

SHIFTING THE POWER

Learning Review – September 2017



How has Shifting the Power influenced local and national partner's responses to emergencies?



actionaid

CAFOD
Just one world

christian
aid

tearfund



CONCERN
worldwide



Cover Photo: Community members from Koronder, a remote village in Marsabit County, northern Kenya, fetching water during PACIDA's water trucking interventions in response to the drought. Photo @ PACIDA.

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Acronyms and abbreviations

CERT	Community Emergency Response Team
CCONAT	Cadre de Consultation des Organisations Nationales
CCRDA	Consortium of Christian Relief and Development Organisations
CHS	Core Humanitarian Standards
CSG	County Steering Group
DDM	Department of Disaster Management
DEPP	Disaster Emergency Preparedness Programme
ECSF	Ethiopian Charities & Societies Forum
ELNHA	Empowering Local and National Humanitarian Actors (project)
FONAHD	Forum des ONG Humanitaires and Développement
HCT	Humanitarian Country Team
HHCT	Humanitarian Coordination Task Team
JNA	Joint Needs Assessments
L/NNGO	Local and National NGO
NAHAB	National Alliance of Humanitarian Actors in Bangladesh
NDMA	National Drought Management Authority (Kenya)
NDMC	National Drought Management Committee (Kenya)/ National Disaster Management Committee
NHN	National Humanitarian Network (Pakistan)
RONDH	Réseau des organisations nationales de développement et humanitaire
SHAPE	Strategic Humanitarian Assessment and Participatory Empowerment (Framework)
STP	Shifting the Power

Executive Summary

Shifting the Power (STP) is a three-year project that aims to strengthen the capacity and influence of local and national humanitarian actors, and to contribute to the development of a more balanced humanitarian system.

STP is part of the three-year Disasters and Emergencies Preparedness Programme (DEPP) and is being implemented by a consortium of six INGOs: ActionAid, CAFOD, Christian Aid, Concern, Oxfam and Tearfund. The consortium is working alongside 55 local and national NGO (L/NNGO) partners in Bangladesh, DRC, Ethiopia, Kenya and Pakistan. The project is comprised of five 'outputs', relating to capacity strengthening, supporting representation and voice of local partners, consortium member INGOs 'walking the talk', collaboration with other DEPP projects, and learning and evidence sharing.

This learning review took place between July and September 2017 (towards the end of the project). It examines how the project has influenced local and national partner's response to emergencies, and which capacity strengthening activities have been most successful. The data on which the review is based was collected from STP staff, L/NNGO partners, and INGO consortium members through a variety of means including: qualitative surveys, field visits, Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), Skype calls and extensive document reviews.

The programme has seen some immediate results and benefits. There are numerous examples from all STP countries of L/NNGO progress in being prepared for and able to respond to emergencies. Positively, reports of the progress achieved as a result of being part of STP was not limited to one or two L/NNGOs, nor were they limited to one area of progress per L/NNGO.

As part of STP, L/NNGOs worked to develop their humanitarian vision and strategy and to refine the systems needed for management of resources and staff during a humanitarian response. They developed Emergency Preparedness and Response Plans and formed Emergency Response Teams from existing staff members. Some L/NNGOs also extended their reach and potential pool of resources to draw on during an emergency response by identifying and training community volunteers. Capacities were developed in undertaking needs assessments, through formal trainings and practical application. Through progress in these areas L/NNGOs reported examples where they had been able to apply for new sources of funding. In addition, links were built with local authorities, helping to formalise L/NNGOs roles and relationships within the wider community.

An important aspect of the project was the networking opportunities it provided. L/NNGOs came together to share experiences and to learn from one another. As a result, new relationships were fostered at a national level and new ways of working and examples of mutual support have been seen. For example: some partners have accessed new funding through building alliances to submit joint proposals to pooled funds. It is the reviewer's opinion that the progress made in building linkages between L/NNGOs and other humanitarian actors is likely to be the most transformative for L/NNGOs going forward, both for the role they play in responding to emergencies themselves and their ability to influence emergency response work. Not only has there been a shift in mind-set among L/NNGOs – from seeing other L/NNGOs as competitors to potential collaborators – but, based on the progress already made and the benefits seen by involved stakeholders, it is likely that these linkages (for the large part) will be sustained.

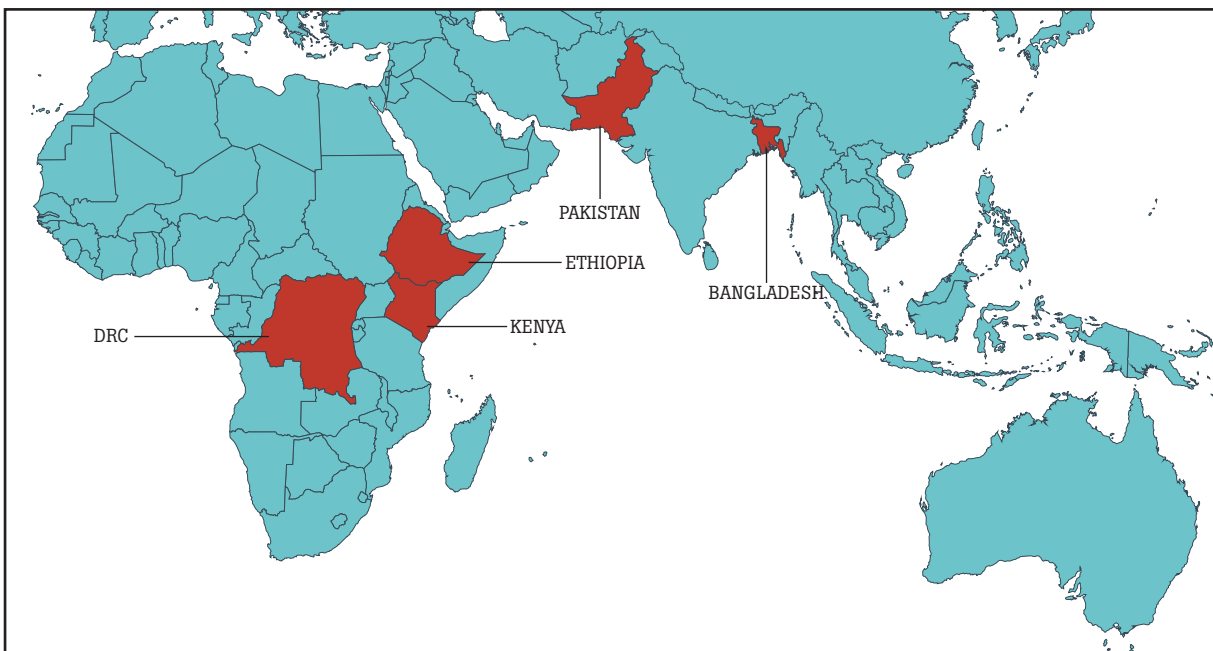
Participating L/NNGOs were hugely diverse in terms of size and humanitarian vs developmental remit. While there were benefits to bringing together diverse L/NNGOs, the support needed for smaller L/NNGOs (and the speed of change possible) is different to that needed for larger L/NNGOs. Partner selection was done by consortium INGOs, rather than by L/NNGOs applying to be part of the project. As such, the STP needed to spend time at the beginning motivating L/NNGO managers on the value of being part of this project.

Given the changes STP was aiming to bring about, the duration and time available for capacity strengthening activities with partners was short. At the time of the review capacity strengthening activities had only been operating 12-18 months. Many activities have just happened or are in the process of being rolled out and therefore it is highly likely that more results will be seen over the next 1-2 years. In looking at these changes, it is important to also test if the underlying assumption that faster response by L/NNGOs, L/NNGOs taking the lead in responses, or other changes, will also lead to more effective responses from the perspective of the communities involved. Extension of the project timeline is recommended, particularly in countries where sustainability of activities is most fragile. Equally beneficial would be a continued effort and investment to sustain the networks which have been established by the project thus far.

1. Introduction

Shifting the Power (STP) is recognised as both an ambitious and unique project. Ambitious in terms of the changes it aspires to bring about over a three-year period; the scale it is working at, with activities across five countries involving 55 local NGOs (L/NNGOs); and the scope of disaster management capacities it is supporting L/NNGOs to strengthen. The focus of STP exclusively on capacity strengthening and increasing the voice and influence of national actors is seen by many as unique, and the approach aimed at empowering L/NNGOs in humanitarian forums is untested and can be considered experimental. Its mode of operation, working with local partners on strategic organisational issues with only small level grants, is counter to ingrained 'project' ways of working between L/NNGOs and INGOs, and so its implementation has needed to challenge mind-sets.

An overview of the Shifting the Power (STP) project - Shifting the Power is a £4.8 million project, running from January 2015 to December 2017, supported by the UK's Department for International Development (DFID), through START Network's Disasters Emergency Preparedness Programme (DEPP). STP consists of six INGOs: ActionAid, CAFOD, Christian Aid, Tearfund, Concern and Oxfam, who together form the consortium implementing STP, with ActionAid and CAFOD as lead agencies. The consortium is supporting 55 local and national NGO (L/NNGO) partners in Bangladesh, DRC, Ethiopia, Kenya and Pakistan. Through increasing locally led responses, the project aims to improve the effectiveness and accountability of humanitarian assistance to disaster affected communities.

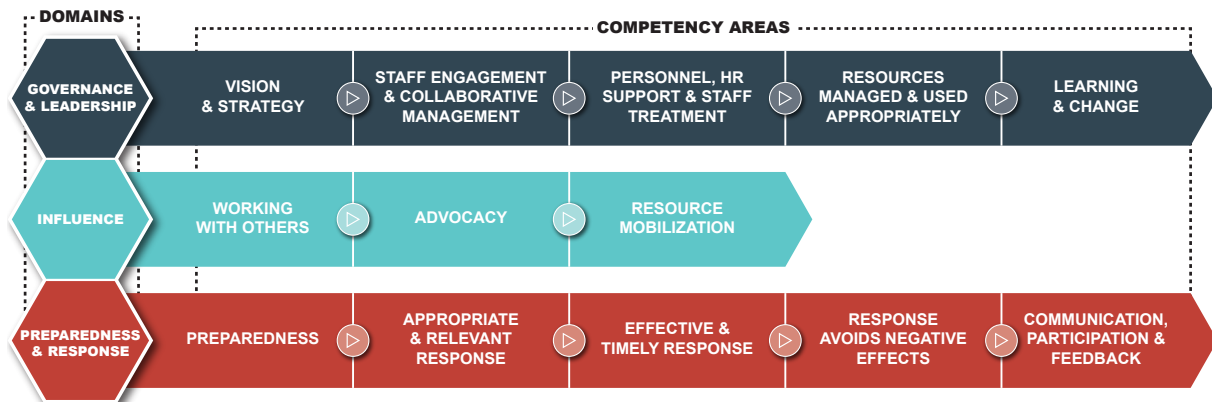


STP consists of 5 major components, formulated as outputs:

1. Capacity strengthening: Local partners in 5 countries have the knowledge, skills, processes, and policies to prepare for and respond effectively to emergencies
2. Enabling environment: Local partners are better represented and have a stronger voice in relevant humanitarian platforms and networks in their countries
3. Walking the talk: STP consortium member INGOs recognise and respond to local partner capacity, leadership, and voice
4. DEPP Collaboration: STP collaborates with other DEPP projects for maximizing collaborative advantage
5. Learning: STP provides evidence of good practice in strengthening local partners' humanitarian preparedness and response work and their role/influence in humanitarian action

The SHAPE Framework - The ‘Strategic Humanitarian Assessment and Participatory Empowerment’ (SHAPE) framework is a tool developed by STP to support local and national NGOs in assessing their capacity to both manage humanitarian programmes and to control and influence humanitarian response. It is used by L/NNGOs to assess their own strengths and weaknesses and prioritise areas for capacity strengthening. Figure 2, below, summarises the main SHAPE Framework components, organised under three domains: Governance and Leadership, Influence, and Preparedness and Response.

Figure 1: SHAPE Framework Components



A unique feature of the SHAPE framework is the inclusion of Power and Influence, aimed at supporting L/NNGOs to reflect on how they can increase their own power and influence within their existing humanitarian setting. As was highlighted in a previous Learning Review “it is an implicit assumption that through capacity development support as assessed through SHAPE, L/NNGOs will become able to influence existing power structures and ultimately become more empowered themselves”.¹

Objective of this Learning Review - This Learning Review is focused on output one of STP, and seeks to answer the following:

How has the Shifting the Power project influenced local and national partner’s responses to emergencies?

More specifically:

1. How has the STP project supported or challenged partners’ emergency response work?
2. How could the capacity strengthening support be improved to ensure it is more relevant to emergency response?

¹ Lewinsky, T. “Getting into SHAPE? A review of Shifting the Power’s Organisational Capacity Assessment Approach” (Nov 2016)

2. How has the STP project supported or challenged partners' emergency response work?

This chapter presents examples of progress and changes reported by L/NNGOs, arranged by each of the three domains of the SHAPE Framework. For each it discusses the results seen to date as well as factors likely to affect the sustainability of progress made. Finally, it considers the 'so what?', i.e. to what extent progress made may have already impacted on what is done at community level in response to emergencies.

2.1 GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP

Developing a humanitarian vision and strategy

For a large number of L/NNGOs there was a need to lay the foundations, helping the L/NNGO organise the basics before moving on to other activities. A common starting point was the development of a humanitarian strategy.

- In Kenya, L/NNGOs started by identifying their own organisational niche, which they could then develop further and build on in interactions with other stakeholders.
- In Bangladesh developing a humanitarian strategy clarified the role L/NNGOs wanted to play in emergencies and gave them a direction. This was of importance especially as many of L/NNGOs are predominantly development focused and a number of them had never responded in an emergency.²
- In DRC, L/NNGOs developed an Accountability Framework (following a training on the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS)) to make explicit the standards and norms that guide their work. 77% of L/NNGOs who responded to the survey reported that STP had improved the understanding of their organisation's role and mandate in emergencies.

What was not always clear from discussions was how these new policy documents would be rolled out and how the newly developed strategies would be used to guide future direction. In both DRC and Bangladesh, there was a perception that 'if the policy or document has been approved by the Board, then it must be followed', and there was little support for the staff to implement the changes. For the majority of L/NNGOs in DRC there was no recognition of the organisational changes that may be needed to strengthen how they realise the nine commitments in the CHS as included in their Accountability Frameworks (building on existing good practice). It will be interesting to see in one to two years' time how these documents have been used.

Refining systems for management of resources and staffing during humanitarian response

Many L/NNGOs across all five countries adapted their existing HR, Finance, and Procurement procedures to make them more suitable for timely and efficient response to emergency situations.

- In DRC, six L/NNGOs were supported to start using SAGE financial software.
- In Pakistan nine L/NNGOs were supported with a double entry accounting system for improved transparency and accountability.
- CIFA³ (an L/NNGO in Ethiopia) reported that their improved policies allowed them to recruit staff and undertake procurement faster, thus reducing their response time to the current drought.
- In other countries the improvements opened up funding opportunities, for example in Pakistan where six of the L/NNGOs are now eligible for OCHA Pakistan Humanitarian Pool Funding (PHPF), they were also able to gain certification from the Pakistan Centre for Philanthropy (PCP).

² This was also identified as a gap across L/NNGOs in Bangladesh by the ELHNA report looking at overall challenges in L/NNGO humanitarian work (Oxfam Bangladesh, "A fresh analysis of the Humanitarian capacity of Bangladesh "Bangladesh Capacity" (September 2016))

³ Community Initiatives Facilitations and Assistance (CIFA)

Strengthening L/NNGO governance and the role of boards

There are some good examples from Kenya, where the STP team worked to strengthen the board of smaller L/NNGOs. For example, through sensitisation sessions with the POWEO⁴ board and via an exchange visit to meet the board of SIKOM,⁵ STP supported POWEO to set up their board. As a result board members have a greater understanding of their role, and have developed a common understanding of the importance of putting in place basic systems as an organisation.

Benefits to date from progress in Governance and Leadership

The progress made by L/NNGOs in these areas is associated with increased individual and organisational confidence. For many L/NNGOs by L/NNGO staff there was considerable pride in the existence of these new organisational documents (as well as other policies developed), and a sense of increased professionalisation.

These improved organisational documents and systems were also seen as key to accessing funding.

Sustainability of progress under Governance and Leadership

Newly developed and refined documents will remain beyond STP. Key for sustainability will be the internal approval of these new strategies and policies (which is on-going for many), and subsequent roll-out and use. Revisiting participating L/NNGOs in 1-2 years will provide an opportunity to understand the extent to which staff at all levels know and understand these key documents, and how they are being used.

"Support from STP really helped us manage many issues related to organisational developmentnow it is our own responsibility to take these forward for our own benefit"

L/NNGO, Bangladesh

2.2 PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE

Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan

During STP, the majority of L/NNGOs across all countries created an Emergency Response Team (ERT)⁶ and developed an Emergency Preparedness and Response Plans (EPRP)⁷.

- Six out of the seven Ethiopian L/NNGOs who responded to the survey reported that the development of an EPRP and ERT was the biggest change in their ability to respond to emergencies.
- In DRC, the newly formed ERTs were made up of heads of teams and positively brought together both operational staff as well as heads of support services such as finance, HR, logistics.
- The integration of emergency response responsibilities into the job descriptions of all staff helped to bring clarity to individual roles. This was done by a number of L/NNGOs in Bangladesh.
- In other countries the improvements opened up funding opportunities, for example in Pakistan where six of the L/NNGOs are now eligible for OCHA Pakistan Humanitarian Pool Funding (PHPF), they were also able to gain certification from the Pakistan Centre for Philanthropy (PCP).

⁴ Pokot Women Empowerment Organization

⁵ SIKOM Peace Network for Development

⁶ Also called Rapid Response Teams in Bangladesh.

⁷ These were called by different names in different countries.

The composition of the ERTs factored in the realities of staffing challenges faced by L/NNGOs, whose humanitarian remit tends to be a small proportion of what they do. As Ethiopian Catholic Church-Social and Development Commission, explains:

“It is difficult to hire and maintain the humanitarian staff for a local NGO like ours. Therefore, we have had to come up with the innovative idea of developing a surge capacity like the ERT. The ERT membership is through an [existing] position and included in the job description of the position to be taken. Even if a member staff may leave as it has already happened, the new staff who will replace him/her will have in his/her JD the role and membership of ERT. The organisation has a guideline on ERT team management and has already tested the benefit of having this surge capacity.”⁸

The exact purpose of the ERT’s varied slightly between countries and L/NNGOs. In DRC, a larger L/NNGO saw the main role of the ERT as being for overall coordination for larger responses, with smaller more common responses being managed by managers based in field offices.

In comparison, in Bangladesh ERTs were described as first responders comprised of front-line and mid-level staff who could rapidly collect information to feed-up to senior managers. They had recently been trained in fire-fighting and emergency first aid, which suggests a more front-line immediate lifesaving role, and given a simple backpack of response items (such as first aid kits). While the training itself, which was conducted by the fire-service, may have built valuable links between L/NNGO and local service providers, it is hard to see how ERT members would be able to use these skills in communities beyond those in which they live and work. Building L/NNGOs capacity to respond to events that need immediate life-saving support, as opposed to humanitarian response, may be an aspiration too far given the resources of this project.

Closely linked to the establishment of ERTs was the development of Emergency Preparedness and Response Plans (EPRP).

- In Ethiopia each partner was encouraged to mobilise its ERT members and core staffs for a minimum of three days EPRP preparation.
- HEAL Africa, in DRC, formed their ERT as the first step to bring key staff together to jointly develop their EPRP.
- Caritas Bangladesh conducted training with staff from each of their regional offices so that each region could develop their plan which would subsequently feed-up into an organizational plan.



⁸ Response to survey

- Eleven L/NNGOs in Pakistan developed their own organisational preparedness plans and facilitated the District Level Management Authorities to review and jointly develop Contingency Plans.
- L/NNGO staff in Bangladesh often talked about the value of the plans for them as being a useful reference document that lists the contact details for key external stakeholders.

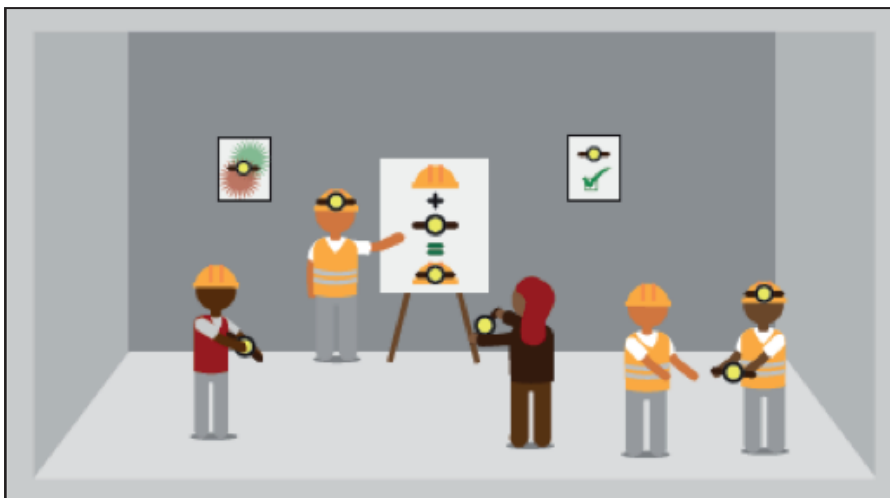
The EPRP documents developed in DRC, tended to be extremely long (70–100 pages was common), with extensive background.⁹ There is a risk that these documents attempt to look at preparedness needed from the whole humanitarian community, as opposed to the role each L/NNGO could play (and the steps needed to achieve this).

A common weakness identified by L/NNGOs themselves in their EPRPs was the lack of contingency funds and stocks. It is recognised that this is in part due to current funding flows and priorities, which STP is looking to address, but lack of even relatively small levels of funds to conduct rapid needs assessments is a barrier to L/NNGOs being able to respond rapidly.

There is an opportunity to combine or better link documents developed under STP, which may be particularly beneficial for smaller L/NNGOs. For example, to use an L/NNGO's Humanitarian Strategy and EPRP as the basis for developing (or updating) an overall capacity strengthening plan – that looks at what the organisation needs to put in place and strengthen in order to be able to realise its strategy and EPRP.

Ability to undertake a needs assessment and develop a proposal

Another common theme across all countries was progress in capacity to undertake needs assessments.



77%

of respondents reported improvements in their organisations' ability to **IDENTIFY THE NEEDS OF THE AFFECTED POPULATION** with their strengthened skills in conducting needs assessments.

- 77% of L/NNGO survey respondents felt there had been improvements in their ability to understand the needs of affected communities.
- In DRC, eight L/NNGOs were supported financially to undertake rapid needs assessments themselves, following a five-day training on "Data collection & dissemination and humanitarian need assessments". Focal points in DRC reported that the training enabled them to follow a more "organised" process, which resulted in a more professional report.
- In Kenya, in response to the drought, seven L/NNGOs were supported via STP to participate in joint needs assessments with their respective County Steering Groups in the six counties.
- Partners in Ethiopia were provided with intensive rapid needs assessment training including digital data collection training. They were also supported with mobile devices to collect real time data. As a result, as part of the current drought, L/NNGO ERTs took part in a rapid needs assessment with other actors and the government for the first time.

⁹ Based on reviewing the EPRPs developed by Caritas Goma, CEDERU, PACODEVI, and PPSSP. Based on a recent visit by STP's global Capacity Building Adviser, L/NNGOs were also developed a summary 2–3 pages matrix for Preparedness and Response.

- In Bangladesh, through an initial training on Joint Needs Assessment (JNA) and followed later by a Trainer of Trainer workshop, L/NNGOs worked to develop a decentralised pool of 183 (35% women) people trained in Joint Needs Assessment (JNA) across six districts, who can be called on to rapidly conduct needs assessments. People trained in JNAs are registered with local government and available for use by L/NNGOs and other actors. In addition, STP funded a rapid needs assessment that brought together a consortium of L/NNGOs, NAHAB, (supported by the STP team and Christian Aid staff) in response to the Hoar Basin floods in April 2017.

Benefits to date from progress in Preparedness and Response

There were numerous reported benefits, linked to progress in areas under the domain of Preparedness and Response:

- **Improved quality of needs assessment and reputation of L/NNGOs**
There were a number of examples of improved reception by Cluster agencies to the needs assessment reports developed by participating L/NNGOs. Plus, L/NNGOs felt that sharing of better quality reports improved their reputation among other international agencies.
- **Ability to participate in joint needs assessments with other stakeholders, and improved L/NNGO reputation**
Now ERTs have been 'formed', L/NNGOs have a trained pool of staff which means they can now more readily participate in joint activities with other agencies, such as joint needs assessments.
- **L/NNGOs being more proactive in undertaking needs assessments themselves to inform their work and others**
As a result they have a better understanding of needs, and so can develop a stronger proposal.
- **Improved ability to attract funding through using data collected through needs assessments to develop proposals**
- **Greater clarity of roles, and expanding the number of staff who can perform key tasks within an L/NNGO**
With the ERTs in place, there is greater clarity on who does what. Additionally, as staff members have received training on needs assessment and humanitarian standards, they have some of the needed skills and knowledge. In addition, as a result to training implemented by STP, L/NNGOs gave different examples of key tasks that previously could only be performed by one or two staff members, but could now be performed by others.
- **A sense that L/NNGOs had added to the level of their organizations' professionalism**
The newly created ERT teams (as well as organizational documents, pools of trained staff and trained community volunteers) are seen as adding to the organizational assets which will be valuable in the future.

Sustainability of progress under Preparedness and Response

A major barrier to L/NNGOs ability to realise their EPRPs is the lack of internal contingency funds; even relatively small levels of funds to cover the costs of doing a needs assessment. For example:

- Caritas Congo has made an internal decision to continue to do needs assessments themselves, rather than relying on second-hand information, but funds will determine if they are able to realise this goal.

While current donor behaviour may not be conducive towards L/NNGOs getting or building contingency funds, reliance on traditional donors for this may also not be a sustainable approach. There were examples in Pakistan and Bangladesh of initial discussions looking at how L/NNGOs could work more with the private sector. This may provide a more sustainable solution. It is too early to know if any results will come out of this.

In some countries ERTs are still being formalised (in DRC a recent visit by an STP staff member found the roles of ERTs still needed to be formalised in agreed Terms of References and/or job descriptions). Doing so will help them become a recognised entity in the L/NNGOs. Maintaining internal capacities in needs assessments and ERTs will depend upon skills being regularly used to ensure learning is not lost. This is less of a risk for larger L/NNGOs who are able to respond to more emergencies, however, for smaller L/NNGOs, or L/NNGOs with a small humanitarian remit, it will again be interesting to revisit in 1-2 years to see if these resources are still felt to be present.

It was not possible within the review to look at what plans are in place for on-going activities in order to build and maintain the coherence of ERTs.

2.3 INFLUENCE

The ability to access funding in order for L/NNGOs to play a more prominent role, is central to progress towards shifting the power. In presenting findings linked to the 'Influence' domain of the SHAPE Framework, it is important to note how this Learning Review complements STP's 2nd Learning Review, which explored how L/NNGOs had increased their voice and influence in their local contexts. Findings presented here look at how reported progress in different areas under 'Influence' enable L/NNGOs to be better able to prepare for and respond to emergencies.

Ability to mobilise resources

Across all countries one of the top priorities identified by L/NNGOs was improving capacity for resource mobilisation. To many extents this aim was a key driver behind other areas of capacity support. For example, the work done on strengthening capacity in needs assessments was closely linked to developing stronger proposals that would more likely attract donor funding.

In DRC, L/NNGOs reported a change in attitude and confidence linked to resource mobilisation. This came as a result of a 6-day workshop on Programme Management and Fundraising. There were numerous examples from DRC of L/NNGOs taking a more proactive approach. For example:

- CADI found the contact details for an INGO working in their area via the internet and contacted them with information about CADI. As a result, the INGO visited their offices and activities at community level to see their work. CADI is now going to work with them as part of a consortium of INGOs.
- CERDERU formed an internal team of 5 people to identify funding opportunities and collectively decide which opportunities they would pursue as an organisation.

“The training [on fundraising] gave us enthusiasm and opened our minds on how to connect to other organisations”

LNGO, DRC

L/NNGOs were also now potentially eligible for funding from new sources.

- In Pakistan 6 L/NNGO partners became eligible for OCHA Pooled funding (although as there have been no large emergencies in 2016 and 2017 there has not been a release of funds as yet).
- In DRC, a number of L/NNGOs were now in the process of being assessed to be eligible for OCHA managed Pooled funding.
- In Ethiopia, SOS Sahel was able to access OCHA funding due to progress they had made under STP. This is a huge success given restrictions on L/NNGOs having foreign currency accounts in Ethiopia.

However, while steps forward were made, the ability to access resources is still a barrier for L/NNGOs. The “ability to apply for and attract new funding” scored the lowest of all the change areas in the survey (only 37% of L/NNGO respondents felt progress had been made in this area).

One of the challenges highlighted in Bangladesh, is the lack of pots of money that L/NNGOs are eligible to apply for. The exceptions at present being an emergency response fund as part of Oxfam’s 3-year ELHNA programme, and the newly established Bangladesh START Fund. Both of these are relatively small amounts of money, and the Start Fund is only open to START members (of which Caritas Bangladesh and Coast Trust are the only L/NNGOs).

Oxfam’s 3-year ELHNA programme, and the newly established Bangladesh START Fund. Both of these are relatively small amounts of money, and the Start Fund is only open to START members (of which Caritas Bangladesh and Coast Trust are the only L/NNGOs)..

Decision-making over the allocation of funding still lies with international actors. Between L/NNGOs there is felt to be a lack of transparency in how funds are allocated. There was also a sense that allocation of funding on occasions ignored local contexts, which L/NNGOs had a better understanding of, penalising L/NNGO proposals which had factored in local constraints only for the awarded INGOs to discover the same constrains further down the line, thus delaying implementation. The rationale behind START Fund decision-making was not shared back with L/NNGOs who had applied but been unsuccessful, and it was unclear how other L/NNGOs could become members of START Fund.

The power to decide if and when donor funding becomes more accessible to L/NNGOs, and what is funded in order to better support sustainable L/NNGOs, lies with international actors. The setting of the rules and criteria that organisations need to meet in order to be able to access funding also lies with international actors. There is a risk that strengthening the capacity of L/NNGOs focuses on them being better able to meet these numerous criteria, which may not have been set with L/NNGOs (or at least smaller organisations) in mind, and restricts L/NNGOs from looking pragmatically at what documents, or systems, might produce the best results for their organisation given its context.

No examples were found of STP actively creating linkages or opportunities for discussion between participating L/NNGOs and ‘traditional humanitarian’ donors such as DFID. A need to better support L/NNGOs to have greater opportunities to access funding was one of the main recommendations from the survey responses for how STP could be improved.¹⁰ Recommendations for improvement included: linking L/NNGOs with donors, stronger advocacy, at country and international level, of donors to create more funding opportunities for L/NNGOs; and supporting L/NNGOs in accessing funding from donors as part of STP project’s exit-strategy.

“Is [L/NNGO] closer to being able to raise funds independently? No. Even INGOs are finding it hard to raise funds, so L/NNGOs are even further away!”

INGO, DRC

“What after STP? - Is it like any other project? What is the end product of STP? Does it involve something like graduation, creation of linkages to key donors, approval to certain levels of funding, certifications? What makes it a unique capacity building project?”

L/NNGO, Kenya

¹⁰ 18 out of 51 responding organisations made a recommendation linked improving access to funding for L/NNGOs.

Stronger links with local authorities, communities, and other humanitarian actors

The most varied activities and changes identified as part of this review were linked to L/NNGOs working with local authorities and communities. It is here that improved capacity to influence other organisations and stronger individual L/NNGO preparedness are closely related.

Working with local authorities –

- In Pakistan, the relationship L/NNGOs have built with 12 local District Disaster Management Authorities (DDMA) is beyond what was originally expected by the STP team. L/NNGOs initially worked with DDMA, supporting them with trainings and building the relationship. L/NNGOs were then able to start coordinating with DDMA to form a Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) for more substantive collaboration. The MoUs reviewed¹¹ showed L/NNGOs had successfully negotiated a variety of joint roles and responsibilities to achieve common objectives. This vastly increases the legitimate role this L/NNGO has during a response.
- In DRC, MoUs of collaboration were also signed with local authorities and some L/NNGOs had started to facilitate ‘community clusters’ for better coordination that bring together local key actors, faith leaders and local authorities.
- HEAL Africa had built a relationship with improved coordination and accountability with local authorities.
- In Kenya, the improved coordination between L/NNGOs and County level stakeholders, as well as an increase in confidence of L/NNGOs as part of County Steering Groups, was one of the main changes identified by L/NNGOs and INGOs.
- In October 2016, PACIDA and Caritas Marsabit in partnership with a local umbrella organisation of indigenous CSOs (MIO-Net), influenced the Marsabit County government and National Drought Management Authority to conduct Drought Rapid Assessment after numerous distress calls from the communities.
- In West Pokot, L/NNGOs POWEO¹² and SIKOM started to speak out regarding women in emergencies. This increased role towards influencing the overall response, will positively impact on individual L/NNGOs reputation and opportunities that may then open up for greater individual response.



¹¹ Four MoUs were reviewed between DDMA and PRDS, PWS Grassroots Pakistan, REED Pakistan.

¹² Pokot Women Empowerment Organisation

Building stronger links with communities -

Different tactics were adopted to improve links with local communities in high risk areas and areas of potential operation. These activities aimed to improve the level of outreach and strengthen the channels of communication between communities and L/NNGOs, thus allowing L/NNGOs to hear about situations more rapidly and potentially respond faster. This in turn would allow the L/NNGO to show their relevance and value to other humanitarian stakeholders.

- In South Kivu, DRC, CODEVA trained community representatives on how to report a situation and provided a telephone number so they could contact CODEVA. As a result, there are already examples of CODEVA being the first organisation to report an emergency event, prompting humanitarian needs assessments to begin.
- A number of L/NNGOs in Bangladesh had created community level ERTs (trained in early warning, disaster risk reduction, first aid and fire-fighting) to enable the faster reporting of incidents and subsequently response.
- In Kenya, Caritas Maralal facilitated the participation of communities at sub-county level coordination to enable better decision making that reflects community priorities. This allowed an issue around unequal targeting of villages to be identified and raised at the County Steering Group (CSG), and thus resulted in each responding organisation being allocated a geographical area to work in.
- In Ethiopia, one partner has extended its emergency response structure to community level where they have recruited community volunteers to support responses during emergencies. It is hoped these volunteers (who are trained on CHS, humanitarian principles and have all signed a code of conduct) will be able to support with data collection, targeting beneficiaries, and awareness raising.

Working with other humanitarian actors in-country -

In the past there has been a tendency for L/NNGOs to view each other as competitors. Consequently, there was previously a lack of contact, sharing or collaboration – even among L/NNGOs working in the same locations.¹³ STP has successfully challenged this assumption, provided a means by which L/NNGOs can start to share experiences and planted the seed that through greater collaboration L/NNGOs may be stronger. There are many positive examples of these collaborations spilling over from the ‘training room’.

- In Ethiopia, AVH has been supporting partners with its complaint handling system and accountability framework, and WSA was approached by others about its data management system.
- GUK in Bangladesh provided peer support to five other L/NNGOs on the CHS membership procedure and application.¹⁴
- L/NNGO HR leads contacted Caritas Bangladesh’s HR team for advice when revising their organisational HR policy.
- In DRC, Caritas Goma organised a training “Building Better Response” (funded by a different project) and took the initiative to invite STP L/NNGOs to participate in this.

There are also examples of more formal connections being created between L/NNGOs:

- In Pakistan, L/NNGO FRDP¹⁵ set up a provincial level DRR forum in SINDH so L/NNGOs and INGOs could share practice and challenges on disaster management and DRR.
- In Ethiopia the recent establishment of a working forum for humanitarian L/NNGOs has the potential to improve formal communication between INGO partners and other L/NNGOs.
- In Ethiopia four L/NNGOs came together to provide complementary support to the governmental Zonal taskforce by dividing different roles among themselves.

¹³ It was commented in DRC that previously collaboration only occurred between INGOs and L/NNGOs, and never between L/NNGOs.

¹⁴ Case Study: on GUK becoming a CHS member, captured by STP Team (April 2017)

¹⁵ Fast Rural Development Programme)

- In DRC, Cerderu formed a consortium with two other L/NNGOs (who were not part of STP). Together they were able to put forward a proposal to UNICEF, which, while unsuccessful, provided valuable learning about using the strengths of different consortium members in order to meet donor demands.
- In Bangladesh, L/NNGOs created the National Alliance of Humanitarian Actors in Bangladesh (NAHAB) in January 2017, as a platform for L/NNGOs to have a stronger collective voice and representation. Importantly for work on building organisational capacity in preparedness and response, NAHAB is a forum that brings L/NNGO Executive Directors together, forging links at this level.

Becoming members of international humanitarian networks –

Two L/NNGOs in Ethiopia and six L/NNGOs in Bangladesh were successful in their application to become members of CHS. STP supported this through training on CHS, as well as paying the first year's membership fees, but the process of application was led by the L/NNGOs themselves.

Benefits to date from progress in the Influence domain

The linkages built with other actors have led to a range of different benefits, linked to L/NNGOs level of preparedness and ability to respond to emergencies. Benefits and results associated with L/NNGOs increased voice and overall influence can be found in the 2nd Learning Review.

The examples of new collaboration are numerous and L/NNGOs recognised the benefits of these collaborations, as opposed to working in isolation.

- The greater participation of L/NNGOs in coordination forums, and formalisation of their role with local authorities, is seen to have contributed towards increasing the profile and reputation of L/NNGOs.
- There are examples of L/NNGOs negotiating different types of partnership with INGOs for emergency response work. For example, in Pakistan, there were examples of L/NNGO staff being used by INGOs for assessments, based on which INGOs mobilised funds and used L/NNGO staff again to implement the activities. Now certain L/NNGOs have the confidence to submit proposals independently of INGOs and can consider their role and level of decision-making when responding in partnerships.
- Similarly, in Kenya, Caritas Marsabit were able to improve their negotiation around funding. Previously in 2011 funding had come with the placement of an expat inside their organisation. As part of the current drought, they were able to convince the funder that their staff have the skills needed and there was no need for an expat.¹⁶

Building stronger links with communities supported smaller L/NNGOs with limited human resources to expand the pool of people they could call on during an emergency response. For example, in Kenya, support from STP helped Kenya Red Cross Society (KRCS) to set up a volunteer presence in Turkana County. During the drought response the presence of existing volunteers made a massive difference to the response, allowing local volunteers to be used rather than bringing in volunteers from outside.

The joining of CHS network was viewed as a means by which national level organisations could be connected with global level debates and trends. Participation in networks and international meetings was reported as exposing L/NNGO directors to global discussions as well as building their confidence in their ability to contribute towards these discussions. Being part of international networks is an avenue through which L/NNGOs can raise their perspective and agenda at the global level.

¹⁶ This change was attributed to the Leadership course that staff had attended, as well as the involvement in the director in discussions around localisation (which had helped them think through the types of partnerships they wanted).

Sustainability of progress under Influence

Progress made in the 'Influence' domain under STP is one area where STP may have brought about transformative change. The linkages that have been built between participating L/NNGOs and others, and the associated shift in mind-set around the benefits of collaboration, represent both substantive changes in ways of working and changes that have the potential to have sustained results.

L/NNGOs are now known by local authorities based on activities conducted under STP, and so collaboration in preparedness and response is likely to continue. L/NNGOs have already seen benefits of joining forces to undertake needs assessments and submit proposals, and so, as long as there are clear benefits, this feels like something that will continue.

However, there are still risks to sustainability. It is likely that linkages between L/NNGOs based in different locations may dwindle due to lack of funds for regular meeting, and a risk that for some L/NNGOs the linkages are between individual focal points rather than organisations so a change in staffing could cause these links to breakdown. It is unclear if L/NNGOs will be able to pay membership fees of CHS and other networks after STP. Plus, there is a risk that developed community volunteer resources will be lost if they are not kept busy or given activities regularly.

However, despite these risks, the work on building linkages between different actors is seen by L/NNGOs as a novel area of STP. It speaks both to L/NNGOs level of preparedness and ability to respond, as well as L/NNGO's ability to influence the localisation agenda.

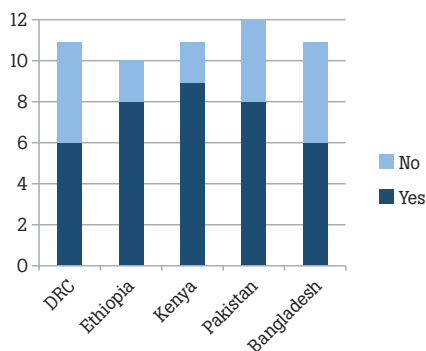
2.4 SO WHAT? WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR L/NNGO'S ABILITY TO RESPOND TO PEOPLE'S NEEDS IN EMERGENCIES?

The STP theory of change states that through building L/NNGO capacity to manage and lead a response, L/NNGOs will have greater access to resources, and be able to take the lead in preparing for and responding to disasters. This in turn will lead to faster, more effective, relevant and accountable emergency responses. A key question for this learning review is to what extent have changes impacted what is done at community level.

How many L/NNGOs have responded to an emergency?

Across the 55 L/NNGOs, at least 37 have responded to some type of emergency in 2016 and/or 2017 (see Figure 3).¹⁷ The definition of an L/NNGO response used here is "services are provided in response to an emergency situation to affected people or households"

Figure 2: How many participating L/NNGO have responded to some form of emergency in 2016 and/or 2017?



37 OF 55

PARTICIPATING L/NNGOs
have responded to
emergencies since STP
started its capacity building
activities

¹⁷ Based on survey responses and data from STP country teams.

The nature of the emergencies and the response varies significantly. For example, while there have been no large emergencies in Pakistan, 8 out of the 12 L/NNGOs have responded to small events from floods to fire incidents, to heat waves, to droughts, to more complex emergencies. Responses are equally varied including search and rescue, awareness sessions, provision of NFI and transitional shelters, cash for work, and supporting WASH facilities. So, while not all countries have experienced large emergencies that caused the humanitarian system to launch into full swing, L/NNGOs have experienced and responded to plenty of smaller emergencies.

Challenges in identifying community-level impacts of STP at this stage

At this stage of the project there are a number of challenges in identifying a link between progress made under the STP project and changes in the responses of L/NNGOs as experienced by communities affected by disaster.

Firstly, many activities have just happened or are in the process of being rolled out, so it is too early to look for changes. Many of the new policies developed by L/NNGOs have only recently been approved or are still in the process of being finalised and approved.

“Different people have been learning different bits and pieces, but now it needs to be mainstreamed all the way down. This will take time and resources”

One of the challenges highlighted in Bangladesh, is the lack of pots of money that L/NNGOs are eligible to apply for. The exceptions at present being an emergency response fund as part of Oxfam’s 3-year ELHNA programme, and the newly established Bangladesh START Fund. Both of these are relatively small amounts of money, and the Start Fund is only open to START members (of which Caritas Bangladesh and Coast Trust are the only L/NNGOs).

L/NNGO, Bangladesh

Linked to this is the fact that organisations move at different speeds, so some are unlikely to see change so soon. In Ethiopia it was noted that some partners had more humanitarian response experience and only need to work more on their systems, whereas others had little to no humanitarian systems.

Secondly, the link between certain areas of focus for the capacity strengthening under STP and what happens at community level is hard to establish. Much of STP, especially in 2016, focused on supporting L/NNGOs with the foundations that would enable them to be stronger humanitarian agencies, in particular with activities linked to the Governance and Leadership domain of the SHAPE framework. How this impacts what is done on the ground is less obvious. In addition, initially much of the interest of L/NNGOs across all five countries was around improved ability to access funds, which was a major concern of L/NNGOs and seen as key to shifting power dynamics. This determined the focus of STP capacity strengthening activities, with perhaps more of a focus on improving capacities to gain funding, as opposed to improving capacities for more effective responses from the perspective of communities.

Benefits to date

Numerous benefits, linked to the work done in strengthening L/NNGO capacity, have already been highlighted. The following themes have been identified:

Increased speed of response

51% of L/NNGOs responding to the survey said they are now able to respond to emergencies faster.

51%

of responders say their organisation is now able to **RESPOND FASTER** to an emergency as a direct result of **STRENGTHENED ORGANISATIONAL SYSTEMS & STRUCTURES**

- AVH in Ethiopia, were able to cut down on their emergency response time from 4 to 1.5 weeks, based on progress in a number of areas including the creation of their ERT.¹⁸

¹⁸ Vittorio Infante Trip Report, Ethiopia (1-11th August 2017)

- The Ethiopian Catholic Church–Social and Development Commission, also from Ethiopia, has seen a reduction by almost 50% in their response time (identified by them as the biggest change they have seen since 2015 in how they respond to emergencies), this is due to now having a preparedness plan and team as well as good relationships with local government.

Successful funding allows L/NNGOs to respond when previously this may not have happened

While only 37% of L/NNGOs responding to the survey said there had been an improvement for them in their ability to attract new funding, this review identified concrete examples of L/NNGOs successfully winning funding due to progress linked to STP.

Improved practice in needs assessments

The improved skills and realisation of the importance of needs assessments, should result in better identification of needs. 77% of L/NNGOs responding to the survey said there had been an improvement in their organisation's ability to identify needs. What still needs to be tested is how L/NNGOs are able to adjust their responses based on the needs identified.

Examples of L/NNGOs leading responses

Based on the STP theory of change, greater L/NNGO leadership in preparedness and response is the first step for overall more effective, relevant and accountable responses. There are several examples of L/NNGOs playing a leading role in managing a response, where as previously this would have been done by an INGO.

- In Kenya, Caritas Isiolo responded to the drought by supporting 2000 households with CTP and food relief (as well as relief fodder for animals). The STP team in Kenya reported this was the first time Caritas Isiolo had managed a response at household level themselves, from doing the assessment, to organising the logistics of supplies for CTP and storing food/fodder, to scaling up staff members.



Women from a community in Eastern Kenya carry bales of hay (relief fodder for their livestock) distributed under Caritas Isiolo's emergency drought response. Photo @ Caritas Isiolo.

The above changes are only the tip of the iceberg, and it is likely that over the next 1–2 years additional changes in L/NNGOs ability to meet the needs of affected communities will be evident. However, it is an assumption that the changes identified to date, will also bring improvements in the effectiveness of L/NNGO response. As an example, this review was not able to look at if faster responses were more effective.

Figure 3: Indications of the ‘maturity’ of progress in preparedness - “Considering the biggest change in how prepared your organisation is for future emergencies.....” The graph shows the % of people who said “Definitely”.

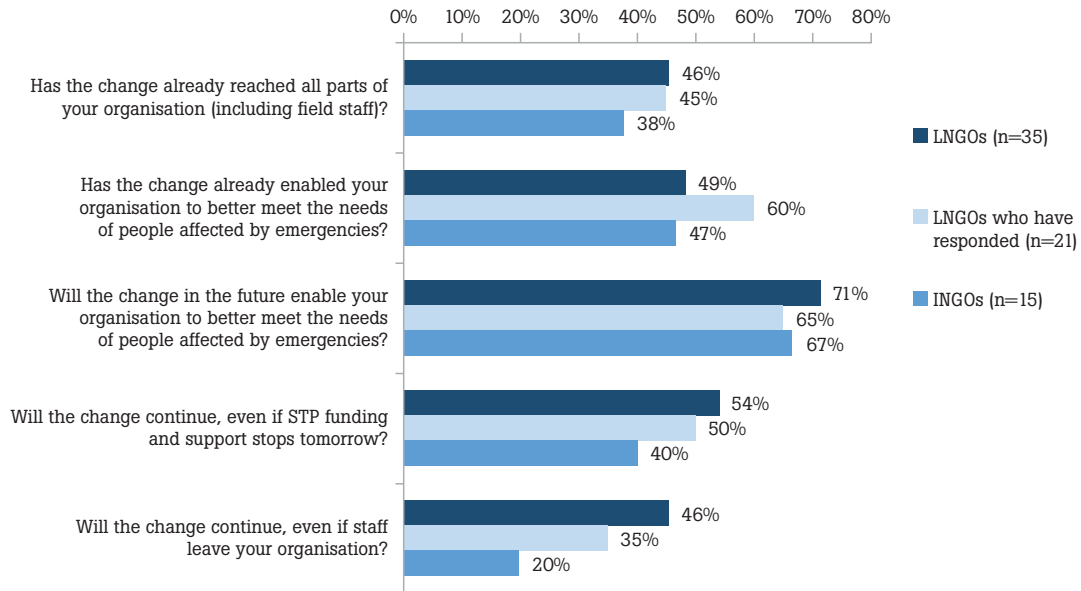
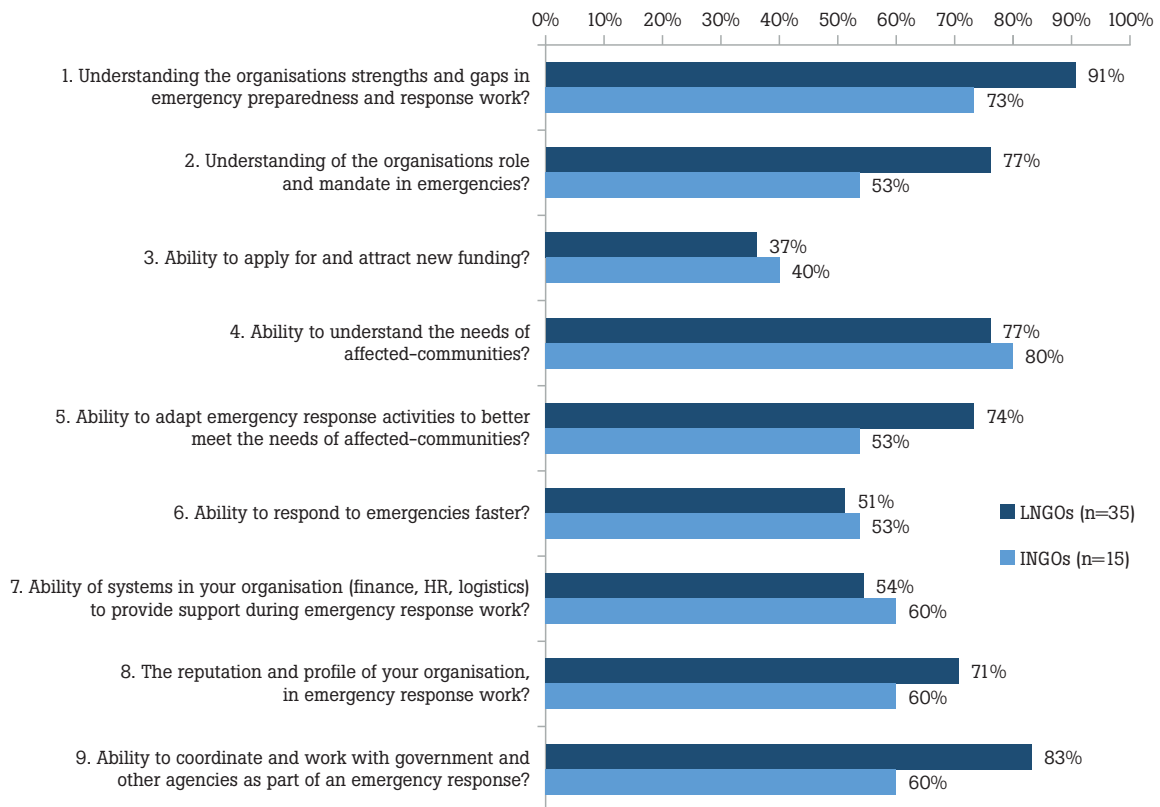


Figure 4: Overall change observed by L/NNGOs and INGO consortium members - “Since 2015 to what extent have the following changed for your organisation?” For INGOs asked about L/NNGOs who are part of STP. The graph shows the % of people who said “To a great extent”



3. Capacity Strengthening Approaches

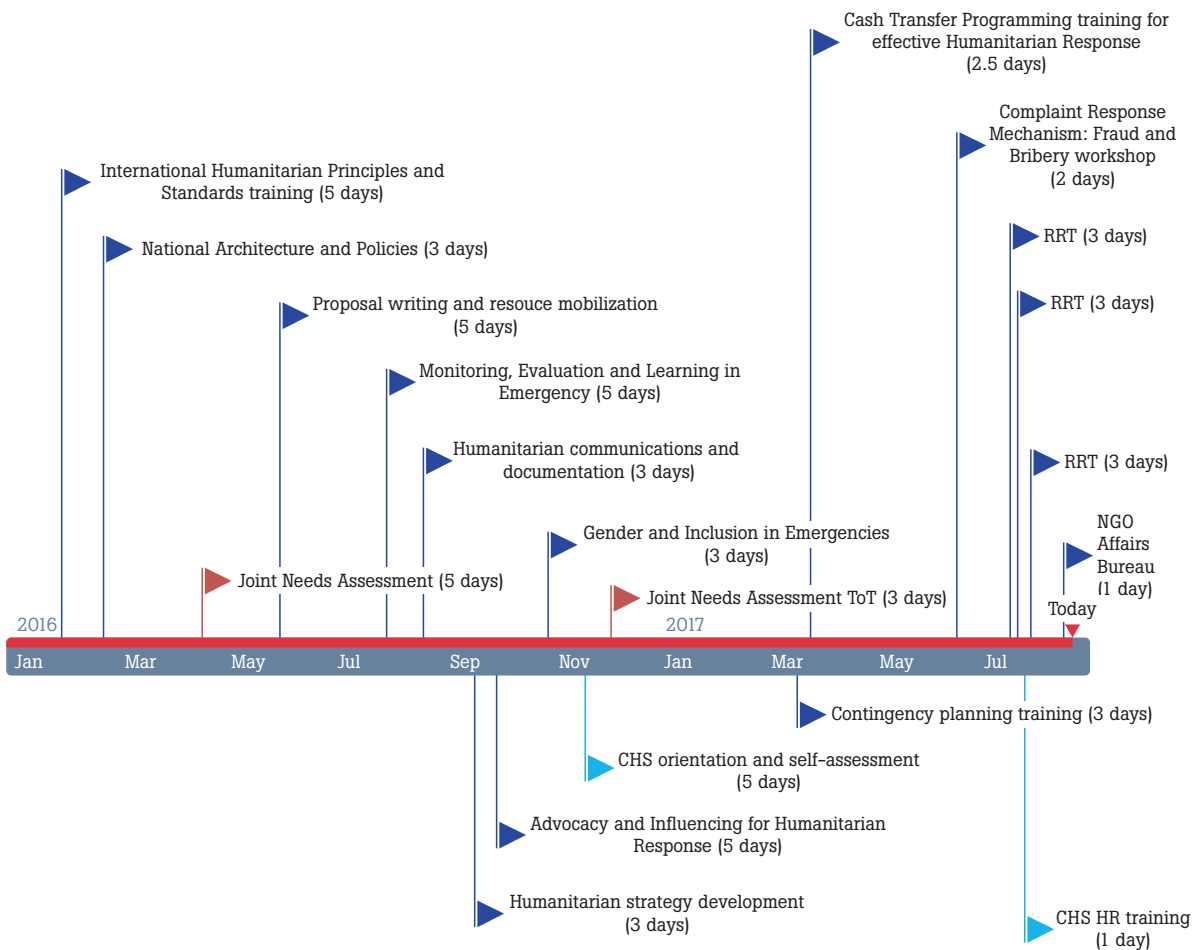
There are common and individual approaches used by STP across each of the five countries. Common to all countries was the process of Capacity Self-Assessment (CSA). Also, common to each country are the supporting structures: with a National Steering Committee (NSC) (comprised of Country Managers from consortium INGOs and, in places, L/NNGO representation) established to provide strategic direction to STP; a Technical Working Group (TWG) (comprised of nominated staff members from consortium INGOs) set-up to provided technical support to participating L/NNGOs and STP; and an STP Country Team of three to four staff.

3.1 WHAT CAPACITY STRENGTHENING APPROACHES HAVE BEEN USED?

Overall, the project took a ‘software’ approach to strengthening capacity and made minimum investments in hardware.

Capacity strengthening approaches were determined locally, decided by the L/NNGO, the STP team, and the TWG as part of developing the Capacity Strengthening Plan. Effort was made to highlight a range of approaches that could be selected by L/NNGOs, through a series of voluntary webinars run by the UK team. The Pakistan STP also spent time with partners to brainstorm approaches other than training that could be used. However, in reality the majority of capacity strengthening activities were carried out by the STP project management team, with limited direct capacity strengthening support provided by the consortium agencies, in part due to time constraints. This limited the project’s ability to realise the full range of approaches as planned.

Figure 5: ‘Common’ trainings conducted by STP in Bangladesh



Use of trainings and workshops

A huge number of training sessions on a variety of topics were delivered in a short period of time. This included both ‘common trainings’ which brought together a number of the participating L/NNGOs for training linked to a theme that was common across their CSP, as well as trainings that L/NNGOs arranged for their own staff based on their own priorities. In general, although the topics were linked, these trainings tended to be ‘one-offs’, with participants selected for each training session rather than selected for a series of sessions that were designed to build on each other.

Using Bangladesh as an example, in 2016 there was a focus on trainings common to most/all L/NNGO partners, followed, in 2017, by a greater focus on individual partner activities. A total of 19 ‘common’ trainings were organised between January 2016 and August 2017 (totalling 63.5 training days – see figure 6). For the vast majority of these trainings each of the 11 participating L/NNGOs sent participants (typically 1-3 staff per training).



Digital data collection, carried out by newly trained staff, in coordination with Christian Aid Bangladesh and StP's national partner NAHAB. Photo credit: Manik Kuma Saha, Christian Aid Bangladesh.

As of July 2017¹⁹, 387 staff had been trained directly by STP in Bangladesh (28% women), and 1,728 people have participated in repeat trainings organised by L/NNGO staff. Of these 67% are organisational staff, 33% are community volunteers, and 36% are women. Efforts were made by both STP and L/NNGOs to send different staff to trainings, who were selected based on relevance to their current roles, and participant data supports this. However, some staff in particular from smaller L/NNGOs attended 6-10 trainings.

In all countries, there was a strong emphasis on action (supported by STP funds) following the training. This ranged from repeating the training internally, to developing or adapting an organisational document, to applying the learning through undertaking a needs assessment. The STP team played a key role in following up on these actions to ensure they were not forgotten.

¹⁹ Figures reported by the STP team. It is not clear how records have been kept to take into account double counting of people who attended multiple trainings. Regardless these figures give an indication of scale.

Perhaps critically, in all countries the trainings provided a means by which different participating L/NNGOs interacted and formed linkages. It allowed for experience sharing and contacts to be made, leading to greater collaboration.

A few other examples of good practice linked to trainings are worth noting:

- In Bangladesh, nominated L/NNGOs took the lead in organising common trainings. These provided an opportunity to develop leadership skills and coordinate an interagency activity. STP staff linked this to the improved leadership seen in some focal points.
- Where possible trainings were facilitated by TWG members and L/NNGO staff, providing an opportunity for L/NNGO staff with good relevant experience to be recognised, plus utilizing consortium INGO resources (saving costs compared to using a consultant, and more importantly allowing the trainings to be tailored based on the TWG member's knowledge of some of the NGOs).
- Links with other DEPP projects allowed STP L/NNGOs to profit from these initiatives and trainings (for example L/NNGOs in Kenya participated in the DEPP Leadership training, in Pakistan L/NNGOs profited from the Transforming Surge Capacity work).

Accompaniment, coaching, and mentoring

The importance of this as an approach for supporting change is recognised by many stakeholders involved in STP. Where accompaniment, coaching, and/or mentoring did occur it was felt to be very successful (the Pakistan STP team identified it as giving the best results).

- In Kenya, peer reviews were done between the three participating Caritas dioceses, facilitated by CAFOD. Through this they were able to review each other's emergency preparedness plans, the process of developing a procurement procedure, and response to the drought.
- Peer learning was practiced as an approach in Ethiopia, though in a small scale, and was found to be a very strong approach with 'extraordinary power of change'.
- L/NNGOs in DRC and other locations expressed in their recommendations for how STP could be improved a strong desire for greater accompaniment and coaching.
- INGO staff in Bangladesh, commented that "you don't know what you don't know", highlighting that sometimes organisations need experienced people to work alongside them to help them identify practice gaps and how these can be addressed.

This review found that STP has successfully supported L/NNGOs with initial steps (trainings and document development), but there is a need for greater support for rolling these out, reflecting on current practice on the ground, and looking to bring about actual organisational change. Progress in this, would benefit from greater L/NNGO accompaniment, coaching/mentoring by experienced staff.

Challenges faced during STP with accompaniment, coaching, and mentoring

There was an understanding that INGO consortium members would play a strong role in accompaniment, coaching and mentoring support (as well as opportunities for exposure visits or exchanges locally).

In all countries, with few exceptions, time constraints prevented INGOs from leading on this.

- In DRC, TWG staff turnover impacted the functioning of this project structure.
- In Bangladesh, while the TWG members were more active, the amount of time they could provide to support STP was limited to a number of days.
- In Ethiopia, one of the initial challenges was the perception among consortium members that "you can't focus on capacity development when emergency is happening".

STP resources were also limited, especially initially:

- The Capacity Building Officer was not recruited in most places until the beginning of 2016 (1 year in), and was only one staff member for 10-12 L/NNGOs (who were spread out geographically over the country).

For the TWG members (or other INGO staff) to be able to support L/NNGOs they would need to have knowledge of the training content (and agree with it). There are risks, as was commented on in DRC, of trainings providing one set of 'good practice' guidance, and INGO staff working to another set – risking L/NNGOs being pulled in different directions. The time commitment needed by TWG and/or INGO staff to perform their role well, based on the STP model, may be unrealistically high to be a viable model.

Use of service providers to give a training and follow-up support

In Pakistan, CWS was commissioned as a service provider to run a number of trainings, including one on international humanitarian standards. Following this, L/NNGO partners needed to develop their own Complaints and Response Mechanism (including a policy and associated guidelines). These were then reviewed by CWS, who provided feedback to each L/NNGO, so these could be finalised. CWS's contact details were also shared with L/NNGOs who could have contacted CWS for support with implementation, although the geographical area over which L/NNGOs were working made this a challenge. Similar approaches were used in other countries.



Participants working on their proposals during a training on international humanitarian standards, led by Church World Service (CWS).
Photo @ CWS Pakistan.

The reviewer has a few concerns over the use of external service providers to perform this role.²⁰ Firstly, the focus for this coaching and mentoring is on the development of a document, rather than on roll out and implementation. Secondly, documents produced by DRC L/NNGOs followed the same template, which had been provided by the service provider during the training. Given the variety of L/NNGOs size and capacity, this risks taking a one-size-fits-all approach. External trainers might not have prior communication with L/NNGO staffs and so don't understand their current capacities²¹ or operational 'niche'. The service provider is also only focused on specific deliverables, rather than being able to put these within the context of the L/NNGO.

²⁰ Noting that: It is not clear how much time the service provider was able to give to each L/NNGO or the form of the feedback provided (whether this was face to face discussion, or comments on a draft document).

²¹ Identified as a change by the STP team in Ethiopia.

Follow-up monitoring and regular check-ins by the STP team

The STP played a key role in regularly following up L/NNGO focal points to prompted for and monitor progress. This follow-up included skype calls, reporting, and office visits.

There was a tendency for monitoring visits to have an accountability focus, looking to verify if documents have been developed, if there were receipts available that justified the spend to date, and if progress as reported by the L/NNGO was correct. Visits tended to be short, maximum 1 day, which limited options for working along-side the L/NNGO. The DRC STP Capacity Building Officer in particular recognised that spending 5 days in a L/NNGOs officer would be beneficial.

Learning by doing

A number of different examples of practical application of skills were identified during this review. STP funds were used by L/NNGOs to conduct a multi-sector needs assessment in response to emergencies. Similarly, L/NNGO staff who led the internal participatory processes to develop policies, or strategies, gained experience through this process.

- Staff in Pakistan involved in coordinating with DDMA, and in Kenya as part of the County Steering Group, again gained practical experience.
- In Ethiopia, to further support learning by doing, the team has allocated £50,000 to pilot a response fund that will allow partners to practice the proposal application process, and allow one partner to implement a response project. As part of this L/NNGOs will be involved in the peer review of proposals submitted, to support learning and a participatory process of selection.

In all of these examples, the process is made stronger by 'closing the learning loop', involving specific time for reflecting on what worked well and what could be improved.

One of main challenges that smaller L/NNGOs in Bangladesh and DRC cited during KIIs about the difference STP had made, was the lack of application to date. In part this challenge is linked to the inclusions of smaller, less experienced, L/NNGOs being part of STP, who have fewer donors and so fewer opportunities for undertaking emergency response work. Having practical examples of response work is also important for applying for future funds.

There may be a need for funds for L/NNGOs to test new learning in smaller responses, where limited budget may preclude application of new practice. For example, one large L/NNGO had not applied newly acquired skills in monitoring and evaluation as yet as they had only responded to small disasters targeting 200 households since the start of STP. For them, smaller disasters did not warrant the expense of sending M&E staff to monitor/evaluate the response. STP could consider how it supports applications even in smaller responses, so learning is tested, refined, internalised by the L/NNGO – as well as being available to hold up as good practice.

The need for further support with practical application of learning was also a strong recommendation from most countries, and there was a fear that learning and new capacities would be lost if not tested and practiced.

“We have the knowledge but lack the money to respond. [Our ERT] has not practiced so don't know if we have the skills we say we have!”

L/NNGO, DRC

“The idea of learning by doing is very much helpful and critically important. Most humanitarian funds have a high level of requirements. For local organizations to be confident enough in tapping these funds and responding to the emergencies, they need higher level of experiences. This cannot come only by theoretical learning.”

L/NNGO, Ethiopia

“[We recommend that STP provide] provide funds for quality showcasing and documentations of success stories of projects implemented by partners”

L/NNGO, Kenya

Partner exchanges

Much of the partner sharing and exchanges happened in workshop settings. Although exchanges were planned in a couple of locations these were later dropped, and the review found only a couple of nice examples of exchanges happening.

- In Kenya, STP supported a partner exchange between SIKOM and POWEO to support the accountant and board of POWEO to learn from the structures and ways of working at SIKOM, who are a similar organisation but with more developed systems already in place.
- In Pakistan, two to three L/NNGOs were supported to visit another partner over the course of a day to learn about use of CLTS and Bio-gas and Bio-sand filtration units.

Recommendations from L/NNGOs for improving STP highlighted an interest in exchange visits being used as a method of learning.

4. What factors have contributed to the level and nature of change under STP?

Broadly STP's aims, and focus on localisation, resonated with the interests and challenges faced by L/NNGOs. This alignment of aims and interests facilitated a huge amount to be achieved over a short timeframe. The bringing together of L/NNGOs and building relationships between L/NNGOs and other stakeholders, brought both a novel focus to capacity development, as well as benefits through sharing of learning and opening doors to new working relationships. Looking at the design of the project, there are a number of elements that have contributed to the level of change seen to date (identified both by looking at why some L/NNGO made more progress than others, and by looking at the overall picture).

Duration of the project and time available for capacity strengthening activities

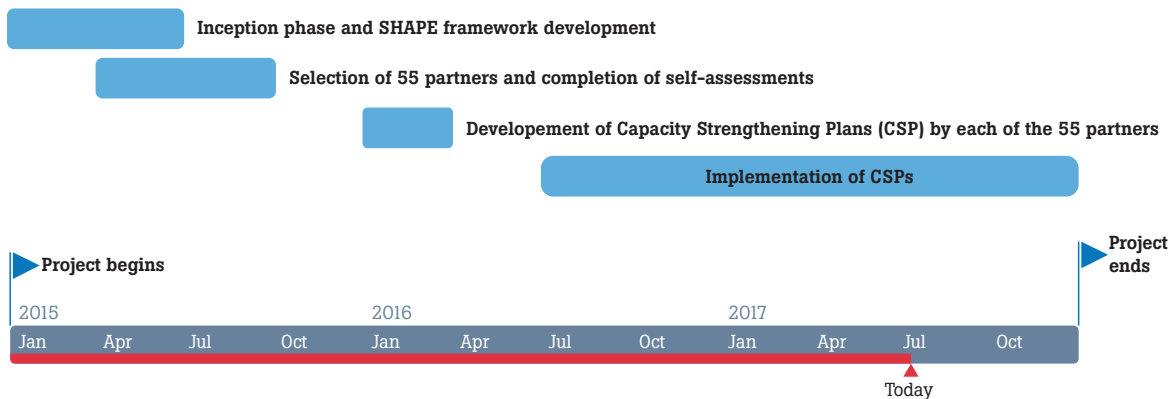
The STP project is relatively short given the types of changes it is aspiring to see in terms of stronger L/NNGO capacity. Three years is not enough time to bring about the desired changes.²²

Figure 6 (below) shows the key phases of activities during STP. As can be seen, the first year was mostly occupied with the setting up of STP. This is not unique to STP, the Empowering Local and National Humanitarian Actors (ELNHA) project in Bangladesh reported a similar long inception period which took 12 months of their 36-month project.

"Shifting the Power Project is not an event, rather it should be considered as a process, hence it requires long term investment, investing not only on the system but also on the human, technical and financial aspects."

L/NNGO, Ethiopia

Figure 6: The STP project timeline showing key 'phases' of activities



While a huge number of capacity strengthening activities have been conducted over the 12–18 months up to the time of this review, the short timeframe has not allowed L/NNGO partners or STP teams to focus on embedding and rolling out of new policies, plans, or practices that have been developed. The tight timeframe has placed huge demands on L/NNGO Focal Points, and implicitly expects all participating L/NNGOs to 'move at the same pace' (especially where emphasis is placed on common training and activities).

²² This was recognised by those involved with the project, 17 out of the 51 recommendations collected via the survey were to do with the extension of STP, 10 of these specifically noted that the current length was too short to see desired changes.

Partner diversity and process of selection

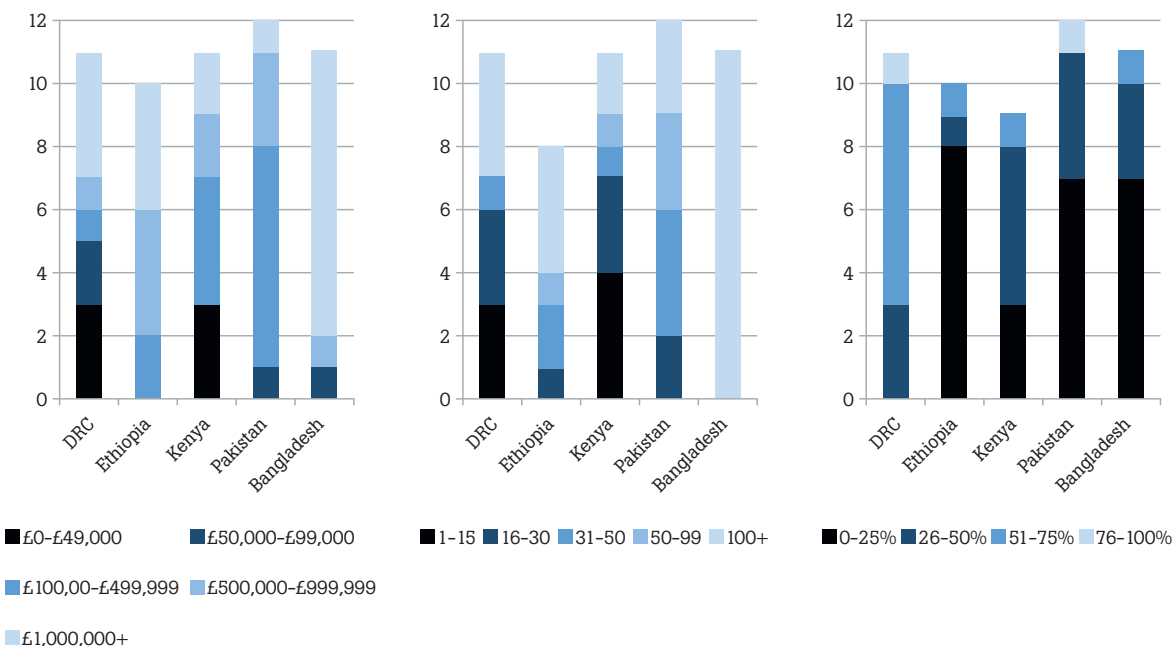
As can be seen in the graphs below, the size and remit of the participating L/NNGO's was hugely varied.

Figure 7:

Annual budget of participating L/NNGOs

Number of staff of participating L/NNGOs

Level of humanitarian remit of participating L/NNGOs (based on % of budget spend on humanitarian activities)



L/NNGOs invited to participate in STP were proposed by consortium members, who drew from their existing partners, with each INGO proposing 1-2 L/NNGOs per country. The rationale behind the emphasis on existing partners was twofold: firstly, consortium members would be able to provide mentoring and technical support during the project, and secondly there was greater chance of continuation of progress after the project if the relationship was an on-going one. These assumptions have not necessarily held true, and there are at least three examples of partnerships between L/NNGOs and consortium members ending during the STP project duration.

The selection criteria developed at the onset of the project considered humanitarian mandate and commitment, but these were not consistently applied as not all INGO members had partners that met these criteria. This raises the question: given what STP is aiming to achieve what type of L/NNGO should STP target? Is the aim to help stronger L/NNGOs take the next step, or for less experienced L/NNGOs to start to engage in humanitarian work?

The overall process of capacity strengthening and the speed with which STP has aimed for CS to move has been the same regardless of the size of the individual L/NNGOs. The use of SHAPE framework may be less relevant for smaller L/NNGOs. It has already been reported that smaller organisations felt overwhelmed by the sheer number of possible capacity development areas on offer by STP.²³ Smaller L/NNGOs, tended to rely more on volunteers, needed more support with the organisational basics, as well as more accompaniment and support from STP. They also face challenges of sustainability, in Pakistan and DRC STP was working with L/NNGOs who had no other projects, and so no other activities that may sustain the organisation and core staff.

²³ Lewinsky, T. "Getting into SHAPE? A review of Shifting the Power's Organisational Capacity Assessment Approach" (Nov 2016)

It is the reviewer's opinion that STP should select L/NNGOs that already have a level of proven humanitarian experience, and that the restriction of selecting an equal number of L/NNGOs based on existing relationships with consortium members should be relaxed. In addition, in selecting L/NNGOs, the likelihood of them applying the learning from the project within a 'reasonable' timeframe should be considered.

A focal point to work with and top management buy-in

The importance of Focal Points (and STP on-going follow-up)

Key for bringing about changes under STP was the presence of a focal point in each L/NNGO. Generally, these focal points were staff in charge of emergency response work, relatively senior within the L/NNGO but not at Executive Director (ED) level.²⁴ Regular follow-ups by the STP teams with the Focal Points was cited as important to ensure momentum for STP was maintained. Interestingly, L/NNGOs themselves highlighted that this follow-up was needed, and the accountability demanded from STP was valuable for ensuring activities continued to be moved forward.

Often the level of progress made by a L/NNGO was linked to the level of enthusiasm of their STP Focal Point. Conversely, a lack of progress by an L/NNGO was explained by an inactive or absent Focal Point. The STP team in Pakistan in particular highlighted staff turnover of focal points as a large challenge (with an estimated 60–70% of focal persons having changed since the start of the project).

Significant time was demanded of Focal Points as part of STP, who were often assigned to other programmes and so had competing priorities. While it is key that changes are driven by staff from within the L/NNGO, there is a need to be realistic about the speed of change possible when L/NNGO staff are not dedicated solely to STP. This adds to the argument for planning STP on a longer timeframe.

The importance of Executive Directors being actively involved was seen as key across different countries. One of the challenges with realising this was the small level of funding associated with STP, which was not enough by itself to garner top management buy-in to the project.

There were varied strategies for how STP gained ED buy-in. In Bangladesh the Power Cafes and later the creation of NAHAB, the new platform for L/NNGOs, raised the profile of STP and provided a forum where EDs wanted to engage.

It is the reviewer's opinion that more focus should be given to working with EDs to garner their support with driving forward organisational changes as envisaged under STP. ED drive is key for substantive change to be achieved.

Use of the SHAPE Framework, and scale of CSPs

SHAPE influenced the focus of organisational strengthening

The use of the SHAPE framework may have led many L/NNGOs towards development of documents, and work focused on addressing the 'basics'. There are advantages to this, with STP seen as a unique opportunity for organisations to get the foundations in place, which previous capacity strengthening efforts had not allowed for. The extent to which this is desirable depends on what the project is aiming to achieve in the given timeframe. It is also worth reflecting that the framework gives emphasis to document development as an initial step, especially for smaller L/NNGOs who identified gaps across many areas of the framework.

²⁴ The financial support provided by STP to L/NNGO focal points varied between countries. In Bangladesh, there was not financial support for focal points, in DRC a small contribution of \$200 per month that started late in the project. Pakistan also contributed towards HR costs of focal points, and in Kenya STP paid full salaries for the focal person in SIKOM, and in POWEO for the Executive director and an accountant.

The Framework itself is relatively large, with 36 broad indicators, resulting in a lengthy self-assessment. While L/NNGOs were positive about the self-assessment process, it is the reviewer's opinion that the process was too extensive for the length of the project and given that very few L/NNGOs had used their capacity self-assessment findings and report beyond STP. Teams reported smaller L/NNGOs were overwhelmed by the number of gaps the SHAPE Framework identified.

The scale of Capacity Strengthening Plans

The number of objectives developed as part of CSPs varies considerably between countries, and each objective tends to be broad, with a number of activities needed in order to work towards its achievement. CSPs are short-term; in theory they are each a year but in reality, with delays they have been 8 months. On one-hand this allows for re-planning, and adjusting activities based on L/NNGO learning on what works, what they may be more interested in, and as the context changes. On the other-hand this is a very short period of time for capacity strengthening activities to be undertaken (alongside programme and response work).

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

STP is a hugely ambitious project, which has achieved much over the last 3 years. The efforts to support 55 L/NNGOs develop their own capacities have resulted in concrete examples of progress in all three domains of the SHAPE Framework. The review also found many examples of immediate results (benefits) being reported by L/NNGOs. Many of these are not easily measured or counted but are important for L/NNGOs in their ability to prepare for and respond to emergencies. There are examples of this progress impacting on L/NNGO's emergency response work, most notable is the increased speed of response cited by a number of L/NNGOs. It is highly likely more results will be seen over the next 1-2 years, once L/NNGOs have rolled out learning and had a chance to apply this in future response work.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for future similar projects

Access to Funding

1. Support L/NNGOs to identify ways they can build organisational contingency funds for rapid needs assessments, through continuing to explore non-traditional donors (private sector) and strategies that go beyond traditional donors.

Capacity Strengthening Approaches

1. Plan for greater accompaniment for L/NNGOs from the STP team. This will require:
 - Reviewing the number of partners that can be reasonably supported by one Capacity Strengthening Officer/Accompanier.
 - Allocating budget (and time) to allow CSO/As to work more closely with L/NNGOs (including travel costs to spend more time in their offices, going with them to the field to support after action reviews of emergency activities). This will likely involve a reduction in the number of trainings.
 - Develop examples of different activities that can be done as part of 'accompaniment'. For example, real time reviews of emergency response work to reflect on practice.
2. Budget should be allocated for L/NNGOs to practically apply learning in response to an emergency. The grants should be used only when there are experienced project staff available who can accompany the L/NNGO to help identify learning and support with further strengthening practice. Opportunities should be identified for the L/NNGO to show-case results from the response supported via the grant, as another means for building their reputation with humanitarian actors and attracting funding.
3. Look for options for low-cost local exchange visits between similar partners, as a means for sharing practice.
4. Identify means of sharing approaches and learning based on being part of STP between L/NNGOs in different countries, so they may be inspired about progress and action in different locations. This could be via webinars or simple video diaries.

Project Planning

1. Capacity strengthening projects of this nature need to be longer and it is recommended they are planned for at least 5 years. This will allow more time for roll out and practice; allows for a variety of capacity strengthening approaches to be used; recognises L/NNGOs will build on their current capacity at different paces; and recognises that focal points have competing tasks.
 2. Allocate sufficient time for project start-up. Based on STP and ELNHA's experience a minimum of 12 months should be planned for the inception phase.
 3. Process of selecting L/NNGOs - for similar projects L/NNGO partners should apply to be part of the project, rather than proposed by their partner INGO. This would help ensure those selected had a level of motivation to be part of the project from the outset.
 4. Consider what type of L/NNGO the project should target (factoring in available resources, project duration, and project aims). Specifically, future projects should consider if they aim to help stronger L/NNGOs take the next step, or for weaker L/NNGOs to get off the mark and start the long journey.
 5. L/NNGOs should be selected based on having proven humanitarian experience on which to build.
 6. Retain the practice of working with focal points from L/NNGOs, aiming for staff who are as senior as possible.
 7. Identify ways of engaging with L/NNGO Executive Directors so they can play a leading role in driving change. This could include: INGOs CMs to engage peer-to-peer to garner buy-in from EDs; identify ways to bring EDs from L/NNGOs together to share progress and struggles with organisational development; plus identify options for supporting EDs in their roles, for example leadership mentoring or accompaniment where needed.
 8. Reduce the number of areas covered by CSP to allow for increased focus on 'roll out' of change. Linked to this will be a reduction in the number of trainings organised by the programme, which will allow time for other activities and support. CSPs should be planned over a longer timeframe (with set times for reviewing progress).
 9. Reduce the 'heaviness' of the project processes and templates. For example, simplify the CSP, and the templates used for L/NNGO reporting.
 10. Revisit the theory of change (i.e. thinking on what change might be achieved within the project timeframe and how this might happen), based on set projects parameters (specifically the available time and resources). Use this as the basis for deciding the number of partners and countries to be targeted, plus what types of partners should be targeted (and how).
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ANNEX 1. Review methodology

The learning review seeks to identify overall themes, successes and learnings from across STP, as well as interesting exceptions and positive deviations. It took place between July and September 2017, and involved data collection from STP staff, L/NNGO partners, and INGO consortium members through a variety of means. In summary:

- 51 people responded to a survey. Of these, 35 respondents were from the different participating L/NNGO (response rate of 58%), 1 was from a national network, and 15 were from INGO consortia staff.
- Two visits were conducted to Bangladesh for 5 days in August 2017, and DRC for 4 days in September 2017. During these visits Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) were held with L/NNGO staff who had been involved with STP. In addition, KIIs were held with members of the TWG and NSC, plus STP staff. In Bangladesh 51 people were consulted (39 men and 12 women). The reviewer was also able to be part of a Power café and NSC meeting which coincided with the visit. In DRC, 24 people were consulted (20 men and 4 women), and the reviewer was able to meet representatives from all 11 L/NNGO partners. (See ANNEX 2 for a list of people met as part of these visits).
- KIIs were also held with STP staff from Pakistan, Ethiopia and Kenya, as well as with staff responsible for the overall management of STP. (See ANNEX 2 for a list of people who were consulted)
- In addition, a huge number of relevant documents were gathered during the review period. These were used to draw in examples linked to the review.

Discussions with all stakeholders started by asking about changes they had seen since the beginning of STP, and the implications of these for the organisation and emergency response work. Questions were then asked to understand why these changes had occurred and strategies that STP had used to build capacity. In the majority of country-level discussions an STP staff member was present, which proved valuable for later to add background and explanation to responses.

Limitations - There are a number of limitations of this review that need to be recognised:

- **Time for change to have occurred**
capacity strengthening activities have taken place relatively recently, and so in many cases it was too soon to determine the extent to which reported changes have actually been embedded. This is discussed more in the findings section.
- **Limited time for the review and with partners**
the number of days for this review was limited and the time in each country was short. Logistical challenges²⁵ prevented the reviewer from visiting field offices to speak to front-line staff. Shorter time for discussing with stakeholders in Pakistan, Ethiopia, and Kenya risk that the findings are biased towards Bangladesh and DRC. However, a huge amount of information was gathered which has allowed interesting findings to be identified.

While the findings presented here are illustrated by examples, it is not possible to include all examples, or to ensure each theme is illustrated by examples from each of the five countries. Efforts have been made to select examples from each of the STP countries, although more material was gathered from the two countries visited during the review so there is likely a slight bias towards these.

²⁵ Visa restrictions in DRC and full flights in Bangladesh

OUR LOCAL PARTNERS

BANGLADESH

- AKK - AMRA KAJ KORY AVAS
- ASSOCIATION FOR VOLUNTARY ACTIONS FOR SOCIETY
- DAM - DHAKA AHSANIA MISSION
- CARITAS BANGLADESH
- SAJIDA FOUNDATION
- UDPS - UTTARA DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM SOCIETY
- GUK - GANA UNNAYAN KENDRA
- CCDB - CHRISTIAN COMMISSION FOR DEVELOPMENT IN BANGLADESH
- DSK - DUSHTHA SHASTHYA KENDRA
- SHUSHILAN
- WCB - WORLD CONCERN BANGLADESH

DRC

- COMITE POUR LE DEVELOPPEMENT ET ASSISTANCE HUMANITAIRE (CODEVAH)
- PACODEVI - PROGRAMME D'APPUI AUX COMITES DE DEVELOPPEMENT DES VILLAGES
- HEAL AFRICA
- CEPROSSAN - CENTRE DE PROMOTION SOCIO-ECONOMIQUE SANITAIRE
- BOAD - BUREAU OEUUCUMEUNIQUE AU DEVELOPPEMENT
- ECC-MERU - MINISTERE DE L'EGLISE POUR LES REFUGIES ET LES URGENCES
- CARITAS CONGO
- CARITAS GOMA
- PROGRÈS SANTÉ SANS PRIX (PPSSP)
- CENTRE DE DEVELOPPEMENT RURAL DE KIBUTU (CEDERU)
- COMITE D'ACTION POUR LE DEVELOPMENT INTERGRAL (CADI)

ETHIOPIA

- COMMUNITY INITIATIVES FACILITATION AND ASSISTANCE (CIFA)
- ACTION FOR DEVELOPMENT (AFD)
- ETHIOPIAN CATHOLIC CHURCH APOSTOLIC VICARIATE OF HOSANNA (AVH)
- WOMEN SUPPORT ASSOCIATION (WSA)
- ASSOCIATION FOR NATION WIDE ACTION FOR PREVENTION AND PROTECTION AGAINST CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT - (ANNPCAN)
- RIFT VALLEY CHILDREN AND WOMEN DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION (RCWDA)
- CENTRE FOR DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE (CDI)
- TEREPEZA DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION (TDA)
- SOS SAHEL
- HUNDEE - GRASS ROOT DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE

KENYA

- PACIDA
- CARITAS-MARSABIT
- CARITAS-MARALAL
- CARITAS-ISIOLO
- ADSMKE
- POWEO
- SIKOM
- ALDEF
- WASDA
- KENYA RED CROSS
- NMDA

PAKISTAN

- PARTICIPATORY RURAL DEVELOPMENT SOCIETY (PRDS)
 - BRIGHT STAR DEVELOPMENT SOCIETY BALOCHISTAN (BSDSB)
 - RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION (RDF)
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