



# News

## letter

September  
2020

●  
Back to school  
Back to life



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# PREFACE

With the onset of every crisis, the norm would be panic, retreat or at the very least, experience some delays in your journey. Just what the COVID-19 pandemic did to majority of the world.

But i am so glad to let you know, dear reader, that in our own case, the exact opposite

happened. To us, the pandemic was an eye opener, it offered an opportunity to grow and build resilience as a team. Not only did we not slow down, but we recorded tremendous success in all programs that took place during this period.

We went from organising fundraisers for food relief drives, to implementation of remote learning in marginalized communities. We didn't stop there, we organised webinars well attended by intellectuals from various fields, who made really valuable contributions.

We have brought all these to you plus a surprise exclusive guest interview.

Just for you!.



The interview

# HUSSAINI ABDU

*“humanitarian  
challenges  
have always  
been with us”*

*Hussaini Abdu  
Country Director, Plan International Nigeria*

**Sir, you have made really giant strides in the humanitarian space. Can you tell us what triggered your interest or what inspired you to embrace humanitarian work?**

Living in our type of society, humanitarian challenges have always been with us. Unfortunately, due to poor governance and unresponsive public service system, we reached a point at which we got used to human misery we thought it is normal and part of life we don't think there is something wrong until there is huge disaster and the effect is huge enough to catch global attention.

All over the country, we have had flood, land slide, draught, fire outbreaks and much more that have displaced people, even if only in their tens and not hundred. Unfortunately, we never consider such incidences huge enough to classify them as humanitarian disaster until an outsider called them that or some people get angry or irritated enough to scream out.

Now, what really got me interested in all of these issues of humanitarian challenges and human misery is that in most cases, they are avoidable. They are avoidable because they are always as a result of developmental

challenges. And when an issue has its roots in developmental challenges, it means someone somewhere has not done their bits. It means some people, institutions, agencies or implementing bodies or policy makers have not played their roles, have not delivered on their responsibilities or there has not been a proper think through.

There is that acuity of mind, that connection between visual and mental alertness to human misery and what triggers them that is lacking in public space, and also an aloofness among the corporates, especially the large national and multinational corporates arising from their absolute concentration on profit that make them all unaware of the developmental challenges and the potential of such to lead to huge disaster.

My concern about this and the fact that even when disaster has happened, when crises have erupted and the attendant human misery we call humanitarian challenges become a haunting reality, we are still unable to draw the linkages between them and developmental challenges is what drew me to paying attention to humanitarian work.

My interest therefore, is how do we in our responses do not forget or lose sight of the fact that what we term humanitarian concerns have their roots in developmental challenges.

How do we ensure we are able to link that flooding to lack of proper urban planning and execution of existing town planning protocols, lack of proper drainages in city centres and the metropolis and the dredging by large corporates without proper supervision or control?

How do we relate landslides with the fact that the excavation and mining sites long abandoned have not been revisited and managed by relevant authorities?

How do we relate the sweeping of farm lands, communities and human beings away by excess flow of water and flood to poor dam management or the fact that relevant authorities have not proactively removed people from harm's way?

How are we able to link easy recruitment of young people by extremist groups to lack of education, poverty and livelihood opportunities as well as disillusion with the system ?

How then do we proactively start engaging with relevant authorities and agencies in the public and private sector, relevant citizens' groups and their own agencies to draw attention to the nexus between developmental challenges and humanitarian issues and come up with the best approaches to addressing them are my major concern, my main areas of interest.

## What has the education intervention during the COVID19 been like so far?

Education intervention like every other social, economic and governance activities have been severally affected by COVID-19. May be education has been more affected due to the relationships between different areas of developmental concerns and education.

These include health, infrastructural development and education governance. Intervention in education during COVID-19 therefore require multiple layers of interventions. Restriction of movements, social/physical distancing and other measure for curbing the spread of the virus also made access to schools and learning spaces impossible.

The situation of low penetration of technology in some parts of the country, the challenge with electricity or power supply in the country and poverty impacted more on education than any other areas of interventions as the other viable option of online teaching and learning is impossible in an environment with such huge deficit in these areas.

More and more however, the principle of adaptation of a problem driven approach to education intervention has dawned on us and is beginning to affect our approaches.

## You mentioned collaboration as a tool to aid development in Nigeria, from Government to Civil Society Organisations, how do you think this should work?

Interestingly, “government cannot do it all alone” has been a mantra of successive governments over the years. Though some of the time I also think that that phrase is much misused and abused. In some instances, it is used when a government is abdicating its responsibility or is not delivering on its obligations to the people, the thought of putting the burden of responsibility occurs to those who run affairs of the state and they resort to asking citizens to take up state responsibility.

. But genuinely, governments need help, need support, from the level of consultation with the people so that citizens’ input into the design of state policies and developmental agenda can be citizens-oriented, relevant to the yearnings and aspirations of the people and so that direction of state policies can also be that which meet people at the point of their needs. Definitely all the domains of governance have to work together, not only civil society organisations and government.

However, the CSOs have the advantage of a continuous engagement with the people, especially those who are in remote locations who hardly feel the presence of government; they also due to the level of distrust people have on state apparatus, which is not limited to Nigeria but cuts across many countries, get closer to people and understand the needs gaps among those unreached by governance.

Due to existing networks among CSOs, exchange of information constantly going on and wide range of documentation, sometimes they tend to have clearer view of situation in many remote locations and even among the urban poor who are largely unheard, unseen and whose issues most times do not come into the mainstream of public discourse than government.





Following the outbreak of the CoronaVirus Pandemic, which has seen Nations of the world bow to their knees and even the wealthiest men cower. The impact the pandemic has had on vulnerable communities can only be imagined. Flexisaf Foundation in one of its weekly staff meetings, (which now holds online due to the existing realities) deliberated quite extensively on the fate of the families of its beneficiaries in Rugga and Gudaba communities in Abuja, and the need to reach out to them in the face of imminent food scarcity and hunger occasioned by the Lockdown order of the federal government in their bid to curtail the spread of the deadly pandemic.





After very robust deliberations, it was unanimously agreed that the foundation should crowdfund to get food supplies to the families of our beneficiaries in these various communities . The foundation decided to design online bills to advocate for people’s donations to this very noble cause.

The online campaign for donations lasted for about a week and some days, and we saw different donations from private persons that was summed up to about #182,000 (One hundred and Eighty Two Thousand Naira). The donations which came in varying sums were deeply appreciated and put into good use as follows.



Food items like two and a half bags of rice, four packs of Pasta, seven packs of oil, eight packs of seasoning and over eighty modules of beans were purchased and divided into over a hundred separate packs, and shared to the concerned persons, with each family getting reasonable pieces of all the items listed.

The Idea of the food drive is not to totally ameliorate the dire situation we observed in these communities, but to complement the efforts of the government and to ease the sufferings of the affected households in the communities.



The foundation team arrived at Rugga Community at about 9:00am on Wednesday 6th of May 2020, and was met with the presence of the foundation's beneficiaries in our designated safe space. The items were then shared to the beneficiaries after a brief sensitization on how to keep safe and maintain a healthy hygiene in these times.



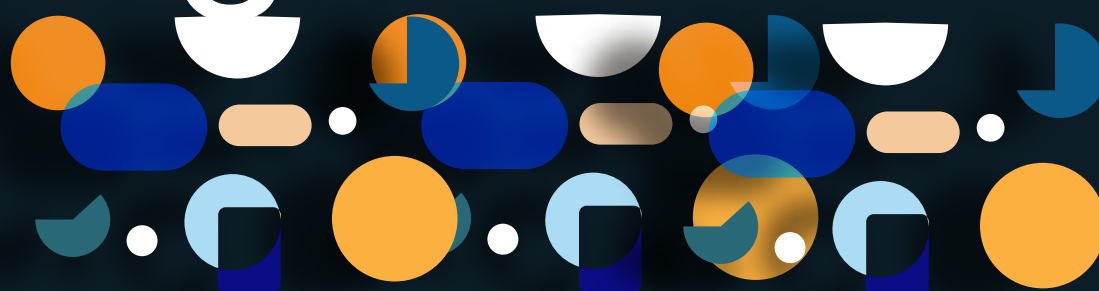


The foundation team tried to maintain the principle of social distancing while the items were being shared, an action which was almost impossible to maintain as a result of the orientation of the community. The same act was replicated in Gudaba community in Kuje as we met with the beneficiaries, related courteously with them, and gave out the palliatives. The principles of social distancing were adhered to brilliantly in Gudaba as it is shown in the pictures attached to the report.



The families of the beneficiaries in the communities visited were quite thankful to the foundation and the team. The food drive was overwhelmingly successful because it met the objectives deliberated upon before it was initiated.

# Digital



# Learning

In the light of Covid-19

## GENERAL DELIVERY:

The Webinar which was held on the 27th day of May to commemorate the Children's Day 2020 with the above topic was successful. The general mood of the webinar was great and participants engaged with the moderator and the speakers from the beginning to the end. The speakers also engaged by responding to questions asked by participants.

## WEBINAR OBJECTIVE:

"...Our objective is to create a platform through the webinar to discuss with other CSOs who are involved in any form of education in marginalized communities on how they are dealing with the stop to education IN THE LIGHT OF COVID-19 and how we can bridge this gap with resources available to us amid the lockdown and restriction on movement"



The objective of the Foundation for organizing the webinar was achieved and due to the quality of speakers, the objective was exceeded with a lot of things to take away from the webinar.

### **ATTENDANCE:**

The response from the public as well as our target audience was very impressive. The speakers also influenced attendance from their individual organizations and spheres. We had in attendance individuals who showed interest from social media promotions, CSOs in Education which were contacted via emails and other well meaning Nigerians. It is worthy of note that also in attendance was the MD and members of the BOT of FlexiSAF Foundation. We had a maximum of 80 participants in virtual attendance at the webinar.

### **SPEAKERS:**

The webinar was graced with four speakers

- 1) Asiya Rodrigo
- 2) Dr. Abubakar Dahiru
- 3) Hajjiya Habiba Muhammad
- 4) Kolade Adebimpe

The above named speakers all individually did justice to the topic by answering the questions asked and giving experiential examples while answering questions

### **SELECTED TOPIC/RESPONSE:**

The topic selected by the team was DIGITAL LEARNING IN THE LIGHT OF COVID-19. The topic got a fantastic treatment from the speakers and an amazing response from participants who as aforementioned were active throughout the webinar.

### **SOFTWARE PERFORMANCE AND NETWORK:**

The team agreed to use the google hangout software. This was a good decision. The network was also good during the webinar. We experienced a few hackings during the webinar but the team members who were prepared specifically to tackle that in the instance that it happens arrested the situation swiftly and as a result, it didn't affect the webinar.

### **DATE AND TIMING OF THE WEBINAR:**

The webinar was scheduled to hold on 27th May, 2020 and the time agreed was 11 am.

It was a webinar planned to last for about an hour but it lasted for two hours, twenty two minutes and fifty three seconds.

Although it was interactive and engaging, we overshoot the time.

## PROMOTION OF WEBINAR:

The means employed by the Foundation to promote the webinar attracted admirable response on all our social media platforms and on individual handles of team members.

The video, doodles including the countdown doodles and the individual confirmation doodle all contributed to advertising the webinar. We observed that the speakers also promoted the webinar to their followers as well.

## TEAM CORPORATION/TASK PERFORMANCE:

The Foundation team cooperated with each to make the seminar a success.

## PREPARATION/REHEARSAL:

The planning, preparation and implementation of the plans made the webinar a success.

The team holding a rehearsal to test run the software and also to teach team members on how to handle their roles during the webinar was a plus to the collective success of every team member.

## RECORDING OF THE WEBINAR:

As agreed by the team members during the planning, the webinar was recorded. This move made it possible for participants to have access to the very rich conversation whenever needed.

## OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS FROM TEAM MEMBERS DURING THE DEBRIEF

1. The proximity of the time to the friday jumat prayers may have hindered some interested person from participating

2. The duration of the webinar over shot by one hour and some minutes, it was mentioned that subsequently with work towards the specified time or do not underestimate the time allotted from the onset



*Written by Lukman Adamu Abdullahi*

## **COVID-19: A Unique Opportunity for Growth**

The year 2020 has proven to be a defining period that has impacted all of us around the world in ways we could never have imagined. No doubt, Covid-19 has brought uncertainty, but to some extent, also opportunities.

We have all been struck with some kind of hardship in one way or another.

We have been compelled to adapt to a new way of living, which in all honesty, could be here to stay, at least for some time.

My whole life I have always been a field person, from field trips as a Geography student, to field supervision as a technical Assistant (Hydrologist) during my NYSC days while working as an enumerator on various humanitarian and development projects. It has now been two years since I joined the 'working class', but never have I been exposed to working remotely until recently, which wouldn't have been possible if I hadn't joined the FlexiSAF Foundation team, quite a remarkable experience, I must say.

## My story is that of hope, a story of progress and development...

Before now, webinars used to be a thing that I just came across online while reading some write-ups. In fact, I can vividly remember the first time I heard the word 'webinar'. It was in the year 2015 in a short advert on Facebook by a renowned Texas-based scholar. I still can't believe that I fully participated in organizing one, but it did happen. In fact, anything is possible when you find yourself amidst young, vibrant and brilliant team players working for a subsidiary of a tech company.

It would be a lie to say I wasn't paranoid the index case of Covid-19 was announced in the country. If America and other developed countries are being knocked-down by the virus, what would be the fate of a developing country such as Nigeria? This question kept me up all night. Gladly, I resorted to prayers and decided I needed to initiate a lock down protocol for myself. I tried to go round the schools which had the foundation's beneficiaries under my purview to check if their results had been compiled, and that was the last field activity I did before the country was brought down to its knees by the pandemic.

Next thing for me was to buy food items. It wasn't even shopping time yet, but who cares! I wouldn't risk waiting for the virus to hit my state before I start thinking of how to stock up my store; "better to have it and not need it than to need it and not have it" as some may say. I rushed to the market without a budget, let alone a list of items. While some people were busy saying the virus was infecting only the rich, I was busy planning how to survive a month straight without having any contact with the outside world



On the 16th of May I received a call from my line manager informing me that I should get ready, we would soon be going out to distribute food items to our beneficiaries. I became very excited because I had been seeing the covid-19 food relief activities flooding our social media pages, it was first carried out in Abuja, and then Kano. The outreach was very timely and the targeted communities had proven to be worthy of the intervention because of the deep appreciation expressed by them, you can tell even from the pictures.

I tried checking my storage to see if i had any personal protective equipment because it has been a while since i last went out. Luckily, I found two face masks and a pair of surgical gloves, and that's it! I am good to go! We set out to the field one Saturday, it was a bright day with very hot weather, which is very typical here in Yola.

We started with the Anguwan Bola community, which happens to be the most vulnerable. We did a house to house drop-off of the food items. The kids were amazed by seeing us, and my manager was surprised as to how I called them by their full names. I said to him, they are my kids, and we all smiled.

We proceeded to other communities and gave them their own share of the food items. The parents were surprised and grateful by the thoughtful gesture; they never expected to see us at a time like this.

Another milestone for me during this Covid-19 epoch was learning how to cook. I was home alone. My mom went on a very important visit to Kano just a few weeks before the lock down. Can you believe it? No home cooked meals, no commercial transport to get to any restaurant, that's if they were even open, and most unfortunately, I didn't know how to cook.

With the help of my mom, I was able to cook for myself in this period of lonesomeness. I would call her early in the morning for some tips, some of which I suddenly forgot, but thank God airtime wasn't an issue, so I would call her even while cooking if I had forgotten anything she had told me, and that was how I succeeded in becoming a good cook.

I cannot account for the amount of data I bought during this period. I watched tons of travel videos as a tourism lover and also registered some courses online as part of an obligation by the Foundation, a great initiative by the way! There is no better time to develop oneself than this period.

Family is the most important thing in any kind of situation you find yourself in. Covid-19 has taught me how important a phone from a family member or a friend is.

I get calls all the time especially from my immediate family members.

Calls could never be a replacement for physical presence, but psychologically, those phone calls went a long way in helping me cope.

Even though the Pandemic brought with it a lot of crises, it's also an opportunity to develop oneself and reach out to loved ones especially the vulnerable. We should always strive to be of service to humanity by empowering those who are marginalised.

Covid-19 crisis was a time for growth and development for me. How are you coping during this time? Do share with us, we'd love to learn from you.



## Theme: Remote AccLearn for marginalized communities

### Objectives:

- To discuss remote learning options for marginalized communities to ensure inclusive learning where no child is left behind.
- To create an awareness of the Foundation's Accelerated Learning program and milestones and impact recorded with the program
- To ensure the online community is engaged despite the Covid-19 situation.
- To discuss the effect of Covid-19 on the program and FlexiSAF Foundations Covid-19 response to the beneficiaries of the program.

The session started with the Coordinator, Amina Abubakar welcoming participants with an elaborate introduction of FlexiSAF Foundation, its mandates, vision and activities. Amina introduces Nelson as her co-host for the Facebook Live session; Nelson is the programmes Officer for flexiSAF Foundation. Nelson spoke on the Accelerated Learning (AccLearn) program and its impact from inception; some of the impacted the program has recorded as highlighted by Nelson were:

Interest and enthusiasm for learning from the children.

Buy in from the community and parents/guardians of the beneficiaries which is reflected in the attendance recorded by the program and the active participation of parents/guardians in supervision and support of the AccLearn program.

Improved phonetic and phonemic awareness from the children who can now blend up to four (4) letter sounds.

Ability of the children to identify and write numbers; also the children's ability to do basic mathematical operations.

improved hygiene and mannerism. the children are more tolerant and accommodating. Kudos to the Life Skills curriculum.

Nelson passionately spoke of the clear distinction between the AccLearn children and other children in the community and believe the Foundation's intervention in the community came just at the nick of time.

Amina elaborated on the Bottle4Books initiative which aims to serve as a funding mechanism for the program and a form of empowerment for the parents of the beneficiaries as they can exchange plastic bottles and bags for money. Amina strongly believes this is a unique strategy for sustainability of the AccLearn program.

Nelson explained that the AccLearn program was adversely affected by the Pandemic and the lockdown crippled most of the programs activities and classes could no longer hold due to the regulations from NCDC. However, the Foundation team put together a remote learning plan to be able to reach the beneficiaries and ensure learning continues.

Nelson explained that worksheets were designed for the three safe spaces and were distributed to the children during a food relief intervention to the household of the beneficiaries.



## Activities And Milestones Highlighted Pre Covid-19

Community awareness drive in Rugga community-Wuye where we held a sensitization meeting on free primary and junior secondary education.

Bottle4Books initiative in partnership with Waste Africa

Launched an Accelerated Learning Center at Rugga-Wuye, with 50 out of school children.

Develop e-learning videos in Hausa language to reinforce learning.

### Covid-19 Response

Food relief intervention, where 68 families benefited from.

Distribution of worksheets.

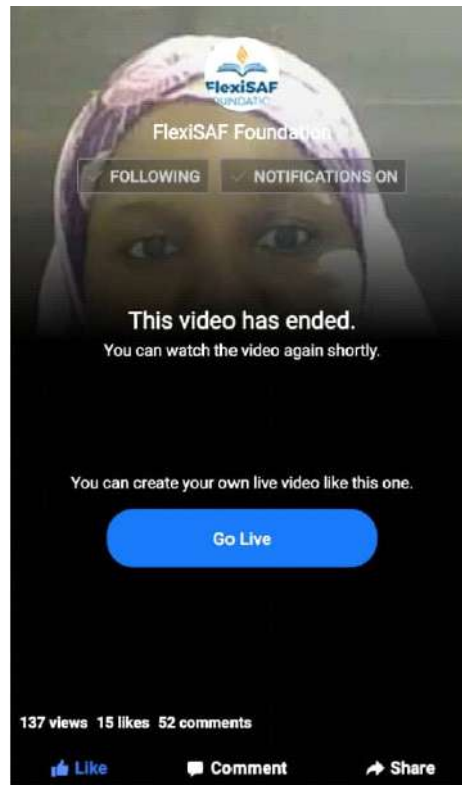
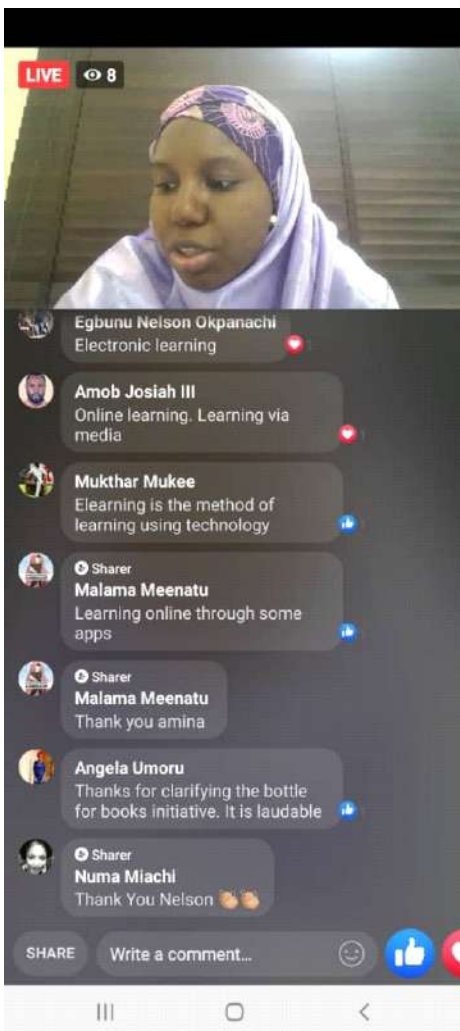
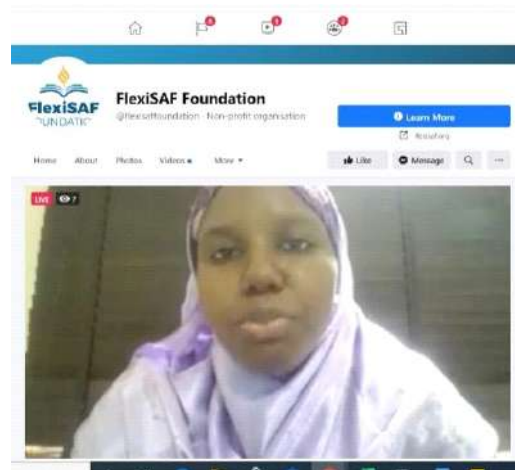
Training of instructors via WhatsApp

Organized a webinar themed “Digital learning in the light of covid-19

## Attendance:

The session recorded 137 views; 15 likes and 52 comments.

# Pictures



Just as we always say that NGOs cannot replace government, in same way we also recognise that government, especially people in government, might not see everywhere, everything. So, the need for collaboration between these two domains is relevant. And their agenda is also linked as both are not set up for profit, but for meeting the citizens' needs and are also obliged by their mandates to understand work within the frame of human rights-based approach.

Understandably, there has been some level of distrust and cynicism in the engagements and relationships over the years. This also has been inevitable due to our political history, the history of evolution of NGOs around here which is largely as a result of gaps in governance. There is also the rise of neoliberalism or extreme market based economic philosophy, which has influenced direction of states policies and invariably deemphasises human development, tilting the focus of governments on economic growth to basic concept of GDP, which most of the time are not connected to the people's realities. There is therefore, that urgent need for both domains to recognise the inevitability of close collaborations between them if they will be able achieve their mandate of working for the people.

## What is your most important message for those intervening in Education in Emergencies ?

Education in Emergencies has its peculiarities and design of interventions need to be conscious of this. The basic principle of EiE is that children must access education irrespective of their situation. The state of emergencies also differs from one location to another. Therefore, the art of mimicry in which ideas are transplanted from one clime to another will not work unless such are contextualised and made to respond to the local realities.

This definitely does not mean we are suggesting non-recognition and adherence to best global practices. But whatever we do must respond to the peculiarities of the environment of intervention. Because we are responding to the situation of human beings, their input is also important.

That actually is where authority for interventions should come from.

Getting the input of the people, you may choose to refer to them as beneficiaries of interventions, is important. We cannot design, frame and implement interventions without the people's own input, without consulting them. Our authority for intervening definitely must come from that interaction with the owners of the issues.

In recent time, though understandably, a lot of emphasis on Education in Emergencies, has been on the North East of Nigeria and with minimal recognition of the fact that there are other emergencies situations. To ensure we do not have another situation of abandonment which is part of the issues that gave rise to the crises of the North East of Nigeria, there is need to also recognise the other dimensions of emergencies and in our work also respond where education is involved.


Most importantly, there is also the need to pay attention to those developmental challenges that gave rise to the emergency situation. Even as we intervene in making provisions for teaching, teaching aid, improvement of facilities and improvement of the skills of teachers, we need to understand that emergency aid or humanitarian support cannot be treated as perpetual intervention or assistance. We need to focus more and more on the nexus between humanitarian and development concerns.






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