SOUTH SUDAN LOCALISATION FRAMEWORK

Developed with support from:

ACCELERATING
LOCALISATION
THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS

Acknowledgements

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Contents

List of Acronyms

CBO   Community Based Organisation

CSO   Civil Society Organisation

ECHO   European Commission's Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations

HNO   Humanitarian Needs Overview

HRP   Humanitarian Response Plan

INGO   International Non-Governmental Organisation

L/NNGO   Local/National Non-Governmental Organisation

NGO   Non-Governmental Organisation

NNGO   National Non-Governmental Organisation

NSC   National Steering Committee (of *Accelerating Localisation through Partnerships*)

SEHP   Supporting Effective Humanitarian Partnerships (pilot project)

UN   United Nations

WHS   World Humanitarian Summit (2016)

Executive Summary

Accelerating Localisation through Partnerships is a 2-year programme funded by the European Commission's Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) between 2017-19 and implemented by a consortium on 6 international NGOs – Christian Aid, CARE, Tearfund, ActionAid, CAFOD, Oxfam. The programme aims to accelerate localisation through the strengthening of local and national leadership of humanitarian response and is being implemented in Myanmar, Nepal, Nigeria and South Sudan. National Steering Committees (NSC) of local and national NGOs in each country are guiding the programme. The programme aligns with recent global commitments made at the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) in 2016 for international humanitarian aid to be as local as possible, as international as necessary. The programme also follows on from work conducted by the consortium over the last few years and shared through the *Missed Opportunities* series of studies on humanitarian response partnerships[1].

In South Sudan, the definition of localisation has been much debated and widely accepted as creating enabling conditions for local and national NGOs to actively participate in decision making, lead in coordination structures, and be involved in delivery of humanitarian assistance to affected communities. National and local humanitarian actors are all CBOs, CSOs, FBOs, local NGOs and national NGOs founded and operating in South Sudan. Some other common terms used in localisation discussions are outlined from the South Sudan perspective in this paper. Partnership is one such term, and agreed to mean the equal and transparent collaboration between local, national and international partners to deliver humanitarian and development assistance.

The South Sudan Localisation Framework outlines findings from the research conducted as part of *Accelerating Localisation through Partnerships* on best practices in partnership-based humanitarian response that promote localisation as outlined in the table below:

Summary of best practices in partnership-based humanitarian response that promote localisation	
Project financial management	• Local and national NGO lead in budget preparation • Joint decision making on budget expenditure and flexibility in budgets for local and national NGOs growth. • Training and mentorship in donor due diligence processes and requirements
Coordination	• Participation and leadership of coordination mechanisms by local and national NGOs
Fundraising	• Direct funding by donors to local and national NGOs • Multi-year funding • Allow visibility for local and national NGOs role in aid delivery
Advocacy	• Encourage engagement between L/NNGOs with government and donors • Building capacity of L/NNGOs
Safety and security	• Invest in safety and security of L/NNGOs • Training in security, safety and risks management

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[1] *Missed Opportunities* (multi-country, 2012); *Missed Again* (Typhoon Haiyan, 2014); *Missed Out* (South Sudan, 2016); *Opportunity Knocks* (Nepal earthquake, 2016). See References section for full references and links.

The document also presents the key findings of the capacity self-assessment completed by local and national NGOs in South Sudan which was facilitated through *Accelerating Localisation through Partnerships*. This capacity assessment process was intended to identify common trends of capacity strengthening and organisational development support most requested or needed by local and national NGOs. However, given the fact that South Sudan has a wide diversity of local and national NGOs with diverse levels of experience, capacity and knowledge, this should be viewed as a starting point for conversations, and a guide for commonly-needed support for local and national NGOs, not as a blueprint for future capacity strengthening engagement. In the table below is a summary of the key capacity strengthening needs of local and national NGOs in South Sudan identified in 2019.

Key capacity strengthening needs of local and national NGOs	
Governance, leadership and management	• Establishment and training of strong boards • Putting fundraising strategy
Strategic and operational planning	• Support capacity to develop high quality proposals • Strategic planning reflecting clear vision, mission and priorities
Human resource management	• Drawing clear human resource policy and plans • Maintaining skilled and motivated staff and volunteers
Programme development and management	• Improve baseline, research and evidence-based programming • Establish strong MEAL system
Financial management	• Establish basic financial management system to manage grants and internal resources • Develop financial policy and implementation plan
Administration and logistics	• Support to adequate and conducive working space • Draw asset management and control policy and implementation plan
External relations, networking and sustainability	• Develop clear stakeholder's engagement plan • Develop strong branding and visibility policy and plan

Those international actors present at the World Humanitarian Summit have committed to reinforcing, not replacing, local capacity. As such, they have a responsibility to identify a complementary way of working with local and national agencies.

The South Sudan Localisation Framework is informed by the findings of the research conducted as part of *Accelerating Localisation through Partnerships*, learning from a pilot phase where consortium members and selected local partners tested the recommendations presented through the research, and results of capacity self-assessments completed by local and national NGOs in South Sudan.

This Localisation Framework outlines two key approaches, and a number of practical steps, for increasing the role of local humanitarian actors in designing, managing and coordinating humanitarian response in the country. The Framework aims to empower local and national actors, while urging international actors – international NGOs and UN agencies – and donors to support this important process.

Accelerating Localisation through Partnerships programme

Accelerating Localisation through Partnerships[2] consortium members were vocal actors in the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) in 2016, successfully advocating for a stronger role of national and local organisations within the humanitarian aid system. This push for a more locally-led response to humanitarian needs was recognised in the following international frameworks and commitments agreed at the WHS: *Agenda for Humanity*, the outcome document of WHS; the *Grand Bargain*, an agreement on humanitarian aid signed by donors, United Nations (UN) and others[3]; and *Charter for Change*, partnership commitments signed by INGOs[4]. There is a strong agreement that 'localisation' can improve the delivery and efficiency of aid. Nevertheless, the new agenda has brought challenges for many organisations in meeting the commitments, and there is some way to go before they are met by all.

Accelerating Localisation through Partnerships, funded by the European Commission's Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO), was implemented by ActionAid, CAFOD, CARE, Christian Aid, Oxfam and Tearfund in coordination with local and national NGOs through National Steering Committees (NSC) and relevant national NGO fora. The programme was run from 2017-2019, and the majority of the consortium members had worked together for many years to conduct the *Missed Opportunities* series of studies which looked at the role of local and national actors in humanitarian response. This focus on partnerships is in recognition that strengthened and more equitable partnerships will support local and national actors to take a greater leadership and coordination role in response to crises in their own country.

The programme started by building an evidence base for which there was a gap in the research to date on humanitarian operational partnership approaches which most support localisation. The research was conducted in Myanmar, Nepal, Nigeria, and South Sudan to explore the research question: what operational elements of partnerships between NNGOs and INGOs are most likely to foster (effective, relevant, efficient etc.) localisation of humanitarian action?

More than 50 organisations informed the research in South Sudan, and more than 350 globally. Preliminary findings from the research were then shared and validated in national workshops with a variety of humanitarian stakeholders. Recommendations informed by the research were developed for international humanitarian actors working in partnership with local and national actors. The *Accelerating Localisation through Partnerships* consortium then piloted these recommendations with a selection of their local humanitarian response partners in the four countries. Findings from the research, learning from the pilot, and information gathered through other project activities – such as the self-assessment of capacity strengthening needs of local and national NGOs – all informed the South Sudan Localisation Framework. National Localisation Frameworks were developed in Myanmar, Nepal, Nigeria, and South Sudan and informed a summary global paper *Pathways to Localisation*[5].

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[2] Find out more about *Accelerating Localisation through Partnerships* here: http://caid.org.uk/54.
[3] Including ActionAid, CARE, Christian Aid, and Oxfam.
[4] Including CAFOD, CARE, Christian Aid, Oxfam and Tearfund.
[5] *Pathways to Localisation: A framework towards locally-led humanitarian response in partnership-based action* (2019) C. Schmalenbach with Christian Aid, CARE, Tearfund, ActionAid, CAFOD, Oxfam. Available online: http://caid.org.uk/eh.

Introduction

Strong partnerships are critical for delivery of timely, effective and efficient humanitarian programming. The Grand Bargain and Charter for Change, global instruments championed by many international humanitarian and development actors and donors, recognise this need for a paradigm shift to scale up participation and leadership of communities affected by crises and local organisations, in humanitarian interventions. In 2016 at the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS), more than 60 donor countries, UN agencies, International NGOs (INGOs), and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescents (IFRC) agreed to the new global set of commitments for improving humanitarian aid; the Grand Bargain. The Grand Bargain aims to aims to reduce the humanitarian financing gap by improving the delivery and efficiency of aid through 9 areas of work known as 'workstreams'. The Localisation Workstream aims to facilitate and enable more capacity, power, respect, resources, space and voice for national and local actors within the humanitarian system. Equitable partnerships are one way to achieve this.

This National Localisation Framework is developed by national and local NGOs with the support of the National Steering Committee (NSC) of the *Accelerating Localisation through Partnerships,* and the consortium partners, along with Red Cross/Crescent National Societies, other INGOs, donors, and UN agencies. The South Sudan Localisation Framework outlines partnership best practice, priority training needs, and recommendations for localisation in South Sudan.

Localisation Concept and Practice in South Sudan

There is no universally agreed definition of localisation either globally or in South Sudan. The definition of localisation in South Sudan has been much debated but is generally accepted as **national and local humanitarian actors taking a greater lead in humanitarian action** in the country. National and local actors means all community-based organisations (CBOs), civil society organisations (CSOs), faith-based organisations (FBOs) and local or national NGOs (L/NNGOs) founded and operating in and across South Sudan (and not beyond). Following the research on partnership practices which support localisation in partnerships between international actors and local/national actors, and in the localisation framework development workshop, participants in South Sudan gave key definitions of commonly used terms in discussions on localisation as follows:

- **Localisation:** creating enabling conditions for local and national NGOs to: actively participate in decision-making, lead in coordination structures, and be involved in delivery of humanitarian assistance to the affected communities.

- **Partnership:** the equal and transparent collaboration between local, national and international partners to deliver humanitarian and development assistance in South Sudan.

- **Humanitarian action:** disaster preparedness, response and recovery programming in communities affected by crises.

- **Local NGO:** 'deep field' and community-based organisation with limited geographical spread beyond its locality.

- **National NGO:** organisations with wider scope of sectoral programmes than local NGOs, spread across multiple states and at national level.

Research on partnership practices

In 2018, the *Accelerating Localisation through Partnerships* programme conducted research on partnership practices which are most and least conducive to localisation. The research consulted representatives from more than 50 NGOs – local, national international NGOs – UN agencies, and other humanitarian stakeholders in South Sudan. Consultations were held with humanitarian staff in Wau, Juba and Bor. The findings highlighted partnership practices which local and national actors believe are most supportive in strengthening their leadership in humanitarian response. Following are some of the findings[6].

Findings from the literature

In South Sudan, knowledge of and demand for localisation is growing very fast**.** Literature reviewed as part of the research revealed that there are 330 registered NNGOs in South Sudan, 95 of which are delivering services in accordance with the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP). Out of the 23,000 humanitarian NGO-workers in the country, more than 90% are locals (SIDA, 2018)[7].

Additionally, the NGO Forum South Sudan is a key national alliance for NGOs in the country, with 214 national and 115 international NGOs as members in 2018[8]. The NGO Forum South Sudan defines itself as a voluntary, independent networking body of NGOs that supports its members to effectively respond to the humanitarian and development needs in South Sudan. Several good practices in localisation identified in the literature were linked to the Forum, but due to its mixed membership many L/NNGOs do not strongly regard it as a body dedicated to strengthening and supporting *their* role in humanitarian action, nor as one that is representative of L/NNGOs outside Juba.

Capacity building versus organisational development

Capacity building and organisation development are terms often used interchangeably by humanitarian staff and organisations. However, following the research and through a series of consultations, humanitarian actors in South Sudan suggested the following distinctions:

- **Capacity building/development:** a process by which individuals or organisations acquire knowledge and skills to effect positive change, expansion, growth and improvement in a sustainable manner.
- **Organisational development:** the process of enabling organisations to improve business practices through change in policies, power relations, leadership, and/or governance to enable them to achieve their (organisational) goal.
- **Institutional strengthening**: continuous assessment and improvement of organisational systems and processes through review of principles, business models and tools for effective, efficient and sustainable delivery of results.

Research findings suggest that, L/NNGOs in South Sudan want tangible assets such as cars, motorbikes, computers and office space, above training courses. Tangible assets, they say, not only enable them to deliver and monitor aid programmes, but strengthen their asset base and help them become stronger,

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[6] Read the full research report from South Sudan here: http://caid.org.uk/3k.
[7] SIDA (2018) *South Sudan Humanitarian Crisis Analysis 2017*. Available online: http://bit.ly/2OcHXG9.
[8] Find out more about the NGO Forum South Sudan here: http://southsudanngoforum.org/about/

more sustainable organisations that are likely to attract funding from donors/INGOs. Given the chronic nature of the conflict in South Sudan L/NNGOs do not wish to be entirely dependent on short-term funding, rented vehicles and temporary offices. For them, partners and donors that support localisation would allow for such tangible assets, or a contribution to them. This reflects the findings that L/NNGOs often value support for organisational development above capacity building/development.

Context and crisis type

Progress towards localisation differs across different contexts and types of crises. The research on partnership practices consulted humanitarian actors based in and around Juba, Bor and Wau. Given all of these contexts are primarily focused on conflict-related humanitarian response, comparing findings on partnerships in natural hazard related humanitarian response was not possible. However, comparing results from South Sudan with the other participating countries – Myanmar, Nepal and Nigeria – shows a number of differences, outlined in the following sections.

Phases of disaster management

Disaster management can be divided into the following phases: preparedness, disaster risk reduction (DRR), response, recovery, and exit/transition to longer-term development; the last of which links back to preparedness/DRR. In many discussions during the research, little differentiation was made by local and national actors between response and recovery, probably due to the chronic nature of the conflict in the contexts sampled, in which such interventions often occur in parallel or are cyclical, in accordance with cycles of escalating violence and relative peace time. Accordingly, partnership practices which were highlighted by research respondents as conducive to localisation appeared to refer to all phases of the disaster management cycle. However, the importance of investing in preparedness and peace-building was highlighted for partnerships between international and local/national actors.

Valuing partnerships

The partnership practices research also uncovered a lot of frustration about duplication of roles of NGOs, and encroachment of INGOs in implementation of humanitarian action, as commonly expressed by the L/NNGO research respondents. This does not reflect a move towards a locally-led response as research participants suggested that many INGOs are choosing to implement and manage projects instead of, or in parallel to, L/NNGOs. This perception is also reflected in the research survey results, both in terms of the number of programme cycle management elements which both INGOs and L/NNGOs claim they make the most important contribution in their partnerships, and the relatively few elements regarded by both INGOs and L/NNGOs as their partner's added value.

Duration of partnerships between INGOs and L/NNGOs

The partnership practices that were most frequently highlighted in the research as conducive to localisation tended to be from multi-year partnerships and long-term relationships. Examples of equitable partnerships mentioned by research respondents were between: Church and Development and DanChurchAid (15 years), NCDO and IAS (10 years), and HARD and Christian Aid (6 years). Each of these partnerships explicitly and strategically aims to strengthen local leadership of humanitarian action through training, policy development, contribution to overheads, mentoring, flexible funding and reporting arrangements, and increasing trust to manage parts of project planning, and monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning (MEAL). However, shorter partnerships with a clear capacity building objective were also mentioned as conducive to localisation, such as WDG and the Canadian Hunger Foundation.

A girl carries water in an internally displaced persons (IDP) camp on the outskirts of Juba.

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Partnership Principles for Localisation

According to the research findings, partnerships were only perceived as genuine partnerships by 19% of survey respondents from South Sudan. However, 54% of respondents believed the same partnerships to be 'very' or 'moderately' instrumental in meeting the needs of crisis-affected people in disaster response operations. This was the lowest across the four research countries, but it highlights the belief in the value of partnerships if not the equity of them.

For increased localisation in partnership-based humanitarian action, it is important for INGOs and their local partners to practice the following principles that increase trust, confidence and performance of humanitarian programming. The below principles are unique to South Sudan context based on feedback and experiences of partnerships between local actors and international partners. During the pilot phase of *Accelerating Localisation through Partnerships*, local actors highlighted significant change in the way partnerships and collaboration were managed where these principles were put into action. They include:

- Transparency and accountability where partners practice a high level of openness and mutual responsibility during the partnership.

- Being conscious of the diversity of culture, and gender being taken into consideration, based on the existing diversity dynamics in South Sudan.

- Equitable distribution of responsibilities and resources to realise partnership goal.

- Respect and recognition of partners' contribution to success of programmes to encourage pro-active participation among partners; this encourages localisation.

- Confidentiality to be taken into consideration to ensure there is trust in the partnership.

- Complementarity where all partners complement each other on the implementation of programmes.

- Mutual benefits for partners to ensure sustainability.

Other localisation initiatives and studies in South Sudan

Missed Out: The role of local actors in the humanitarian response in the South Sudan conflict[9] found that strong humanitarian partnerships in South Sudan had all benefited from significant investment including joint capacity assessments, training targeted at specific staff development needs, development of shared actions plans, secondment of key staff from the international to national NGO during first three months of response, progress tracking against indicators, and support for financial and logistical management tasks.

Supporting Effective Humanitarian Response (SEHP) is currently being implemented by the South Sudan NGO Forum as a pilot project. This is an initiative supported by Save the Children to strengthen the capacity of L/NNGOs through online capacity building using the experience of the Humanitarian Leadership Academy (HLA), a UK-based institution. By the end of the pilot project, at least 150 people shall be certified humanitarian workers in South Sudan.

Bridging the Gap project is looking at the role of local faith actors in humanitarian response. This initiative is led by Joint Learning Initiative on Faith and Local Communities (JLI) and supported by Tearfund Belgium, Tearfund UK, Islamic Relief Worldwide, RedR UK, and the University of Leeds[10]. The project will engage faith actors, including faith-based organisations (FBOs), faith leaders, faith communities and places of worship within the humanitarian sector. Among the activities are capacity building for faith-based actors, provision of grants to build organisational skills and apply for diversified funding, and research element to ensure learning is used to provide a way forward on progress of localisation.

South Sudan Women-led Organisations (SSWOP) is conducting a study to map out all the existing women-led organisations (WLO) in South Sudan to ensure that their views are captured at the grassroots levels. This coordination study is done in consultation with the NSC/CARE South Sudan and other actors. This is to increase advocacy on the inclusion of women-led organisations in the move towards localisation in South Sudan.

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[9] Christian Aid, CAFOD in partnership with Trocaire, Oxfam & Tearfund (2016) *Missed Out: The role of local actors in the humanitarian response in the South Sudan conflict*. Available online: http://bit.ly/2NLA2QT.
[10] Find out more about Bridging the Gap here: http://bit.ly/2OaDMdU.

Partnership practices for localisation: guidance note

More than 400 humanitarian agencies contributed to identifying the priority partnership practices for localisation; approximately 85% of them were local/national actors. The basis of the guidance note is the findings of the research conducted in Myanmar, Nepal, Nigeria and South Sudan in 2018 as part of the *Accelerating Localisation through Partnerships* programme. Research respondents, representing more than 350 agencies, highlighted partnership practices they believe are most conducive to localisation. This guidance note was further validated by participants of the three Grand Bargain Localisation Work stream regional conferences in 2019. All humanitarian stakeholders are urged to note the partnership practices below and make concerted efforts to action them, while keeping crisis-affected people at the centre of all responses.

Project and financial management

1. **Local organisations design projects and budgets** or co-design with international humanitarian actors who provide technical expertise on proposal writing and technical issues where needed.

2. **Local actors are treated as equal partners**, not as sub-contractors presented with already agreed projects and budgets. Partnership agreements include roles and responsibilities of *both* parties.

3. **Partners conduct joint monitoring visits** to beneficiaries, providing opportunities for joint reflection on progress, obstacles and required modifications. Local partners maintain relationships with local communities, and international partners and donor agencies visit communities in agreement with, or when accompanied by, local actors.

4. **International actors and donors are open to discussions on findings** from local partner monitoring, and allow flexibility to adapt programmes and budgets in response to evidence of changing needs and community feedback as much as is practicable.

5. **Project budgets include funds for local partners, relevant to the context and needs,** for: 1) reasonable overheads; 2) indirect costs (as % of project budget); 3) assets vital for project implementation, safety and/or organisational financial sustainability; and 4) organisational strengthening. Budgets should clearly show core funding allocations.

6. **All humanitarian actors follow ethical recruitment practices.** International actors attempt to keep salaries/benefits within as close a range as practicable to local actors. Local actors strive to support staff to do their job effectively and treat them fairly and equitably.

7. **All actors support the active participation of crisis-affected people** in project design, monitoring, implementation and evaluation. With particular focus on involving marginalised, minority and vulnerable groups such as women, children, and persons with disability.

8. **All humanitarian actors identify their added value in any partnership and work on the basis of complementarity**. International actors provide support to local partners based on demand (rather than supply); longer-term institutional strengthening support is generally preferred over short-term project-related support. Strategic partnerships tailored to partner needs, with complementarity identified before crises, are important.

Capacity strengthening and sharing

9. **Joint capacity assessments are conducted for both local *and* international partners**. Strengths are recognised, and gaps used to develop tailored, long-term, capacity strengthening/sharing plans which are shared with other partners to coordinate effective support and investment.

10. **Capacity strengthening/sharing plans are long-term, not solely based on project needs, and include comprehensive training and mentoring plans**. The most effective approaches are identified, such as secondments, mentoring, and on the job training, with follow up monitoring.

11. **International actors and donors include/allow capacity strengthening and organisational development budget line(s) in all projects and partnership agreements**. Ideally an explicit % of budgets and/or specific funds are earmarked for this. Local actors commit time and other resources to invest in their own capacity and organisational development.

12. **International actors assess their capacity strengthening skills**, and address gaps by either strengthening staff skills or investing in local training providers.

13. **International agencies show a clear intention to adopt an advisory, backstopping or secondary role once adequate local capacity exists**. Review and partner 'graduation' strategies are key.

Financing

14. **International actors and donors support local actors to build their sustainability** (including retention of key staff) by providing multi-year funds, allowing core funds in project budgets, and supporting local actors in income-generating activities or generating local funds.

15. **Local organisations actively participate in meetings, communication and coordination with donor agencies** to support relationship building, facilitated by international actors if needed.

16. **International actors credit the role of their local partners** in communications with supporters and donors, recognising the positive impact narratives have on reframing perceptions of local leadership of humanitarian response.

17. **Donor agencies coordinate to identify minimum standards for accountability and compliance**, reforming processes where necessary. International actors and donors support local partners to meet these minimum standards. Local organisations invest in meeting these standards.

Coordination

18. **International actors, particularly UN agencies and cluster coordinators, promote and facilitate active participation of local partners and other local actors in relevant coordination fora**, and ensure a diversity of organisations represented, including women-led/focused organisations.

19. **International actors highlight the role their local partners play** in partnership-based / joint humanitarian response at cluster and other humanitarian coordination fora meetings.

Safety and Security

20. **Training, advice and timely information on security and risk management, and safeguarding is provided to local actors** for operations in high-risk areas. Donors and international actors allocate funds/budget to establish and maintain sustainable national provision of such services.

21. **Local actors are involved in decision-making about security risk management with their international partners**, with adaptations made for local context as advised by local actors.

Advocacy

22. **International agencies support national actors to engage with the government**, when requested, to influence humanitarian response decisions to ensure effectiveness.

23. **Local actors are facilitated to connect crisis-affected people with relevant international actors and government authorities for advocacy** related to the humanitarian response.

For the Accelerating Localisation through Partnerships research reports, and global paper *Pathways to Localisation*, visit the webpage: caid.org.uk/54. Refer also to: Principles of Partnership (Equality, Transparency, Results-Oriented Approach, Responsibility, and Complementarity); Charter for Change; NEAR Localisation Performance Measurement Framework (Section 1: Partnerships); and Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability (CHS).

Capacity Assessment of Local and National NGOs

The *Accelerating Localisation through Partnerships* programme facilitated more than 40 local and national NGOs (L/NNGO) to conduct capacity self-assessments to inform this National Localisation Framework. *Accelerating Localisation through Partnerships* developed a hybrid tool adapted from five different organisational capacity assessment (OCA) tools including those from: Pact Inc., Save the Children International (SCI), NEAR Network, World Vision and CARE. The hybrid tool assesses eight dimensions of organisational capacity strengths and gaps, including: Governance, Leadership and Management; Strategic and Operational Planning; Human Resource Management; Programme Development and Management; Financial Management; Procurement Management; Administration and Logistics; and External Relations, Networking and Sustainability. The reason for a focus on organisational capacity (rather than technical or project-related capacity) was because this was an area which L/NNGOs who participated in the *Accelerating Localisation through Partnerships* research highlighted as something local actors valued highly in their partnerships with international actors.

Analysis of the L/NNGOs Institutional Capacity Gaps

Capacity self-assessment reports completed by L/NNGOs, and the in-depth discussions held during a programme workshop, allowed the following trends to be identified for the capacity development needs of local actors in South Sudan. However, it should also be recognised that local actors in South Sudan represent a wide diversity of experience, expertise, governance and capacity. Tailored capacity development plans which are developed through open conversations between partners are crucial. Therefore, the summary outlined below is a good starting point for prioritisation of capacity building initiatives, and presents the key capacity gaps that L/NNGOs face, and clear areas of strengths.

Governance, Leadership and Management

1. Lack of fundraising mechanism.
2. Poor communication between board and management.
3. Weak communication structures.
4. Lack of diversity of management staff and organisation boards.
5. Lack clear succession plan for board and senior management.
6. Limited adherence to organisational code of conduct and policies.
7. No regular meeting of board.

Strategic and Operational Planning

1. Limited fundraising strategies.
2. Poor proposal development and quality, and donor restrictions.
3. Annual work planning rarely reflects strategic plan priorities, vision and mission.
4. Limited focus of annual and strategic plan on gender transformation.
5. Inadequate review of performance of annual plans.
6. No clear feedback mechanism for communities and stakeholders.

Box 1: Strengths of L/NNGOs in South Sudan

Governance, Leadership and Management
Meeting of the board, networking with other NNGOs and good relationship with communities.

Strategic and Operational Planning
NNGOs have clear implementation frameworks, monitoring and evaluation plan, community mobilisation and reporting process.

Human Resource Management

1. Inadequate human resource policies and plans.
2. High corruption in recruitment.
3. Inadequate human resource skills.
4. Poor motivation of staff.
5. Weak teamwork.
6. Limited staff and volunteers.
7. No work place policies on safeguarding, HIV, PSEA.
8. Limited staff capacity in terms of skills and experience.
9. No confidential lock up for HR files.

Programme Development and Management

1. Weak research capacity for evidence-based programming.
2. Exclusion of beneficiaries.
3. Limited programme innovations for business development.
4. Weak MEAL system with disconnect from strategic focus and annual work plans.
5. Lack of innovative tools to monitor and measure women empowerment.
6. Data quality for accurate reporting (timeliness, integrity, reliability, precision and validity etc.).
7. Weak and limited policy advocacy for programme delivery.
8. Inadequate skill, experience and capacity in humanitarian thematic areas such as: cash programming, camp management, water and sanitation, gender-based violence (GBV) and protection, health and nutrition, gender in emergencies, and livelihoods and food security.
9. Inadequate embedment of sustainability mechanism into programmes.
10. Weak organisation capacity to develop quality proposals for funding.

> **Box 2: Strengths of LNNGOs in South Sudan**
>
> **Human Resource Management**
> Basic human resource policies, and the NNGOs volunteers
>
> **Programme Development and Management**
> Incorporating gender in programmes and diversity in approach of delivery.
>
> **Financial Management**
> Some NNGOs have chart of accounts, basic book keeping, authorisation matrix for funds, more than one signatory to bank accounts and basic per diem policy.

Financial Management

1. Lack of chart of accounts among most NNGOs.
2. Discrepancy in budgets and actual.
3. No social insurance for staff.
4. Inadequate audits.
5. Lack of funding to programme support.
6. No travel and per diem policy.
7. Limited audit both internal and external and sharing of audit recommendations.
8. No chart of accounts.

Procurement Management

1. No procurement committee.
2. No fraud reporting (whistle-blower) policy.
3. NNGOs do not follow their procurement policies.
4. Increased self-interest.
5. Lack of resources to build strong procurement system.

Administration and Logistics

1. Inadequate office space.
2. Inadequate security systems and mechanisms.
3. Lack of asset management and control policy or tool.
4. Lack of funds for equipment and to set up procurement system.

External Relations, Networking and Sustainability

1. No clear stakeholders' engagement strategy.
2. No contact list of key stakeholders.
3. Limited mechanisms to obtain relevant information from stakeholders.
4. No branding and visibility materials.
5. Limited mechanisms to engage private sector in fundraising activities.
6. No self-income generation activities to sustain the organisation.
7. Board members have limited skills and experience in resource mobilisation.
8. Poor coordination among NGOs sectors and UN agencies.
9. Delay in funding.

> **Box 3: Strengths of LNNGOs in South Sudan**
>
> **Procurement Management**
> Some NNGOs have basic procurement policies and procurement committees
>
> **Administration and Logistics and**
> Teamwork among staff, transparency and accountability, and guiding policies
>
> **External Relations, Networking and Sustainability**
> Collaboration and coordination with the different stakeholders, joint resources mobilisation and capacity building through trainings.

Capacity strengthening methodologies for L/NNGOs

During the capacity self-assessment, L/NNGOs developed their own capacity building plans and proposed ways to deliver such activities. Equally, L/NNGOs held group discussions during the workshop to assess how past capacity building methods have been successful and what should be done differently to enable and improve learning and practice of the skills. The following are some of the proposed methods for capacity building for L/NNGOs:

1. **Mentorship and coaching by INGOs on specific thematic areas**: most L/NNGOs value on-job mentorship and coaching by international partners as the most effective way to build local capacity of staff. This enables direct transfer of knowledge and skills through practice on the job. Many L/NNGOs want to see increased co-location, secondment and regular, technical on-job support to their staff and volunteers.

2. **Training of L/NNGOs staff and volunteers on key areas:** workshop based training still remains a relevant method for conducting capacity building, according to L/NNGOs involved in this process. Although this has been the most used method to date, L/NNGOs would like to see a shift to trainings based on the specific needs of the L/NNGOs staff or volunteers, rather than generic training.

3. **Online training and learning:** some training should be provided through online short courses and/or mentorship and coaching. L/NNGOs need tailored trainings that can be provided remotely with limited internet connection considering the challenges in connectivity across South Sudan.

4. **Building mutual relationships between INGOs/donors and NNGOs:** L/NNGOs believe that equitable relationships and strong partnerships can help them learn how to manage their organisations, implement project activities, and become sustainable. They consider constructive criticism, technical guidance and joint management of projects as key approaches for stronger partnerships that can help them improve their own ways of management.

5. **Exchange visits and learning platforms:** there is also a request for increased sharing and learning experiences between L/NNGOs themselves and with INGOs counterparts through participation in regular coordination platforms and continuous sharing of success factors. Such exchange visits must have clear terms of reference and intended results to be effective. L/NNGO representatives who take part in the exchange visit should be those directly involved in the daily activities of the organisation/programme, who will put the learning into action. Note: criteria for selecting participants to attend such learning opportunities must be clear and transparent.

6. **Sharing experiences and success stories:** sharing of L/NNGO success stories remains an important untapped source of learning. Most L/NNGOs have implemented a number of effective projects and may have developed institutionally over the years. However, there has been limited sharing of experiences and success stories between L/NNGOs. This is another capacity building method that L/NNGOs are interested in; promotion of peer learning from fellow L/NNGOs that have managed to grow despite the difficulties.

7. **Encourage partnerships between INGOs and L/NNGOs**: increasing strong partnerships between L/NNGOs and INGOs is also considered another approach for developing capacities of L/NNGOs. Such partnerships need to ensure joint action planning, project design and budgeting, and decision-making throughout the project management cycle as well as increased engagement between support functions of the INGOs and L/NNGOs to transfer best practices and build organisational capacities of the local partners. INGOs also have a lot to learn from L/NNGOs.

8. **Connect L/NNGOs partners to funding opportunities:** for many L/NNGOs, their ability to access (increased) direct funding from donors is considered a methodology for institutional capacity strengthening. Overhead costs for L/NNGOs being allowed enables them to invest in building internal systems, maintaining quality staff between projects, and acquiring necessary equipment to deliver programme activities effectively. Equally, funding availability enables L/NNGOs to increase their network with regional and global humanitarian actors that exposes them to discussions and humanitarian frameworks that enhance their donor compliance measures.

Priority capacity strengthening needs of L/NNGOs

The L/NNGOs involved in the capacity self-assessment process, developed capacity building plans and validated these during the workshop, which included identifying priority capacity strengthening areas as follows:

1. Financial management
2. Strategic planning
3. Procurement processes, procedures and system development
4. Monitoring and evaluation, and outcome harvesting
5. Community strategy and resource mobilisation

6. Provide access and information to professional trainings to staff to improve their skills and knowledge on thematic areas
7. Research and policy
8. Human resource planning and policy development, job description and recruitment
9. Teambuilding and diversity in multicultural work setting
10. Proposal writing
11. Transparency and accountability principles and requirements of donors
12. Project cycle management

In addition to the overarching institutional governance, leadership and management, and internal system training and mentorship thematic areas, the L/NNGOs also identified and prioritised support in technical capacities or skills important for effective humanitarian response in the following areas:

1. Networking with stakeholders.
2. Technical support in applying the 'accountability' and 'participation revolution' commitments with affected populations.
3. Building alliances and mitigate unhealthy competition among NNGOs.
4. Technical support on accountability, gender mainstreaming, community engagement, advocacy, and protection mainstreaming in relevant NNGOs programmes.
5. Participatory action planning.
6. Report writing and success story writing.
7. Financial system establishment and coaching.

Case study: Local NGO leads consortium after gaining skills through mentorship

Localisation becomes a reality as Centre for Emergency and Development Support (CEDS), a local NGO in South Sudan, takes the lead in accountability to affected populations in a consortium of 10 INGOs and 7 NNGOs.

In October 2018, Tearfund trained its partners in South Sudan on accountability, and provided smart phones to be used in collecting feedback using an online data collection software. The training enabled CEDS to step up its accountability systems and processes. Two months later, CEDS employed a full-time Accountability Officer separating the accountability role from the M&E functions of the organisation. Little did the organisation know that this initiative will later provide it the opportunity to lead a consortium on accountability.

In March 2019, South Sudan Joint Response (SSJR), a consortium of 10 INGOs and 7 NNGOs funded by the Dutch Relief Alliance (in which CEDS is a member through Tearfund) decided to assess the accountability mechanisms that the partners have put in place as they implement the SSJR project. The assessment highlighted that CEDS had the best accountability system and its system was selected as a model to be used by all the consortium members as they implement the SSJR project with CEDS as the lead. This is a testament to the fact that local organisations in South Sudan are able to lead when empowered and given an opportunity.

Lessons Learnt in Partnership Practices

As part of the *Accelerating Localisation through Partnerships* project, the consortium partners of CARE, Tearfund and Christian Aid were joined by Save the Children International, to pilot the research recommendations on partnership practices which support localisation with selected local partners. Changes in the partnership's effectiveness in programme delivery, and the positive influence of the pilot phase, was assessed. The following learnings were highlighted:

1. A stronger relationship was developed between partners through the pilot phase. During the joint development of the pilot action plan, local partners expressed a very good relationship with their international partners, and there was a strong belief of success in progress towards localisation by INGOs, as it was believed they are gradually getting more convinced with their local partners' support.

2. Confidence and trust building between the local and international partners increased throughout the pilot phase, leading to an increased willingness to share, learn and support each other. Local partners shared how their organisations have gained confidence from their partners, for example, through increased involvement in project proposal development.

3. Realistic capacity building plans were developed and owned by the local partners which led to training and mentorship being provided based on demand to address critical institutional capacity gaps identified. Mentorship was one method used and this improved accountability in the response as major events were done jointly. Consequently, this improved performance of the L/NNGOs in core functions as well as delivery of project activities.

4. There was increased engagement between international and local partners during the pilot phase; more technical assistance was provided, follow up meetings held, and remote conversations conducted. This had all been limited before the pilot phase. This increased engagement in addressing project challenges, capacity gaps and misinformation within the partnerships.

5. Responsibilities were shared in a more complementary manner, where INGOs took what was within their parameters while respecting their L/NNGO partner's responsibilities. Those involved, reported a shared sense of ownership and responsibilities for project activities as well as other functions that enhanced the partnerships. The local partners reported greater respect for their views and decisions on project matters which helped build confidence and ownership of the process.

6. Policy gaps were reduced among the local partners with the majority of the L/NNGO partners reporting that they had developed basic polices for areas such as security, safeguarding, finance and HR. The INGO partners worked with their local counterparts to support the development of these policies which helped address some of the compliance issues restricting the L/NNGOs.

Operationalising Localisation: Partner Implementation Matrix

Approach 1: Focus on capacity building and organisational development

These steps should ideally be taken by a collective of INGOs and L/NNGOs that are committed to fostering localisation, but they can also be followed by an individual INGO and their partner/s. The suggested steps below should be agreed jointly, and a steering/management group comprised of representatives from both/all partners established to design, monitor and evaluate the progress.

The organisations whose role it is to develop capacity must have the necessary skills for this; they may be INGO staff with proven skills in this area (some INGOs have a roster of trainers / capacity-developers or require certain staff / jobs to have capacity development skills) or external providers. It should not be assumed that all NGOs have the inherent ability to be a strong trainer or expert organisational developer; something mentioned in the research report also.

Approach 1: Focus on capacity building and organisational development

- Co-development of **draft text for Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) or partnership agreements / contracts** that reflect a 'new deal': the roles and responsibilities of both/all parties (not just of the L/NNGO) are specified, including how they relate to the goal of localisation; financial and other commitments by partners for capacity building and organisational development are documented; a monitoring mechanism for reviewing implementation of the commitments in the MoU/contract itself is included. Such text could be incorporated into agency partnership agreement templates, and used by L/NNGOs as a negotiating tool when engaging with new partners.

- **Development of engagement plan with key donors** present in-country so that local actors know how they work, and they can get to know each other, as a first step towards possible direct funding.

- **Research on international donors that might become open to funding L/NNGOs directly**, and how to access their funds, complete due diligence requirements, and learn about calls for proposals.

- **Support to L/NNGOs on how to calculate and set a justifiable overhead rate**, to be used/requested in all projects with future partners. This could include budget to retain key staff/pay volunteers' expenses for low-intensity activities in between project-based funding.

- **Provide training and mentorship on major donor requirements** for HR, finance, logistics etc. for local actors, so they can be prepared for future responses with international partners and as a stepping stone towards direct funding arrangements.

- **Conduct training and mentorship on fundraising from institutional donors** for local actors, e.g. writing proposals, drafting reports etc.

- **Give training and mentorship on risk assessment and security management** for L/NNGOs, provided by specialised external service providers with experience of humanitarian action if necessary.

- **Facilitate learning opportunities on MEAL**, through learning events, training, and mutual shadowing that build technical skills and bonds between L/NNGOs and INGOs.

- **Support L/NNGOs to develop a basic set of policies**, that meet L/NNGOs needs and those of potential donors, funders and partners, and support them to train staff on content and application.

- **Purchase a key asset**, such as an essential piece of equipment, vehicle or other, as identified by L/NNGO partners, as crucial to advancing localisation.

Approach 2: Integrate localisation-promoting partnership practices directly in response and recovery

The suggested steps outlined in the checklist below should be situated in the project management cycle and are the partnership practices that L/NNGOs in South Sudan considered the most conducive to localisation; or those which were highlighted as disempowering have been reversed to reflect the positive alternative. The steps should not be regarded as a blueprint for all partnerships; partners should openly discuss who does what based on their specific experience, knowledge and other capacities, without assumptions or pre-assigned roles. A starting place for all is to establish their added value to a partnership so that the partnership is complementary based on existing technical/sectoral skills relevant to the humanitarian crisis.

Approach 2: Integrate localisation-promoting partnership practices directly in response and recovery	
Processes 1 / 2: Assessment & Planning/Design	**Process 3. Start-up/scale up & Implementation**
- L/NNGOs and INGOs **discuss their approach to localisation,** to anchor the partnership on a common understanding of the goal and the process. They should also discuss humanitarian principles and how they understand them in practice and context. - L/NNGOs and INGOs both **undertake a rapid institutional capacity self-assessment** (potentially using the tool developed by the South Sudan NGO Forum). This should include assessment of the INGO's capacity-development skills (training, mentoring, etc.) for capacity gaps of L/NNGO. Partners should discuss the results and establish where they can complement each other and what external sources of capacity development support are required. This is important prior to creating the budget. **INGOs share the likely budgetary parameters** with the L/NNGO partner, with information about the donor(s) and their expectations and restrictions. - L/NNGOs and INGOs **agree on a budget for assessment** costs. The assessment methodology and scope is discussed prior by both partners and other stakeholders. The assessment team is led by the L/NNGO, with INGO participants advising/mentoring on technical/sectoral issues and facilitating coordination with international actors. **Partners jointly design the project** within established budgetary parameters, based on	- L/NNGO and INGO **recruit according to needs** (profiles) and market conditions. INGO staff may need proven capacity building and organisational development skills, as well as technical, coordination, MEAL and collaborative management skills. - L/NNGOs and INGOs **set up small project management team** with members from both partners to discuss challenges as they arise. **Use capacity self-assessment results to create a capacity development plan for L/NNGO partners**, using the budget line already approved for capacity building and organisational development. The plan should be tailored to the partner and the context. Topics might include security risk management, gender and inclusion, and technical expertise in areas as requested by the L/NNGO. It might also include mentoring/training on financial management. - L/NNGO and INGO agree how each contributes to MEAL and **arrange joint monitoring visits** at key intervals so learning is shared. - INGO and L/NNGO **establish schedule for project management meetings**, where monitoring results are shared, potential changes to the project design are discussed, and amendments to the budget are made (in consultation with donors as necessary). Accountability to the affected populations is the crucial element of such decisions. - L/NNGO and INGO discuss context and

local knowledge of L/NNGO and with technical inputs from INGOs as appropriate.

- **L/NNGO and INGO write the project proposal together**, while developing L/NNGO's proposal-writing skills in preparation for direct relationships with institutional donors.
- **L/NNGO and INGO jointly prepare project budgets together**, to include: a fixed overheads rate; all related HR costs (health, insurance etc.); all implementation costs, such as transport; contingency lines or in-built flexibility to adapt during implementation; market-based HR packages for L/NNGO staff; one significant material asset for L/NNGOs needed for this project that will save costs in the long term (e.g. computers, vehicles, equipment for a field office); local/national coordination activities and related costs, for both L/NNGO and INGO; and capacity building and organisational development costs.
- **L/NNGO and INGO both agree to the contents of, and sign, the proposal** after ensuring crisis-affected populations are in agreement, and send to donor for consideration.

establish security protocols and a schedule for mutual updates and sharing of lessons learned, including learning from the INGO from other contexts.
- L/NNGO and INGO sign **updated partnership contract**, to include the above agreements if necessary.

Processes 3 and 4: Implementation and Monitoring

- **L/NNGO coordinates with local authorities** and other local actors, and forms the bridge for INGO coordination/communication with government.
- INGO and L/NNGO managers **attend cluster / coordination meetings together, with a view to transitioning to L/NNGO to lead alone when appropriate**. Resources should be allocated for this participation where needed.
- Partners periodically **review commitments laid out in partnership agreement**.
- Partners periodically **monitor progress against commitments and capacity/organisational development plan**, and re-prioritise/plan as necessary, ensuring roll out to new staff.
- INGO and L/NNGO **jointly draft narrative report for donor, with the full report visible to both.**
- **L/NNGO completes financial reporting** using required formats, addressing feedback from INGO as needed.
- **INGO gives credit to its L/NNGO partner(s)** in all engagements at coordination fora, communications and media.

Processes 4 and 5: Evaluation and Transition

- L/NNGOs and INGO partners **plan handover to CSOs/the community/other actors**.
- Partners **evaluate the partnership**, including the affected population's views of the joint response.
- If both partners wish to continue in partnership and funding is available, **partners conduct a more in-depth capacity assessment** and explore steps in Path 1.

Conclusion

The main objective of the *Accelerating Localisation through Partnerships* programme in South Sudan was to provide evidence, and a platform, to facilitate conversations on the approaches and mechanisms that can be followed to scale up localisation of humanitarian interventions in the country. The research on partnership practices, the pilot phase, and the capacity self-assessment process, were critical steps in highlighting best practices and key actions that promote localisation within the South Sudan context.

The South Sudan Localisation Framework outlines the steps, evidence and strategic choices that local and national NGOs, international NGOs, UN agencies, and donors can adopt to improve their engagement with local actors to ensure humanitarian response is effective, efficient and locally driven.

International partners, especially donors, have the leverage to ensure active participation and involvement of local actors in the humanitarian architecture is realised in South Sudan and around the world. Localisation will be achieved when there is active involvement of all relevant stakeholders in the humanitarian sector. Advocacy will be needed at country level to ensure progress in decision-making and funding processes; in particular with the UN system through the Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO), Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP), and UN Country-based Pooled Fund (CBPF) (the South Sudan Humanitarian Fund (SSHF)). Donor investment in, and commitment to, localisation remains critical as well as encouraging INGOs and UN agencies to ensure there is adequate representation and they follow fair partnership practices. Encouraging consortium building between INGOs and local NGOs may be one way to support this. Donors need to have a clear engagement plan with local actors at country level, to build confidence and understanding on issues that affect the ability of local NGOs to access funding directly.

International NGOs and UN agencies must focus on capacity building and organisational development for local actors they work with, and foster genuine partnerships to advance localisation. Building a culture of collaboration in partnerships is critical for INGOs to embed joint planning, budgeting and decision-making into their Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) or partnership contracts / agreements to support L/NNGOs genuine participation in projects. It also means supporting the L/NNGOs in budgeting and project design especially the ability to calculate and set justifiable overhead rates to charge to projects, training in major donor requirements, support on fundraising activities, capacity strengthening on risk assessment and security risk management, facilitating learning opportunities on MEAL, and supporting the development of a basic set of organisational policies. The South Sudan Localisation Framework provides a useful tool for these agencies to plan for, and monitor progress against, partnerships which are more complementary and reinforce existing local capacity.

Local and national NGOs are also encouraged to take deliberate steps to self-assess their capacity strengthening needs, to invest in building their own internal systems and capacities, and to mobilise resources nationally. Findings of capacity assessments is useful for negotiations with existing and potential international partners and this proactiveness supports their quest to be a strong, sustainable organisation which meets the needs of crisis-affected populations. The South Sudan Localisation Framework provides a useful tool for these actors as a basis for discussions and negotiations with international actors: donors, INGOs, and UN agencies.

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Front cover photo:
Displaced women return to Bor, a city in South Sudan's
Jonglei State, which has been the scene of fierce fight-
ing in recent months between the country's military and
anti-government rebels.

ACT Alliance/Paul Jeffrey