Local humanitarian action in practice
Case studies and reflections of local humanitarian actors
Acknowledgements

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Cover image: Flood affected people in Sirajganj district receiving emergency food assistance from BDRCS, supported by IFRC. Photo: Corinne Ambler, IFRC

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Dr. Jemilah Mahmood, Under Secretary General – Partnerships, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), Geneva
“Local actors, based in and made up of members of the community, are saving lives and helping people to prepare and to rebuild again and again”.

Dr. Jemilah Mahmood, Under Secretary General – Partnerships, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), Geneva
Almost 20 years ago I started MERCY Malaysia with just a handful of volunteers, including doctors and nurses, using my clinic as our office and operational centre, and the doctors’ lounge as a meeting room and storage centre.

Starting an organisation is hard work. So is building it up, making it strong and making it last even after the founder leaves. It is even harder in a poor and crisis-affected country, yet around the world over and over we see amazing local organisations, often with non-existent budgets, staffed by volunteers, providing the vast majority of assistance in any crisis.

Local and national actors are crucial to humanitarian response. They are there before any of the international actors arrive and long after they leave. Local action is not a ‘nice to have’ add on to a relief operation that is a distant second consideration to getting aid out – it is a critical vehicle for that lifesaving action and even more so, in preventing crises where possible. The reality is, the vast majority of crises never receive international support and attention. In these instances, local actions by local actors, based in and made up of members of the community, are saving lives and helping people to prepare and to rebuild again and again. Even now, working for a large international organisation, the International Federation of Red Cross Red and Crescent Societies (IFRC), I know that it is our local branches and our volunteers that are the backbone of our response.

It is important to recognise the clear comparative advantage of local humanitarian actors. First, local actors are fast because they are close. When the strongest earthquake ever to impact Ecuador struck, hundreds of Ecuador Red Cross volunteers as well as local CSOs located in and around the affected communities began responding just minutes afterwards, with search and rescue, first aid, psycho-social support and other types of assistance.

Secondly, local actors often have access that no international actor can achieve. This is true in situations of insecurity as well as in remote areas with physical access challenges. While humanitarian access has been extremely constrained for all actors in Syria, the Syrian Arab Red Crescent has better access than most. Meanwhile it is Syrian NGOs that have been providing the assistance in opposition-held areas in other parts of the country, with virtually no presence of international actors. After the earthquake in Nepal, UN agencies similarly called on the Nepal Red Cross to manage ‘last mile’ distribution of essential supplies in hard to reach places.

Thirdly, local actors have a strong understanding of local circumstances, politics and culture. When the Ebola Virus swept through Western Africa, families faced the agony not only of a terrifying wave of deaths, but the spectre of space-suited foreigners telling them they were no longer allowed to conduct traditional funeral rites, involving touching the bodies. Over 10,000 Red Cross volunteers in Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia engaged their communities in a respectful, culturally appropriate way to ensure safe and dignified burials. This community connection also facilitates far greater accountability to affected populations, facilitates better community level preparedness and enables the community to have a greater voice in articulating their needs in a humanitarian response. In short, local actors are more readily accepted. This fact came out clearly during the robust consultations for the World Humanitarian Summit.

Finally, local actors are in a strong position to link preparedness, response and long-term recovery. They are well placed to make resilience real.

Yet local actors, while playing a significant role currently, are not receiving the support they need to meet the full potential and to maximise effective humanitarian response. The international humanitarian machine sweeps in for a crisis and can disregard and undermines local capacities.

As a humanitarian community, we need to work together to ensure we do the best we can to prevent, prepare for and respond to crises.

“Local humanitarian action is age old, extremely diverse and central to communities preparedness and ability to respond.”

Saba Almubaslat, CEO, Humanitarian Leadership Academy

Foreword
This means playing to the strengths of each actor and building complementarity and an appropriate balance between local, national, and international humanitarian assistance. It also means respecting local actors, working with local actors based in principled partnerships, and sometimes it means standing back. It also means it is important that we focus our collective efforts on ensuring strong, sustainable, relevant, effective local organisations.

Throughout this project, local humanitarian actors called for more direct funding and commitments from international aid agencies to invest more in their leadership and capacity-development. Accompaniment and partnerships with local actors are needed, so they can be effective, respected and equal partners on the ground. We need to respond to this request. Provision of core funding is essential, so that humanitarian relief does not weaken but strengthens the sustainability of local actors.

Local actors also raised the importance of investing in organisational capacities. We need to invest in advance of future crises both in the functional and operational capacity of local government and civil society actors, to ensure that they are not overwhelmed by a sudden influx of emergency relief funds. We should focus capacity development support for good governance, integrity, financial management, domestic resource mobilisation, project management, accountability and reporting, and good governance, not just technical expertise linked to specific projects. Capacity strengthening work should be led by local and national actors themselves, defining what they need and how.

I often hear allegations that local organisations cannot be principled in conflict situations. I find this surprising—as in the hottest conflicts today (Syria for example) assistance is almost entirely delivered by local organisations and local staff. That said, it is undoubtedly true that local actors face challenges in hotly contested political environments, just as international actors do. There is often a tension between humanitarian principles, and challenges to maintain access to affected populations which affects local and international actors alike. Local actors can be challenged by their local affiliations, as international actors often lack acceptance by affected communities due to their perceived alliance with geo-political interests.

We must be honest about these challenges and work to achieve complementary and share risks—so that aid gets as quickly as possible to those who most need it, and local and international actors alike enjoy enough security to do their job.

We must understand that localisation cannot and will not look the same everywhere. The balance between local, national, and international responses—will look radically different depending on the context—depending on the nature of emergency and level of existing local and national capacity.

And finally, we must each look inwards and ask ourselves, if we truly believe in a quality humanitarian response that respects and nurtures and supports the role of local actors, and seeks to promote strong, sustainable, relevant, effective local organisations, what should we do differently? How do we change our way of working? How do we support long term sustainable capacity building? Can we make a commitment to provide overheads / core costs to local actors? And how do we ensure respectful equal partnerships? And how could we all do this better?

This report sets out some case studies and ideas that will help us move to the next step—demonstrating that local leadership and action is in fact the norm in many locations and deserves acknowledgment and enhanced support.

Dr. Jemilah Mahmood
Under Secretary General -Partnerships, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, and Chair, Humanitarian Leadership Academy

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Dr. Jemilah Mahmood, Under Secretary General - Partnerships, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), Geneva
Increasing the percentage of direct
Removing barriers to partnerships and

In June 2017, the Humanitarian Leadership

It commits international humanitarian
actors, including donors, to:

• Investing in multi-year support to
boost the institutional capacity of local
organisations;

• Removing barriers to partnerships and
coordination with local responders; and

• Increasing the percentage of direct
funding to local and national responders
by at least 25% by 2020 using funding
tools and mechanisms to facilitate this.

Through the Charter4Change initiative, southern
NGOs have called for an equal partnership
with international actors and, increased direct,
transparent funding for local humanitarian
organisations. Local humanitarian actors can
access local social and political capital, reach
remote and insecure areas, operate with speed
and directness, and use their knowledge of the
context to respond effectively. In light of this,
investing in strengthening their capacity will
ensure the unique value they add is fully realised. In June 2017, the Humanitarian Leadership
Academy, together with the International
Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent
Societies (IFRC), Wilton Park and the
European Civil Protection and Humanitarian
Aid Operations (ECHO) of the European
Commission, brought together representatives
of national and local organisations from
countries affected by disasters and conflicts.
During this conference, local and international
actors shared their successes and challenges
and jointly reflected on how the localisation of
humanitarian aid could be better supported and
improved.

The conference used examples of strong local
humanitarian leadership to consider how to
reduce the silos in the current aid system. The
participants called for more investment in
systems that promote trust, transparency, and
efficiency. They also advocated for a global
facility for local humanitarian action, which
prioritises institutional capacity strengthening;
risks sharing and knowledge brokering; and
investing in and supporting coalitions.

The Humanitarian Leadership Academy and
the British Red Cross have sought to build on
these ongoing conversations by capturing the
experience of local actors. This publication, Local
Humanitarian Action in Practice, explores the
experiences of local humanitarian organisations
and the environments in which they work.
Most of these areas are highly vulnerable to
recurrent natural and climate-induced disasters,
instability, civil conflict, and other emergencies.

While definitions of ‘local humanitarian actors’
vary, this report discusses those organisations
rooted in the country or region where they have
been established and who have been involved
in locally-led humanitarian response on their
own or with others. These case studies do not
examine international organisations that are
implementing on the ground.

The case studies cover 10 local and national
humanitarian actors across Central and
Southern Africa, the Horn of Africa, the Middle
East, and South and South-East Asia, which
have each led or managed humanitarian
interventions. The case studies show the
mandates and growth of these organisations,
their impact and contributions to humanitarian
response, the challenges they have faced, and
the lessons they have learned.

The size, influence, and activities of the
organisations featured vary, both in terms of their
interventions and in the manner in which they
have helped shape the humanitarian landscape. For example:

• Local Resource Center in Myanmar and
People’s Disaster Risk Reduction Network in
the Philippines were born in the aftermath
of Cyclone Nargis in 2008 and the eruption
of Mount Pinatubo in 1991, respectively,
when there were few local humanitarian
organisations in those areas.

• Save Somali Women and Children in Somalia
and Caritas Goma in the Democratic
Republic of Congo were founded amid a
democratic transition to advance peace,
social justice, and human rights.

• Candlelight in Somaliland and SEEDS India
were both established in response to the
growing environmental and social changes
that were affecting communities at the
margins.

• Muhammadiyah Organization, one of the
oldest and largest faith-based groups in
Indonesia, has experienced an institutional
shift since the Indian Ocean Tsunami in 2004.

• The Jordan Hashemite Charity Organization
was established to provide aid in the Middle
East and North Africa and is now working
closer to home as it strives to tackle the Syrian
refugee crisis.

• The Botswana Red Cross Society and the
Bangladesh Red Crescent Society, while
substantially different in size and exposure
to emergencies, are leading humanitarian
organisations in their countries; balancing
their auxiliary role and adherence to the
fundamental principles of the Movement.

The research seeks to expand on the
experiences of these organisations and
document the different ways in which they
influence the global humanitarian response
architecture. The Humanitarian Leadership
Academy and the British Red Cross hope
that this research will enhance the growing
recognition of the dynamics and diversity of local
humanitarian actions.

Introduction

The Grand Bargain, agreed at
the World Humanitarian Summit
in May 2016, sought to promote
localisation from short-term actions
to more strategic and sustainable
approaches.

This publication...explores the experiences of local
humanitarian organisations and the environments in which
they work. Most of these areas are highly vulnerable
to recurrent natural and climate-induced disasters,
instability, civil conflict, and other emergencies.'
Case studies of local humanitarian action in practice

Cash for work corn farmers, Philippines
Increasing resilience through early warning-early action in disasters and humanitarian crises

1. Bangladesh Red Crescent Society, Bangladesh

The Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BDRCS) has been one of the leading national humanitarian organisations in Bangladesh for more than 40 years. BDRCS was first constituted as the Bangladesh Red Cross Society in March 1973. It was recognised by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in Tehran in September of the same year and admitted to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) two months later. Its name and emblem changed to Bangladesh Red Crescent Society in 1988 (BDRCS, 2017:7). BDRCS operates through its 68 branches and has 81,000 volunteers and more than 700,000 youth members. It employs around 500 staff at its headquarters and in the field, and between 500 to 600 staff in the BDRCS-supported tertiary hospital and health and maternity centres. BDRCS also runs a blood donation programme with eight centres, providing 14% of the total safe blood supply in the country.

BDRCS is mandated by the government to include disaster risk reduction in its programmes and policies. Its areas of work are:
1) disaster preparedness, response and recovery
2) multi-hazard community resilience
3) urban disaster risk reduction
4) healthcare response and management.

BDRCS works closely with the IFRC, which supports the National Society to mobilise resources, including launching emergency appeals, and provides it with technical support and guidance on programmes and reporting (IFRC Operational Plan, 2017). BDRCS is aligned with the International Federation’s Strategy 2020 of ‘saving lives and changing minds’. It is an early member of the One Billion Coalition for Resilience, a global platform to enable at least one billion people to strengthen their resilience (BDRCS, 2017).

Bangladesh is highly vulnerable to hydro-meteorological and geological hazards, and is one of the world’s most at-risk countries to climate change. Nazmul Azam Khan, BDRCS Director for Response, describes Bangladesh as being “an example of a country living with disasters. People do what they can to survive.”

Humanitarian context: Bangladesh

- Two-thirds of the country’s land area is less than 5 meters above sea level
- Characterised by low-lying river deltas and about 230 rivers and tributaries
- The eighth most densely populated country in the world; its population is expected to rise to 230 million by 2050
- Ranked 142 out of 187 on the Human Development Index, indicating a low level of human development
- Its funnel-shaped coastline is a breeding ground for catastrophic cyclones at the Bay of Bengal
- It experiences an average of 1 to 3 moderate to severe cyclonic storms annually and storm surges as high as 13 metres
- Inland and riverine monsoon flooding submerges the country every year
- Proximity to the Himalayas makes the country prone to severe earthquakes
- Climate change will lead to more extreme weather events and displacement (IFRC, 2017: 2; BDRCS, 2017: 11)

‘The Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BDRCS) has been one of the leading national humanitarian organisations in Bangladesh for more than 40 years’.
against the odds. The increasing frequency, scale and impact of disasters such as floods, cyclones, riverbank erosion, earthquakes, and cold wave and saltwater intrusion put the resilience of communities and institutions to the test, and place an enormous strain on services and resources. Bangladesh has been ravaged by destructive cyclones and flooding, among them Cyclone SIDR, Cyclone Aila, Cyclone Mahasen, Cyclone Komen, Cyclone Roanu, Cyclone Mora and other depressions in the Bay of Bengal over the last 10 years.

Mitigating the economic and social costs of cyclones and floods requires a long-term strategy. BDRCS launched the Cyclone Preparedness Programme (CPP) in the aftermath of Cyclone in Bhola, which killed around 500,000 people in 1970. Between 1985 and 1995, the National Society built 189 cyclone shelters Bangladesh. In 1997, BDRCS established the Disaster Management Division in Dhaka to raise management capacity on disaster preparedness and response, and has been implementing community-based disaster management (now community-based DRR) programmes since 1996. In 2017, BDRCS had a budget of US$20 million, which includes programme costs. It also received BDT6 million (US$73,171) in 2017 from the government’s national budget to help pay for overhead costs and hospital management.1

The organisation’s strategic plan puts community resilience to disasters and climate change high on its list of priorities.2 It works with local government and communities on early warning, disaster preparedness and building the capacity of local structures. The community-level coordination mechanisms for early warning that BDRCS has set up along the coastal belt are a prime example. Cyclone Preparedness Program (CPP) volunteers disseminate the warnings to the community using HF/VHF radio stations. These teams coordinate with the Union disaster management committees and are also connected to community disaster management committees (CDMCS).

2. Humanitarian interventions

2.1. Flood and cyclone early warning—early action

In 2017, the north-eastern and southern parts of Bangladesh were hit by a succession of floods, landslides and cyclones. In August of the same year, heavy monsoon rains led to flooding that swept across Bangladesh, India and Nepal, affecting more than 7.4 million people and destroying agriculture, homes and livelihoods.3 Torrential rains sparked flooding in Bangladesh’s Brahmaputra–Jamuna river basin, affecting approximately 3.9 million people and damaging about 500,000 houses (BDRCS, 2017: 52).

Some of these emergencies, particularly Cyclone Mora and the monsoon flooding, provided an opportunity for BDRCS to implement early warning—early action systems and forecast-based financing (FbF) interventions (see Section 3.2 on Innovations). Cyclone Mora response. BDRCS and IFRC launched an emergency appeal in the aftermath of Cyclone Mora, which made landfall on 30 May 2017 in the Cox’s Bazar District. With winds reaching speeds of 130 km/h, seven people were killed, around 100,000 houses were damaged, and more than 3.3 million people in four districts were affected. A day before the cyclone hit, the government issued a Signal 7 warning, which was later updated to Signal 10 in six coastal areas, including Cox’s Bazar. With the support of the CPP and BDRCS volunteers, the National Society was able to evacuate more than 460,000 people. The cyclone dealt a heavy blow to an already fragile Cox’s Bazar, battering the makeshift shelters and belongings of around 150,000 displaced people from Myanmar, as well as clinics and latrines.

BDRCS and IFRC had closely monitored the path of the cyclone and held a preparedness meeting before it made landfall. Early action was taken and BDRCS asked the IFRC to release

1 CPP is the joint venture programme of Bangladesh Government and Bangladesh Red Crescent Society since 1973.
2 Exchange rate of 1 USD to 82 BDT.
3 Skype interview with Nazmul Azam Khan, Director for Response and International Relation & Communication Departments, and Md Bekal Hossain, Director for Disaster Risk Management, BDRCS, 26 October 2017, and Adish Shit Durjoy and Nasirul Alam of the IFRC Delegation in Bangladesh, 23 October 2017.
5 See https://media.ifrc.org/frk/what-we-do/disaster-and-crisis-management/south-asia-floods/ for more information on the damages to Bangladesh’s north-eastern and southern regions.
6 Drawn from IFRC Information Bulletin MDRBD019 for Cyclone Mora.
‘BDRCS believes that lasting impact requires a change in the mindset of the government and the population, including those affected by crises’.

CHF 110,111 (US$110,171)7 from the Disaster Response Emergency Fund (DREF) in 31 May. It activated the Cyclone Contingency Plan and the emergency control room in Dhaka. A series of early warning–early actions were taken: the National Disaster Response Teams (NDRTs) and the National Disaster WatSan Team were alerted, and 55,000 CPP volunteers and 800 Red Cross Youth (RCY) volunteers across 15 coastal districts were deployed.

In the immediate aftermath, BDRCS deployed four teams to conduct a rapid damage and needs assessment in four of the affected districts. It actively participated in joint assessments with the Humanitarian Coordination Task Team (HCTT).

BDRCS also provided food, shelter kits, safe drinking water and Jerry cans to at least 5,000 families. It also distributed cash grants to more than 2,800 families from the FbF programme than one million people during Cyclone Mahasen in 2013 because of its early warning and climate measures. The National Society continues to strengthen its community-based disaster risk management through disaster risk assessment, information sharing, and National Disaster Response Teams (NDRTs) and the National Disaster WatSan Team were alerted, and 55,000 CPP volunteers and 800 Red Cross Youth (RCY) volunteers across 15 coastal districts were deployed.

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2.2. Population displacement of people from Rakhine to Bangladesh

Since August 2017, violence in Myanmar’s northern Rakhine State has led to the displacement of hundreds of thousands of people who have crossed into southern Bangladesh. As of 29 October 2017, the Inter Sector Coordination Group (ISCG)8 estimates the total number of people displaced at 820,000 (including those who had previously fled from Myanmar). They have predominantly settled in camps in Cox’s Bazar and Bandarban districts. They are living in dire conditions in makeshift and cramped shelters, and are in urgent need of food, shelter, clean water, sanitation, protection and healthcare. An earlier BDRCS assessment in January 2017 reported their deteriorating situation and mounting needs, well before the recent explosion of violence and displacement.9

Before August 2017, the humanitarian response in Bangladesh had a relatively low profile. BDRCS led diplomatic discussions with the Bangladeshi government and advocated for humanitarian organisations to be authorised to assist the displaced people seeking refuge in Bangladesh. The escalation of the crisis in August 2017 prompted the Bangladeshi government to call for international humanitarian support.10 BDRCS, after a request from BDRCS, launched an emergency appeal of CHF 33.5 million (US$33.5 million) to help the National Society reach 200,000 of the most vulnerable people (IFRC, 2017).

BDRCS has provided food, water and sanitation (WASH) services, tarps for temporary shelter, non-food items (NFIs), psychological support, and child-friendly spaces to the people affected by the crisis. It has also deployed a 60-bed field hospital, equipped with an operation theatre and mobile medical teams.

Belal Hossain, BDRCS Director for Disaster Risk Management, estimates that the simultaneous disasters mean its funding requirement for 2017 could rise to US$150 million, and recovery plans are being discussed.

The Bangladeshi government has also stepped up its response efforts. It has started registering the arrivals of displaced people and is planning to build 14,000 shelters in the Kutupalong/Balukhali area, where all new refugees will be relocated (BDRCS Sit Rep 1, 2017).

3. Impact and enabling elements

• **Balancing the auxiliary role with the Fundamental Principles.** Belal Hossain, BDRCS Disaster Risk Management Director, emphasised that the BDRCS’ auxiliary role to the government of Bangladesh has enabled it to work productively with national and local governments. Its unique position helped BDRCS advocate for increased humanitarian support to people displaced from Rakhine. However, as the National Society is bound by the Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement11, including the principle of independence, it must balance its auxiliary role to the government with its need to remain autonomous.

• **Commitment to resilience.** BDRCS recognises that the devastating long-term impact of these cyclical disasters necessitate a shift of approach: from response to disaster risk reduction. In one outstanding example of success, BDRCS helped evacuate more than one million people during Cyclone Mahasen in 2013 because of its early warning measures. The National Society continues to strengthen its community-based disaster risk management through disaster risk assessment, information sharing, and

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7 Exchange rate of US$1 to CHF0.99946
8 See ISCG Situation Report 2017 at http://www.humanitarianresponse.info
11 Adopted in 1965 in Vienna, the seven Fundamental Principles of the Movement are: Humanity, Impartiality, Neutrality, Independence, Voluntary Service, Unity and Universality.
programme implementation and contingency planning, and livelihoods and small-scale mitigation support. Community volunteers are mobilised and trained on early warning and promotion of key messages on DRR, WASH and health. For its Cyclone Preparedness Programme (CPP), BDRCS has about 50,000 volunteers working on early warning in coastal areas and more than 700,000 young people from the government’s national youth programme to support different interventions. BDRCS will expand its programmatic focus on early warning, preparedness and recovery to flood-prone areas, and will strengthen its partnership with the government and other stakeholders (BDRCS, 2017). It will continue to run its community disaster relief emergency fund, which community members can use to access emergency grants for flood or cyclone response, helping to save lives and livelihoods, and make communities more resilient to future crises. BDRCS matches the funds gathered by the community.

• Collaboration and coordination. BDRCS actively participates in the Humanitarian Coordination Task Teams and with cluster leads. It decides on joint assessments and advocacy with donor groups, and is a member of the Local Consultative Group of the Disaster Responders at the Ministry. This gives it the opportunity to raise humanitarian principles and law, among other issues. BDRCS advocates to change national government policy and practice on key disaster risk management and humanitarian issues, efforts that are strengthened by the presence of BDRCS members in Parliament.

• Mobilising support within the Movement. BDRCS enjoys the support of the Movement and other Red Cross/Red Crescent Societies for its response operations and some of its development programmes. IFRC’s Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF), which is made available within 48 hours of a disaster striking, has allowed BDRCS to respond quickly.

3.1. Sustainability

Most of BDRCS’s funding for its response and development programmes comes from national and international donors. It implements multi-year resilience projects, including community-based disaster risk reduction programmes (CBDRR), school-based DRR (SBDRR), and WASH. It also receives funding from the national budget, and is currently negotiating with the government of Bangladesh to increase its share. It uses income from building and land rentals to pay its staff, and lottery ticket sales to support some of its operations.

BDRCS’s Strategic Plan aims to increase resource mobilisation from international to national sources by about 20%, and raise revenues from its assets by 25%. It will also strengthen its local branches so they can deliver services more independently and promote the use of modern technology more efficiently in all aspects of its programmes (BDRCS, 2017: 40 - 41). Hossain is hopeful about tapping the potential of the private sector and local donors, as well as long-term private contributions.

3.2. Innovations to improve national humanitarian action

BDRCS has introduced several innovations in humanitarian aid. The first is mobile data collection for beneficiary selection. BDRCS volunteers have been trained to use this innovation, called the Open Data Kit (ODK), during humanitarian response. The second is mobile money transfer, which is delivered in partnership with a national mobile phone company and financial service providers.

The move from in-kind donations to cash has allowed BDRCS to reach more people effectively. A third innovation is Forecast-based Financing (FbF), which aims to make early warning–early action an integral part of Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement’s disaster risk management work worldwide. BDRCS began piloting FbF in Bangladesh in 2017, when the north-east of the country had been hit by floods. Cash disbursements of BDT 5,000 (US$60) were released to 2,300 families in selected communities before Cyclone Mora made landfall in the coastal district of Noakhali in May, and to 1,000 households in Bogra district after water at the monitoring stations at Jamuna river exceeded established danger levels. Displaced populations from Rakhine who were affected by Cyclone Mora also benefited from FbF assistance. FbF has been applied by Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in Uganda and Peru, and is being piloted in Nepal, Bangladesh, Mozambique, the Philippines, the Dominican Republic and Haiti (IFRC, 2016).

4. Challenges

• Pressure on institutional capacities and resources. Bangladesh has developed strong institutional capacities and structures over time. However, these capacities are continually being challenged and eroded by the scale and frequency of emergencies and the very high demand for support at community level. BDRCS estimates that the funding requirement for the simultaneous emergencies in 2017 could go as high as US$150 million for the year.

• Long-term investment in communities. The need to support community resilience over the long term as well as implement the wide range of disaster mitigation measures identified in the vulnerability and capacity assessment (VCA) put BDRCS resources under serious strain. Short implementation periods are deemed insufficient to provide communities with the guidance and follow-up they need.

• Capacity development. While BDRCS builds the knowledge and capacity of its staff and volunteers, it recognises that not everyone is equally equipped. Volunteer retention is a challenge. For instance, youth volunteers who have completed their education may move outside the branch/area. The BDRCS Planning and Development Department motivates existing volunteers through capacity training and actively recruits new ones.

5. Lessons learned and next steps

• Changing mindset. BDRCS believes that lasting impact requires a change in the mindset of the government and the population, including those affected by crises. But this will not happen overnight. That said, BDRCS’s communication and advocacy work on DRR and resilience has been effective in changing people’s awareness about their disaster risks as well as in improving their level of preparedness.

• Integrated approach. For community resilience to be effective, BDRCS has to work with both communities and local governments and adopt an integrated approach to DRR, livelihoods, health, shelter, education and WASH programmes.

• Capacity. The number of qualified humanitarian professionals who can deal with multiple disasters needs to grow. BDRCS has established a National Disaster Response Team with about 60 personnel, which although substantial is not enough, considering the country faces multiple disasters at the same time.

Accountability, monitoring and evaluation. BDRCS is implementing the Branch Organizational Capacity Assessment tool to assess branches’ capacity and accountability levels and help them improve. BDRCS is also using the community investment accountability system, especially in its DRR programmes, to track longer term progress. BDRCS is also committed to ensuring the Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) standards are met in every sphere of its work. Communities are involved in the validation of programme results and BDRCS has set up a complaints process. Aside from programme monitoring, BDRCS conducts real-time evaluation and lessons-learned workshops for its resilience programmes.

Forecast-based Financing

FbF, or forecast-based financing, is a mechanism that enables access to funding for early action and preparedness for response based on an in-depth forecast and risk analysis. FbF has three components: 1) triggers, 2) selection of actions, and 3) financing mechanism. (Source: IFRC & German Red Cross, 2017)

12 Visit the IFRC website for more information on FbF: https://media.ifrc.org/innovation/2017/07/18/forecast-based-financing-played-a-key-role-during-bangladesh-monsoon-season
13 Since 2013, BDRCS has advanced in integrating CEA within community-based programmes and response operations.
Empowering communities on disaster risk management

1. Botswana Red Cross Society, Botswana

The Botswana Red Cross Society (BRCS), established in 1948 as a branch of the British Red Cross Society, became an independent National Society by an Act of Parliament (64.01) of the Republic of Botswana on 1 March 1968. BRCS was recognised by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in February 1970 and admitted by the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in 1971. The Botswana Red Cross Society, like all National Societies, conducts its humanitarian activities in accordance with the seven Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement: Humanity, Impartiality, Neutrality, Independence, Unity, Universality, and Voluntary Service.

Some of its core programmes are outlined below:\(^{14}\)

- Disaster management, including strengthening disaster preparedness planning; building effective disaster response mechanisms; raising community awareness and public education; and disaster mitigation and reduction. BRCS trains volunteer action teams to analyse vulnerabilities and capacities to respond, and to provide services on first aid, relief support, and water and sanitation and hygiene promotion. It has responded to past disasters, provided immediate aid, and helped communities get back on their feet.

- Community-based rehabilitation, providing therapy for children and people living with disabilities. It also provides young adults with vocational and literacy classes in one of its centres.

- Healthcare, responding to health emergencies, including measles and polio outbreaks and avian and pandemic influenza. It also works on humanitarian pandemic preparedness and HIV/AIDS.

- Youth development, which includes recruiting and training young volunteers.

The National Society has 72 staff at the national and district levels, and 2,094 active volunteers. The volunteers carry out BRCS programmes at their respective branches. To sustain its operations, BRCS generates income from donor-funded projects and investments in hotels and property rentals. It also collects public donations and receives in-kind contributions.

Sethamiso Moritshane, BRCS Disaster Risk Management Officer, explains: “Unlike in other countries, Botswana doesn’t have a lot of humanitarian actors working on disaster management, besides the government and the National Society. In most cases, BRCS has been called upon to lead the operations. BRCS sits on the National Disaster Management Committee and the National Disaster Management Technical Committee. At the district level, field officers and volunteers participate in the district and village disaster management committees.”

Humanitarian context: Botswana

- Botswana is a landlocked, southern African country that shares borders with South Africa in the south and the east, Namibia in the west, and Zimbabwe and Zambia in the north. It is a semi-arid country, with about 70% of its total area covered by the Kgalagadi Desert. Its climate ranges from mild to semi-arid.

- Disaster risks in Botswana include flooding, especially on the country’s floodplains and in urban areas; drought and associated risks of wild fire and pest infestations; potential civil unrest sparked by the presence of groups described as ‘illegal migrants and refugees’; and epidemics, primarily HIV/AIDS, cholera, diarrhoea, and malaria. Other threats include tropical cyclones from the south-west Indian Ocean during the summer, high winds and earthquakes (NDRMP 2009).

\(^{14}\) Data from Botswana Red Cross Society: http://www.botswanaredcross.org.bw/
mitigation measures had been initiated to reduce future impact. Instead, community members who had been forced to leave their homes by the floods were allocated land on the floodplains. They were also not given guidance on how to construct strong traditional structures or foundations for their homes.

**BRCS interventions.** Given the scale of the flooding and the local government’s lack of capacity to respond, BRCS was designated to lead the humanitarian relief effort. With no Red Cross branch in the village, the National Society pulled in volunteers from across the country to support the response. Immediately after the flooding, BRCS conducted a rapid assessment of the area in order to develop an appropriate response strategy.

BRCS moved quickly, coordinating with district authorities such as the Department of Social Work, the Department of Water Affairs, and the District Health Management Team. To address water contamination, volunteer teams were organised to disseminate hygiene messages and disinfect potentially contaminated areas to help prevent, or minimize, further outbreaks of waterborne diseases. As the only humanitarian actor present in the area, the initial phase of the response was challenging, with financial resources rapidly exhausted. To fill the gap, BRCS reached out to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) to request a grant of CHF 78,221 (US$78,182) from the Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF). The funds helped cover the cost of purchasing and distributing essential supplies such as soap, water containers, blankets, kitchen sets, mosquito nets, water-purification tablets and shelter repair. BRCS was also able to replenish preparedness stockpiles and initiate information and education campaigns to reduce the incidence of cholera and other waterborne diseases.

Community members were mobilised to assist with the relief effort and, once it was over, were enlisted to establish the local Red Cross house. These volunteers have since trained village officials and 50 more volunteers on community-based disaster risk management. They drew up a community map, identified disaster risks, and crafted a disaster risk management plan. They also conducted follow-up activities such as livelihoods support, early warning messaging, and public awareness campaigns. These efforts made a difference: when floods hit the village in 2017, there was far less damage than there had been in 2007.

**3. Impact and enabling elements**

- **Valuable partner in humanitarian response.** BRCS’s proactive response to the floods was well received by all stakeholders. It was considered a valuable partner to the local government who had been unable to cope with the demands of the response and had not yet implemented disaster risk management measures. BRCS has also trained government social workers who are in charge of district-level response on disaster risk management, including assessment and planning. Being the first on the ground in Gweta gave BRCS the opportunity to instil a culture of preparedness among community members. Nationally, BRCS is one of the few humanitarian organisations that has the reach and scale to respond to disasters and other emergencies.

- **Rapid scale-up.** BRCS moved quickly to address the growing needs of those affected using its own human and financial resources and requested DREF funding. The additional funds helped BRCS scale up its activities – getting life-saving supplies to the most vulnerable families and disinfecting the at-risk areas to prevent the outbreak of waterborne and vector-borne diseases.

- **Capacity building and promoting key messages.** BRCS combined a number of useful tools to train its volunteers, such as the Participatory Hygiene and Sanitation Transformation (PHAST) guide and the Epidemic Disease Control Manual for Village Leaders. Village authorities have also conducted follow-up activities – getting life-saving supplies to the most vulnerable families and disinfecting the at-risk areas to prevent the outbreak of waterborne and vector-borne diseases. They also conducted follow-up activities such as livelihoods support, early warning messaging, and public awareness campaigns. These efforts made a difference: when floods hit the village in 2017, there was far less damage than there had been in 2007.

**4. Challenges**

BRCS faced specific challenges in its response to the Gweta floods in 2007. One was the limited capacity of local authorities and the communities during the response, which BRCS was required to support. For instance, the National Society intervened by treating the contaminated water while the local government was trying to find a more long-term solution to ensuring accessible purified water. Another challenge was the community’s reluctance to

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15. From the 2009 National Disaster Management Plan of Botswana.
being evacuated because they feared losing their livestock. There is also a big question about the village’s resilience to future flooding. The village is located in a salt pan so floodwaters do not subside immediately, and many households who are in the floodplains could not be relocated because of the lack of available lands.

Nationally, Botswana is facing a renewed risk from earthquakes after the recent discovery of movement in the Okavanga Delta fault lines. Between April and July 2017, central Botswana experienced two earthquakes of magnitude 6.5, while in the south, less than 100km from the capital, there was a magnitude 5.6 quake. At present, the government does not have a strategy to address earthquake risk. The country also suffers from a worsening malaria outbreak, including in the south, which had not been previously considered malaria-prone. Since November 2017, the government has collaborated with BRCS to train communities on malaria prevention and awareness.

5. Lessons learned and next steps

- **Community-based disaster risk management.** The crucial first step of community-based risk management is the identification of risk by the community. This guides the measures needed to mitigate the negative impacts of flooding. The village’s recurrent exposure to flooding made it critical to build the capacity of community members and leaders to manage risk – efforts that have paid off in the form of reduced damage from subsequent events. BRCS reiterates the importance of involving communities in emergency operations and then giving them ownership of disaster risk management plans and measures after the relief effort is over. It will also strive to make gender equality a central part of all stages of disaster risk management.

- **Coordination.** The way BRCS and local government agencies coordinated and shared information meant their interventions were complementary, avoiding duplication and addressing gaps. For example, BRCS worked with the Department of Social Services to distribute food. The Department of Water Affairs oversaw transporting water while BRCS treated the water, provided water containers, and promoted hygiene.

- **Transparency and community involvement.** In line with BRCS’ grassroots approach, it involved communities to identify the most vulnerable families and validate beneficiary lists to ensure transparency in the relief distribution. This also helped increase the Red Cross’s visibility and the trust communities felt for it.

- **Volunteer training.** The training that volunteers received on disaster risk management and WASH promotion during the floods significantly boosted their ability to respond to future emergencies and improved the communities’ perception of BRCS. The community was also shown how to prevent a cholera and other waterborne epidemic, which helped reduce incidences of new cases in the village.

- **Monitoring recommendations.** After the response, the BRCS disaster management team outlined the need for a more systematic approach to monitoring and evaluating emergency work, including the opportunity to review ongoing operations to improve their relevance and impact.
Lighting the way for community-based drought resilience in Somaliland

1. Candlelight for Environment, Education and Health, Somaliland

Candlelight for Environment, Education and Health was founded in Somaliland in 1995 as a non-profit, non-political organisation. Its headquarters are located in Hargeisa, Somaliland’s capital, with three regional offices and a liaison office in Nairobi. It is a member of the Somali Recovery and Resilience Consortium (SORAC). Candlelight has a seven-strong Board of Directors and a staff of 115.

For over 22 years, it has been implementing humanitarian assistance and development programmes, supporting women, young people, people with disabilities, and internally displaced persons (IDPs) in communities throughout the six regions of Somaliland. Its interventions are mostly concentrated in three eastern regions affected by recurrent droughts and a recent outbreak of acute watery diarrhoea (AWD)/cholera. For 2017/18, Candlelight has a budget of US$5.6 million, at least 80% to 85% of which is spent on programmes.

Candlelight supports education through two formal secondary schools and one primary school in Burao and Erigavo. It runs technical training centres in Hargeisa and Erigavo mainly for young people from poor backgrounds, IDPs and returnees. The centres teach their students tailoring, metal fabrication, carpentry, bakery and beautification vocational skills.

Candlelight has been advocating for an end to female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C), a customary practice in Somaliland with a prevalence higher than 90% according to one assessment (NAFIS, 2014). For past the three years, Candlelight has been implementing an awareness-raising project highlighting the consequences of FGM/C and providing livelihood support to the same communities in the Sahel region.

2. Humanitarian interventions

Somaliland has been experiencing recurrent droughts that have severely affected about 90% of the population. Candlelight has been instrumental in responding to the drought, reaching approximately 15,000 households (90,000 people) since the start of 2017. This number is set to increase to over 20,000 households by the end of 2017. Candlelight has:

- provided cash transfers
- distributed hygiene kits
- promoted hygiene and sanitation awareness
- delivered food and non-food items
- trucked in water and repaired water sources
- constructed pit latrines, especially in IDPs camps and host communities.

Candlelight also implements the following thematic programmes to increase drought resilience:

- **Natural resource management for drought mitigation and adaptation.** Candlelight provides drought-affected communities with access to water for drinking and for watering crops and livestock. It works to preserve and restore people’s food security and livelihoods, and helps communities find solutions to the conflicts that often arise as a result of competition over scarce resources. Candlelight builds and repairs water sources and promotes simple methods to conserve water and regenerate land naturally and sustainably. It has trained local young artisans to make energy-saving stoves and bee-keeping toolkits to give people a way to make a living.

For over 22 years, it has been implementing humanitarian assistance and development programmes, supporting women, young people, people with disabilities, and internally displaced persons (IDPs) in communities throughout the six regions of Somaliland.

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16 SORAC is a consortium of five indigenous Somali NGOs working on advocacy, research and resource mobilisation.
17 Each household has approximately six members.
• **Community-based drought mitigation and preparedness.** Using participatory and community-driven approaches, Candlelight trains and supports communities to develop action plans to deal with the effects of drought. It also helps communities become better prepared for when the next crisis hits — so that they have access to water, animal fodder, and food during future dry spells.

• **Livelihood support and diversification.** The drought is reported to have affected the main source of income of 84% of households.18 Candlelight works to address this loss of income by giving cash transfers to very vulnerable households, distributing food, setting up and supporting women groups, training farmers in improved farming and livestock management techniques, and distributing locally appropriate drought-resistant seeds, tools and other agricultural inputs.

• **Health.** Candlelight, through the Somalia Humanitarian Fund, which is being managed by the UN OCHA, is rolling out Integrated Emergency Response Teams. The teams will offer a complete package of support, including disease and malnutrition screening, treatment and awareness raising. The teams will also rehabilitate the water sources of affected communities.

In light of the increasing impact of climate change, Candlelight is implementing a programme to help 18,000 poor agro-pastoralist and pastoralist households in 12 villages in Somaliland’s Togdheer and Sahel regions to become more resilient to its adverse social, economic and ecological effects.

3. Impact and enabling elements

• **Focus on long-term resilience.** Through its humanitarian response and long-term programmes, Candlelight helps communities increase their resilience and ability to adapt to climate change and environmental degradation.

• **Advocacy and integrated programming.** Candlelight designs and implements programmes that integrate advocacy and livelihood support. This includes its work on FGM/C, which has been featured in UK national newspaper, the *Guardian*.19

• **Strategic presence and reach.** Candlelight attributes its success to its closeness to the community and the people it works with. It also has four strategically-located regional offices, which are well-equipped and have competent and committed staff.

• **Working with community volunteers.** Candlelight works closely with community volunteers and field staff who are recruited from beneficiary communities and project areas, respectively. The knowledge of its volunteers and field staff about the area’s topography, culture and power centres is a major factor in the success of Candlelight’s programmes.

• **Direct benefits to communities.** Candlelight has implemented development and recovery interventions such as cash transfers, hygiene kits and other non-food items, ensuring that they directly benefit the communities. It works with community leaders and community groups who help it design beneficiary selection criteria and identify the most vulnerable households. Candlelight has also implemented innovative community-based mitigation programmes such as the women’s milk cooperative.

• **Staff capacity.** Candlelight strives to attract and retain staff by providing them with a conducive working environment and opportunities to advance. For instance, it encourages its staff to go for further studies and provides any staff that joins a local university with an education subsidy.

3.1 Sustainability

Candlelight works with various humanitarian partners that include CARE International, UN-Habitat, Food Agriculture Organization, United Nations Children’s Fund, Oxfam, International Solidarity Foundation of Finland, Finnish Church Aid, Development Fund Norway, Kindernothilfee.V., United States Africa Development Foundation, and CARITAS. Candlelight has recently secured US$340,000 from the Somalia Humanitarian Fund managed by UNOCHA.

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18 Somaliland Inter-Agency Needs Assessment, October / November 2016.
Central to Candlelight’s aim of being sustainable is the promotion of community and stakeholder participation. This gives communities a greater sense of ownership of Candlelight’s interventions, builds the capacity of existing community structures, and increases community expertise – skills and knowledge that the community retains after the project has come to an end.

Candlelight promotes environmentally friendly and local knowledge-based technologies to promote sustainability and diversify production. For instance, it encourages growing and preserving local fodder plant species using locally-improved techniques to increase the availability of fodder for sale and animal feed during times of scarcity. It documents its learning on the ground through reviews with the beneficiaries, which are then used to inform project design and implementation. Candlelight welcomes feedback from beneficiaries through regular project site visits, suggestion boxes and telephone feedback. They also conduct both internal and external process and impact evaluations of their projects.

4. Challenges

- Scale. The drought has affected over 90% of the population, and the need for support far exceeds the resources available. Candlelight recognises this and seeks to prioritise the most vulnerable people in its beneficiary selection. This includes female-headed households, undernourished children, people with disabilities, or households with elderly members. The available pool of finance from total global humanitarian funding is limited. As Kulmiye Hussein, Chief of Party of SORAC, Candlelight’s consortium partner, notes: ‘less than 5% of global humanitarian funds go to Somalia’.

Suuqsade: harnessing the power of the community

Suuqsade is a mountain village in the Sheikh region with a population of just over 3,000. Most people live as agro-pastoralists, rearing sheep, goats, cattle and camels. Their main products are milk, livestock for sale, fodder and cereals. Most women are involved in selling milk to earn the money they need to feed their families. As elsewhere in Somaliland, this agro-pastoral community has been affected by drought.

From 2015 to 2016, Candlelight implemented an innovative programme in Suuqsade to help the community improve their food security and income and become more resilient to drought.

One of the key successes of the project was the establishment of a women’s milk-selling business cooperative. Women used to have to travel for eight hours to the nearest milk markets, which often meant milk was spoiled and less was sold.

Candlelight provided 30 members of two women’s milk groups in the village with milk-preservation toolkits consisting of stainless-steel milk cans and two solar refrigerators. It also trained them in milk production and preservation. Each of the two groups was supported to elect a chairperson, a milk secretary, and a milk collector/checker to control milk quality and minimise risks. Each woman in a group of 15 contributes one to three litres of milk a day, which is collected to be stored and sold.

The groups are also tasked with saving 2,000 Somaliland shillings (US$0.15), which is used to maintain solar refrigerators and any other investments for the cooperatives. The low level of technical training involved and the in-kind collection of milk were easier forms of saving than cash.

The way this project was implemented was unique to Somaliland and resulted in increased milk sales, higher household incomes, and women gaining access to microcredit companies.

20 Skype interview with Kulmiye Hussein, Chief of Party, SORAC, 22 September 2017
• **Direct funding.** Local organisations in general find it hard to access funding directly from donors because of factors such as their limited capacity to produce winning proposals and the lack of trust from donors. For instance, Candlelight sometimes has to compete with international NGOs during the proposal bidding. Candlelight is strengthening its own capacity for programme development and management, with some donors allocating budgets for capacity building.

• **Competition for funds and implementation.** Some international agencies are directly implementing their own projects, which denies local NGOs the chance to gain experience in implementation or partnership. This situation can create competition between national and international NGOs for funds and areas in which to work. The lack of coordination of interventions between these actors can create confusion among beneficiaries.

• **Flexibility.** Programme-based funding lacks the flexibility to respond to changing situations. During emergencies, changing humanitarian needs require high levels of agility, such as the rapid reallocation of resources. However, not all donor funding allows this flexibility.

5. Lessons learned and next steps

• **Collaboration.** Inter-agency collaboration between partner NGOs and other stakeholders is very important. Candlelight is a member of several clusters and working groups that deliver humanitarian support. UNOCHA has played a key role in coordinating the activities of different players. This has helped increase coordination, information sharing and institutional capacity building, and reduced duplication and waste of limited resources.

• **Government relations.** Working with government bodies and ministries that have the mandate to respond to disasters is very important. Candlelight has good relations with key ministries such as health, water, labour and social affairs, agriculture, and the environment, among others. It coordinates with local committees on programme implementation, as well as on early warning and disaster risk management planning. Candlelight provides technical support and guidance, supportive policies and security, which some other stakeholders may not be able to offer.

• **Community.** Community involvement throughout the entire project cycle is very important. This helps in building on the knowledge, skills and other resources that exist in the communities. It is an approach that helps increase community acceptance of projects and therefore their sustainability. The importance of quick response needs to be raised as it is a matter of life and death for many affected populations, as was the case during the AWD/cholera outbreak.

Candlelight will continue to work on combining life-saving assistance, recovery and resilience in its programmes, as well as in strengthening the capacity of its staff.
Caritas Goma, Democratic Republic of Congo

Caritas Goma is a provincial-level, or diocese-level, organisation of the Catholic Church, working mostly in North Kivu Province, eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). It delivers development and humanitarian assistance to communities and vulnerable populations who need it and through its vision and actions, Caritas Goma advocates for solidarity, charity and social justice.

Caritas Goma implements multi-sectoral programmes that promote human rights, justice, peace, care for the victims of violence, including sexual and gender-based violence, and relief for communities affected by crises. Its programme work includes healthcare, nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH); distribution of food and other essentials; livelihoods support; and care for victims of sexual and gender-based violence in humanitarian crises. In Caritas Goma’s strategic plan for 2015 to 2019, it saw the need to focus on disaster risk reduction.

Caritas Goma was founded in 1962, two years after the DRC won independence from Belgium, and is now led by Father Abbe Oswald Musoni. The organisation mainly intervenes through its parishes, a structure that allows it to collect development and disaster data quickly, using volunteers who are employed and available even during stable times.

Caritas Goma has its own equipment, vehicles, and buildings. Its employees participate in various capacity building programmes and are trained in the Core Humanitarian Standards, conducting needs assessments, resource mobilisation and advocacy. An entire department with more than 10 permanent staff is dedicated to humanitarian work. In total, Caritas Goma employs around 150 people and has 40 volunteers in each of the 15 parishes. The organisation’s operations cover the capital city of Goma, the territories of Nyiragongo, Rutshuru, Masisi, part of Walikale, part of Kalehe (in South Kivu province), and part of Kanyabayonga in southern Lubero.

Eddy Yamwenziyo, Coordinator of the Humanitarian Department, says: “Caritas Goma measures its overall success in terms of improved living conditions of affected communities, especially in terms of health, food security, shelter and access to assets. The organisation has also contributed to improved cohabitation between community tribes.”

Caritas Goma’s humanitarian experience has helped it improve the way it conducts needs assessments, implements projects, conducts monitoring and reporting, fundraises, and networks.

The organisation participates in the DRC’s provincial-level humanitarian clusters.

Promoting a social justice lens to humanitarian action

‘Caritas Goma implements multi-sectoral programmes that promote human rights, justice, peace, care for the victims of violence, including sexual and gender-based violence, and relief for communities affected by crises’.

Humanitarian context:
Democratic Republic of Congo

- The DRC has been affected by decades of political and social instability, armed conflict and violence; fighting continues in the country’s eastern provinces, including North Kivu, where Caritas Goma works (DRC Country Profile 2017)
- According to UNOCHA (2017), 7.3 million people are affected by the crisis, while 6.9 million need humanitarian assistance
- It is one of the poorest countries in the world, despite having reduced its poverty rate from 71% in 2005 to 64% in 2012 (World Bank, 2017)
- Acute hunger remains a threat to 7.7 million people (IPC, 2017), with very high prevalence of chronic malnutrition in children (UNICEF, n.d.)
- The country has a very high maternal mortality rate of 693 out of every 100,000 live births (WHO, 2015)
- It ranks 153 out of 159 countries on gender equality (UNDP, 2016)
Caritas Goma distributed food, shelter and other essentials to those caught up in the crisis. It helped people who had lost their livelihoods find employment. It participated in needs assessments, supported investigators and validated beneficiary lists.

Its interventions benefited people across a wide geographical area, including several categories of beneficiaries such as displaced people and returnees. In partnership with the World Food Programme (WFP), Caritas Goma conducted the registration of internally displaced persons (IDPs).22

Bihambwe floods
On 19 September 2017, torrential rains caused the Osso River to overflow, submerging villages in Bihambwe in Masisi territory. According to local civil society groups, the floodwaters killed more than 90 people, including members of the indigenous group in Bihambwe and other residents who took shelter in residential houses, restaurants and administrative offices. The floodwaters also washed away livestock and food crops, and damaged the Gasiza Bridge and five schools. A reported 750 houses and properties were washed away and five sources of drinking water destroyed.

When flooding struck Bihambwe, Caritas Goma worked with UNOCHA and the Non-Food Items Cluster to provide food and non-food item (NFI) kits to 200 disaster-affected households. It validated the list of beneficiaries and provided shelter to those affected or at risk. Caritas Goma also collaborated with the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs to conduct a risk assessment and help the communities design their disaster preparedness plan and response. This plan was used to further analyse local hazards, risk factors and community capacity, and as a tool to mobilise resources during future crises.

Caritas uses a tool developed by UNOCHA to assess people’s vulnerability and determine whether they should be identified as beneficiaries. It publishes the list of beneficiaries so that when complaints arise, they can check and revise the list accordingly.

In both Rutshuru and Bihambwe, Caritas Goma will continue to design and deliver programmes through its development and health departments.

3. Impact and enabling factors

• **Christian-based humanitarian values.** Caritas Goma’s humanitarian services are integral to its support for displaced households.23 By working to promote well-being and peace, it advocates for the dignity and rights of individuals to be respected and the Christian values of solidarity and sharing to be applied.

• **Strategic presence.** Caritas Goma works in all of the territories of North Kivu Province. It has a trained emergency team, which can be deployed quickly to assess any crisis situation and provide life-saving assistance during an emergency. Supplies are distributed simultaneously in each territory with assigned teams located in different areas. Caritas Goma’s knowledge of the local context and environment means it can make rapid changes to the project to ensure it adheres to the ‘Do No Harm’ principle. Similarly, the parish committees for peace and justice have a deep understanding of the local context, which they can bring during the design and implementation of responses.

• **Conflict sensitivity.** Navigating the intensely racial/tribal socio-political landscape of the DRC can be tricky. Caritas Goma makes it a point to perform an initial conflict-sensitivity analysis to ensure any planned intervention takes account of ethnic tensions. Citing its recent experience in Nyanzale, Bwalanda and Kibirizi – areas populated by Hutus and the Nande tribe – Eddy Yamwenziyo said: “Having a conflict-sensitivity approach in place facilitated free movement of our staff on the ground.” Caritas Goma uses the Core Humanitarian Standards as a code of accountability for all. The organisation has also contributed to improved cohabitation between tribes in the community.

21  Key resource person is Yves Nguru, DEPP Learning Advisor for DRC, ACF, who coordinated the submission. He translated texts and quotes from Caritas Goma staff from French to English (DRC). Respondent from Caritas Goma is Eddy Yamwenziyo, Coordinator of the Humanitarian Department.
• Relationship and coordination with donors. Caritas Goma has established good working relationships with donors. For instance, the World Food Programme (WFP) has an annual open contract with Caritas Goma and its local partners, which allows them to evaluate evolving crises and provide a direct response. This partnership with WFP also allows Caritas Goma to distribute food to hundreds of thousands of displaced people using the food-ration-per-person-per-day method. Caritas Goma has introduced a new ‘fairs’ approach – based on the organisation’s many years of experience – which replaces food rations with vouchers enabling beneficiaries to purchase the goods of their choice. The availability and support of institutional donors (ie, the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the DRC [MONUSCO], Social Fund, Caritas Luxembourg) have facilitated the integration of sectoral responses with the organisation. MONUSCO also financed Caritas activities in Nyanzale, where conflict is ongoing, helping secure the project areas.

• Multi-stakeholder approach to accountability. The heavy involvement of civil society and the parishes in the implementation of Caritas Goma’s projects has increased the sense of local ownership and trust in the organisation. Yves Ngunzi, DEPP Learning Advisor for DRC, noted that: “In this part, people’s attitude towards aid has been quite negative. But when the communities are involved at the earlier stage, they are more likely to own their actions and manage the aid they received.” Caritas Goma saw that the communities understood the importance of managing community assets during and after the response operations in both the Bihambwe and Rutshuru emergencies.

3.1. Sustainability
Caritas Goma has a strategic plan, which allows it to project expected budget and identify potential funding partners. The total budget raised in 2016 was US$12 million, an estimated 20% of which was spent on overhead costs and the rest for programmes. Caritas Goma includes overhead costs in all the organisation’s donor-funded projects. Volunteers in parishes receive a minimum allocation to cover living costs. It also collects money and in-kind donations from its parishes so that it is able to respond immediately to an emergency. When a major disaster hits, Caritas Congo, its national counterpart, facilitates the emergency appeal and it is launched by Caritas International to call for international solidarity. At national level, the solidarity fund managed by Caritas Congo is used to support affected communities, including in Caritas Goma’s areas of operation.

Caritas Goma recognises the importance of making development interventions sustainable. That is why it passes on emergency preparedness and management skills to local communities during a response. The START Network’s Shifting the Power project has also supported Caritas Goma. Shifting the Power has made local and national NGOs more conscious about the benefits of working together to make their voices heard at national, territorial and provincial levels, while advocating for change. Caritas Goma has been supporting both local authorities and communities to develop and implement their emergency preparedness and response plans, of which advocacy is a component. These plans, in turn, enable these stakeholders to mobilise human and financial resources and strengthen their own governance structures for more effective humanitarian assistance.

Caritas Goma also advocates for more support for its humanitarian work from both donors and the DRC Government. Other groups provide financial support to Caritas Goma, too, largely because it is already present and working in the affected areas, and has been chosen as an implementing partner by some donors.

4. Challenges
Yves Ngunzi says: “There are many experienced national NGOs in DRC, but they are insufficiently consulted and included in decision-making by international actors. They also do not have access to financial resources directly from donors.” The DRC Red Cross, Caritas and the Protestant churches are the only Congolese humanitarian actors with deep field experience and community-based work as well as nationwide coverage in the country. But their potential is insufficiently tapped and utilised.24 The other challenges Caritas Goma faces are:

• Security. As violence persists and the needs of the population grow, frequent and lengthy emergency intervention is required although there is lesser opportunity to implement projects promoting resilience. The absence of state authority, the atmosphere of lawlessness, poor roads, and the targeting of civilians or aid workers for violence or kidnapping create an extremely difficult environment in which to operate.

• Understanding of vulnerability. There is a poor understanding of the concept of vulnerability by the predominantly illiterate rural population. People think that assistance is given based on status and not vulnerability. To ensure participatory selection and avoid resentment, Caritas Goma facilitates the validation of the list of potential beneficiaries, which is published and cross-checked by representatives of the affected communities. The process takes time, as final beneficiaries are selected based on vulnerability-criteria scores as well as input from the community.

• Low government commitment levels. The state tends to rely heavily on humanitarian NGOs and international agencies for assistance and is not committed to humanitarian efforts and disaster risk reduction. The DRC government has a DRR strategy document for 2017–2030; however, there is no law or operational programme in place. While structures have been suggested in the strategy, they are not yet established in some of the most disaster-prone provinces. Caritas Goma and other humanitarian actors are calling on the government to step up its efforts. When opportunities arise, Caritas Goma coordinates with the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and other agencies such as the Provincial Coordination of Civil Protection as well as the Goma Volcanic Observatory to strengthen community capacities by sector preparedness. Caritas Goma is hoping that the government will have a provision on response and DRR in its 2018 budget, and will put in place the law for disaster risk reduction and management.

• Climate variability. Erratic climate conditions have contributed to the humanitarian challenge. Prolonged dry periods have led to poor or non-existent harvests, further exacerbating the country’s high levels of malnutrition and food security.

5. Lessons learned and next steps
• Values. Conscious of its mandate to promote social justice, Caritas Goma has learned to avoid recruiting people suspected by the community of having participated in human rights abuses. This is also consistent with the ‘Do No Harm’ principle that the organisation observes.

• Community involvement. Involving communities during the early stages of an intervention improves the project’s levels of collaboration and transparency. Although it takes time to select beneficiaries when communities are involved, the process reduces the amount of complaints received and increases accountability.

• Partnerships. Caritas Goma’s continued collaboration with local civil society actors and parishes during project implementation has reduced mistrust. Working together with the affected communities and local structures has also improved accountability and sense of partnership.

• Field presence. Caritas Goma also learned that having staff and volunteers on-site when emergencies happen helps reduce the cost and time of deployment of staff from one location to another. It has a deployable emergency response team as well as trained staff and volunteers who respond immediately. Parishioners also act as first responders, providing basic life-saving aid and mobilising solidarity funds to support emergency response.

• Commitment. Caritas Goma will use all this valuable knowledge to design its new projects. It is committed to a multi-stakeholder approach, combining relief efforts with long-term programmes and advocating for good governance. Yves Ngunzi emphasised that: “Caritas Goma does not separate humanitarian work from development learning, and disaster and emergencies are part of their development journeys.”

Caritas Goma will continue advocating for a new way of working. It will help change the current practice of focusing only on acute emergency responses, and ensure that addressing the core and structural interventions that could help achieve sustainable results is not neglected.

Reaching out across borders for social cohesion and humanitarian response

1. Jordan Hashemite Charity Organization for Relief and Development, Jordan

The Jordan Hashemite Charity Organization for Relief and Development (JHCO) was established in 1990 as a merger of two national committees that aim to provide aid across the Middle East. It is registered with the Ministry of Social Development of Jordan as a non-governmental, non-profit organisation. With Royal Patronage from his Majesty the late King Hussein, JHCO has a mandate to coordinate humanitarian response efforts, manage funds from national and international donors, and establish logistical support for transporting humanitarian aid to crisis-affected areas. JHCO has grown from seven staff to 120 since 1990, and now has six warehouses in Jordan. It can call on about 5,000 to 6,000 volunteers for different campaigns and humanitarian responses.

JHCO has provided humanitarian assistance in more than 37 countries. The scale and frequency of the conflicts and disasters in the Middle East have devastated peoples’ lives, economies and governance. Nasser Kilani, JHCO Director of Planning, Coordination and Programs, explained that the organisation played a key role in the humanitarian response to the 2003 Gulf War and the Gaza Conflict in 2009 to 2010. In the early phase, JHCO supported work such as food distribution, the establishment of communal kitchens, and the provision of healthcare and education to the refugees. It also helped oversee the management of one of the camps near Ramtha crossing, which accommodates about 1,000 internally displaced Syrians. JHCO worked to improve the camps’ roads and electricity supply, and provided families with solar-powered lanterns, giving them access to lit roads and heated facilities. JHCO coordinated closely with and participated in various humanitarian clusters, for instance, co-leading the Food Security Cluster. It helped organise community leaders among the refugees to participate in decision-making in the camps.

Health. With support from the Moroccan and French governments, JHCO helped set up three field hospitals with Jordanian staff and medical equipment, which complemented other health facilities run by international agencies in the camp.

As the demands for health services and housing increased, JHCO had been working with local and international aid agencies to replace tents

2. Humanitarian interventions

Following the influx of Syrian refugees, JHCO has initiated a series of humanitarian interventions inside and outside the camps in Jordan. From 2012 until 2013, it co-led and facilitated the establishment of camps, primarily Zaatari in Mafraq Governorate, which was inaugurated in 28 July 2012. From 2013, JHCO concentrated on reaching Syrian refugees outside the camps.

2.1. Multi-sectoral assistance inside the camps

In 2012, the Jordanian government tasked JHCO with running the Zaatari camp and coordinating with UN agencies and international organisations on camp management and service delivery. In the early phase, JHCO supported work such as food distribution, the establishment of communal kitchens, and the provision of healthcare and education to the refugees. It also helped oversee the management of one of the camps near Ramtha crossing, which accommodates about 1,000 internally displaced Syrians. JHCO worked to improve the camps’ roads and electricity supply, and provided families with solar-powered lanterns, giving them access to lit roads and heated facilities. JHCO coordinated closely with and participated in various humanitarian clusters, for instance, co-leading the Food Security Cluster. It helped organise community leaders among the refugees to participate in decision-making in the camps.

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As the demands for health services and housing increased, JHCO had been working with local and international aid agencies to replace tents
with long-term or semi-permanent housing, and provide the supplies and services that the refugees need.

Food and other essentials. Before communal kitchens were set up in Za’atri, JHCO collaborated with the World Food Programme (WFP) in providing ready-meals to refugees. It closely monitored distribution and provided welcome meals to all new arrivals and survival meals to Syrians crossing the border. Together with WFP, JHCO established 27 shops in the camps, which were then run by community-based organisations (CBOs) to sustainably help the people around them. JHCO has also worked with UN agencies and other partners to provide refugees with ‘winterisation kits’ and enable them to move from tents to caravans.

Education. JHCO is committed to making sure all school-age children in Za’atri can get an education. With support from the government of Bahrain, JHCO opened Za’atri’s first education centre in 2013 with over 1,000 enrollees. Several smaller schools and educational centres supported by other agencies have since opened, further increasing the number of Syrian refugee children in the camp receiving formal schooling.

2.2. Reaching outside the camps: Community cohesion, livelihoods, education

Another of JHCO’s most significant areas of work is supporting Syrian refugees outside the camps, many of whom live in urban and poor areas where it’s difficult to reach them. JHCO aims to help more than one million Syrian refugees living in urban areas and host communities. JHCO works closely with community-based organisations (CBOs) across Jordan to register refugees. These registration lists then allow JHCO to ensure the refugees get the support they need.

The influx of refugees has seen tensions between Jordanian host communities and Syrian refugees rise, and competition for social services and economic resources grow. A Reach Assessment (2014) looking at resilience and social cohesion among Jordanian host communities found sources of tension in:

i) education, with a growing student population leading to a perceived fall in quality and access;
ii) healthcare, putting the capacity of hospitals and health centres under strain;
iii) access to water services, with reports of supply shortages, weak infrastructure and deteriorating quality; and
iv) employment and livelihoods, with intensifying competition for livelihoods and jobs for skilled and casual labour.

Municipal services have also faced delivery gaps – in services such as solid waste management, for example, and resource and fiscal strain (REACH Assessment, 2014).

The influx of refugees can make many Jordanian host communities, who also live in poor conditions, feel marginalised. These dynamics can further divide communities if not addressed. “Syrians who received aid had their standards of living improving,” says Nasser Kilani, “while those of the poor Jordanians were declining. In some instances, the Syrians would extend help to the host community.”

JHCO began working in these communities to ease the tensions and improve the relationship between Jordanian host communities and Syrian refugees. It provided communities around the camps with opportunities to make a living and worked with local authorities to resolve social service gaps and environmental pressures, such as garbage management. In Azraq, JHCO has launched the Sustainability and Empowerment project, which aims to provide skills and livelihood opportunities for Jordanian and Syrian women. To date, the Jordanian government has allocated 30% of humanitarian aid to vulnerable Jordanians, which is a sensible step.

The educational dimension of this crisis cannot be overlooked: there are currently more than 87,000 Syrian refugee students studying in Jordanian public schools run by the Ministry of Education. JHCO has helped the ministry establish two official schools outside the camps – one in Irbid and another in Amman – which were donated by the Bahraini royal charity. These schools brought the enrollment to 16,000 school-age children. JHCO also launched a campaign and donation drive with the Ministry of Education to supplement and print school books. It has also extended tutoring services to Syrian refugee children, and provided them with bags, stationery and clothes so they can attend classes.

Humanitarian context: Syria Crisis

Since the outbreak of the war in Syria, more than 200,000 people have been killed and 12 million driven from their homes: four million of whom have fled into neighbouring countries such as Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt and Turkey (Jordan Response Plan 2016–2018). This unprecedented influx of refugees has seen around 655,000 Syrians arrive in Jordan since the start of the crisis: almost a quarter of live in camps, with the remainder mostly in Amman and the northern governorates (3RP Regional Refugee Resilience Plan 2017–2018). Two refugee camps were opened in Za’atri in Mafrak Governorate and Azraq in Zaqra Governate, together hosting about 130,000 refugees.

The enormous needs of the refugees have added significant additional requirements on social services, infrastructure and social cohesion in host communities. The international community has been helping Jordan respond to the Syrian refugee crisis but gaps in the funds needed for a comprehensive response continue to be a challenge. For instance, in 2015, US$1.07 billion was committed to the Jordan Response Plan, which is only 36% of what is actually needed (JRP 2016:18). In the 3RP Regional Refugee Resilience Plan 2017–2018, about 42% of the total US$1.08 billion inter-agency requirements has been secured.

Given the protracted nature of the crisis, a resilience-based approach was endorsed by the Regional United Nations Development Group (UNDG) to address the long-term social, political and economic consequences to Jordan (Bailey & Barbelet, 2014). To help stabilise the country’s economy, the Jordan Compact Deal was signed between the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and the international community, with pledges of over US$700 million in grants to create investment and jobs for both Jordanians and Syrian refugees; rebuild host communities through the Jordan Response Plan, and mobilise enough grants and financing to support Jordan’s macro-economic framework for the next three years (Reliefweb, 2017).

Providing a safe space for social cohesion: Tarabot Community Center

JHCO is working to promote social cohesion through the Tarabot Community Center in East Amman, which it established in April 2015. The centre is a safe environment that is open to all. It provides various services to Syrian refugees such as:

1) cash assistance for special and emergency cases
2) referral of special needs cases to relevant organisations
3) psychosocial support for children and families in East Amman, with activities such as puppet theatre, free drawing, Lego building, face painting, story time, homework support, and informal educational sessions in Arabic, maths, English, science, and computer skills
4) exercises and activities aimed at empowering individuals and fostering self-reliance by introducing critical thinking, decision-making, financial literacy, and other life-skills. It also promotes interdependence and solidarity through events such as Mothers’ Day, Eid, and youth matches.

To manage aid and oversee its distribution, JHCO has built its own warehouses and created a database to transparently document assistance to Syrian refugees not registered with UNHCR and avoid ‘double dipping’. It also follows the same process for the in-kind donations it receives, which are stored in JHCO warehouses and then released to partner organisations for distribution. Documentation and donor reports are produced for these donations.

JHCO has also implemented cash-assistance projects in Amman, Karak, Mafrag and Irbid. Together with the WFP and UNHCR, it has devised a more dignified way for refugees to receive cash using ATM cards and iris scans.

26 Interview with Nasser Kilani, 11 October 2017
3. Impact and enabling elements

- **Humanitarian values.** Nasser Kilani stresses that "JHCO’s mission is to save lives, emphasising that every human life is precious and giving one person a new beginning is a huge achievement." JHCO embeds this value into its projects, which are designed to improve the lives and well-being of affected populations in Jordan and other disaster- and conflict-affected regions. JHCO receives public support through donations and volunteering, because the quality and importance of its work is recognised.

- **Capacity-building.** JHCO has been focusing on increasing its own capacity, as well as that of its partners and the communities it works with. This involves organising refugee community leaders, developing the life-skills and livelihoods of Syrian refugees and host communities, and collaborating with municipal governments. JHCO has also supported local community-based organisations (CBOs), with 90 CBOs having been formed since the start of the crisis.

- **Social cohesion.** The crisis has led to tension and the perception of inequalities between the refugees and Jordanian host communities around the camps and in urban areas. JHCO’s outreach and livelihood programmes, as well as its community centre for Syrians and Jordanians, are helping bridge these gaps.

- **Networking and coordination.** To respond effectively to the crisis, it is crucial that a dependable network of partners and contacts from UN and government agencies is connected to teams and individuals who know what is happening on the ground. In Libya, for instance, JHCO worked with the country’s Scout Movement and the private sector to deliver a 200-bed field hospital to treat the injured.

- **Reach and scale.** JHCO has wide-ranging partnerships and reach with the public and governments for its humanitarian response and recovery work in Jordan and worldwide, including in Haiti, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Yemen, and Somalia. JHCO is very proud of what it accomplished during its response to the Gaza conflict, delivering a tremendous amount of aid. In Libya, JHCO was one of the first humanitarian agencies to provide logistical support for field hospitals in Benghazi. JHCO also reached Eastern Europe following the Serbian-Bosnian conflict, where it coordinated aid worth around US$5 million and established a centre for host families in Jordan.

- **Multi-sectoral approach.** Over the years, JHCO has built good relationships with national and municipal governments, the UN, international agencies, and the refugees themselves as part of its work to deliver aid and provide social services. It has strong coordination and management skills as well as the capacity to deploy and organise resources quickly and at scale.

3.1. Sustainability

JHCO is restructuring its managerial system so it can become more effective and responsive. It has hired more staff and introduced job training and workshops to help employees deliver better programmes.

Donor-funded projects account for 90% of JHCO’s current funding, while 5% comes from campaigns and philanthropy, and another 5% from JHCO’s own funds. To cover its development programmes and institutional funding, JHCO has invested in an endowment fund with a private university. The fund’s returns are given back to the organisation annually. Through the principle of waqf and zakat, JHCO receives philanthropic contributions, which go towards administrative costs and fund specific projects. In addition, its Azraq project generates income for its activities by providing catering services via the community kitchen. JHCO also generates income by selling unusable clothes donated to its Charity Clothing Bank. These clothes are shredded and sold to other NGOs or CBOs that use them as stuffing for pillows and mattresses. JHCO plans to find more opportunities to create social enterprises run on a commercial basis.

JHCO tries to cut down on its expenses by, among other things, switching to renewable energy to power its facilities and reduce its electrical bills by 25%. Not all projects are sustainable, so JHCO is increasing its fundraising efforts and partnerships to support its humanitarian work and some of its regular programmes. It recently raised money to help displaced populations in Bangladesh from Rakhine State in Myanmar.

4. Challenges

- **Hostile environment.** Like many other NGOs, JHCO works in volatile and hostile environments, meaning that staff safety and security is a risk. Humanitarian access to people in need has to be negotiated in a sensitive manner. The organisation also must carefully choose who to partner with, avoiding ties with groups that are politically motivated.

- **Local acceptance and trust.** At the beginning of its response to the Syria crisis, JHCO found it difficult to gain sufficient trust among Syrian refugees and Jordanians outside the camps. To forge acceptance and widen its reach, JHCO worked with CBOs to register and deliver aid to Syrian refugees living in their respective areas. With its partners, JHCO facilitated an open dialogue with the communities to ensure that any projects being implemented are accepted and owned. By coordinating with local volunteers and hiring staff from local areas, JHCO has been able to collaborate with the communities as a trusted partner they can work with to deliver humanitarian assistance.

5. Lessons learned and next steps

- **Tapping local knowledge.** Based on experience gained from JHCO’s past interventions, NGOs should tap into the knowledge and resources of local CBOs and humanitarian workers when responding to a crisis. Increasing the organisational capacity of CBOs is also important if international aid agencies want them to be effective and efficient partners on the ground.

- **Encouraging trust and self-reliance.** Working with communities, volunteers and the refugees themselves in all phases of programme implementation has had a transformational effect. It has transferred skills and instilled values of self-reliance, trust and cohesion.

- **Coordination for timely response.** Good networking, coordination, and productive relations with a variety of actors, including the UN, international agencies, national ministries, and local governments, are key to having the information needed for a timely and effective response.

- **Developing humanitarian resource capacity.** JHCO is working towards developing the capacity of the next generation of humanitarian aid professionals in Jordan. It is training them in relevant aspects of the law, funding, partnerships, coordination, cash assistance provision, and programme delivery, among other things.
Civil society driving momentum for locally-led humanitarian actions

1. Local Resource Center, Myanmar

Established in May 2008, Local Resource Center (LRC) emerged out of the aftermath of Cyclone Nargis, after international agencies pushed for the creation of a national coordinating body for disaster response. It was registered as a local NGO in May 2012.

Over the years, LRC has served as a platform for civil society to advocate for national policy reforms, and has focused on the holistic development of civil society organisations (CSOs) in Myanmar. Cyclone Nargis, in particular, gave LRC the opportunity to organise civil society around humanitarian response. The post-Nargis period witnessed the flourishing of formal NGOs and CSOs in Myanmar. Previously, self-help groups and community-based organisations (CBOs) played a significant role in meeting the immediate needs of disaster-affected populations. After the cyclone, many of these groups established themselves as formal CSOs following training from LRC.

Pansy Tun Thein, LRC Executive Director, describes LRC’s vision of an “empowered and accountable civic society that actively embraces diversity, social inclusiveness and civic responsibility, and works together to bring about change to the lives of vulnerable and marginalised communities in Myanmar.”

Its mission is to empower civil society organisations by acting as a catalyst for:

1) strengthening CSO institutional capacity through skill development and targeted information dissemination
2) creating opportunities for CSOs and young people to develop a collective voice, and collaborate with each other and with other stakeholders using a rights-based approach
3) influencing policy development and reform by establishing advocacy platforms that encourage broad-based dialogue using factual information.

LRC had a budget of €193,329 (US$228,925) for 2016 and €587,865 (US$696,103) for 2017, 25% of which is allocated for overhead costs and 75% for programmes. LRC currently operates through its head office in Yangon and its branch offices in Mandalay, Lashio, Mawlamyine, Kayin and Dawei. It will begin working in Rakhine State in 2018. It has 43 core and project-based staff, eight volunteer board members, and 128 community volunteers serving as ‘change agents’.

The organisation now has a network of about 1,100 CSO and local NGO members, including about 20 thematic networks, many of which provide systematic humanitarian response. Through its network members, LRC and other leading CSOs are better able to mobilise local organisations when disaster strikes and work in a more coordinated manner – both to fundraise and provide emergency relief. The local NGO forum is active and meets every two weeks to share information on collective advocacy and disaster preparedness and response.

2. Humanitarian interventions

2.1. Cyclone Nargis response

The enormous needs in the aftermath of Cyclone Nargis required an immediate national response. The government declared a state of emergency in the affected areas, dispatched search and rescue crews, and began distributing relief supplies that were already in-country. The insufficiency of in-country supplies, however, brought fears of a “second wave of deaths from starvation or disease”29, and highlighted the need for international assistance.

LRC has served as a platform for civil society to advocate for national policy reforms, and has focused on the holistic development of civil society organisations (CSOs) in Myanmar.”
The government was initially cautious about allowing international humanitarian assistance into Myanmar, permitting only bilateral aid and restricting the movement of international agencies already operating in the country to some of the affected areas. The UN, for instance, appealed for US$178 million for humanitarian assistance.

Singapore, as the Chair of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), called a special meeting of the ASEAN foreign ministers in Singapore in May 2008. They recommended establishing an ASEAN-led coordinating mechanism called the Tripartite Coordinating Group (TCG), composed of high-ranking representatives from the ASEAN, the government and the UN. The ASEAN also activated the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER), an agreement for joint response and recovery of member states in times of disaster.

The TCG’s work facilitated:
- the entry of international humanitarian workers into Myanmar
- the deployment of the first international assessment team
- the development of the Post-Nargis Joint Assessment and its periodic reviews
- partnership and fund mobilisation for the response and recovery process.

The situation provided a significant opportunity for civil society in Myanmar to organise themselves to respond to the enormous humanitarian needs. The initial restrictions on the deployment of international aid workers into disaster-affected areas meant emergency response operations had to be handled by local humanitarian organisations and national staff at various international agencies. They did not, at this point, have much experience in humanitarian assistance.

LRC’s role was to strengthen and empower local organisations by training them in humanitarian response mechanisms and principles. It also advocated to ensure the protection of local aid workers and provided capacity-building support to CSOs on how to raise funds for groups working in affected areas and how to assess needs. LRC supported CSOs’ participation in the clusters, giving them more opportunities to work with government, donors and the international community. The government recognised the role of CSOs in educating and mobilising communities for disaster preparedness and risk reduction in the Myanmar Action Plan on Disaster Risk Reduction (2009–2015): a clear indication that collective CSO action was making a difference.

2.2. Severe flooding in 2015

The severe flooding of 2015 prompted many local CSOs and NGOs to mobilise the local private sector, which significantly contributed to the relief effort. During the floods, young volunteers became involved, especially in raising funds. The millions of kyats they collected in just over a month amounted to around US$60,000. LRC, together with local Myanmar NGO Contingency Plan and Response Group, provided these youth groups with weekly training on humanitarian principles, ethics and accountability, and safety. Young volunteers were also taken to affected areas so that they could have first-hand experience in humanitarian response.

As Pansy Tun Thein emphasised: “The youth are the future humanitarian actors and we need to continue to groom their interest and capacity in humanitarian work.”

The severe flooding of 2015 prompted many local CSOs and NGOs to mobilise the local private sector, which significantly contributed to the relief effort.”

Affected community members gathered at a Buddhist monastery to receive relief goods distributed by Local Resource Centre during floods in August 2015.
The flooding also provided another opportunity for CSOs to advocate for the transformation of the Emergency Response Fund (ERF) managed by UNOCHA. It was very difficult for local CSOs to access ERF funding – which amounted to US$19 million – because of the system’s complexity. Applicants were required to upload multi-year financial reports, audited bank statements among many other things to a short deadline: something most local CSOs struggled to do. In most cases, only international NGOs could comply with the requirements, as they already have systems in place. LRC teamed up with other local CSOs to call on UNOCHA to simplify the ERF system by allowing the pre-registration of interested local CSOs. Their advocacy succeeded and the fund – now known as the Myanmar Emergency Fund (MEF) – is easily accessible to local CSOs who have pre-registered in the system.

2.3 National advocacy for civil society and governance.

In 2011, Myanmar’s civil society undertook an intense advocacy process aimed at convincing the country’s parliament and government to revise the Association Registration Law. Its advocacy was underpinned by evidenced-based research entitled ‘A Review of the Operational Space and Opportunities for Civil Society Organizations in Myanmar’, which had been commissioned by the LRC. With the assistance of international advisors, the law was successfully revised and adopted in 2014. The new law provides an amended legal framework for the establishment and registration of local and international NGOs, stipulating rights, operations and obligations, including reporting of activities.

LRC also trains community members on human rights issues, especially in conflict-sensitive and post-conflict communities, so that they can understand and identify rights violations on their own. Selected community members are trained to serve as ‘change agents’, who agree to work voluntarily in their communities as rights defenders. The programme also includes paralegal training for the change agents so that they can serve as paralegals in the community and help link affected individuals to the formal justice system.

3. Impact and enabling elements

Myanmar is an example of how mass engagement through advocacy, research and capacity building can open the space for civil society in humanitarian crises and bring about legal reform and societal change. The efforts to empower CSOs after Cyclone Nargis worked.

As Pansy Tun Thein observed, “CSO management and coordination skills have improved and funding from donors has increased because of their work. More importantly, CSOs have gained the trust of the community and the government because of their ability to fill the gaps during the crisis.” Previously, self-help groups and community-based organisations played a major role in responding to disasters. Post-Nargis, many of these groups formed into formal CSOs after being trained by LRC. As an organisation, LRC benefited tremendously from the technical knowledge and humanitarian skills it gained from various donors during the cyclone response, enabling it to effectively engage in advocacy.

The transition to a new government in 2015 also provided CSOs with an additional opportunity to engage in humanitarian coordination. In Myanmar, the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) – composed of UN agencies and international NGOs tasked with planning and responding to humanitarian needs in the country – had no local civil society representation until December 2015, after LRC’s sustained advocacy for their involvement. At present, there are four local CSOs in the team promoting local and international partnership to localise humanitarian response. The impact of LRC on humanitarian response in Myanmar includes:

- capacity building for a rights-based approach to citizen and community engagement in humanitarian response and governance, including links with formal justice mechanisms
- legal reforms, particularly the revision of the Association Registration Law in 2010 to allow civil society organisations to flourish and for CSOs to take more lead roles as first responders
- change in the modality of funding and access to the UNOCHA-managed Emergency Response Fund (ERF) for civil society organisations
- increased representation of NGOs in the Humanitarian Country Team and clusters
- a recognition of civil society’s role in humanitarian response, DRR and governance.

3.1 Enabling elements

- High level of staff commitment. The organisation has fulltime staff, as well as volunteers, in three regional offices and two sub-regional offices.
- Growth and results-based mindset within the organisation. LRC has proven it can mobilise and network with clear end goals. As a result, it is now regarded as a civil society leader in Myanmar.
- Continuing capacity development and strategising for CSOs. LRC has a small grants programme for qualified NGOs. The grants aim to help CSOs enhance their local human rights activities and to promote awareness.
of human-rights issues at grassroots level. Thirty-four submitted proposals were screened using transparent and agreed small grant criteria. A selection panel was convened in Yangon including two CSO representatives from each region. Among the topics covered in the grants include leadership, women’s rights and land laws.

- **Partnerships.** Openness to partnerships of all kinds in a multi-layered, interdependent humanitarian landscape is key to successful coordination and implementation.

### 3.2. Sustainability.

LRC generates core funding from the training and technical services it provides. It also receives multi-year funding from the European Union, the US Agency for International Development, and the UK’s Department for International Development. LRC is developing a business plan to invest in social enterprise. It plans to open a youth café in one of its regional offices, offering training to unemployed young people. If successful, it could be replicated in all the LRC offices and help contribute to the organisation’s sustainability.

### 4. Challenges, lessons learned and next steps

The work of mobilising and educating communities continues. The government has developed the Myanmar Action Plan for Disaster Risk Reduction (MAPDRR) since 2010, but many community members are still not aware of it. The only feasible way to disseminate the plan is by working with community volunteers.

Pansy Tun Thein also identified some of the outstanding challenges for local organisations, as follows:

- **Donor-driven policies continue to put NGOs in a box.** More collaboration and effective consultation can help break down these barriers.
- **Local humanitarian organisations need increased direct funding.** Many donors are moving in that direction, but many NGOs do not have the capacity to absorb the funds. LRC, with its members, highlights the importance of supporting systematic organisational development and of improving fiscal management for local actors.
- **LRC also acknowledges staff turnover as one of its biggest challenges.** Trained individuals are constantly being attracted to international NGOs and the private sector because of higher salaries and fringe benefits that local NGOs are unable to match.

In closing, Pansy Tun Thein believes that: “To do things differently, international actors must learn to work with the local actors; they must learn to trust and give them opportunities to take the lead where relevant, as they know the country context and understand the culture. It is important to listen to the needs of the affected population and involve them in the response and recovery plans and implementation.”

With the new government in place, LRC will continue to advocate for the active involvement of CSOs as they identify champions in Myanmar’s Parliament.

‘It is important to listen to the needs of the affected population and involve them in the response and recovery plans and implementation’.
Seas of Change: Bridging between faiths in humanitarian response and risk reduction

1. Muhammadiyah Organization, Indonesia

Muhammadiyah Organization, established in 1912, is one of the biggest and oldest faith-based non-governmental organisations in Indonesia. As a religious and social movement run by volunteers, Muhammadiyah was originally founded to improve the understanding of Islamic teachings and social welfare. It has since extended its mission to include the provision of immediate relief during disasters and disaster risk reduction. Based in the city of Yogyakarta, Muhammadiyah has around 35 million members in its 34 branches across Indonesia. It has 20 special agencies that implement specific programmes and functions, and seven wing organisations, including associations of women, young people and university students. Muhammadiyah also runs a huge number of institutions, including 457 hospitals and clinics, 176 universities and colleges, 635 care homes for orphans and other vulnerable groups, 19,000 schools, and 13,000 mosques.

In 2010, the Muhammadiyah Disaster Management Center (MDMC) was created as a special agency to lead the organisation’s work on disaster response and disaster risk reduction. MDMC coordinates various areas of work within the wider Muhammadiyah organisation. For example, it has collaborated with the Council of Fatwa to publish an Islamic perspective on disaster relief and DRR as a theological basis for humanitarian assistance. It has also worked with Muhammadiyah’s branches and wings to increase the organisation’s emergency response capacity, and with its hospitals and schools on disaster mitigation and preparedness.

Muhammadiyah’s shift of emphasis towards long-term DRR has been informed by its experience in a series of large-scale disasters and humanitarian interventions. According to Dr. Rahmawati Husein, Vice Chair of MDMC and Assistant Professor at Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta, there are two major reasons for this change.34

34 Interview with Dr. Rahmawati Husein, 3 October 2017, Manila Hotel, Philippines.

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Humanitarian context: Indonesia

Indonesia is an archipelago of 17,000 islands between the Indian Ocean, South China Sea and Pacific Ocean. It lies on the Pacific Ring of Fire, where the Indo–Australian Plate and the Pacific Plate are pushed under the Eurasian Plate. The country has experienced a whole range of disasters, including earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanic eruptions, droughts, floods and cyclones. It has 129 volcanoes, 70 of which are potentially dangerous and 23 of which have erupted during the last 20 years (CFE-DMHA, 2015). From 2002 to 2008, Indonesia is estimated to have experienced 4,245 disasters, with a total financial cost of up to 110.4 trillion rupiah or more than US$12 billion (Husein, 2012).

On 26 December 2004, an earthquake measuring more than magnitude 9 struck 240km off the coast of Sumatra and generated a massive tsunami with waves reaching as high as 30 metres (100 feet). Tremors and shockwaves were felt in 14 countries. The hardest hit included Indonesia, Sri Lanka, India and Thailand, with more than 230,000 deaths. In the Indonesian city of Bandah Aceh, 165,708 people died or went missing; 270,000 of its 820,000 houses were flattened or damaged; 1,488 schools were destroyed; and 49 primary health centres and two hospitals were washed away (Save the Children, 2014). The financial cost of the tsunami to Indonesia was estimated to be US$4.4 billion (Rego, n.d.).
First, the organisation has come to realise it urgently needs to protect its assets; it has schools, hospitals, colleges and universities that are exposed to these hazards. Second, because of the immense size of the organisation, Muhammadiyah saw the potential of reaching out and increasing the capacity of its own members and volunteers.

Muhammadiyah started building its disaster risk management capacity through a national taskforce for disaster response and recovery called POSKOR Muhammadiyah (Posko PPM), which in 2010 became the MDMC.

Outside Indonesia, Muhammadiyah:
- has provided aid to people caught up in the Gaza conflict in 2010 and in 2014 to 2016, sending donations through the Palestinian Embassy
- sent field medical teams to the Philippines in on overhead costs.
- in 2017, of which US$584,814 has been allocated
- Muhammadiyah has a budget of US$3.32 million

The response of NGOs was critical during the Indonesian government, which at that time
- 2.1. Indian Ocean Tsunami 2004, Banda Aceh
- 2. Humanitarian interventions
- 2.1. Indian Ocean Tsunami 2004, Banda Aceh

The immense impact and scale of the The immense impact and scale of the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami posed an unprecedented challenge for international aid agencies and the Indonesian government, which at that time did not have a contingency plan for a tsunami. The response of NGOs was critical during the immediate aftermath. This period also saw an increase in the international and local organisations involved in the recovery effort. In Banda Aceh alone, the number of registered international NGOs rose to about 185 by June 2005, alongside some 430 known local NGOs.35

These organisations varied in their scale, development orientation, scope of services, and programme attributes. Some were registered at UN offices, some with the Indonesian government, while others were small volunteer community groups.

Muhammadiyah was one of the first local organisations on the scene. Its reach and size meant it was able to mobilise volunteers and resources immediately from other branches. The Central Board of Muhammadiyah set up a team called the Committee of Aceh Relief and Recovery, which coordinated with the local (Aceh) Muhammadiyah branch. Muhammadiyah started by mobilising thousands of volunteers from Java to Aceh in Sumatra, particularly for healthcare and education work. But as the response progressed, it started training local organisations. The nature of Muhammadiyah’s collaborative interventions after the tsunami are described below:

- Transport and logistics. After the tsunami, Muhammadiyah received a huge volume of donations, and thousands of volunteers enlisted to help. The transportation of equipment and volunteers became a huge logistical problem. To address this, Muhammadiyah worked with The Asia Foundation (TAF), which supported the operational cost and transport of the national management team and the medical teams from Java to Aceh for six months. Muhammadiyah also collaborated with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to bus volunteers from nearby cities and provinces to Banda Aceh City to help with evacuation and distribution. IOM also provided trucks to transport food, clothes and medical aid from the port of Medan, through which all of Muhammadiyah’s relief supplies were shipped. Muhammadiyah also worked with more than 30 other local, national and international organisations; private sector firms such as airline companies; and media organisations to transport supplies and develop relief and recovery programmes.

- Child protection and education. Muhammadiyah worked with UNICEF and the Ministry of Social Welfare to provide safe spaces where children in 13 zones could learn and recover from the trauma of the disaster with the support of social workers and volunteers. Immediately after the tsunami and for three years afterwards Muhammadiyah helped set up and run a children center programme. It also rebuilt permanent Muhammadiyah elementary schools destroyed during the tsunami with new child-friendly features, such as spacious classrooms, separate toilets for boys and girls, and a large courtyard.

- With a grant from Australian Aid (AusAid), Muhammadiyah strengthened emergency education capacity under the Learning Assistance Program for Islamic Schools (LAPIS). The programme allowed teachers in Muhammadiyah schools to continue teaching and receive a salary. It provided students with textbooks, school supplies and uniforms. The AusAid recovery grant supported two further disaster-preparedness-in-schools programmes – Child Disaster Awareness for School and Community and Hospital and Community Preparedness for Disaster Management – between 2006 and 2010. Muhammadiyah also worked closely with Youth Off The Streets (YOTS), run by Father Chris Riley, to identify separated and orphaned children and to give them the care, protection and psychosocial support they needed. Muhammadiyah helped YOTS set-up activities that were sensitive to the cultural and religious context of Aceh.

- Communications. With the support of The Asia Foundation (TAF), Muhammadiyah established community radio stations, including Radio Komunitas Suara Muhammadiyah (Voice of Muhammadiyah Community Radio) which is thought to be the first radio station to have begun broadcasting after the tsunami.

- Health. Muhammadiyah provided emergency healthcare, including pharmaceutical and medical supplies, and personal hygiene packs for women.

- Working with volunteers. Medical teams and volunteers from Singapore and Croatia worked with Muhammadiyah volunteers to provide emergency medical aid, evacuate victims, and take part in the massive clean-up operation. These teams were joined by students from Muhammadiyah University’s Health Department in Aceh to provide healthcare in remote areas.

- Advocacy. At the national level, Muhammadiyah advocated for the Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Agency (BRR-Badan Rehabilitasi dan Rekonstruksi) for Aceh and Nias to include post-tsunami reconstruction in the national budget.

The post–tsunami reconstruction effort marked a fundamental breakthrough for disaster risk reduction. It was the moment that the UN Special Envoy for Recovery and former US President Bill Clinton called on the world to “build back better” and inspired new and durable DRR solutions. In 2006, Indonesia instituted the Indonesia Tsunami Early Warning System (InaTEWS), which is quickly able to determine if an earthquake is likely to produce a tsunami (CFE-DHMA, 2015).

2.2. Yogyakarta Earthquakes of 2006 and Mt. Merapi Eruption in 2010

Two years after the tsunami, in 2006, a series of earthquakes hit Yogyakarta and central Java, killing 5,778 people and injuring more than 38,000. According to IFRC figures, almost 600,000 houses were damaged or destroyed and nearly 1.2 million people were left homeless.37 Muhammadiyah coordinated its various response from its branches, units, wings, schools, universities and hospitals, many of which were severely affected by the quake. Muhammadiyah also worked with Australian emergency teams of doctors, nurses, psychologists and physiotherapists to treat survivors. It received an AusAid grant to set up temporary medical clinics, field clinics, childcare facilities, village meeting centres and a livelihood programme. The Japanese Embassy helped the Muhammadiyah Hospital in Bantul procure ambulances, which were also supported by Direct Relief International, as well as a field clinic to meet the rising demands of the emergency. From October to November 2010, Mount Merapi in Central Java started a violent series of eruptions.38 More than 350,000 people were displaced and 353 killed. During and after the eruptions, Muhammadiyah ran a sustainable livelihoods and economic recovery programme. It aimed to help disaster victims rebuild and improve their businesses and make it easier to get funding. Training on entrepreneurship, food production, livelihood cooperatives and marketing were provided to people affected by the crisis.
2.3. Establishment of MDMC in 2010

Following the three major disasters outlined above, Muhammadiyah created the Muhammadiyah Disaster Management Center (MDMC), a special unit working extensively on humanitarian response and DRR. Every year since 2011, Muhammadiyah has been sending capable emergency teams to respond to between 24 and 48 crises throughout Indonesia using local (national and sub-national) resources. They include assessment teams, emergency medical teams, search and rescue teams, and psychosocial teams, which are currently organised through the ‘One Muhammadiyah One Response’ mechanism. Muhammadiyah has also set up a mechanism to finance relief efforts through in-kind donations and humanitarian funds.

2.4. Inter-faith and intra-faith collaboration and dialogue

Muhammadiyah recognises the importance of working with other faith-based organisations (FBOs) and local faith institutions (LFIs), as they have a long history of emergency response at the grassroots level. Often, they are among the first to respond to disasters and have social and material assets that make them a natural locus for support, information and conflict resolution (Husein, 2016). Muhammadiyah worked to address proselytisation in predominantly Muslim areas, respecting protocol while allowing people to freely practice their faith. It also works with local faith groups in predominantly Christian communities. For example, it provided health services to local Catholic communities after the 2010 floods in Papua and the 2012 volcanic eruption in Rokatenda, East Nusa.

Muhammadiyah, along with six other FBOs, established the Humanitarian Forum Indonesia (HFI), as they have a long history of emergency response at the grassroots level. Often, they are among the first to respond to disasters and have social and material assets that make them a natural locus for support, information and conflict resolution (Husein, 2016). Muhammadiyah worked to address proselytisation in predominantly Muslim areas, respecting protocol while allowing people to freely practice their faith. It also works with local faith groups in predominantly Christian communities. For example, it provided health services to local Catholic communities after the 2010 floods in Papua and the 2012 volcanic eruption in Rokatenda, East Nusa.

Muhammadiyah is a member of the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) and works closely with the Indonesian National Agency for Disaster Management on humanitarian relief and DRR. “These two key platforms grew together,” says Dr. Husein, “supporting policies as well as undertaking humanitarian response together.” Muhammadiyah, along with other HFI members, has set up the Indonesian Humanitarian Alliance (IHA). HA and HFI are currently supporting the displaced Rohingya population in Bangladesh, where Muhammadiyah leads on emergency medical assistance, and the affected communities in Rakhine in Myanmar.

3. Impact and enabling elements

- **Civil society leader.** “Muhammadiyah is a recognised civil society leader in DRR and humanitarian response,” states Dr. Husein. It is a member of the NDMA Advisory Board and has a lead role in building the capacity of health systems and in education in emergencies. Muhammadiyah prides itself on the expertise on disaster preparedness and response it has gained as a leading voluntary organisation. Through MDMC, Muhammadiyah ensures its volunteers are well-equipped and trained: a key element of its success. It recently secured a permit to run the certification training for healthcare in emergencies. Many members of MDMC have received national certification for search and rescue as well as for emergency managers and medical emergency officers. The organisation is also working to integrate DRR into its religious training, schools, hospitals, and university research and development.

- **Reach and networks.** As a huge national organisation, Muhammadiyah’s strength lies in its reach and wide network of local volunteers and partners. This includes mosques, prayer houses, hospitals, clinics, orphanages, nursery homes, schools, credit savings unions and universities. It has used this network to better respond to humanitarian disasters and collaborate on community-based DRR.

- **Catalyst outside and within.** Muhammadiyah has been involved in humanitarian and DRR policy development in Indonesia. It has worked successfully between and across faiths on DRR and humanitarian response, while remaining firmly grounded in humanitarian principles and Islamic teachings. Over time, the organisation has increased its strategic presence and improved its ability to deliver relief as soon as disaster strikes. MDMC has integrated DRR into the organisation’s programmes and plans, such as its safe schools and safe hospital projects. It has also made DRR part of the Muhammadiyah university curriculum. As a change-leader, MDMC has high representation of women decision-makers and managers.

- **Sustainability.** Muhammadiyah estimates that for its 2015 to 2018 budgets, it has received between 25–40% of its funding from international donors and around 25–40% from national and local donors. Other sources include pooled funds and in-kind contributions during emergency response. Muhammadiyah branches also provide counterpart contributions once they receive matching support from the National/Central Board. The organisation also receives funding from the national government for its schools and in some cases from the local government for community resilience and preparedness activities. Muhammadiyah also raises funds for its work through donations from its members and international donors. It recently raised US$1 million for displaced communities fleeing violence in the Myanmar state of Rakhine. MDMC also fundraises from philanthropists, with proceeds coming from infaq and shodaqoh (charity and alms), zakat (2.5% of income), and wakaka (land and property) for specific causes. Every branch of Muhammadiyah sustains itself by running its own provincial/local enterprises, kindergartens, philanthropic cooperatives, hospitals, clinics and schools.

4. Challenges

- **Scale and geography.** In Aceh after the 2004 Indian Ocean disaster, the scale of the devastation was so immense that a standalone response was not sufficient. To make matters worse, Aceh was embroiled in conflict, leading to distrust and prejudice among the local community. Muhammadiyah found it difficult to organise its resources and had no special unit to lead the response and recovery. Indonesia is a huge, archipelagic country, which makes transporting people and resources incredibly challenging. It is also extremely prone to natural and climate-induced disasters, putting an extra strain on its resources.

- **Localising response.** Muhammadiyah still finds some international NGOs working directly with communities without collaborating with local NGOs. Thus, Dr. Husein pointed out the importance of localising humanitarian assistance. Local NGOs have much greater capacity than they used to, but still face challenges in securing funds for emergency relief, preparedness and DRR.

- **Volunteer commitment.** Maintaining the commitment of the staff, who are mostly volunteers, while upholding professional standards of service is a challenge for the organisation. Engaging volunteers in capacity building and response is one way to motivate them. The organisation also has to think through succession at the highest decision-making level.

5. Lessons learned and next steps

- **Values.** “Be persistent in applying humanitarian principles in programmes and assistance,” Dr. Husein says. The focus of Muhammadiyah’s work continues to be founded in humanity, working across faiths and contexts, while remaining true to the organisation’s work on behalf of the affected communities.

- **Structure and vision.** According to Dr. Husein, “Finding the right structure that works for the organisation is important, but it also has to be flexible. This means working closely with the management and members, and trying to balance both individual and institutional capacity to successfully deliver. One has to find the right persons within to support these goals.”

- **Network.** The power of Muhammadiyah’s network proves that it can create support and gain recognition, as well as inspire self-confidence and self-reliance, increasing the effectiveness of emergency response and DRR. Its leadership, as well as support to key humanitarian platforms, is an important pillar of the organisation’s success.

- **Capacity.** Investing in organisational and staff capacity and experience over time has proven to inspire confidence and self-reliance. It has prioritised strengthening its own ranks to ensure that their branches, management and volunteers have the capacity to sustain their operations and manage disaster response.
Breaking the divide: Steering a development orientation in humanitarian response

1. People’s Disaster Risk Reduction Network, Inc., Philippines

The People’s Disaster Risk Reduction Network, Inc. (PDRRN), formerly known as the Pampanga Disaster Response Network, was formed in May 1991, with operations commencing after the June 1991 Mt Pinatubo eruption. It was originally part of the emergency preparedness and response programme of the Citizens’ Disaster Response Center (CDRC), a national NGO.

PDRRN started as a volunteer-run organisation, which served as the coordination platform of 18 local agencies in Pampanga Province. It was managed through the CDRC’s regional NGO affiliate, the Central Luzon Emergency Aid and Rehabilitation, Inc. (CONCERN). Foreseeing the need for the long-term rehabilitation of the Central Luzon region, worst hit by the eruption, PDRRN continued its work after the project with CDRC ended. In 1992, PDRRN (under its old name) was registered as a non-profit organisation and, in 1997, was accredited by the Department of Social Welfare and Development as a Disaster Relief and Community Welfare Services Organization.

This initiated a series of strategic planning phases from 1997, which slowly transformed PDRRN from a volunteer organisation into one with a defined management and structure. Esteban Masagca, PDRRN’s Executive Director, says: “PDRRN’s goal at the very beginning was to address issues of vulnerability and poverty while empowering communities. On this note, it doesn’t see a divide between what is humanitarian and what is development.”

During this period, PDRRN also strengthened its relations with local government disaster coordinating councils from the barangay (village) up to the regional level, at a time when many civil society organisations were wary of working with them. The disaster coordinating councils are the predecessors of the local government disaster risk reduction and management councils created under Republic Act (RA) No. 10121 in 2010. In 2007, the organisation affirmed disaster risk reduction (DRR) as its guiding framework in its programmes and plans until 2017. It changed its name to the People’s Disaster Risk Reduction Network, Inc. (PDRRN) in 2010.

PDRRN runs regular socio-economic development programmes, encompassing social services, public health, capacity building and national advocacy. It also conducts humanitarian assistance with geographical priorities in Pampanga, CARAGA and Region VIII. The organisation remains small, with 10 core staff and a roster of 18 on-call personnel for humanitarian response work. Its budgets for 2016 and 2017 are PhP12 million (USD$250,000) and PhP3 million (USD$61,000) respectively, 10% of which is spent on overheads.

PDRRN has improved the capacity of selected municipal and village local government units in eight provinces to enhance local leadership. It has also helped people rehabilitate damaged livelihoods, improved natural resource management, and set up microfinance programmes for vulnerable communities.

Between 1992 and 2005, PDRRN’s partnerships evolved from response to rehabilitation. It also formed a close relationship with Oxfam, focusing on humanitarian response projects and research. The partnership helped PDRRN become acquainted with international humanitarian standards – first encountering the Sphere Project in 2001 – and with accountability and standards on reporting. The first discussions on the localisation of humanitarian aid, Esteban Masagca, Executive Director, PDRRN

“PDRRN’s goal at the very beginning was to address issues of vulnerability and poverty while empowering communities. On this note, it doesn’t see a divide between what is humanitarian and what is development”.

Esteban Masagca, Executive Director, PDRRN

Relief distribution Raming Bical
Masagca recalls, surfaced around 2004, when NGOs were starting to find it difficult to secure funding and there was a shift in focus to other geographical and thematic areas by INGOs and donors. PDRRN is one of the leading NGO proponents of the ‘Balik Lokal’ campaign, launched in 2016, which supports locally-led humanitarian response.

From 2006, PDRRN started reaching out to other disaster-affected areas outside Central Luzon. It provided humanitarian assistance and early recovery support to communities affected by:

- Typhoon Reming in the Bicol Region
- Typhoon Frank in 13 villages in three municipalities in Iloilo Province from 2008 to 2009
- Tropical Storm Ondoy (Ketsana) and Pepeng in 2009, delivering emergency public health support to more than 9,000 families
- Typhoon Megi, helping small farmers, landless men and women, and labourers rebuild their livelihoods
- Typhoons Pedring and Quiel, providing emergency public health assistance to coastal and farming communities from 2011 to 2012.

As part of the Humanitarian Consortium, PDRRN also participated in the Typhoon Bopha Response in two provinces in Mindanao.

2. Humanitarian interventions

2.1. Mt. Pinatubo response and rehabilitation

After the Mt. Pinatubo eruption, the Central Luzon region was in need of long-term rehabilitation and recovery. Huge numbers of local populations and indigenous groups had been displaced, and mudslides from the lahar flow triggered by monsoon rains and storms had caused devastation. PDRRN mobilised existing community organisations and built their capacity to prepare and respond using community organising (CO) principles. The organisation participated in the planning for the lahar and monsoon season. Its key programmes during this period were:

i) disaster preparedness
ii) capacity building of people’s organisations and supporting a survivors’ organisation called Ugnayan, which supported community-based organising for the Mt. Pinatubo rehabilitation
iii) recovery and rehabilitation.

Esteban Masagca (1998) believes that:

“Affected population and communities play a significant role in addressing their concerns, that they acquired coping capacities and, although necessary, outside support is not the decisive factor in their survival. External assistance should be directed towards enhancing the survivors’ indigenous coping strategies and local capacities, and that any intervention should be based from a thorough understanding of the situation of a particular community and that there is no single prescribed strategy that can apply to all.”

Between 1991 and 1995, PDRRN directly implemented 19 small-scale projects. It provided farm inputs and supported livelihood activities.

**Humanitarian Context: Philippines**

The Philippines’ geophysical location makes it vulnerable to tropical storms, flooding, landslides, extreme weather events, earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. The country is visited annually by an average of 19 tropical cyclones, the most catastrophic of which was Super Typhoon Haiyan in 2013.

**Mt. Pinatubo eruption (1991)**

- Described as “the largest eruption of the century to affect a densely populated area”
- Ejected 10 million tons of magma and 20 million tons of sulfur dioxide into the atmosphere, contributing to temporary ozone depletion and a temporary decrease in global temperatures by 0.5 Celsius between 1991 and 1993
- Pyroclastic materials and lahar reaching a height of nearly 1.6 metres destroyed settlements, bridges and roads in the provinces of Pampanga, Tarlac and Zambales, and clogged eight major river systems
- It left more than two million people affected, 800 dead, and at least 200,000 displaced, including indigenous Aetas
- Ashfall covered 92,600 hectares of agricultural land

such as cooperative stores and bayanihan (community solidarity) housing construction. It also trained community organisations in evacuation-centre management, reaching about 83 evacuation centres in Pampanga and more than 200,000 beneficiaries during that period. It also formed and trained community-based disaster response groups (CBDRGs). PDRRN made the most of its limited resources by adapting the community-based disaster response strategy and later the community-based disaster preparedness approach.

PDRRN continue to work on improving the DRR capacity of local governments and people’s organisations in the province.

2.2. Locally-led response during Super Typhoon Haiyan (Yolanda)

PDRRN was among the local humanitarian actors who responded after Super Typhoon Haiyan hit the Philippines in 2013. With a total funding of PHP104.3 million (approximately US$2.2 million)\(^{45}\) between 2013 and 2014, PDRRN allocated 85% for direct interventions in four provinces (PDRRN, 2015).

Its humanitarian assistance consisted of restoring damaged livelihoods and enterprises, providing food and non-food items, and delivering life-saving aid. It trained locals on emergency shelter construction – using the Typhoon Resistant Building approach – and school rehabilitation, which helped communities become more self-reliant.

Typhoon-resistant shelter construction and food assistance\(^{46}\)

PDRRN worked with local shelter committees and local government to organise the community works, and trained 4,315 people from 154 barangays (villages) in DRR and typhoon shelter construction. Shelter and repair kits were distributed to qualified beneficiaries. Local workers were formed into 461 construction teams in three provinces, who helped the beneficiaries build their houses through food and cash-for-work schemes. Some were built by the beneficiaries themselves.

PDRRN provided food to vulnerable households – especially those with infants and small children, pregnant and lactating women, older people, and people with disabilities. The distributed food packages adhered to specific nutrition and food security indicators based on the required individual kilocalorie (KCal) daily intake of 2,100 KCal set by the SPHERE standard, under the food-for-work scheme.

PDRRN also participated in the shelter cluster meetings and monthly meetings of the Technical Working Group on Recovery and Development Programs that was formed and led by the Provincial Environmental Protection and Disaster Management Office (PEPDMO) in the province of Biliran.

PDRRN made the most of its limited resources by adapting the community-based disaster response strategy and later the community-based disaster preparedness approach.

2.3. Humanitarian response after Haiyan: Cash assistance to vulnerable farmers

Between 2015 and 2016, the Philippines faced persistent drought caused by the El Niño phenomenon, which had a huge impact on the agricultural sector. It was also hit by Typhoons Karen and Lawin during the same period. These successive emergencies put massive pressure on farmers. In Cagayan Province, one of those hardest hit by Super Typhoon Lawin, residents were also affected by flooding with the release of water from Magat Dam at the rate of 200 cubic metres per second, destroying 300 hectares of corn crops in two villages.

From December 2016, PDRRN supported the response and recovery effort, providing food and livelihood support. It facilitated cash transfers to more than 500 beneficiaries, using the Express Payment System (EPS) through the new Pay Maya prepaid card. Cash grants were distributed in the form of:

1) unconditional cash grants of food assistance to 100 selected vulnerable male and female-headed households
2) unconditional cash grants for 90 highly vulnerable women for basic family
3) cash-for-asset recovery (CFAR) for 200 men and women small farmers to acquire production inputs to resume planting and pay their loans.

The project also used cash-for-work for poor men and women farm labourers and domestic work for poor women and men (PDRRN, 2017).

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\(^{45}\) Exchange rate at USD to PhP 47.

3. Impact and enabling elements

Disaster-development nexus. PDRRN’s work is underpinned by its commitment to community organising and ownership, and applying a disaster-development nexus to its humanitarian strategy – mobilising a variety of people and stakeholders for a broader base of locally-led humanitarian response. Before DRR was widely used, PDRRN and other development NGOs were already analysing the root causes of underdevelopment using social investigation processes, and capacity and vulnerability assessments. These processes are similar to the disaster risk management framework and risk assessment tools that practitioners use today, Masagca said.

Growth and contextual understanding. PDRRN has been able to strengthen and grow, evolving from a local volunteer-run organisation to one with regional and national reach. It prioritises its own learning and has developed capable and confident staff and volunteers, some of whom (during their involvement and after they left PDRRN) have been leading players in local disaster risk management offices. PDRRN anchors its programmes in a deep contextual understanding of the social and political dynamics in the main areas where it works. It also continually reflects on its role and contribution.

Influencing policies. PDRRN believes that to deliver effective change, it must also influence national policies and dialogues, and introduce a local perspective. PDRRN served as Sectoral Representative for the Victims of Disasters sector of the National Anti-Poverty Commission. It advocated for the passage of the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Law in 2010. And it co-led the Balik Lokal (Back to Local) civil society campaign to improve policy and practice on locally-led humanitarian response. Mr Masagca, together with other Philippine civil society delegates, participated at the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016.

Local knowledge and capacities. PDRRN has incorporated local knowledge in some of its response. After the Mt. Pinatubo disaster, it helped develop the Temporary Refugee Center. This enhanced the traditional system of hosting families, who generally refuse to leave their communities because of the poor conditions in evacuation centres. It also promoted the use of indigenous warning signals for particular hazards, such as malansang amo (fishy smell) for a storm surge or tidal wave; ‘3-in-1 coffee’ for a river that is about to overflow; noting a flock of birds called balinsasayaw or emerging insects that indicate an oncoming typhoon; observing migratory birds, the sibad, that indicate flooding will happen in a month’s time; and the appearance of lightning and thunderstorms in the west suggesting bad weather is on the way. In areas hit by drought, PDRRN provided indigenous aringay rice seeds that don’t depend on fertilisers, as suggested by upland families. In Leyte after Typhoon Haiyan, PDRRN used light materials such as nipa and coco lumber, and mobilised carpenters who were trained in typhoon-resistant construction techniques.

Collaboration and partnerships. PDRRN has collaborated closely with and encouraged local government units (LGUs) to take on local leadership roles in disaster risk reduction and humanitarian response. It has mobilised local executive- legislative channels to enable a better working relationship with LGUs and influence the drafting of the comprehensive development plan, executive-legislative agenda, and the comprehensive land-use, land-tenure, and risk-sensitive planning and budgeting. This helps ensure the continuity and support of its community interventions. PDRRN bases its partnerships on mutual respect, and will collaborate even when no funding commitment has been made. Esteban Masagca cites the organisation’s long relationship with Oxfam on humanitarian response and advocacy as an example of this kind of partnership. PDRRN was able negotiate flexibility in some of its auditing and reporting requirements with Oxfam Hong Kong, which agreed to allocate funds for the audit. PDRRN now includes auditing and evaluation in its donor-funded projects.

3.1 Sustainability

While recognising sustainability as a challenge, PDRRN has formal institutional partnerships on a continuing basis with Community World Service Asia, Christian Aid, Oxfam, provincial and city local governments, the national government-supported PROJECT NOAH, and civil society networks. It benefits from other non-funded partnerships on joint advocacy, research and learning. PDRRN is also providing consultancy services, such as training and research, which contribute to its income.

4. Challenges

Less investment on long-term resilience. PDRRN believes that the narrowing of long-term investment in development and resilience programmes by donors and local governments after a disaster poses a challenge for sustainability. PDRRN also finds it challenging to further mentor and support local organisations that it has helped to form during its interventions.

Super Typhoon Haiyan (Yolanda)

- Category 5 tropical storm that made landfall in Eastern Samar on 8 November 2013
- With sustained winds of 250 km/hr. and gusts of over 315 km/hr.
- Storm surges of over four meters
- 14 million people affected; 1.1 million houses destroyed, 4 million displaced, and over 6,000 people dead
- Designated as a Level 3 (L3) emergency by the international humanitarian system


Visibility for criteria and feedback
5. Lessons learned and next steps

- **Resource mobilisation.** PDRRN considers resource mobilisation a continuing challenge, as 99% of most of its projects are donor-funded and the remaining funds come from consultancy fees. Of its total budget, 56% is spent on capacity building, 16% on advocacy and 28% on livelihoods support. It must account for fixed costs such as staff salary and other obligations, especially as it has less institutional funding available. To remedy this, it apportions overhead costs to specific funded projects, and some personnel costs are paid for out of institutional funds.

- **Staff turnover and transition.** The organisation also must face the reality of staff leaving after they have been trained and gained experience. While there is management openness to staff departures, PDRRN recognises the need to prepare for these transitions.

- **Field experience breeds confidence.** Field experience gained by staff and volunteers during a response increased their strengths and confidence. Esteban Masagca, who was coordinator of PDRRN during the Mt. Pinatubo response, saw how this raised the commitment level of staff and volunteers. He added that: “It was also very important to prioritise the welfare and protection of staff involved in the response through regular sharing of their experiences and continuous capacity building that is not dependent on project fund availability.”

- **Value of strategic planning.** A second important lesson for PDRRN is the value of strategic planning in setting the direction of the organisation. It now has a more defined, analytical and strategic approach in its programme work and advocacy. Strategic planning allows it to plan for lean days and explore new ways of delivering aid. Cash transfers and disaster resilience have been important components of its locally-led response. Acknowledging limitations in funding, Esteban Masagca emphasises the importance of maintaining core staff and size in lean times: “Do not spread yourself too thinly by being too big.”

- **Collaboration.** Working with others is critical to successful humanitarian action. Each actor brings something of value to the table, whether resources, expertise, partnerships or information. PDRRN recognises the importance of participating in cluster meetings, which is an opportunity to secure support from other organisations and gain valuable information about beneficiary targeting and geographical reach. With local governments, it was important to clearly delineate roles between those stakeholders. This resulted in successful project outcomes without having to allocate new resources.

- **Flexibility.** Flexible programmes allow humanitarian organisations to change priorities, depending on the shifting humanitarian need and context. During the Haiyan response, PDRRN collaborated with both national and international actors. For instance, its partner Community World Service (CWS) Asia helped alert PDRRN to the typhoon’s imminent arrival. CWS agreed to shift some of the planned resources from its other programmes to Haiyan-affected areas.

- **Documentation.** Documenting experiences and supporting assessments helped the organisation to learn and keep its work on track. PDDRN is improving on this, so it can learn more from its interventions and document its successes.

- **Succession.** PDRRN is preparing itself for organisational succession by developing the next generation of DRRM staff and managers, helping it to remain sustainable.
Challenging perceptions: changing the lives of women and girls in humanitarian response

1. Save Somali Women and Children, Somalia

Save Somali Women and Children (SSWC) is a national NGO founded in 1992 in Mogadishu by a group of Somali women intellectuals from six different clans. Their aim was to promote peace and raise women’s voices amid the ongoing violence and insecurity in Somalia. SSWC is a women-led, women-centred organisation with well-functioning management, finance, and programmatic structures and systems. It supports women to overcome marginalisation, violence and poverty in their communities. It is part of a network of organisations that share similar values and aims, including influencing policies that affect Somali women.

SSWC advocates for:
- equal opportunities and leadership roles for women
- prevention of gender-based violence and care for its victims
- child protection
- reproductive, maternal and child healthcare
- food security and livelihoods
- good governance, peace and reconciliation
- access to justice.

SSWC is operating with a budget of US$1.87 million for the 2017/18 financial year and with US$1.31 million in 2016/2017. It implements programmes on protection, legal and psychosocial support for the victims of gender-based violence, food security and livelihoods, assistance to internally displaced persons (IDPs), resilience programmes, and WASH, shelter and other emergency support. SSWC has 10 core staff and 156 project-based staff.

2. Humanitarian interventions

“The presence of government has changed the landscape for local actors in the country,” says Halima Adan, SSWC Programme Manager. The first change is that local organisations have taken an active role in delivering aid to many inaccessible areas, where SSWC is leading the way on gender-based violence and protection issues – a taboo subject in Somalia. Second, a national agenda has emerged that identifies local organisations as the drivers of change. SSWC believes women, and women’s organisations, should be at the forefront of localisation. Their contextual knowledge, skills, resources, and experiences should be integrated into disaster preparedness, response and resilience-building in Somalia. Halima notes that: “Women have the same right to equally access avenues to end poverty, have meaningful and dignified participation, and equal say in decision making and access to opportunities, services and support to reach their potential.”

For localisation to be truly successful, women’s organisations need to be given adequate resources and the chance to be first responders in emergencies. SSWC’s role is to help women and girls address the structural obstacles and increased risks that prevent them from achieving their full potential in the humanitarian sector.

Gender-Based Violence (GBV) GBV is not a hidden problem within Somalia but it receives insufficient attention. One of the main obstacles to both preventing and punishing perpetrators of GBV is the stigma so often attached to victims, who become afraid to raise the issue with the authorities or even within their own families.

SSWC established Gender-Based Violence Crisis Centres, which provide a ‘one-stop’ comprehensive service to survivors, including medical support, psychosocial counselling and legal aid. GBV centres coordinate the assistance and referral processes so survivors only have to
visit a single location to receive basic support following an attack. In an Al Jazeera feature on SSWC in 2013, Halima Adan said: ‘as many as 10 to 15 women a day come to the centre seeking assistance.’ 48 From July to September 2017, for example, 59 cases of rape were recorded in SSWC’s Mogadishu and Afgooye centres.

SSWC helped launch a national campaign to combat rape and other forms of gender-based violence. This campaign has now made GBV a topic that can be discussed openly in families. SSWC also works with communities, field monitors and service providers to evaluate and monitor cases of violence and abuse. To encourage self-reliance, SSWC trains women in livelihood skills and income-generation, providing tailoring start-up kits for GBV survivors and vulnerable women so they are more able to provide for themselves and their children.

In addition, SSWC distributes ‘dignity kits,’ comprising the basics displaced women and girls need to maintain feminine hygiene, dignity and respect in their daily lives. Menstrual hygiene is important for the dignity of displaced women and girls, who have routinely suffered from shame and low self-esteem.

Drought response. As the drought escalated in mid-2016, SSWC made sure protection was a key element of the response. As a member of the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT), SSWC discusses key strategic issues such as access, intervention priorities, and the allocation of funds to local organisations to increase local humanitarian response. It has also helped women and girls who have been violated while migrating from drought-hit areas to cities, providing them with medical, psychosocial and legal support, as well as dignity kits.

During the drought response, SSWC carried out WASH interventions in the IDP camps. This included consultation meetings and education through mass media, which changed household hygiene practices.

Since 1992, SSWC has run livelihoods and food security programmes, which have included business skills training for women and job creation through the rehabilitation of public infrastructure. Using their Pathway-to-Prosperity approach, SSWC has also provided crucial support to small farmers and cash assistance and food and water vouchers to vulnerable groups. The Pathway-to-Prosperity approach helps farmers build sustainable livelihoods through a phase-by-phase process: recover, build and grow. The agricultural farming community introduced a livelihood idea called the ‘table banking system,’ where a member contributes and receives a specified amount at the end of the month to boost their business. This amount also supports smallholder farmers recover their productive assets, rebuild their farms, or enhance their ability to engage with markets more effectively.

Resilience. SSWC conducts Participatory Risk Assessments (PRA) to help communities understand the risks they face and identify measures to increase their local adaptive capacities. After a PRA, SSWC helps communities develop community-managed DRR plans. To date, 10 communities have developed such plans and formed disaster management committees.

SSWC ensures that women and disadvantaged groups can access financial institutions. It uses a holistic approach known as Savings and Internal Lending Communities (SILC), designed by Catholic Relief Services. In contrast to commercial banks and other credit institutions, the funds handled by SILC are affordable, easy to manage and within reach of the poor. They offer households a strategy to protect their assets, maintain a small credit line to increase their income. SILC has its roots in the traditional Rotating Savings and Credit Associations (ROSCAs) and Accumulating Savings and Credit Associations (ASCAs) and can provide flexible financial solutions for marginalised groups. They create accessible, transparent, and flexible savings and credit groups that are user-owned and self-managed in the communities where members reside. They can also leverage the contributions of members for specific purposes, such as creating a social fund that can be used to provide people with grants during emergencies. After a specified period, investments and earnings are returned in part or in full to their members. 50

Humanitarian context: Somalia

Since 2015, only a few years after the 2011 famine, Somalia has been at an elevated risk of famine. The Somalia Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) 2017 estimates that 6.7 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance, putting the aid requirements at US$1.5 billion. It is estimated that nearly 130,000 pregnant women may require urgent care.

There have been reports of major disease outbreaks, with over 36,000 cases of acute watery diarrhoea (AWD)/cholera and nearly 5,700 suspected cases of measles since the beginning of 2017. Drought has forced more than 680,000 people from their homes since November 2016, including 7,000 people who have crossed into neighbouring Ethiopia and Kenya. The HRP plans to deliver vital relief, treat acute malnutrition, provide protection for people who have been displaced, and help rebuild livelihoods.

By the beginning of May 2017, more than US$672 million of aid had been committed towards the response. This unprecedented level of early support for a Somali crisis has enabled aid agencies to rapidly reach millions of people with safe water, food, and healthcare. Less has been achieved in delivering protection, emergency shelter, and non-food items (NFIs) because of low levels of funding in these areas. Humanitarian organisations are using a number of innovative and joined-up approaches to tackle the crisis, including cash transfers, rapid response teams, and strong risk management and coordination units (HRP 2017:4).

3. Impact and enabling elements

• Leading advocacy role and representation. Strong advocacy for the protection of rights and empowerment of women at national and community levels has changed attitudes and behaviour. It has led some communities to abandon female genital mutilation cutting (FGM/C). SSWC is now advocating for the enactment of the Sexual Offence Bill, which criminalises sexual offences such as rape and FGM/C. Asha Hagi Elmi, one of SSWC’s key campaigners and founders, became a member of the Federal Parliament in 2012. SSWC is also training the next generation of women and girl leaders in Somalia. SSWC is a member of the Somali Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) and Protection Cluster Review Committee, as well as co-chair on the GBV sub-cluster and the Somalia NGO Consortium Steering Committee.

• Service orientation and capacity building for women, girls and disadvantaged groups. SSWC has established a strong service orientation through its crisis centres and coordination with service providers. It combines entrepreneurial training, empowerment, skills-building and trauma care to ensure that women and girls become more self-reliant, confident and able to resume their daily lives. SSWC established referral pathways to allow communities to refer survivors to the centres.

• High community engagement and acceptance. SSWC’s programmes and presence are accepted by the communities where they work. SSWC attributes this to the way communities are engaged in the project cycle and its ‘preparatory approach,’ where community structures are formed and strengthened to support service delivery on the ground. SSWC has also enhanced survivors’ access to services from the wider community and persuaded relevant community members to increase the protection of women and girls and support for GBV survivors. As part of SSWC’s programmatic work, it conducts needs assessments at community level, where key issues are identified. It might then train community members on hygiene promotion and GBV prevention and response, for example.

• Solid experience on the ground. SSWC has a solid grasp of the changing political and social dynamics in Somalia, helping it analyse and respond quickly to emerging needs.

3.1 Sustainability

SSWC collaborates closely with beneficiaries so that it can design interventions according to real needs. It applies a holistic approach to its programmes:

50 See description of programme at http://sswc-som.am/silc.html
51 See http://somom-ou.org/2016/05/high-level-panel-debates-on-sexual-offences-bill-for-somalia/
When the community comes up with an innovative idea, grants are awarded to implement it – for example, a community proposal to build an irrigation canal for farmers who live next to a river.

SSWC added a livelihood component to sessions at the GBV Crisis Centres to prevent survivors from dropping out of their psychosocial counselling. It also promotes economic independence through small business financing and entrepreneurial training.

SSWC generates contributions from various local organisations, including the Hormuud Foundation, for its work with GBV survivors.

Staff turnover is not a serious issue for the organisation, as it tries to ensure that staff are paid well and can enjoy favourable working conditions.

Halima Adan points out, however, that “sustainability is not yet a reality in Somalia. Long-term partnerships need to be pursued to help rebuild trust and deliver better services, through mechanisms such as consortium-based approaches and multi-year funding, with elements of capacity-development.”

4. Challenges

SSWC notes some of the challenges of the current humanitarian context:

- **Security risks pose a major obstacle to humanitarian aid.** For example, numerous unplanned roadblocks and closures by police and militia groups prohibit NGO staff from accessing IDP camps. With humanitarian access continuing to be difficult in some areas, local organisations carry a high burden of risk in delivering timely humanitarian assistance.

- **Needs vs. capacity.** The enormous humanitarian needs created by the drought and conflict place a huge pressure on social services and cannot be fully met by SSWC or other organisations. SSWC is addressing this by prioritising interventions and reaching out to the most vulnerable groups.

- **Donor commitments.** SSWC’s income comes from donor-funded projects with short timeframes and a lack of flexibility. Donors often prefer to fund local organisations through international agencies, which SSWC feels results in fewer resources reaching beneficiaries. Humanitarian funding facilities, like the Somalia Humanitarian Fund (SHF), are still out of reach for many small NGOs. SSWC advocates for more direct and multi-year funding from donors.

5. Lessons learned and next steps

- **Networking and information sharing within national humanitarian platforms benefits local humanitarian organisations.**

- **By forging trust within the community, local NGOs can mobilise quickly on the ground.** In many instances, local organisations are the first to respond to emergencies while international agencies must endure the lengthy wait for clearance and for funds to be processed.

- **To ensure a community’s harmonious engagement, it is important to use existing committees or form them in areas where they are not present.** For instance, SSWC facilitated the formation of community structures of women, men, young people and the elderly to ensure effective community-level prevention and response mechanisms.

- **Building the capacity of staff and community members to deal with emergencies can empower staff who bring this knowledge to the communities.** Through advocacy, education and information, community attitudes to key issues such as gender equality and GBV are changing, as awareness is raised and access to knowledge, psychosocial support and lifeskills is improved.

SSWC will continue to advocate for a recovery-resilience approach in its work, including making sure early-warning systems are in place. It will strengthen its integrated programming approach and community protection mechanisms. It will look to engage men as change agents and develop alternative livelihoods for victims of violence as a crucial element of long-term societal change. As its contribution to local humanitarian action, SSWC will promote enhanced participation of local actors in areas such as joint assessments and in the implementation of localised and more direct aid.
Sowing the seeds from disaster to resilience

1. Sustainable Environment and Ecological Development Society, India

Sustainable Environment and Ecological Development Society (SEEDS) was established in India in 1994 as a national non-profit organisation. SEEDS has maintained one goal from its beginning: protecting the lives and livelihoods of people exposed to disasters.52 Manu Gupta, Executive Director of SEEDS,53 says: “We commenced our work at a time of rapid economic change in India, with huge investments pouring into many of its productive sectors, but development was not evident in all of society.” Many communities were starting to feel marginalised and lacked the necessary social safety nets. From 1998 to 2001, a series of disasters, most notably the Gujarat Earthquake of 2001, served as a wake-up call to SEEDS. Many lives were lost: deaths which could have been prevented.

This prompted SEEDS to shift its focus from just response to ensuring that information about risk is widely available to the public and decision-makers. “Our focus now is to reduce people’s vulnerability to natural hazards and other shocks and stresses through disaster risk reduction and resilience building strategy,” says Manu Gupta.

To achieve this, SEEDS maintains five core programmes:

1) **Disaster relief and rehabilitation**, with a focus on both saving lives and rehabilitation using disaster-resistant and low-cost materials as well as disaster risk reduction (DRR) research and advocacy.

2) **Environmental sustainability**, to adapt to climate change through water-conservation strategies and the creation of “bioshields” for livelihoods in agricultural and coastal communities.

3) **Water and sanitation**, promoting safe and hygienic practices in schools and communities, and increasing community ownership in latrine construction.

4) **Education**, with disaster-resilient school construction and promoting safety of girls in public spaces.

5) **Skill development**, building vocational skills of men and women in masonry and plumbing for construction.54

Humanitarian context: India

- A country of 1.2 billion and one of the largest world economies, faced with multi-faceted natural, climate- and human-induced hazards
- Disaster data from 1990 to 2014 indicates that floods constitute 53.5% of all disasters in the country, followed by storms (22%), extreme temperatures (10%), and landslides (8.5%) (PreventionWeb, 2014)
- Mortality from earthquakes (41.7%) and floods (31%) are highest, while floods, storms, and earthquakes caused 66.3%, 23.1%, and 7% of total economic losses, respectively, for the same period (PreventionWeb, 2014).
- The UN Economic and Social Commission of Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) Asia Pacific Disaster Report (2017) states that between 2013 and 2015, 9.2 million people were displaced in India because of various hydro-meteorological disasters.
- Flood-risk scenarios developed by UNESCAP for moderate and severe climate situations for 2030 estimate that flood losses for India could cost nearly US$50 billion annually.
- Cyclone risk vulnerability will continue to be high in the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea as well as transboundary flood losses (ibid).

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52 Lifted from SEEDS profile.
53 Skype interview with Manu Gupta, Executive Director, 25 September 2017.
54 Information from http://seedsindia.org
SEEDS has 50 national staff (30 core workers and 20 project workers) with expertise in urban planning, engineering, research, DRR, and management and administration. For 2016 to 2017, SEEDS has a budget of US$2 million, 70% of which comes through corporate social responsibility (CSR) donor commitments for disaster preparedness and response activities. The remaining 30% comes from international NGOs supporting resilience building in communities, and research and learning activities.

Regionally, SEEDS is an active member of the Asian Disaster Reduction and Response Network (ADRRN), where it currently serves as the Secretariat. It has also established a regional arm, SEEDS Asia, which provides research, advocacy and programme advice to its affiliates and partners. SEEDS prides itself as India’s first home-grown NGO and the only one to date that is certified by the Geneva-based Humanitarian Accountability Partnership (now called the Common Humanitarian Standards Initiative).

2. Humanitarian interventions

SEEDS has responded to various hydro-meteorological and geological disasters in India and South Asia, in both rural and urban contexts. Its pioneering work includes providing post-disaster shelter during most of the major emergencies in the region, including the Gujarat earthquake, Indian Ocean tsunami, Kashmir earthquake, Rajasthan floods, Orissa floods, Chennai floods, Bihar Kosi floods, and most recently in the Nepal earthquake of 2015. It has in-house technical expertise on structural safety, architecture, environmental planning, and community-based processes and construction work, and can adapt this expertise to the social features and traditional knowledge of whichever area it is working in.

Its interventions to provide shelter through an owner-driven approach after the Gujarat earthquake of 2001 and the Chennai urban floods of 2015 are described below.

2.1. Safe construction and owner-led design process in post-Gujarat reconstruction

The Gujarat earthquake, also known as the Bhuj earthquake, struck western India in 26 January 2001, with a magnitude of 7.7 and intensity scale of X (extreme). At least 19,000 people died, 300,000 buildings were destroyed and 600,000 people were left homeless. Gujarat’s capital, Ahmedabad, was also badly affected, with several of the city’s multi-storey buildings collapsing during the earthquake. In the Kutch region, the most heavily hit area, the quake destroyed more than 90% of the housing stock and 24% across the entire state. Kutch was already reeling from a drought and had been battered by two cyclones in the previous three years.

The extent of the damage revealed the physical vulnerability of the state’s buildings and infrastructure. Many critical utilities and facilities like railroads and electric power stations were not built to seismic standards. Hospitals in Bhuj, the epicentre, were destroyed.

SEEDS immediately responded to the disaster by providing relief and permanent shelter. The organisation noted that there was a lack of adequately trained masons who could help with the rebuilding effort after the earthquake. In a village called Patanaka, where 220 of the 276 houses were destroyed, SEEDS piloted an owner-led design and construction. During the design process, communities were engaged to help them feel a sense of ownership. A housing prototype was not imposed; rather each household was free to develop its own design. SEEDS provided the materials and paid for skilled labour, and great care was taken to ensure that the socio-cultural essence of the community was preserved and redeveloped along its original organic lines. To ensure safer post-quake reconstruction, SEEDS introduced innovations and modifications to local construction practices. Stones embedded in concrete – stonecrete – was used in place of traditional walls, which were built using stones and mortar. The stonecrete material created strong and thinner walls, and reduced the costs of construction. Overall, 250 permanent shelters were built and 10 houses in the village were retrofitted.65

2.2. Urban flooding reconstruction in Chennai (2015)57

Two consecutive spells of torrential rains in November and December 2015, generated by the annual northeast monsoon and exacerbated by the 2014–2016 El Nino event, had brought urban life in Chennai, India’s fifth largest city and the capital of Tamil Nadu, to a halt. On 2 December 2015, Chennai was officially declared a disaster area. The flooding, the worst in Gujarat state for 100 years, resulted in 500 deaths and the displacement of 1.8 million people in affected states. It cost a reported US$3 billion in damages and losses, and was among the world’s costliest disasters in 2015.59 60 The extent of the damage pointed at poor urban planning, large-scale conversion of water bodies into residential areas, siltation of waterways, and the encroachment of flow channels and banks.62

Immediately after the flooding, SEEDS conducted extensive relief operations, reaching more than 7,300 families in nine low-income areas of Chennai. It distributed essential utilities like shoes and hygiene kits, which comprised mosquito repellents, mosquito coils and bath soaps. For near real-time monitoring, SEEDS used a mobile application for data collection and geo-tagged every family receiving its support.

SEEDS partnered with the Madras School of Social Work for the water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) assessment field surveys.

After assessing the situation, SEEDS decided to intervene in Madhavaram. Located on the outskirts of northern Chennai, Madhavaram is a former village that is now considered an urban area. Residents are largely from marginalised communities (scheduled castes), and most families make a living through daily wage labour. SEEDS selected 200 of the most vulnerable families, with an emphasis on female-headed households, people with disabilities, the elderly, and those who would struggle to recover without assistance. The intervention also included larger outreach activities around hygiene promotion, supply of drinking water, and the refurbishing of a school. WASH committees, mostly composed of women, were set up in different clusters to address garbage management and disseminate information in the community.

Low-cost, socially acceptable safe homes. Many of the homes of low-income families were not made of durable materials: they were mainly thatch huts weakened by the long-standing water. Some had collapsed completely and those still standing were filled with debris, making them uninhabitable. Nowhere else to go, some families were still living amid the floodwaters. The challenge was to construct safe transitional homes combining rural and urban sensibilities, acceptable to the affected populations. They also had to be low-cost, built quickly and comfortably to live in. Each home had to be customised according to the size of the family. Market surveys were carried out to assess available local resources and skills before the design process started. SEEDS engaged a team of bamboo artisans from Bihar who were part of the SEEDS Mason Association trained during the 2008 Kosi floods and a local entrepreneur set up the workspace.

The artisans combined the use of traditional materials with a process that ensures structural stability. The pre-fabricated elements of reinforced cement concrete pillars (RCC) and ferro-cement panels were incorporated into the construction to quicken the process and provide structural stability.

There were several changes to the choice of walling. At first, as with previous responses, they used bamboo strip walling that required mud plastering. However, the community was unfamiliar with the process and were not willing to accept it. So the walling design was changed to wooden planks, an approach that was socially acceptable. But the planks began bending because of the moisture in the air, causing gaps to appear. The final design used bamboo mats sandwiched with plastic sheeting. This lightweight alternative required no plastering and was conducive to the climate. The bamboo mats were procured from Kerala (for higher quality) and the walls themselves were assembled in a local workshop. Once the structure was complete, each house owner was provided with rubble. The families completed the flooring and put in doors and windows. Some added their own features, such as a door salvaged from their old home. Others expanded their space to create a kitchen.

Safe drinking water. The area’s main water supplier, the Chennai Municipal Corporation, trucks in water to the community. Testing suggested the water was being contaminated en route in unclean tanks. So SEEDS promoted the practice of adding ‘mother solution’ 58 60

55 Eidinger, J. Gujarat (Khutch) India 7.7. Earthquake of January 26, 2001 and Napa M5.2 Earthquake of September 3, 2000, ASCE, June 2001
56 60 Drawn from Rebuilding Chennai: Post-2015 reconstruction, published by SEEDS
57 Eidinger, J. Gujarat (Khutch) India 7.7. Earthquake of January 26, 2001 and Napa M5.2 Earthquake of September 3, 2000, ASCE, June 2001
60 http://indianexpress.com/article/explained/extra-rain-poor-urban-planning-why-chennai-went-under-water/
Communities at the centre

Honeywell Hometown Solutions. United Way year programme on safe schools from US-based work with the private sector. An example of CSR national donors, citing excellent opportunities to and fee-based learning courses. There has been into its systems, which include consulting services 3.1 Sustainability

Risk reduction strategy and resilience building.

Disaster risk reduction (DRR) and resilience underpin SEEDS’ long-term recovery work. It builds the capacity of vulnerable communities to cushion the negative impacts of shocks and stresses, including climate change and other disasters. SEEDS’ response in the flood-affected areas of the Kosi Belt, for instance, introduced water filters while helping communities establish grain banks to address food insecurity, which has been worsened by seasonal flooding.

Integrating traditional knowledge with technical knowledge. SEEDS has studied not to impose external knowledge,” says Manu Gupta, “rather they work with local communities to make traditional knowledge contemporary to adapt to the changing nature of hazards and acceptance of the community.” SEEDS makes sure the design and process of its interventions are accepted by the local community, keeping in mind that materials or local knowledge vary in every response depending on the climate, social norms and culture of the area.

Skills transfer. SEEDS bridges the gap between knowledge and practice by training local masons and construction workers, particularly on safe construction practices and retrofitting. It has also introduced a training programme for women who want to learn plumbing or masonry.

Maintaining momentum in partnerships.

SEEDS has built, led and collaborated with networks across thematic areas and research institutions around the world to improve organisational capacity, advance community-based DRR, learn new models and thinking, and share knowledge and lessons learned as well as from that of others. Private sector partnership is becoming increasingly important in how SEEDS responds to emergencies. The Nepali response was one example.

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3. Impact and enabling elements

- Communities at the centre. SEEDS’ response and recovery interventions have reached out to people at the margins, who take the brunt of disasters. SEEDS has emphasised that an owner-driven method of reconstruction, combined with community awareness and WASH promotion, is one of its most successful approaches. “The community at the centre is non-negotiable,” Manu Gupta says.

- Professionalism in humanitarian interventions. SEEDS maintains a strong cadre of professional staff with expertise in engineering and construction, community mobilisation, environmental management, and management and coordination. Organisationality, it encourages learning and reflection, as well as documentation of its work.

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CSR funds to NGOs, another corporate donor. Other corporate support is for emergency response and reconstruction.

SEEDS estimates a three-year average budget, 15% of which is allocated to meet overhead costs and the rest for programmes. Its overheads are mostly funded through donor projects and some are subsidised through consultancy services. It can carry over up to 15% of its annual budget to the following year; however, as required by law, this should not be beyond five years. While it does not receive multi-year funding, SEEDS maintains a small funding pot it uses to launch an immediate response when emergencies hit.

In terms of human resources, the executive director, being an honorary position, and certain executive functions of the secretary general constitute non-financial contributions and are not paid for from SEEDS budget.

3.1 Sustainability

SEEDS is developing revenue models to be built into its systems, which include consulting services and fee-based learning courses. There has been an upsurge in funding for SEEDS from local and national donors, citing excellent opportunities to work with the private sector. An example of CSR funding is the US$1.5 million pledge for a three-year programme on safe schools from US-based Honeywell Hometown Solutions. United Way (India), an American organisation that channels

- Organisational challenges. Documenting and managing knowledge from interventions and determining how it will shape approaches and shifts in thinking. Succession and hiring of SEEDS’ future leaders and managers. Developing funding streams, which require new partnership and revenue models.

- Widening horizons of risk, shocks and stresses. The recurrent risk of disaster and environmental stressors such as waste and air and water pollution are creating a greater population of vulnerable people. The widening of the horizon of risks encompasses macro-issues related to sustainable development and climate change. A better understanding of how communities absorb and cope with these shocks and stresses will be valuable for resilience interventions.

- Fresh perspective in shelter response and recovery. Effective shelter response and recovery remains a challenge for the humanitarian sector. A number of diverse organisations run shelter interventions, so there is variation in approach and targeting, process and outcome. At times, the post-disaster imperatives of rapid deployment and large-scale, low-cost delivery result in one-size-fits-all approaches that do not suit the context and need. At other end of the spectrum, interventions driven by sustainability and local appropriateness can struggle to meet timeframes or demand. The norm has also been to create a new structure at each phase. A fresh perspective is needed to bring sustainable, scalable and transitional shelter models with a degree of permanence.

5. Lessons learned and next steps

- SEEDS’ experiences during its first few responses have made it firmly uphold community needs while finding solutions to contemporary risks. As a result, it treats response interventions as windows for building resilience, staying in the communities where it responded, helping those at the margins recover on their own, and mobilising individual and collective resources from national and local institutions to sustain its initiatives.

- A combination of approaches that are locally appropriate and environmentally and technically sound is crucial for timely and holistic programmes to address a widening horizon of risks. In this endeavour, humanitarian actors like SEEDS need to continuously explore and pursue a cross-section of partnerships and a range of approaches.

- As Manu Gupta, Executive Director of SEEDS, writes, “Communities have inherent resilience developed through adaptation to natural environments. But this resilience is being tested every day, and they understand it in their cultural and spiritual context. The capacity of communities to absorb sudden catastrophic disasters is dependent on the level of their resilience to small scale, recurrent disasters.” This thought recognises that shocks and stresses will continue to challenge the coping capacities of individuals and communities that have been built over time and understanding how we can better anticipate and prevent these shocks and stresses from eroding their resilience is key to long-term risk reduction.

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Nepal earthquake of 2015

In the Nepal earthquake response, SEEDS used a multi-pronged partnership model to deliver and teach highly engineered design and owner-driven construction in a step-by-step process to allow replication and scale-up by the community. This included partnership of the local private sector, which helped with supply chains (Chaudhary Foundation); a consultancy firm, which led on monitoring (PWCI India); local technical partners (National Society for Earthquake Technology); and SEEDS, which led the replication design and oversight. SEEDS also trained local construction artisans locally and more than 100 masons from Bihar, who participated in the reconstruction in the 10 most-affected districts in Nepal (Annual Report 2015–2016).

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4. Challenges

- Organisational challenges. Documenting and managing knowledge from interventions and determining how it will shape approaches and shifts in thinking. Succession and hiring of SEEDS’ future leaders and managers. Developing funding streams, which require new partnership and revenue models.

- Widening horizons of risk, shocks and stresses. The recurrent risk of disaster and environmental stressors such as waste and air and water pollution are creating a greater population of vulnerable people. The widening of the horizon of risks encompasses macro-issues related to sustainable development and climate change. A better understanding of how communities absorb and cope with these shocks and stresses will be valuable for resilience interventions.

- Fresh perspective in shelter response and recovery. Effective shelter response and recovery remains a challenge for the humanitarian sector. A number of diverse organisations run shelter interventions, so there is variation in approach and targeting, process and outcome. At times, the post-disaster imperatives of rapid deployment and large-scale, low-cost delivery result in one-size-fits-all approaches that do not suit the context and need. At other end of the spectrum, interventions driven by sustainability and local appropriateness can struggle to meet timeframes or demand. The norm has also been to create a new structure at each phase. A fresh perspective is needed to bring sustainable, scalable and transitional shelter models with a degree of permanence.

5. Lessons learned and next steps

- SEEDS’ experiences during its first few responses have made it firmly uphold community needs while finding solutions to contemporary risks. As a result, it treats response interventions as windows for building resilience, staying in the communities where it responded, helping those at the margins recover on their own, and mobilising individual and collective resources from national and local institutions to sustain its initiatives.

- A combination of approaches that are locally appropriate and environmentally and technically sound is crucial for timely and holistic programmes to address a widening horizon of risks. In this endeavour, humanitarian actors like SEEDS need to continuously explore and pursue a cross-section of partnerships and a range of approaches.

- As Manu Gupta, Executive Director of SEEDS, writes, “Communities have inherent resilience developed through adaptation to natural environments. But this resilience is being tested every day, and they understand it in their cultural and spiritual context. The capacity of communities to absorb sudden catastrophic disasters is dependent on the level of their resilience to small scale, recurrent disasters.” This thought recognises that shocks and stresses will continue to challenge the coping capacities of individuals and communities that have been built over time and understanding how we can better anticipate and prevent these shocks and stresses from eroding their resilience is key to long-term risk reduction.

Nepal earthquake of 2015

In the Nepal earthquake response, SEEDS used a multi-pronged partnership model to deliver and teach highly engineered design and owner-driven construction in a step-by-step process to allow replication and scale-up by the community. This included partnership of the local private sector, which helped with supply chains (Chaudhary Foundation); a consultancy firm, which led on monitoring (PWCI India); local technical partners (National Society for Earthquake Technology); and SEEDS, which led the replication design and oversight. SEEDS also trained local construction artisans locally and more than 100 masons from Bihar, who participated in the reconstruction in the 10 most-affected districts in Nepal (Annual Report 2015–2016).

61 Ibid, p.37

62 From an unpublished manuscript by Manu Gupta entitled, Building Inherent Resilience.
SEEDS treats response interventions as windows for building resilience, staying in the communities where it responded, helping those at the margins recover on their own.
The importance of local humanitarian organisations is steadily growing in many countries across the world. As the case studies in this report have shown, local organisations are increasingly willing and able to manage the impact of humanitarian crises in their own countries.

This research affirms what is already being recognised by international and local organisations: that locally-led responses have a number of critical advantages:

- Better access to and deeper connections with affected people and local structures;
- Greater understanding of the relevant geopolitical and cultural context; and
- A longer term engagement ensuring that key elements of the response continue in to and beyond recovery, to ensure greater community resilience.

Local organisations are commonly among the first to respond to sudden-onset disasters. In protracted crises, they stay on for the long-haul to work on long-term recovery and rehabilitation. However, despite the crucial role local organisations play, they face mounting obstacles to their autonomy and sustainability. Frequently, these challenges stem from and/or are exaggerated by the international aid architecture and the way support from the international community is provided to local organisations.

In many countries, local humanitarian organisations face barriers to locally-led humanitarian action, such as a lack of access to secure and predictable funding, the perception that they are merely service delivery providers, and the lack of investment in capacity building and long-term partnerships. Local organisations also feel that donors are not currently sufficiently interested in long-term resilience planning.

Some of the challenges faced by local humanitarian organisations include:

- The organisational capacity of local actors, including their ability to manage and document knowledge, processes to ensure smooth succession, monitor results, and find sustainable funding streams;
- The widening scope of risks such as climate change and the increasing severity of disasters which puts additional pressure on their resources and capacity; and
- The hostile and insecure environments in which they operate, hindering humanitarian access and threatening the security of their staff, with fewer resources to cope than international agencies.

Local organisations are increasingly willing and able to manage the impact of humanitarian crises in their own countries.

Despite these challenges, the local organisations we have profiled have positioned themselves as key national humanitarian actors in the contexts in which they operate. There are a number of important lessons that can be learned from the reflections and experiences captured across a wide variety of contexts, these include:

1) The strengths and comparative advantage of local humanitarian organisations. The strengths of these local humanitarian organisations lie in their commitment to humanitarian values and principles, a determination to put community at the core of their work and a deep understanding of the nuances of the local context. The strengths of these organisations have been augmented by their commitment to learning and growth and to increasing the capacity of staff, volunteers, and partners as well as being accountable to the communities they serve. They have also shown a drive for self-reflection, a willingness to re-evaluate their role, contribution and structure in changing political and social contexts, enabling them to evolve and ultimately thrive.

2) The importance of investing in institutional and staff capacity. Recognising the long-term impacts of disasters and conflicts, many local organisations have broadened their work to include helping communities increase their resilience to shocks and stresses. This was especially evident in countries exposed to recurrent natural or climate change-induced emergencies. Here, local humanitarian organisations initiated strategic shifts from response to disaster risk reduction (DRR) and resilience. They strengthened their ability to respond to disasters, training staff and volunteers while implementing longer-term mitigation, resource management, protection, and livelihoods programmes.

- All of the featured organisations felt able to design and implement recovery programmes in order to absorb a high volume of work, funding, and reporting both during and after an emergency response. Most local organisations maintain a small pool of standby response volunteers, however larger organisations have contingency plans for multiple emergencies, deploying national disaster response teams as well as community volunteers.
- As the case studies demonstrate, investment in the capacity of local humanitarian organisations has not only improved their effectiveness, it has also increased the confidence and self-reliance of staff and volunteers.
- Key factors in improving and maintaining staff retention included providing a clear vision, offering training and opportunities for field experience, and creating favourable working conditions.

Conclusion

The importance of local humanitarian organisations is steadily growing in many countries across the world. As the case studies in this report have shown, local organisations are increasingly willing and able to manage the impact of humanitarian crises in their own countries.

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- As the case studies demonstrate, investment in the capacity of local humanitarian organisations has not only improved their effectiveness, it has also increased the confidence and self-reliance of staff and volunteers.
- Key factors in improving and maintaining staff retention included providing a clear vision, offering training and opportunities for field experience, and creating favourable working conditions.
3) The value of connecting with communities. All the organisations featured shared a well-articulated commitment to, as SEEDS India reiterates, “ensuring that the community remains at the centre and that they should be involved in decision-making.” Affected populations are regarded by local actors as not just beneficiaries but as having the agency to change their lives and rebuild their communities. Some organisations whose early work had a strong development focus applied community-driven approaches, for example, building the capacity of CBOs, community-led housing reconstruction, and creating community ‘change agents’. In conflict-affected communities, local organisations have taken other approaches which are also highly relevant including, methods to improve social cohesion, heightened conflict sensitivity in program analysis and implementation, and increase accountability and trust among stakeholders. The case studies have also shown that local actors have expanded the idea of community beyond their originally defined areas of operation. As organisations gain experience, confidence, and knowledge from their own interventions, they are becoming better placed to offer their expertise and support at both the regional and international level.

4) Collaboration and partnerships are essential to success. Local organisations believe in the power of networks, complementarity, and partnerships to promote advocacy and programmatic success. Several modalities of cooperation came of the case studies, including:

- NGO to community collaboration, where community members are empowered to be ‘partners’ in the response and recovery effort;
- NGO to NGO collaboration, in areas such as joint assessments, programme delivery, and technical expertise;
- Sectoral or thematic collaboration through academic institutions, NGO networks, coordination clusters, interfaith/intra-faith groups, and humanitarian forums;
- Peer-to-peer collaboration on research, advocacy, and training;
- NGO to INGO/international agencies collaboration on emergency response, programmes, capacity building, and advocacy; and
- Working closely with national and local governments and other leadership structures to help sustain intervention gains after emergency responses come to an end.

5) Sustainability is the key to long-term resilience and preparedness. All the organisations featured in this report cited sustainability as a priority. Many local actors remain concerned about their dependence on traditional donors for recovery and long-term programming. Some organisations continue to receive multi-year funding, however this is becoming increasingly limited. Other actors count on regular and long-time funding partners for support on advocacy, research and knowledge exchange, and training. International donors continue to be an important source of funding for humanitarian response and recovery. However, support from national donors and the private sector is gaining ground. Local organisations are increasingly seeking new sources of funding through corporate social responsibility, private giving, endowments, social investments and enterprise development, and through consultancy services. Organisations with a more multi-layered structure are able to raise funds from the public. Those such as the Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies can seek to obtain funds through existing organisational structures and networks for emergencies and resilience programmes. Another important source of funding is faith-based philanthropy, such as zakat and waqaf in Muslim-majority countries, and contributions from Christian networks and parishes. There are also spontaneous private donations from independent groups, such as youth networks and diaspora groups.

‘Local organisations are commonly among the first to respond to sudden-onset disasters. In protracted crises, they stay on for the long-haul to work on long-term recovery and rehabilitation’.
The future of local organisations in humanitarian response

The local humanitarian organisations in this report have called for more direct funding from international aid agencies. These organisations want international donors to invest in building their capacity and to work with them as equal partners so they can be more effective on the ground.

While they face many challenges, these local organisations have the appetite for improvement and growth.

With an increasing shift towards building resilience, local humanitarian organisations are finding ways to innovate. They are using new technology to improve early warning systems, they are working with the private sector to become more sustainable, and they are developing social enterprises and providing technical services.

In addition, these actors are working to establish a pool of future local humanitarian aid professionals.

Local humanitarian organisations are not just ready to lead the way—they are already doing so. To make the Grand Bargain commitments a reality, it is time for the international community to step up and invest their resources where they can make the biggest difference.

‘Local humanitarian organisations are not just ready to lead the way—they are already doing so’.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AADMER</td>
<td>ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response</td>
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<td>ASEAN</td>
<td>Association of Southeast Asian Nations</td>
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<td>ADRRN</td>
<td>Asian Disaster Reduction and Response Network</td>
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<td>AusAid</td>
<td>Australian Agency for International Development</td>
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<td>Bangladesh Red Crescent Society</td>
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<td>Bangladeshi Taka</td>
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<td>BRCS</td>
<td>Botswana Red Cross Society</td>
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<td>CBDRG</td>
<td>community-based disaster response group</td>
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<td>CBDRR</td>
<td>community-based disaster risk reduction programme</td>
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<td>CBO</td>
<td>community-based organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>CDRC</td>
<td>Citizens’ Disaster Response Center</td>
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<td>CFAR</td>
<td>cash for asset recovery</td>
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<td>CHF</td>
<td>Swiss Franc</td>
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<td>CO</td>
<td>community organising</td>
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<td>CPP</td>
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<td>CSR</td>
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<td>DFID</td>
<td>Department for International Development</td>
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<td>DRC</td>
<td>Democratic Republic of Congo</td>
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<td>DREF</td>
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<td>disaster risk management</td>
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<td>disaster risk reduction</td>
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<td>EIE</td>
<td>education in emergencies</td>
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<td>European Union</td>
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<td>FbF</td>
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<td>FBO</td>
<td>faith-based organisation</td>
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<td>HCTT</td>
<td>Humanitarian Coordination Task Team</td>
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<td>HDI</td>
<td>Human Development Index</td>
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<td>IASG</td>
<td>Inter-Agency Support Group</td>
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<td>ICRC</td>
<td>International Committee of the Red Cross</td>
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<td>IDR</td>
<td>Indonesia Rupiah</td>
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<tr>
<td>IFRC</td>
<td>International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies</td>
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<td>Indonesian Humanitarian Alliance</td>
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<td>InaTEWS</td>
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<td>IOM</td>
<td>International Organization for Migration</td>
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<td>IPC</td>
<td>Integrated Food Security Phase Classification</td>
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<td>ISCG</td>
<td>Inter Sector Coordination Group</td>
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<td>JHCO</td>
<td>Jordan Hashemite Charity Organization for Relief and Development</td>
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<td>LAPIS</td>
<td>Learning Assistance Program for Islamic Schools</td>
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<tr>
<td>LFI</td>
<td>local faith institution</td>
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<td>LRC</td>
<td>Local Resource Center</td>
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<td>MAPDRR</td>
<td>Myanmar Action Plan for Disaster Risk Reduction</td>
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<td>MDMC</td>
<td>Muhammadiyah Disaster Management Center</td>
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<td>MEF</td>
<td>Myanmar Emergency Fund</td>
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<td>MONUSCO</td>
<td>United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo</td>
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<td>NDRMP</td>
<td>National Disaster Risk Management Plan</td>
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<td>NDRT</td>
<td>National Disaster Response Team</td>
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<td>non-food item</td>
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<td>NGO</td>
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<td>NTT</td>
<td>Nusa Tenggara Timur (East Nusa Tenggara)</td>
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<td>OD</td>
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<td>PDRRMO</td>
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<td>PDRRN</td>
<td>People’s Disaster Risk Reduction Network, Inc.</td>
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<td>PHAST</td>
<td>Participatory Hygiene and Sanitation Transformation</td>
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<td>PhpP</td>
<td>Philippine Pesos</td>
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<td>Project NOAH</td>
<td>Nationwide Operational Assessment of Hazards</td>
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<td>RA</td>
<td>Republic Act</td>
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<td>RCC</td>
<td>reinforced cement concrete</td>
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<td>RCY</td>
<td>Red Cross Youth school-based DRR</td>
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<td>SEEDS</td>
<td>Sustainable Environment and Ecological Development Society</td>
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<td>TAF</td>
<td>The Asia Foundation</td>
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<td>TCG</td>
<td>Tripartite Coordinating Group</td>
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<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Programme</td>
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<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)</td>
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<td>UNFPA</td>
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<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>United Nations Children’s Fund</td>
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<td>UNOCHA</td>
<td>United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs</td>
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<td>UNRW</td>
<td>United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East</td>
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<td>USAID</td>
<td>United States Agency for International Development</td>
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<td>VCA</td>
<td>vulnerability and capacity assessment</td>
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<td>WASH</td>
<td>water, sanitation and hygiene</td>
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<td>WFP</td>
<td>World Food Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>YOTS</td>
<td>Youth Off The Streets</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
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List of contributing respondents from participating local humanitarian organisations

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- Mr. Elijah Mulumba, Programme Manager, Candlelight for Environment, Education and Health, Somaliland, and Mr. Kulmiye Hussein, Chief of Party, Somali Recovery and Resilience Consortium (SORAC)
- Mr. Nazmul Azam Khan, Director of Response and International Relation & Communication Departments, and Mr. Md. Belal Hossain, Director for Disaster Risk Management of the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society; and Mr. Adith Shah Durjoy, Senior Manager - Response and Organization Development, and Mr. Raqibul Alam, Senior Manager - PMER with Communications of the IFRC Delegation in Bangladesh.

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