MISSED OPPORTUNITIES
Duration: 3 mins

[READ] *Reflecting on the project implementation, let's discuss any challenges and missed opportunities:*

12.1. Were there areas where donor expectations were not fully met?

13. RECOMMENDATIONS, BEST PRACTICES & LESSONS LEARNED
Duration: 20 mins

Based on your experience, what are the key lessons learned from these projects?

- **13.1.** What best practices should be scaled or replicated in future nexus programming?
- **13.2.** How can donor engagement and collaboration with implementers like World Vision be enhanced?
- **13.3.** What are your key recommendations to improve donor-funded projects under the HDP Nexus approach, even more so as World Vision programming is concerned?

END

Thank you for your time and valuable insights. Before we conclude, is there anything else you'd like to add? **Would you be open to a follow-up discussion if needed?** **[PLEASE CHECK TIME IF STARTING A NEW DISCUSSION]**	[any time remaining]
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ANNEX 6: SAFETY AND SECURITY MANAGEMENT

OTHERwise Research has the expertise and experience in designing and implementing security plans in post-conflict environments to ensure that the study would be well-executed. Should the situation in South Sudan become unsafe, the RT had developed a number of strategies that could be used to adapt to our fieldwork plans. Balancing access for our partners with our duty of care towards our employees is a process we take very seriously. Thus, accessibility was determined on the local-level throughout the research process to ensure that we could reach the targeted locations without endangering our staff or compromising the quality of the data collected.

The RT has been in a position to provide all staff with targeted Country Risk reports and daily country-based security alerts throughout the duration of this study. In high-risk contexts like South Sudan, we provide security briefings and security manuals for all staff members who are mandated to abide by during their engagement. The following safety measures were utilized to ensure the safety and security of our field staff throughout project implementation:

- The staff utilized for direct implementation of field-level data collection for this project were recruited from the roster of pre-vetted researchers with intimate knowledge of the localities this study would be undertaken, and their cultural and linguistic specificities.

- Any time data collection activities were scheduled, field staff updated their direct line manager of the local situation that day and alerted them if any changes, security issues, or threats were been identified for further action. If at any time it would be determined that scheduled activities were not possible due to security, WV would be promptly informed of the issue and alternative implementation arrangements would be made.

- Throughout project implementation, active management was implemented, entailing regular communication, assessment and risk mitigation by the RT team. The Security Director of OTHERwise Research attends or is directly briefed about local NGO security meetings, and these meetings along with daily updates of protection incidents provide the RT with up-to-date knowledge of the present security situation. Our involvement in online groups exchanging relevant information further informs us of real time incidents and security threats for NGOs and private sector organizations throughout the locations in which we operate.

- While in the field, our security protocols start with the Field Researchers who are subject to daily check-in calls, in order to identify and report any security incident to the Research Officer, who will escalate this to the Security Director who will then investigate the incident and intervene. If the situation would be deemed serious, the security team would allow the Research Officer to take the appropriate measures to address the situation in communication with management.

ANNEX 7: DATA QUALITY ASSURANCE & ETHICAL STANDARDS

DATA QUALITY ASSURANCE

The RT implemented rigorous data management and quality control procedures throughout this study. This commitment to quality was further bolstered by the consistent quality control and alignment with best practices and standardized frameworks in research. To ensure the quality of the data collected (both primary and secondary data), the RT continuously oversaw the consistency and completeness of data collected and will be providing anonymized transcripts of all interviews conducted to WV. The approach to maintaining high data quality encompassed several key considerations:

- Development of a detailed and systematic data collection plan, including clear instructions on anonymization, labeling, and secure data storage.
- Transcript verification and spot checking of audio recordings to ensure accuracy and reliability.
- Development and consistent application of a data coding system by the RT to maintain consistency in data interpretation.
- Implementation of data validation through member checking , which involved sharing preliminary findings with participants to validate the accuracy of interpretation.
- Strict adherence to participant confidentiality and data security protocols, including secure, password-protected data storage with restricted access.
- Creation of audit trails that documented the data analysis processes and any decisions or changes made during analysis, promoting transparency and replicability.
- Ensuring inter-rater reliability through regular discussions and cross-checks of coding to maintain consistency in interpretation.
- Validation of initial findings through data verification and triangulation, drawing on multiple information sources and conducting a data validation webinar with relevant stakeholders.
- Ongoing reporting to the WV, both in person and in writing, to keep stakeholders informed about the progress and findings of the study.
- Adherence to the common research standards for utility, ethics, impartiality, transparency, collaboration, ensuring accuracy, and organizational learning.

ETHICAL STANDARDS AND SAFEGUARDING POLICY

The ET adheres to the highest ethical standards, drawing from the ICC/ESOMAR International Code and comprehensive ethics training. This includes maintaining neutrality in research interactions, ensuring voluntary and informed participation, and minimizing potential harm to participants. Our commitment extended to safeguarding all research contacts from harm, abuse, or exploitation, emphasizing a zero-tolerance stance on misconduct. The ET's ethical framework is also informed by the Belmont Report's principles, emphasizing respect for persons, beneficence, and justice to protect vulnerable populations and ensure equitable study benefits.

GENDER CONSIDERATIONS

Adopting a human rights- and gender-responsive lens, the ET prioritized transformative inclusion and equitable participation throughout the research process. This commitment to gender equality and participant safeguarding was reinforced through methodologies that acknowledge and address the complex gender dynamics encountered in the field. By integrating UNEG norms and standards, the ET ensured that its research practices not only illuminate gender-specific insights but also contribute to broader organizational learning and impact.

ANNEX 8: DATA PROTECTION AND SECURITY

In the course of this study, the RT collected, stored, used and disclosed large volumes of information. This information was an indispensable resource used for managing, planning, and conducting this study. Appropriate management, storage conditions and disposal methods ensured that information was protected, accessible, managed and destroyed when required. A disposal schedule and appropriate destruction methods will be applied to ensure that the information collected has been adequately protected.

Ownership: The RT understands that all data utilized, captured, or acquired within the implementation of this research on behalf of WV is solely owned by WV. As such, the RT will not utilize WV owned data for any other pursuits other than for those specifically required to perform the work under contract, without express written consent from WV. This includes work outside the bounds of WV, as well as any other initiatives which might be commissioned by WV but lie outside the bounds of the work contracted under this initiative.

Data Management: All data utilized, captured, or acquired for this initiative have been securely stored and segregated from any other data. These procedures included segregated project folders used only in the execution of this evaluation and which were only accessible by the members of the RT involved in this WV activity. The transfer of data has been limited to designated RT/WV staff only and is not to be shared with any other actor or stakeholder without the written consent of WV. Any transfer of data from the RT to WV staff has been encrypted and password-protected.

Data Protection & Encryption: All data utilized under the initiative were stored on encrypted password protected cloud-based servers and exchanged only through encrypted email with designated staff.

Anonymized Data Submission: Data shared with WV are, by default, anonymized and all identifying information (such as prior work experience, current post held, etc.) redacted. Non-anonymized data may be provided only if specifically requested by the WV and informed consent has been obtained by the participant(s).

DATA AND DOCUMENT DISPOSAL POLICY

The RT has comprehensive guidelines, and procedures in place for the secure and irreversible disposal of documents and records. These processes ensure the retention of only relevant, up-to-date information while safeguarding confidential data of clients and respondents and mitigating risks associated with unauthorized access or misuse. All team members are mandated to adhere to these guidelines, demonstrating utmost diligence in document handling and disposal.

Documents targeted for disposal include outdated or irrelevant research data and findings, superseded research notes and drafts, and past client communications and agreements. The disposal process involves shredding physical documents and permanently deleting digital files using secure methods to prevent reconstruction or retrieval.

Sensitive documents are disposed of through secure means like shredding, or secure recycling, with a systematic record-keeping system in place to track the disposal process, including dates, methods, and responsible person. This process is underpinned by a structured tracking system, employing spreadsheets with detailed records to ensure a clear audit trail. Each document marked for disposal is assigned a unique identifier, facilitating efficient tracking and compliance. Disposal schedules are aligned with project timelines or immediate business needs, with a special emphasis on promptly disposing of documents containing sensitive information. The Team Leader periodically reviews the tracking system to maintain accuracy and compliance, ensuring a responsible approach to document management and disposal.

ANNEX 9: ASSUMPTIONS, RISKS & MITIGATION MEASURES

The table presented below takes into account many possible challenges that were anticipated throughout study's implementation, along with their potential impact on the study and their proposed mitigation.

Table 7: Potential challenges and limitations, including proposed mitigation measures

Possible Risk	Potential Impact on Study	Mitigation Method
Failure to receive all project documents/Missing project documentation	Delays in producing report, extended delays could impact final project deadline, lack of depth in final deliverable.	The RT team worked closely with WV to coordinate on any pending/needed documents – **Risk not encountered.**
Delays in receiving feedback on draft reports	Delays in finalizing report, extended delays could impact final project deadline	The RT provided deliverables in a timely manner and worked closely with WV to ensure all reviewers are updated on timelines – **Risk not encountered.**
Poor internet or power causes delays in conducting virtual interviews (potentially at the national level)	Poor internet or power could prevent the research team from conducting virtual interviews with remote research participants, if needed.	If communication would not be possible with selected participants, the RT would first examine the feasibility of alternative communications. If communication would still not be possible, the research team would coordinate with WV to select an alternate method for interviews/substitute respondents – **Risk not encountered.**
Limited response rates	Research participants may choose not to participate, leading to lower response rates.	If research participation would be low, and participants opted out, the RT would coordinate with WV to provide replacement participation lists – **Risk not encountered.**
Bias in responses	Participants may provide biased responses, either intentionally or unintentionally.	To mitigate this risk, the RT used multiple data collection methods and cross check information to identify any inconsistencies **– Risk not encountered**
Language barriers	In a diverse context, language barriers could hinder effective communication with participants.	The broad range of languages and dialects spoken by the RT will facilitate communication with participants in languages other than English, if necessary, but if obstacles are insurmountable interpreters will be used - **Risk not encountered**
Loss of data	Data loss, whether due to technical failures or other reasons, could jeopardize the research.	Regular data backups and secure storage practices are essential to prevent data loss and these processes adhered to by the research team **– Risk not encountered**
Insecurity and/or inaccessibility	We do not anticipate major accessibility issues in conducting this research. However, the three caveats to this are the possibilities for i) a hostile attitude to the study taken by authorities; ii) serious inclement weather, and iii) spontaneous armed conflict.	Should a major insecurity and/or accessibility event occur, we will follow our standard security and evacuation procedures and inform WV as quickly as possible – **Risk not encountered during the data collection phase. However, during the concluding phase of the study, and as the team prepared to launch into analysis, the security situation in South Sudan escalated, leading to shift in focus and minor delays were caused.**
Difficulty of meaningful disaggregation by gender/age and disability	In a qualitative study with a limited sample size, the ability to differentiate opinions between men and women still allows for an exploration of gender- specific perspectives. However, the limited sample may restrict the generalizability of findings and depth of gender analysis across other demographic variables.	The gender-balanced approach in sampling, paired with the rich, contextual insights shared by participants partly mitigates this limitation, and employing triangulation methods by comparing these qualitative findings with existing literature or secondary data can further validate and enrich the evaluation's gender-specific insights . – **Risk encountered.**

Image courtesy of Achuoth Deng©

OTHERwise is a female-led and employee-owned social enterprise.

We conduct research, evaluate programmes and design policies in fragile and data-scarce contexts. Our work builds the capacity of local researchers, empowers the voices of communities, and provides the evidence-base for robust decision making towards more equitable and inclusive development.

OTHERwise Research Ltd.
C12, Hai Amarat, 767025,
Juba, **SOUTH SUDAN**

Reg.No: COY-M8S6R9

OTHERwise Research AB
4A Pontonjärgatan, 112 37,
Stockholm, **SWEDEN**

Reg. No: 559505-3512

OTHERwise OÜ
Sakala tn 7-2, Harju Maakond,
Kesklinna linnaosa, 10141
Tallinn, **ESTONIA**
Reg. No: 17086906

www.otherwiseresearch.org
info@otherwiseresearch.org

OTHERWISE
RESEARCH PRAXIS POIESIS