



EXPLORING THE THREE C'S: **COMPLEMENTARITY, COLLABORATION & CONSORTIA** IN START FUND INTERVENTIONS

INTRODUCTION

International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs) have played a leading role in humanitarian action for decades. However, the dominant role that INGOs have been playing is becoming increasingly scrutinised and questioned and systems change processes aim to 'shift power' towards locally led and decolonised humanitarian action. The roles that INGOs are playing in the sector are being **re-imagined**.

At Start Network, our vision is also for locally-led humanitarian action, we recognise the important **roles INGOs are already playing** and can play more of in the future. However, the specific roles that INGOs can play when accessing Start Networks funding mechanisms is not clear. One of Start Networks funding mechanisms that this research focuses on is the global Start Fund. The global Start Fund is a pooled fund collectively owned and managed by Start Network's members that provides rapid response funding to under-the-radar, small to medium-scale crises. National funds that are modelled on the Global Start Fund also operate in Bangladesh and Nepal.

An **evaluation of Start Fund** undertaken in 2022 focussed on the ability of the global Fund to be locally led. The Start Fund locally-led evaluation highlighted that Start Network has a gap in understanding the factors that complement partnerships between its INGO and Local and National Non-Governmental Organisation (LNNGO) members. Taking a step back, there is also a gap in understanding what complementarity for members looks like. Where complementarity is referred to as 'local as possible and international as necessary'. This research will explore what a locally-led Start Fund response looks like to members that are as local as possible and as international as necessary.

AIM

The primary aim of the research was to better understand what complementarity between INGOs and L/NNGOs in the Start Fund looks like to the membership and to understand how Start Network can support complementary relationships.

OBJECTIVES



Understand the current roles of members in Start Fund responses, and what their motivations to undertake various roles are (as intermediaries, leaders, and equal partners).



Identify what a complementary Start Fund alert could look like for the membership.



Identify solutions for Start Network to put in place that will support the membership to have their ideal future complementary scenario.

ACRONYMS

ASECSA	The Association of Communitarian Health Services	INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
CSRC	Community Self Reliance Centre	LNNGO	Local and National Non-Governmental Organisations
HANDS Pakistan	Health and Nutrition Development Society Pakistan	MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
ICR	Indirect Cost Recovery	NEADS	North-East Affected Area Development Society

METHODS + SAMPLE

The main methodological approach was semi-structured interviews with agencies (LNNGOs and INGOs) involved in different response types to identify the current role of members in consortiums and the benefits and challenges members experience in consortiums. The interviews also questioned what the members' ideal complementary Start Fund response would be, particularly considering a locally-led perspective. Respondents included 16 member agencies split between those that access Start Fund Bangladesh (2), Start Fund Nepal (7) and the Global Start Fund (7) (Table one).

To identify agencies to interview, all consortia alerts from Start Fund Bangladesh, Start Fund Nepal, and Start Fund Global were reviewed for the year 2022. Agencies were categorised by location (Global member, Bangladesh, Nepal), the type of agency (either INGO or LNNGO), and the role they played in the response (leading, partner, individual). At least three agencies from each category were contacted for an interview. Agencies that positively responded were interviewed.

KEY QUESTIONS EXPLORED IN THE INTERVIEWS

- 01 WHAT ARE THE MOTIVATIONS AND BENEFITS FOR INGOS AND LNNGOS TO RESPOND IN CONSORTIA, LEADING, OR INDIVIDUALLY?
- 02 WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES FOR INGOS AND LNNGOS TO RESPOND IN THESE WAYS?
- 03 HOW WOULD INGOS AND LNNGOS PREFER TO RESPOND IN A LOCALLY-LED WAY? WHAT ROLE DO INGOS AND LNNGOS THINK THEY COULD HAVE IN THIS APPROACH?
- 04 WHAT COULD START NETWORK, START FUND, OR THE ORGANISATIONS, CHANGE TO MAKE THIS PREFERRED WAY OF RESPONDING HAPPEN?



TABLE 01: AGENCIES INTERVIEWED FOR THIS RESEARCH

	INGOs	LNNGOs	TOTAL
START FUND BANGLADESH	1	1	2
START FUND NEPAL	4	3	7
GLOBAL START FUND	3	4	7
TOTALS	8	8	16

Of the 16 agencies interviewed, each had different perspectives depending on the types of responses they had undertaken (Figure 2). No INGOs discussed being part of consortiums led by LNNGOs either because the situation had not occurred or they did not have enough information to discuss the case.

FIGURE 2: THE NUMBER OF DIFFERENT PARTNERSHIP TYPES THAT THE MEMBERS INTERVIEWED HAD RESPONDED IN DURING START FUND ALERTS



FINDINGS + ANALYSES

01 WHAT ARE THE MOTIVATION AND BENEFITS FOR INGOS AND LNNGOs TO RESPOND IN CONSORTIUMS, LEADING, OR INDIVIDUALLY?

Motivations and benefits for LNNGOs to respond on their own

Of the two LNNGOs that discussed responding on their own, motivations to lead responses were their level of confidence, the opportunity to learn, and to opportunity to have accountability to affected populations. Motivations were described as simply having the confidence to respond on their own and having an opportunity to learn a lot (one response), and the ability to manage the response at the very local level, leading to greater accountability to the affected populations and hence greater confidence (one response). Most of the LNNGOs that responded infer that they feel ready to lead, as opposed to any other motivations.

“ Since we are grounded in communities, we have all sorts of community-based organisations and collaboration with affected people, we feel more accountable to the affected communities and this builds our own confidence to initiate a response individually.”


TIRTHA PRASAD SAIKIA Director, North-East Affected Area Development Society (NEADS), India



Alert 611: Distribution of Dry Ration Kits and Non-Food Items / Hygiene Kits during a flood in India.

Photo credit: @NEADS

The benefits for the two LNNGOs to respond on their own were based around speed (one response), ease of operations, reduced need to check the policies of other organisations align with their standards (one response) and the ability to respond according to their own policies (one response). The benefits for an LNNGO to respond on their own were similar to the responses provided by INGOs for risk reduction and ease of response.


 We are faith based, there are challenges finding partners that meet our ethical beliefs, it restricts us in the pool of consortium parts. When it comes to safeguarding, we also have to make sure we have safeguarding policies... **When navigating issues of accountability, reporting, and data privacy within consortia, complexities emerge due to the multiplicity of organizations involved. Striking the right balance becomes imperative in such data-intensive collaborative efforts."**

MISS EVANJALINA SAMPATHAWADUGE Start Network Coordinator, Caritas Sri Lanka

Three INGOs spoke about the reasons why they might respond on their own to a Start Fund alert, similarly to LNNGOs all the INGOs' responses were based on their ability to manage financial and safeguarding risks. Two stated that it would be faster to respond on their own if they didn't have pre-agreed relationships with LNNGOs in a region due to the time it would take to do Due Diligence checks and build trust. The third mentioned various reasons centred around their ability to manage the funds. Risk reduction and ease of response are the same benefits mentioned by LNNGOs, although INGOs mention more about the capacity of the LNNGOs and their biases, whereas LNNGOs discuss the time it takes to liaise with INGOs.


Motivations and benefits for LNNGOs to respond in a consortium led by INGOs

There were six LNNGOs that discussed partnering with INGOs in consortiums, of those, three mentioned motivations to partner with INGOs as being increased impact of work (three responses), and ability to access technical support, access to resources and undertake knowledge sharing with INGOs (two responses). In one case a national organisation in Nepal that was used to development projects but not rapid response was able to work with an INGO who helped them use their knowledge of local vendors to source materials rapidly following an earthquake. The consortium here used the national NGOs' knowledge and skills and amplified them with the experience of an INGO to use them in a fast response, and supported them with technical policies during the response.

 As we are local people and the project happened in our home districts it was easy to coordinate the local actors... even for buying materials we have a logistics offer, but the INGO supported us to make quick decisions to explore the vendors... [And] to design the houses and shelters quickly, [the INGO] supported us to identify the quality materials and standards we need to follow."

JAGAT DEUJA Executive Director, Community Self Reliance Centre (CSRC), Nepal

Of the six agencies that responded in consortiums with INGOs as partners, five gave benefits of this type of response as being a learning opportunity for staff (three responses), an ability to have greater advocacy power and access to funding (two responses), and reduced chance of duplication (one response). The benefits and motivations for consortiums between organisations are similar, and are based on collaboration, combined efforts, strategic approaches, increased coverage and impact, reduced duplication of effort, sharing of knowledge, training and access to resources.

 We had some experience where we need to create the notes and we needed more time, we learned more, we participated more in the whole process... [and] although we could not cover everything, we were able to not duplicate in the territories and we were able to delegate one area for each organisation, it helped to not duplicate anything."

SANDRA MIGUEL Project Coordinator of Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and Humanitarian Aid, The Association of Communitarian Health Services (ASECSA), Guatemala

An LNNGO that leads consortiums with other LNNGOs stated that consortiums also provide the opportunity to have more holistic responses, especially if each organisation has a different focus. This perspective gives a new angle on consortiums, rather than each organisation working in different areas, the LNNGO proposes they could work in the same areas and provide different support to the crises affected-populations.

“[Each organisation in a consortium can have a different focus] for example, WASH, health, food, protection, this comprehensive support means a wide range of needs are met”

MD. HASAN SHAHRIAR Coordinator Monitoring & Evaluation, JAGO NARI, Bangladesh

Motivations and benefits for LNNGOs to lead consortiums of INGOs

Two LNNGOs in this research led Start Fund consortiums with INGOs as partners. The main motivation for one was to ensure that responses had a bigger impact, with better coverage, better coordination, and more efficient use of time. For the second LNNGO they were motivated to lead responses to keep local needs in mind and to begin responding to crises within 72 hours of the proposal being selected. One of the LNNGOs did not mention motivations for them to lead the consortium, except that having them lead was a motivation for some INGO partners, as funds could be transferred to the LNNGO faster, directly from Start Network, without requiring long chains of authorisation. The INGOs in this partnership could receive funding faster from the LNNGO than what they could having their Head Quarters (HQ) give authorisation for them to receive and share the funds.

Our main motivation is to help the most vulnerable people, which we do by creating alerts in a consortium, thereby allowing the alerts to be stronger and have a bigger impact in El Salvador, given that, although it is a small country, it experiences constant events due to its many vulnerabilities, sadly of course. Working in a consortium, we can coordinate ourselves well and manage to cover a wider area. Plus, we are more time-efficient when working with Start Network... getting all the members to arrive at an agreement can be frightening when you are a small organisation leading a consortium which contains international ones. In the end, we have had diverse experiences and practice, which we learn from.”

DAMARIS GUARDADO, Project Manager, Pro-Vida, El Salvador

The main benefit of leading a consortium of INGOs for the LNNGOs was stated as being the opportunity to learn (one response) and the opportunity to respond to the needs of the crisis-affected populations using flexible approaches while receiving Indirect Cost Recovery (ICR) (one response).

We adopt the community-led approach and the community-led initiative, in our policy it is mandatory to work with the communities for development work, and for humanitarian work we also work with community committees, **we strongly believe communities should be in the lead**. We engage communities at all stages of the project. We are flexible and we believe that the community should have ownership we need to make sure we have accountability to the communities, we communicate in the local language and ensure we share messages in a way communities will be able to access, and we have a feedback mechanism so they can reach us by phone and they can coordinate with us. This is easier to do when we are leading the response, so many organisations have their own system for reporting, and we face so many difficulties in unnecessary or extra reporting when we are not leading.”

RAHEEM MARRI Head of Inclusion and Disaster Management, Health and Nutrition Development Society (HANDS Pakistan)

“We are able to respond with relief activities to the disaster victims, after approval, we immediately coordinate with local stakeholders... when we engage the local vendors, we save so many costs in terms of transportation costs, and its good when there is flexibility in the procurement. When you have a choice, it is much easier, we save money and we increase the number of beneficiaries, we negotiate with the vendor and we enhance the number of beneficiaries. Our relationships are very good and in partnerships, we are still able to have a community lead approach. There are benefits to receiving funds directly, we access the indirect Cost Recovery so we directly receive this.”

RAHEEM MARRI Head of Inclusion and Disaster Management, Health and Nutrition Development Society (HANDS Pakistan)

Motivations and benefits for INGOs to partner with LNNGOs

Of the agencies spoken to for this research, eight INGOs partnered with LNNGOs for Start Fund responses, they gave three main motivations to do this:

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| 1 Organisation policy for locally-led action or for a national policy such as in Nepal | 6 responses |
| 2 For the benefits of working through LNNGOs to provide access to communities, knowledge of local communities or to increase the speed or efficiency of the response | 5 responses |
| 3 To support and empower LNNGOs | 4 responses |

As well as recognising the value of working with LNNGOs to support the INGOs access and accountability to communities affected by crises, INGOs recognised their role in supporting LNNGOs.

“They have real ground information so it enables us to select the most vulnerable communities. They have the knowledge on how to manage distribution and screening processes and disseminating via local radio and things is very practical and beneficial. There are the ones who are first responders when a road was blocked by a previous landslide local NGOs have their representatives on the ground in the village even to roads are blocked, the telephone and internet was working and they can feed back to us and their country office in Katmandu. Without LNNGOs it is impossible to address local needs in the country.”

DHRUBA GURMACHHAN Programme Readiness & Integration Manager, World Vision International Nepal

One of the INGO's regional offices that they consulted for this research stated similar reasons for working with LNNGOs to the INGOs interviewed for this study, such as organisational or country policy, to support the capacity strengthening of NGOs, and value adds such as access to communities and to support them to gain community trust. They also mentioned areas not spoken about by other INGOs:

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| 1 Joint mobilisation of resources, coordination, collaboration, avoidance of duplication | 1 response |
| 2 Increased reach | 1 response |
| 3 High reputation with local government | 1 response |
| 4 LNNGOs are the first responders | 1 response |

“Given some contexts like the current context in Sudan (insecurity and access issues due to rains), it is vital to have local partners based in the field with the relevant capacities needed to continue with the emergency life-saving activities with minimum supervision (through remote monitoring)”

INGO REPRESENTATIVE wishes to remain anonymous

The researcher spoke with one INGO that had been in a Start Fund consortium led by an LNNGO. Their office stated that their motivation to work in a consortium led by an LNNGO was to have a bigger impact across the national territory, and because the consortia can reach places where the INGO is not present, as well as the coordination groups the LNNGO was part of. The INGO country office stated that the LNNGO participates in technical spaces such as the Cash Working Group and the National Civil Protection System which were suitable for the context of the emergency. The regional offices of an INGO also mentioned the benefits to LNNGOs when involving them in Start Fund alerts, such as through capacity strengthening and knowledge and skill transfer, as well as the benefits to the INGO and to the community affected by crises, as the local NGOs play a part in ensuring the responses are accountable to communities.

Seven of the eight INGOs that partnered with LNNGOs gave five main benefits:

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| 1 The LNNGOs provide local knowledge and perspectives, for example on community needs | 3 responses |
| 2 The LNNGOs could respond immediately as they were already in the location | 2 responses |
| 3 They supported the INGOs to gain access to communities, especially in areas with high security | 1 response |
| 4 The LNNGO helped the INGO to save costs and provide lower cost implementations (e.g., staffing of an LNNGO is cheaper) | 1 response |
| 5 INGOs partnering with LNNGOs helps donors meet their locally-led goals without taking on the risk of funding them directly | 1 response |

“ From a risk perspective – local partners have more risk appetite, better access, and better value for money. This works well with the average envelope size with Start Fund because donors agree with localisation but don't have a workaround for transferring risk and accountability to local partners”

INGO REPRESENTATIVE wishes to remain anonymous

Alert 12 (Start Fund Bangladesh): JAGO NARI Chief Executive delivered a speech during a Cash Distribution ceremony.

Photo credit: @ JAGO NARI



02 WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES FOR INGOs AND LNNGOs TO RESPOND IN THESE WAYS?

The LNNGOs that led consortiums stated the three main challenges as being: difficulties in maintaining transparency, and common reporting procedures amongst all the partners (two responses, respectively), as well as consultation, communication, and funding transfers can be slow processes (one response). In all challenges, one LNNGO recognised that different ways of working between agencies provided a learning opportunity. For another LNNGO, slow funding transfers delayed the project and they were required to cover the initial project costs using different sources of funding. One organisation mentioned that working with INGOs affects their relationship with the communities they work in, in some aspects and contexts. For example, the community sometimes thinks the INGOs have access to more funds so trust them more than the LNNGOs.

“Achieving transparency is a challenge. Each organisation has its own tools. We always try to improve the way in which we carry out our reporting, which is not only a challenge for Pro-Vida, but for all the organisations in the consortium as well. Improving the quality of the reporting which is presented to the network in terms of its communication is another challenge, because not all have the same level or capacity. We have to send photos and videos, so we keep trying to improve this.”

DAMARIS GUARDADO, Project Manager, Pro-Vida, El Salvador

Three of six LNNGOs that responded in consortiums spoke about four challenges of the role:

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|---|----------------|
| 1 Tensions between ways of working and codes of conduct between INGOs and the community/ local actors | 2 responses |
| 2 Increased need to ensure the partners are adhering to their policies and ethical standards | 1 organisation |
| 3 Negotiation to determine the locations of response | 1 response |
| 4 Little sharing of the Indirect Cost Recovery (ICR) budget | 1 response |

One local organisation that responded on their own stated that a challenge could be faced if they lacked technical expertise or experience in some areas of the crisis response. However, they went on to say that they had not experienced this challenge, as the programmes are specific and hyper-local, meaning they can do it based on their experience as a local organisation. One INGO also identified the challenges of the system, such as their challenge in reducing the imbalances of power between themselves and the LNNGOs as well as the difficulty they face in providing mutual capacity-strengthening support whilst not burdening the LNNGO.

“Sometimes if we are not experienced, we might make mistakes, we might have some gap in resource, when we are in consortium the second or third organisation might be able to guide us if we are making mistakes, working in consortium can provide technical input and recommendations on how to work together in a collaborative way, there would be support and technical support, if there are gaps in resource they might be met. So far, we have not faced any of those challenges or issues because the programs are context specific, hyper-local programs, it is not a huge program and we can do it well based on our

TIRTHA PRASAD SAIKIA Director, North-East Affected Area Development Society (NEADS), India

There were a range of main challenges recognised by INGOs when working with LNNGOs:

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| 1 Challenges transferring funds from an INGO to an LNNGO in Nepal due to national policies | 2 responses |
| 2 Concerns over the capacity of LNNGOs to respond following the INGOs guidelines, policies and standards | 1 response |

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|----------|---|------------|
| 3 | The increased time it takes to collaborate with LNNGOs, especially if the relationship was not formed before the Start Fund alert | 1 response |
| 4 | The communication gap between agencies and challenges with information sharing | 1 response |
| 5 | The low quality of responses if they aren't planned in advance | 1 response |
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“ I don't think there should be any challenges, if LNNGOs lead I don't see any challenges. Not a challenge, but there is no clarity in fund flow mechanisms if LNGOs lead the consortium, this should be discussed openly across members. That's a dilemma. The Nepal country policy that regulates NGOs says that INGOs are not allowed to take funds from NGOs”

INGO REPRESENTATIVE wishes to remain anonymous

“ Power dynamics is a big one, despite best intention from both sides there is an element of power through which the local partner will abide by the rules of the INGO because it has always been like this and they believe INGO know best, it might impact the relationship and how clear we are on responsibilities. In fast funding, we have to very quickly decide the roles and sometimes local partners only see what the INGO wants to do in a very small response they don't see the whole strategy in the country and there is an imbalance in power and decision-making.”

INGO REPRESENTATIVE wishes to remain anonymous

One INGOs regional offices faced similar concerns to the INGOs interviewed for this study. They also mentioned a series of specific challenges:

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| • Local partners not following humanitarian principles and international practices, norms and laws | 1 response |
| • The local partners may focus on budgets rather than community needs | 1 response |
| • Unclear expectations or lack of clear strategy or goals | 1 response |
| • Capacity challenges such as safeguarding and risk management | 1 response |
| • Lack of standardised systems, processes, and management systems | 1 response |
| • Reluctancy to challenge negative cultural norms | 1 response |
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The potential challenges stated by an INGO country office when having an LNNGO lead a Start Fund consortium were mainly operational:

- Lack of clarity around Due Diligence process, this was overcome in the Pro-Vida consortium using a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).
 - Transfer of funds and bank accounts, e.g. If they do not have an international account that allows transfers of Euros and British Pound Stirling. This can add delays to the money being transferred.
 - LNNGOs often do not have the ability to prefinance operations internally to begin operations to reach beneficiaries within 7 days. This has a big impact if there is a delay in receiving funds.
 - INGOs not having enough time to support the capacity development of partners.
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“ Transfer of funds and bank accounts could be a problem for LNGOs e.g. If they do not have an international account which allows transfers of Euros and British Pound Stirling. This can add delays to the money being transferred. If an INGO was leading and transferring to their national office, they have an internal process to transfer funds.”

INGO REPRESENTATIVE wishes to remain anonymous

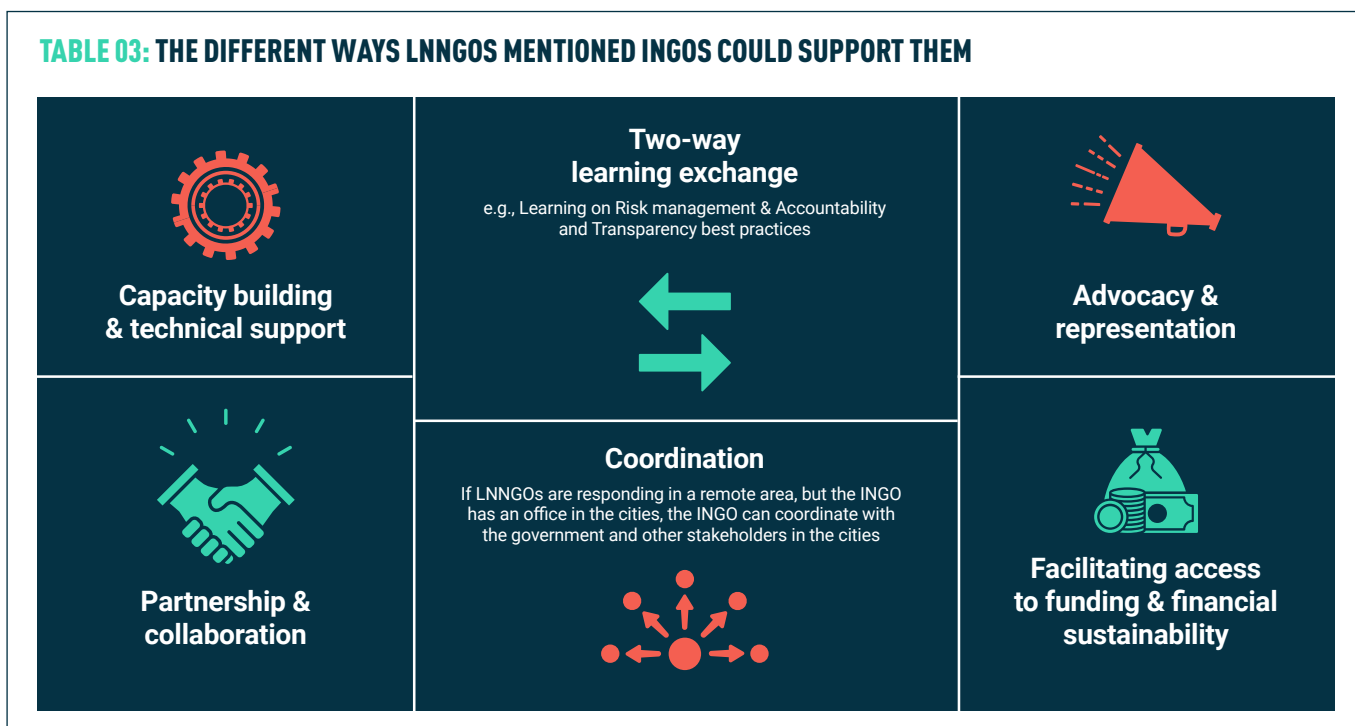
03 HOW WOULD INGOS AND LNNGOS PREFER TO RESPOND IN A LOCALLY-LED WAY? WHAT ROLE DO INGOS AND LNNGOS THINK THEY COULD HAVE IN THIS APPROACH?

The researcher spoke with seven of the eight LNNGOs about the way they would prefer to respond to crises using the Start Fund, they spoke of two main ways they would prefer to respond:

- 1 In consortiums [often with a small number of INGOs to help them access funding and technical support (Table three) or to have larger coverage] 10 responses
- 2 With a community-based approach, partnering with local organisations and government stakeholders 5 responses

For some organisations they believed collaboration was essential to ensure the needs of crises-affected communities, competition were met, they also believed and responses could be more efficient.

TABLE 03: THE DIFFERENT WAYS LNNGOS MENTIONED INGOS COULD SUPPORT THEM



Eight INGOs discussed their preferred way to respond to crises using Start Fund considering a more locally-led perspective, they mentioned multiple ways they could see themselves supporting and working with LNNGOs (see Table four):

- 1 Training and capacity strengthening of LNNGOs 6 responses
- 2 Working with LNNGOs in long-term trusting partnerships and pre-planned partnerships 2 responses
- 3 Supporting the LNNGOs to directly receive funding 1 response
- 4 Working with local community-based organisations more 1 response
- 5 Supporting the LNNGOs to lead consortiums 1 response

A number of INGOs suggested that for them to be partners of LNNGOs that could lead responses they would need long-term relationships with the LNNGOs to build trust with them and to understand their long-term capacity strengthening needs beyond and outside of Start Fund responses.

“ I prefer to go with INGO to get funding that has backup funds that can be utilised for emergency response when waiting for money to get from Start Network, and the LNNGO can go direct to the field.”










INGO REPRESENTATIVE wishes to remain anonymous

Alternatively, one INGO stated that they would support LNNGOs to receive funding directly from Start Fund as this would be the best way for a locally-led response. INGOs don't have the time or funding in a Start Fund response to always share ICR or support the capacity building of partners, this occurs in multi-year or 12-month projects.

“ Long-term partnership to share money and trust and capacity meaningful, it is not the goal of Start Fund money to do this, so if the money can go straight to local partners that is ideal, we are thinking quick and efficient with Start Fund not the capacity building of partners, and the money is not that much so we have to put it all to response, when we are focussing on building capacity of partners, we take multi-year funding or 12 months.”

ACTED REPRESENTATIVE wishes to remain anonymous

TABLE 04: THE DIFFERENT WAYS INGOS MENTIONED THEY COULD WORK IN A MORE LOCALLY-LED WAY

 <p>Good collaboration with local government & organisations</p>	 <p>Learn how to give communities power to make decisions</p>	 <p>Provide capacity strengthening support to local partners</p>
 <p>Work in local languages</p>	 <p>Expedite the due diligence process or set up Memorandum's of Understanding to work with new local partners in rapid responses</p>	 <p>Work with LNNGOs that are not members</p>
 <p>Map the LNNGO's that are available to partner and have prior agreements in place</p>	 <p>Engage affected communities in design, implementation and accountability</p>	 <p>Gather lessons learned during the response</p>

04 WHAT COULD START NETWORK, START FUND, OR THE MEMBER ORGANISATIONS, CHANGE TO MAKE THIS PREFERRED WAY OF RESPONDING HAPPEN?

Local and national NGOs stated various ways they would like support from Start Network in order to implement responses:

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|---|---|-------------|
| 1 | Opportunities for learning and capacity strengthening | 5 responses |
| 2 | An Indirect Cost Recovery (ICR) policy and consideration to provide funds for organisational sustainability | 3 responses |
| 3 | Platforms to share experiences with other agencies & building relationships between agencies | 3 responses |
| 4 | Commitment from INGOs to work with LNNGOs equitably, and INGOs should be clear on their mission and vision | 2 responses |
| 5 | Improved relationship and communication with Start Network | 1 response |
| 6 | Increased response time and Due Diligence in local languages | 1 response |
| 7 | Promote indigenous knowledge and ideas | 1 response |
| 8 | Faster transfer of funds | 1 response |
| 9 | Access to knowledge on funding opportunities | 1 response |

In general, one LNNGO stated that they would like to see less competition between INGOs and LNNGOs, they fear that if they raise an alert an INGO will compete with them to write a proposal. In summary, the main areas LNNGOs suggested Start Network could support them in would be in facilitating networking and shared learning between agencies, supporting initiatives for long-term capacity building and ICR policies, as well as trying to work out how to decrease the time it takes for LNNGOs to receive funding.

“To access funds they had criteria to reach on the ground in 7 days if organisations like us who don't hold a big budget won't have access to money and we can respond very quickly unless money is transferred to the organisations account, we need the funding earlier - even criteria couldn't release the money for two weeks before it could be released - within the seven days we had to use our own resources and later Lead INGO transferred the money but it took four to five months to settle all the funds transferred even to the project ended in 45 days!”

DEEPAK CHAPAGAIN President, Volunteer Corps Nepal

“We would benefit from a international alert cycle exposure visit, for enhancing our capacity, to see how humanitarian responses are managed on time. We have received training in Nepal but it would be good to attend one month of training with an INGO facilitating.”

LNNGO REPRESENTATIVE wishes to remain anonymous



Eight INGOs interviewed stated multiple areas for Start Network and Start Fund to change or support to help them work in a more locally-led way:

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|----|---|-------------|
| 1 | Support longer-term partnerships and capacity development with funding and time at the end or responses set aside for it | 4 responses |
| 2 | Encourage collaboration and strategic approaches before alerts are raised | 2 responses |
| 3 | Facilitate co-learning and platforms for discussions | 1 response |
| 4 | Advocate for an ICR policy and financial support for this included in project funding | 1 response |
| 5 | Facilitate meetings between local organisations and donors | 1 response |
| 6 | Fund each organisation in a consortium directly to reduce delays and overcome some national policies that stipulate LNGOs can't transfer to INGOs | 1 response |
| 7 | Create a fund for hyper-local responses | 1 response |
| 8 | Awareness for LNNGOs to empower them on what they can do | 1 response |
| 9 | Training on the coordination skype group for LNNGOs | 1 response |
| 10 | Decentralise more decision-making on governance structures to national Start Funds | 1 response |

Two INGOs suggested they would like to see more strategic collaboration between LNNGOs and INGOs during the Alert and Proposal stage of Start Fund. One INGO also suggested that LNNGOs would feel more empowered if they led alerts and then invited all agencies in the area to collaborate in designing a strategic response. To support LNNGOs with this one INGO suggested Start Network could provide more sensitisation training on the coordination Skype groups and there could be a way of only funding alerting national organisations.



I would love to see more LNNGOs raising alerts, there is a huge potential for national organisations to take a leadership role. I am not sure if they are aware of how it works and the power of consultation and the importance of alerts being raised by multiple organisations. It should be more coordinated; the organisations will have more power and feel more confident to position themselves in the response. It all starts with the alert process... the INGOs don't support alerts that aren't strategic or a team effort."

ACTED REPRESENTATIVE wishes to remain anonymous



Sometimes alerts in [location removed] were not honest about other organisations working and responding to crises in the area, sometimes there were NGOs better placed to responding in the area, we need to challenge the assumption that no one else can do it except us if there are any other organisations in the area they should be part of the discussion and all voices should be heard - the whole point of start fund is made by NGOs for NGOs, but I have the feeling it's not done, sometimes NGOs maybe shy or don't know how to raise their voices, and there should be more space for debate, maybe there is a way to fast track the voice of local partners that are there."

ACTED REPRESENTATIVE wishes to remain anonymous



One INGO suggested bringing agencies together to discuss the issue of complementarity as a group to share learning on how to work with LNNGOs in a complimentary way through a series of discussions.

“ [We need a] platform where various INGOs and local partners can discuss this issue [of complementarity]. It could be a session where it's only INGO so we share our fears and challenges and better understand how we can overcome the challenges. We should also have a session with LNNGOs to agree on how to move forward. Some more traditional INGOs worry about having less funding if they work with LNNGOs. Other organisations are more open and others are more pioneering and they can afford to do it as they have unrestricted funding. **With this variety of views and opportunities, it would be useful to have a series of discussions around this. There is nothing better than challenging and confronting one another about how to be better. It is a great role Start Network could have as it is a network of INGOs and LNNGOs,** I have been craving this for a while, by having internal conversations in [organisation name] so many ideas come up so it would be wonderful to have it beyond us.

INGO REPRESENTATIVE wishes to remain anonymous

The main areas INGOs want to see Start Network developing are very similar to what the LNNGOs wanted. This includes networking, shared learning, initiatives for long-term capacity building, ICR policies, and research into funding transfers.

“ Start Fund could allocate more funding more anticipation and innovative idea, we would work closely with the LNNGOs, we cannot implement by ourselves, collaboration is essential.”

INGO REPRESENTATIVE wishes to remain anonymous

“ Capacity building and partnerships should not be project-based, working with partners like, to have equal understanding and the partnership mandate it should be a long time and we can provide support to build capacity on programme, implementation and building support for policies and systems development, that should be continued and should not be project focussed, we should complete long term development with them and we can't expect results overnight, it may be on different aspects and we should focus on organisational development and that should be the focus of INGOs and the donors as well.”

MD. SHAMSUZZAMAN Emergency Coordinator, Christian Aid Bangladesh

In general, the actions given by one INGOs' regional offices when consulted for this research were for Start Network to support locally-led Start Fund alerts. They mentioned the need for dedicated capacity strengthening and funding set aside for it, as well as giving LNNGOs decision-making roles in the Start Fund committee, and simplifying processes such as Monitoring and Evaluation to make the tasks less burdensome:

- **More guidance on the due diligence process with local partners and members. E.g., If the LNNGO is prime and the sub is a national office of a member INGO, do they have to do due diligence?**
- **Provision of workflow process diagrams to partner in or lead a Start Fund alert, and the time each stage should take.**
- **Providing INGOs with time with the Start Fund alert to support the capacity building of LNNGOs.**
- **A mapping of LNNGOs per area e.g., per municipality sub-region. This would detail what each of the LNNGOs capabilities are, their mandates and missions, and which have completed due diligence.**

CONCLUSION + NEXT STEPS

THIS RESEARCH HAS EXPLORED WHAT A LOCALLY-LED START FUND RESPONSE LOOKS LIKE TO 16 MEMBERS (BOTH LNNGO AND INGO), AND WHAT START FUND RESPONSES LOOK LIKE THAT ARE AS LOCAL AS POSSIBLE AND AS INTERNATIONAL AS NECESSARY.

All INGOs and LNNGOs recognised the benefits of working in collaboration to respond to crises and recognised the mutual benefits they either gained from one another or could gain. For INGOs this included vital access to local communities and for LNNGOs this included access to funding and technical support.

The main challenge faced by INGOs when working with LNNGOs in a locally led way in Start Fund responses was the lack of time and funding to support capacity strengthening and the equitable sharing of ICR. For LNNGOs, the main challenges when working with INGOs included the lack of ICR and long-term funding for their own organisational sustainable development and capacity strengthening respectively. Some LNNGOs also mentioned concerns over competition with INGOs during the alert cycle, which may have prevented meaningful collaboration with the INGOs and strategic response planning.

Most agencies recognised in some contexts it is more efficient for them to respond on their own especially if they don't have partners set up in those regions, most agencies also stated that consortiums were favoured as they could have a greater impact and could benefit from the coordinated and strategic approaches of a consortium. Both INGOs and LNNGOs recognised the importance of working with local actors either to have access and knowledge to and of communities or to initiate community-based and community-led responses. Alternatively, there was an argument made that Start Fund is more suited to directly funding LNNGOs or small consortiums of INGOs with pre-agreed relationships and roles. The latter argument suggests that Start Fund as a fast-funding mechanism for small-to-medium scale crises is not the most suitable fund for the long-term development needs of partners, and LNNGOs would gain more from directly accessing funds themselves.

The main areas INGOs and LNNGOs want to see Start Network working on to support locally-led Start Fund responses were closely aligned. This includes the facilitation of networking, shared learning platforms, and initiatives for long-term capacity strengthening. To support LNNGOs directly accessing funding, suggestions were also made to support LNNGOs lead the alert process as well as setting up a non-competitive fund.



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR START NETWORK

For members to work in a more collaborative way the following suggestions were made throughout this research by members, for Start Network:



FACILITATE NETWORKING AND LEARNING PLATFORMS BETWEEN INGOS AND LNNGOS TO DISCUSS APPROACHES TO COMPLEMENTARITY, SUPPORT THEM TO NETWORK, SHARE KNOWLEDGE AND IDEAS AND OVERCOME BARRIERS.

Three LNNGOs and one INGO mentioned the need for opportunities, facilitated by Start Network, that would give agencies the space to discuss and talk through approaches to tackling challenges. For the INGO this challenge was about how to support local organisations to lead while not burdening the LNNGOs, or exposing themselves to financial or safeguarding risks. The INGO recognised that some INGOs are much further ahead in understanding their role in a locally-led Start Fund than others, and have already overcome challenges that others are still grappling with or haven't come up to yet. For the INGO, having a space to openly discuss challenges and hear about the ways other INGOs have overcome them would be helpful in their localisation journey. For the LNNGOs, this platform would support them to learn, build their capacity, and share experiences of Start Fund responses and common operational challenges when working or leading INGOs. Examples of these platforms can already be seen at Start Networks Annual General Assembly; however, a series of discussions facilitated by Start Network would allow the INGOs to tackle multiple problems in more detail and hold one another to account and challenge one another on an ongoing basis.



DESIGN AND DELIVER INITIATIVES FOR MEMBERS TO ACCESS SUPPORT FOR LONGER-TERM CAPACITY STRENGTHENING. ONE CHALLENGE RAISED BY FIVE LNNGOS AND FOUR INGOS WAS THE LACK OF TIME AND FUNDING IN START FUND RESPONSES FOR CAPACITY STRENGTHENING.

There were multiple suggestions from members on how to overcome this: funding set aside in Start Fund proposals for specific training that arises as a need in the response, extra time allotted at the end of a Start Fund response for the partners to deliver training on anything that arises as a need, and opportunities and support for longer-term non-project-based experience sharing. To support members with long-term partnerships for capacity strengthening Start Network could continue to advocate for donors to support INGOs with multi-year, flexible, unrestricted funding. This means that INGOs can support more local partners in the long term with training and capacity strengthening beyond Start Fund responses. Start Network should also continue to secure resources and partnerships specifically for the capacity strengthening of its local members. problems in more detail and hold one another to account and challenge one another on an ongoing basis.



ENSURE MEMBERS MAKE A COMMITMENT TO AGREED WAYS OF COLLABORATIVE WORKING.

A challenge raised by two INGOs was that LNNGOs did not collaborate or strategise with INGOs before raising alerts and proposals. In comparison, a challenge for some LNNGOs was that they didn't feel INGOs were transparent about their mission and vision and that they felt in competition with INGOs. For some LNNGOs the competition encouraged them to collaborate with INGOs, but for others, some feedback suggests it may discourage transparency and collaboration between LNNGOs and INGOs. Going forward, some members suggested some beneficial actions for Start Network would be to encourage members to be transparent and to make commitments to collaborative ways of working. Furthermore, it was suggested members are trained on the Skype communication groups already set up at Start Network. To encourage more LNNGOs to directly access funding without competition from INGOs, it was suggested that LNNGOs should be encouraged to lead alerts and non-competitive funds could be set up, i.e., ways of funding only alerting LNNGOs.



FURTHER RECOMMENDATIONS ARE FOR START NETWORK TO CONTINUE LOOKING INTO WAYS TO IMPROVE THE LONG-TERM SUSTAINABILITY OF LNNGOS AND OPERATIONAL PROCESSES THAT SUPPORT LNNGOS ACCESS FUNDING.

This includes further work on understanding and implementing policies for equitable ICR sharing and operational processes that don't form barriers for LNNGOs to access funding directly. For example, research should be undertaken into ways to speed up funding transfers to LNNGOs and to minimise the impact of slow funding transfers.

Alert 611: Distribution of Dry Ration Kits and Non-Food Items / Hygiene Kits during a flood in India.

Photo credit: @NEADS



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MEMBERS

For members to work in a more collaborative way the following suggestions were made throughout this research by members, for members:



ENGAGE IN DISCUSSIONS WITH OTHER MEMBERS ABOUT HOW TO WORK IN A COMPLIMENTARY WAY, AND BE OPEN ABOUT CHALLENGES AND WAYS TO OVERCOME THEM.

Four members stated their wish to have more space to openly discuss challenges and their ways to overcome them. Members could organise their own workshops or attend and engage in workshops set up by Start Network on learning and equitable partnerships.



DEVELOP LONG-TERM PARTNERSHIPS AND CAPACITY-STRENGTHENING SUPPORT FOR LNNGOS. FIVE LNNGOS AND FOUR INGOS STATED THE LACK OF TIME AND FUNDING IN START FUND RESPONSES FOR CAPACITY STRENGTHENING WAS A CHALLENGE.

Members could advocate for donors to provide flexible long-term funding to use for the capacity strengthening of partners. To support the long-term operational sustainability of LNNGOS, INGOS should also continue to work on equitable ICR-sharing practices.



COMMIT TO COLLABORATIVE WORKING.

As mentioned, two INGOS stated that LNNGOS did not collaborate or strategise with INGOS before raising alerts and proposals. In comparison, some LNNGOS stated that they didn't feel INGOS were transparent about their mission and vision and that they felt in competition with INGOS. Hence, members should prepare for Start Fund Alerts strategically, not competing for funds but working together to decide which agencies are best able to meet the needs of the crisis-affected population. This collaboration can be done through the collaboration platforms set up by Start Network.



EXPEDITE DUE DILIGENCE OR MOUS WITH POTENTIAL LOCAL PARTNERS OR COMPLETE THEM PRIOR TO START FUND ALERTS BEING ACTIVATED.

Some members stated that delays caused by Due Diligence processes were a challenge. To overcome this, it was suggested by members that Due Diligence could be completed prior to Alerts being raised and MOUs can be used to work with partners temporarily.



Find out more at www.startnetwork.org

Contact us at info@startnetwork.org



ACTED ACTION AGAINST HUNGER UK ACTIONAID APPUI AUX FEMMES DÉMUNIES ET ENFANTS MARGINALISÉS (AFEDM) ASSOCIATION FOR GENDER AWARENESS & HUMAN EMPOWERMENT (AGAHE) ASSOCIATION DES FEMMES POUR LA PROMOTION ET LE DÉVELOPPEMENT ENDOGÈNE (AFPDE) AGE INTERNATIONAL AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION (PARC) ALIANCE FOR INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL ACTION (ALIMA) ARAB RENAISSANCE FOR DEMOCRACY AND DEVELOPMENT (ARDD) ASOCIACIÓN DE SERVICIOS COMUNITARIOS DE SALUD (ASECSA) AZAT FOUNDATION BRAC INTERNATIONAL BRIGHT STAR DEVELOPMENT SOCIETY BALOCHISTAN (BSDSB) CADENA CATHOLIC AGENCY FOR OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT (CAFOD) CARE INTERNATIONAL UK CARITAS BANGLADESH CARITAS GOMA CARITAS INDIA CARITAS SRI LANKA CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES CHRISTIAN AID COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION (CDF) CESVI COMMUNITY WORLD SERVICE-ASIA CONCERN WORLDWIDE CORDAID DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION FOR COMMUNITY DOCTORS OF THE WORLD DOABA FOUNDATION DORCAS RELIEF & DEVELOPMENT EHSAR FOUNDATION ENCOURAGE THE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT (EHD) ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION SOCIETY (EPS) FARMERS DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION GOAL HEALTH AND NUTRITION DEVELOPMENT SOCIETY (HANDS) HELPAGE INTERNATIONAL UK HELP FOUNDATION HUMANITY & INCLUSION UK INITIATIVE FOR DEVELOPMENT AND EMPOWERMENT AXIS (IDEA) ISLAMIC RELIEF LASOONA LAAR HUMANITARIAN DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (LHDP) MANZIL ORGANIZATION BALOCHISTAN MECHANISM FOR RATIONAL CHANGE (MRC) MEDAIR MERCY CORPS MIDEFEHOPS ASBL MUSLIM AID MUZAFFARABAD POVERTY ALLEVIATION PROGRAMME NARI DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION (NDO) NATIONAL INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION (NIDA)-PAKISTAN NORTH-EAST AFFECTED AREA DEVELOPMENT SOCIETY (NEADS) OXFAM GB PEOPLE IN NEED PACIFIC ISLANDS ASSOCIATION OF NON GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS (PIANGO) PLAN INTERNATIONAL PARTICIPATORY RURAL DEVELOPMENT SOCIETY (PRDS) PRO-VIDA QATAR CHARITY RURAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SOCIETY (RCDS) RELIEF INTERNATIONAL RURAL EMPOWERMENT AND INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT (REPID) RURAL DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION (RDO) BUNER SAMI FOUNDATION SAVE THE CHILDREN UK SOCIETY FOR MOBILIZATION ADVOCACY AND JUSTICE (SMAAJ) SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONALE SUKAAR FOUNDATION THARPARKAR SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT SOCIETY (SEEDS) - INDIA SANGTANI WOMEN RURAL DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION (SWRDO) TEARFUND TROCAIRE VEER DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION WAR CHILD WELFARE ASSOCIATION JARED WELTHUNGERHILFE (DEUTSCHE E.V.) WORLD JEWISH RELIEF WORLD VISION YOUTH ORGANIZATION - PAKISTAN YUGANTER