

## Learning Review

### Lesson from ongoing pilots to support community-led response to crisis of the Linking Preparedness Response and Resilience (LPRR)

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#### 1. Introduction to the pilots

The LPRR<sup>1</sup> supported 7 local NGOs in Kenya and Myanmar to develop and pilot operational methodologies for supporting integrated community-led responses to humanitarian crises.

The project was funded by the START network through UK aid and was led by Christian Aid.

The approaches tested by the project were based on the research carried out by Kings College London (KCL), on the on-going action-research of carried out by Local to Global Protection<sup>2</sup> (L2GP) and on the ideas, capacities and contexts of the LNGOs themselves.

The pilots test the application of the recommendations made by communities as captured by the KCL research of how to improve humanitarian programming.

This learning paper summarises the key findings to date from seven of these pilots in 3 local organisations from Marsabit County of Northern Kenya<sup>3</sup>, two from NW Myanmar (Rakhine State) and two from SE Myanmar (Kayah and Kayin States).

Given the small budgets for the pilots and the very short timeframes for their completion, they are the first step for the seven LNGOs to test and develop some of the components of the emerging 'practice' for facilitating locally-led emergency programming (as summarised in Figure 1)

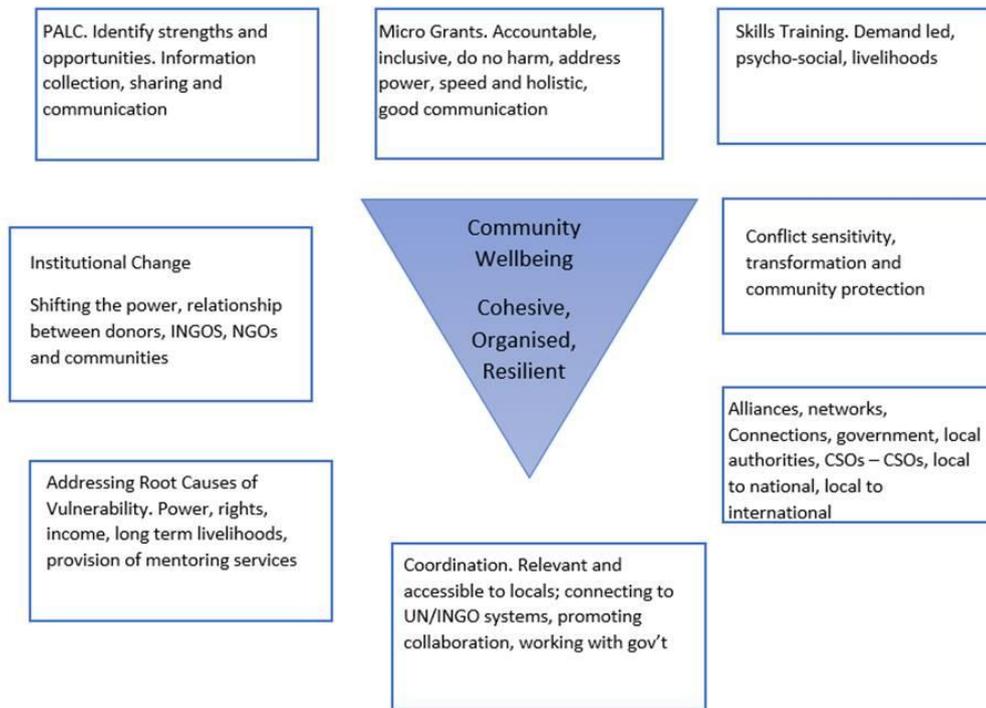
<sup>1</sup>“ Linking Preparedness, Response and Resilience” a DEPP funded, multi-agency project , led by Christian Aid

<sup>2</sup> L2GP: Local to Global Protection initiative([local2global.info](http://local2global.info))

<sup>3</sup> Three further pilots, funded directly by CAFOD in Maralal, Isiolo and Marsabit have only recently started and thus are not included in this paper.



Figure 1 Key components of an emerging practice to support community-led response to crises



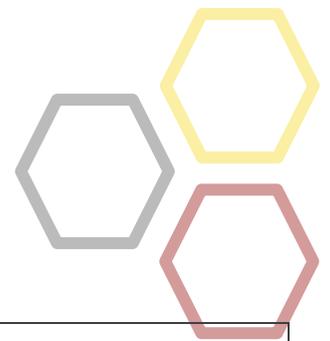
**1.1 Methodology**

Each of the 7 LNGOs had sent between 2 to 5 team members to participate in the original six-day co-design/training workshops held in September and October 2017. Each LNGO received approximately \$10,000 to cover all programming, operational and management costs of the pilots which they subsequently carried out the between January and March 2018 with little or no further support.

Local to Global Protection (L2GP), worked in collaboration with LPRR to design the working methodologies and facilitate the co-design/training workshops. It also facilitated a session on capturing the lessons from the pilots using teams of independent national social researchers. A simple methodology was applied using key informant interviews and focus group discussions with the participating communities and their self-help groups and CBOs (i.e. the grantees of micro-grants awarded); the LNGOs facilitating the pilots; local Government representatives and Christian Aid staff. The social researchers also had access to the internal reports and documents coming from the pilots.

**2. Context and focus of the pilots**

All seven LNGOs were already operating in areas with on-going humanitarian crises as summarised below in Box 1. All the LNGOs had a mix of experiences and capacities in providing both short term relief and in implementing longer-term projects of a more developmental nature.



**Box 1 Nature of protracted crises in the pilot areas**

- Northern Kenya (Marsabit County): protracted drought during to climate change coupled with weak public service delivery resulting in devastating collapse of local livelihoods, severely reduced access to clean water, armed (inter-tribal) conflict over depleted natural resources
- North West Myanmar (Rakhine State): Structural poverty due to historic marginalization, poor economic opportunities and weak public services critically exacerbated by severe complex political emergency and armed (inert-religious and ethnic) conflict.
- North East Myanmar (Kayah and Kayin States): Structural poverty due to historic marginalization, poor economic opportunities and weak public services critically exacerbated by protracted civil war and significant increased frequency of annual flooding and landslides (due to a mixture of climate change and large-scale upstream deforestation)

The participating LNGOs were free to make decisions in relation to: the allocation of the pilot funds provided by Christian Aid, the aspects of the approach they wanted to apply and test and how and where they wished to do so. In the end, all seven pilots included (indeed, focused on) two core components of the approach (Participatory Action Learning in Crises (PALC)<sup>4</sup> and the use of emergency group micro-grants). In addition, each LNGO also explored one or more of the following additional components: rapid skills training, provision of psycho-social support, conflict sensitive programming and coordination with local Government.

Most LNGOs opted to select a target area (comprising 5 to 15 villages or nomadic camps that were known to be particularly disaster prone and where the LNGOs had prior experience or knowledge) and facilitate a series of community level meetings to introduce the core aspects of the approach for supporting locally-led crisis responses. Leaflets were also posted up in key locations explaining the approach (including the application process for micro-grants). The LNGOs followed the procedures they had developed in the original workshops to manage an emergency micro-grant scheme for local CBOs and self-help groups (existing and emergent). In most cases, the micro-grants awarded ranged from \$700 to \$1,500.

Box 2 below provides a summary of the interventions carried out.

To ensure that feedback was available in time for this final report to DEPP, all LNGOs had to complete their pilots and submit their own internal reports by the end of January 2018. All seven LNGOs complied with this tight deadline and showed focus and high performance in the successfully completing of their pilots in time for the 3<sup>rd</sup> party lesson capture to be undertaken during February/March 2018.

### 3. Summary of Lessons to date

#### 3.1 Overview

two sets of learning were generated:

- i. those related to the **efficacy of the practice** itself and the extent to which it contributed (or not) to improving the immediate well-being and strengthening longer term resilience

<sup>4</sup> “Participatory Action Learning in Crises”, PALC Is used as a short-hand to refer to a mix of processes to enable community-managed information systems that enhance appreciate inquiry, mobilisation, targeting, accountability, conflict-sensitivity and experiential learning.



- ii. and those related to the strengths and weaknesses of the **process of initiation** and how INGO and LNGO staff were capacitated to understand and facilitate the practice (from the co-design/training workshop onwards).

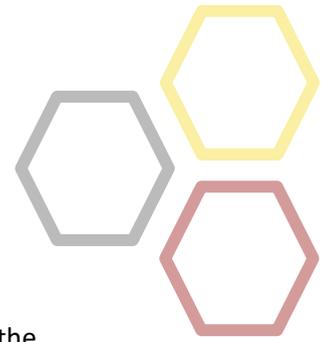
These are examined in more detail below, but the overall findings from these pilots to date are that the practice itself is proving effective at improving immediate responsiveness, speed and cost-effectiveness of interventions while indicating additional benefits to psychosocial recovery and social cohesion. It is too early to assess evidence of changes to longer-term resilience, but there are indications of positive impact on increased capacity to cope, adapt and recover. Communities described improved cohesion and a spirit of collective self-help, increased confidence in managing group projects, practical on-the-job lesson learning, greater attention to ensuring disabled people were involved and frequent examples of women empowerment and shifts in gender norms.

*“The project has exposed and educated us. Initially it was like we were in class one but now we are in class 2.” – Chairlady of Turbi Women’s Group, Marsabit.*

Another women group (Kalesa Self-help) in Northern Kenya explained that initially the men didn’t think their project (local shop to avoid 18km walk to nearest market and raise funds for maintaining water silos) was a good thing but after seeing the benefits, if anything is needed, the men sell their goats and give the women the money they need. This group describes the benefits of local ownership in terms of ease of self-mobilisation and speed of action: *“When people are called, they respond differently. Other projects within the community have taken time to materialise but this one, we were able to implement our planned activities immediately.”*

Similarly, more time (and greater scale) is needed to determine how the approach can generate any lasting transformative processes that successfully tackles the root causes, although encouraging signs are giving by a number of peace building interventions and by the extent to which women took active, decision making roles in community interventions. That said, a reoccurring finding from all 7 pilots (and one that resonates with experiences from other countries where this approach was tested such as Philippines, OPT and Sudan) was that the very limited amount of funds (approximately \$10,000) and time (approximately 3 months) prevented the full potential of the practice to be developed and, in some cases, led to changes to the agreed approach that reduced opportunities to test what had been envisaged. Thus, some NGOs felt unable to allow a fully open process of inviting applications for microgrants, while in other cases fixed micro-grants were offered to simplify the allocation of the very small funding pot. *“Organizations should give grants based on our budgeted needs. This project is our choice, we are working hard to make it work. Even when we sleep we have this project in our mind.”* Some of the processes that take longer to establish (e.g. establishing new coordination systems, building on opportunities to address root causes) were not given much attention in the short time period available.

In terms of introducing the approach to INGOs and LNGOs for the first time, the experience indicates that the process of an initial co-design/training workshop followed by immediate testing is appropriate. However, there is much room for improvement to the workshops and providing more on-the-job, practical coaching to initiate the pilots. Furthermore, in line with the “Action Learning Research” used by LPRR (and the learning-by-doing inherent in the emerging practice), it is important that the participating LNGOs and



INGOs are supported to internalise the lessons captured from the pilots and address the weaknesses and opportunities revealed in the methodology and in its practical application.

### 3.2 Strengths and weaknesses of the emerging practice

Using the systems and skills developed in the co-design workshops and the resources provided by the pilots, the 7 participating LNGOs were able to directly support (with mobilisation, connecting, micro-grants and skills training) a total of 27 self-help groups, community-based organisations and village committees from crisis affected communities (villages and nomadic settlements). These in turn were able to provide direct benefits to some 1,820 crisis affected households. The majority of interventions were related to livelihood recovery and livelihood diversification (about 65%), a smaller amount to enabling access to key services such as clean water, education, retailers of basic commodities (about 25%), about 15% to direct short-term relief (food/cash) and 2 directly to peace building.

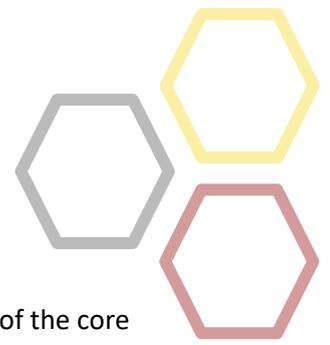
The most obvious immediate improvements on conventional externally-led aid relate **to responsiveness, speed and cost-efficiency**. Almost all communities highlighted the benefits of being able to manage the funds themselves to obtain what *they* needed, quickly and at costs below what outsiders could achieve using voluntary labour and locally available transport. *“The office doesn’t know what we want, we know what we want.....We know where to buy goods at a cost-effective price”. “When we buy everything for ourselves, we ensure the right type and quality; if we want spare parts we know where to buy them”. “We can’t plan our lives with support from other projects because we don’t know when it will come. Sometimes they say they are coming but delay for even three weeks.”*

The range of livelihood interventions was considerable (see Box 2) but required no time-consuming or costly needs assessment and avoided the ‘one-size fits all’ tendency of externally-led relief responses. The pilots demonstrate that the use of emergency micro-grant systems and a mix of rapid and community-managed mobilisation, appreciative inquiry and accountability processes, self-help groups were able to rapidly elaborate their plans and submit their proposals<sup>5</sup>. Similarly, on being awarded a micro-grant, recipients immediately carried out their projects without any institutional delays. Local implementation offered value-for-money as the grantees felt a strong sense of ownership (it was now ‘their money’ they were spending), had no additional management or administration costs and were often able to find cheaper options for goods and local transport than those incurred by external actors.

#### **Box 1 Range of livelihood interventions initiated by SHGs**

Extensive rat pest control; weaving and marketing traditional mats; local shops of essential household commodities; brick-making; butchering and meat storage and marketing; livestock feed production; trading in shoats; fish storage and marketing; fish net production, chicken rearing; starting rotational savings and loan groups; camel milk storage and marketing; pig rearing; cycle repair shop; banana seedling production; agricultural seed supply.

<sup>5</sup> The use of publically posted notices and rapid information meetings by just 2 LNGOs with settled and pastoralist communities in Northern Kenya generated over 120 plans for self-help initiatives within a week.



The fact that so many of the communities focused on **livelihoods** (they had full freedom to select any intervention, including direct relief distribution) speaks to one of the core principles highlighted by the findings from the KCL research carried out for LPRR and others<sup>6</sup>, that recognises that people in distress will always try to recover their own self-reliance rather than become dependent on others *if* they have the chance to do so.

Similarly, the impacts of so many of the local initiatives were varied and reflect the relevance of aiming for improvements in the broader sense of “**well-being**” rather than the more narrowly defined “humanitarian” (e.g. shelter, food, watsan etc) outcomes often prescribed by externally-led projects. Thus in addition to increased disposable income from new or strengthened sources of livelihoods, positive impacts included: reductions in inter-tribal, ethnic, religious conflicts; improved access to basic household commodities; reduced stress and depression; increased time available for productive activities (not spent walking to very distant water sources, shops etc); money saved by producing cheaper local products (livestock feed, fishing nets); food supplies saved from pests; school fee payments allowing children from poor households to continue schooling; increased confidence of women; access to clean water.

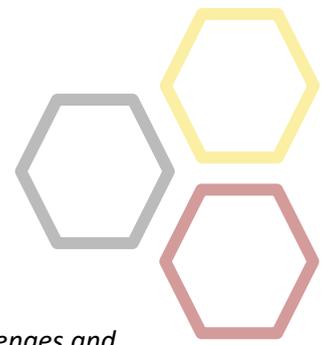
It is too early to comment on the sustainability of the micro-enterprises initiated through these interventions. However, in several cases LNGO spoke of the perceived need for more effective skills training in **marketing** for local SHGs. In some cases, LNGOs also felt that additional rapid training was needed to help local groups plan more systematically about how best to avail of limited resources to make the most impact through more effective and analytical **project planning**.

By offering group grants (rather than household cash transfers), it was possible to maximise opportunities for collective action by groups. From all pilots, feedback indicates that participating communities appreciated the level of **community cohesion and collaborative self-help** that was promoted by the approach used. Several alluded to secondary psychosocial benefits and in the pilots where LNGOs provided (very basic) additional training in strengthening psychosocial recovery (e.g. through local agency, inclusiveness, listening skills etc.), local recognition of the **psychosocial** impacts were still more pronounced. Many spoke of the **mental relief** accruing from coming together in groups and actually experiencing successful outcomes from their own efforts.

*“We know each other and if we know a member is badly off we talk to her and contribute to support her. In our meetings we also talk about our problems and advice each other. If a member needs something, we contribute, if one is not comfortable to share their problems, we send a member she trusts to talk to her”.*

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<sup>6</sup> See for example the various case-studies documented by L2GP ([local2global.info](http://local2global.info)); ALNAP’s 2014 conference proceedings on “Engagement of crisis-affected people in humanitarian action” ([alnep.org/140310program.pdf](http://alnep.org/140310program.pdf)); the multiple case-studies on use of micro-grants in “Smart Risks” edited by Jennifer Lentfer & Tanya Cothran (Practical Action, 2017); ILO’s report on community use of remittances in crisis “Policy implications for disaster risk management” (Policy Brief Series, Issue 2, Vol. 1, March 2015); various case studies in Groupe URD’s special issue on Aid Localisation released in January 2018 (see: [urd.org/Humanitarian-Aid-on-the-move-no19](http://urd.org/Humanitarian-Aid-on-the-move-no19))



One woman also from Marsabit observed:

*“it [the approach] has helped me and other women to come together and share challenges and opportunities available to overcome stress which if we stay alone leads us to depression. I have personally received psychological support from group members (who had also lost livestock during the drought) through the group formation around the micro grant project initiatives”.*

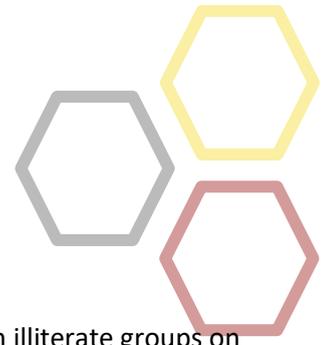
There were no examples of friction caused either between groups or between family members (even though in one pilot alone in Marsabit, over 60 applications for micro-grants were received but only 4 awarded due to shortage of pilot funds).

Much of the social research highlighted the strong sense of local ownership felt by the self-help groups involved and indicated the importance of this not only to operational effectiveness but also to issues of pride, self-worth and local-mobilisation for further self-help initiatives. Several indicators of effective **peace building** initiatives and outcomes arose from the pilots. In northern Kenya, two micro-projects looked specifically at conflict resolution, with one woman’s group also challenging gender norms as female ‘peace ambassadors’ started peace dialogues with their husbands and male children in a time of escalating tribal conflict. An encouraging example (attributed to orientation on listening and empathy provided by the LNGO facilitating the process) of challenging religious divides also arose in one of the Rakhine communities where a male participant had a motorcycle accident with a Muslim youth and instead of blaming and creating trouble for him, responded with sympathy and care – recognising that this was ‘new behaviour’ for him.

The pilots revealed that in most cases it was existing SHGs and CBOs that applied for and received support with relatively few examples of new emergent (pop-up) groups. This may well reflect the fact that in all cases, responses were to protracted crisis rather than new, sudden-onset emergencies. LNGOs did feel that in the majority of cases, the rapid **training in financial management** that was delivered was necessary. At the same time, the **local systems of accountability** used (in these particular pilots all based on transparency, largely through community meetings and publicly posted information) were sufficient. One LNGO recruited a range of community members into the panel reviewing proposals from SHGs which they found very effective. There were no cases found of any instances of weak accountability, indications of misuse of funds or related concerns around misconduct. One group describing the local systems of accountability (for a shop they had started to reduce marketing time and generate funds for community infrastructure) was fairly typical:

*“We know the price of the items and we also know what was bought... but we go with the youth who can write everything. Then we hold public baraza’s [meetings] to inform the larger community what has bought, what has been sold and the profit made”.*

The LNGOs felt that the procedures for appraising proposals and the criteria used were also effective in avoiding possible risky applications from newly formed, grant-induced (“carpet-bagger”) SHGs. Micro-grants were provided either through banks, through local financial services or directly as cash. There were also no instances of insecurity related to transfer of grants. Several groups described how it had been school children or youth who had alerted them of the initial fliers that had been posted to advertise the scheme and how they used educated youth to help them with reading and writing reports, doing accounts



At the same time, more than one LNGO commented on the challenge of working with illiterate groups on **financial record keeping** and requested more help on how to deal with such cases.

Given the small scale of the pilots, it has not been possible to comment with confidence on issues of inclusion or exclusion and targeting. However, many of the pilots do reveal **effective community-based targeting** based on need. There are several examples of where people living with disabilities are prominent members of SHGs supported and/or where agreed % of profit income from micro-enterprises are earmarked for provided household support to PWLDs and other most needy. At the same time, the shortage of funds made available resulted in all pilots highlighting the extent of unmet needs and exclusion and the difficulties encountered in having to make targeting decisions where the available resources fell so far short of the actual need.

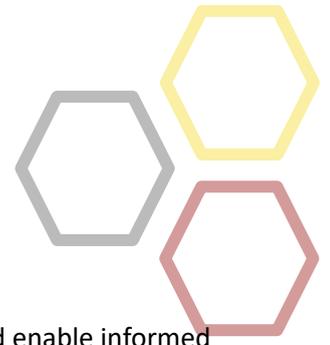
It is also encouraging to see that the approach performed well in terms of **inclusiveness of SHGs**. Several of the groups that used micro-grant successfully to generate multiple impacts were largely or totally comprised of illiterate members or other groups often excluded (e.g. women-headed households, people living with disabilities, HIV/AIDS positive). Many of the groups supported were the sorts of very local, informal, unregistered, embedded groups that are usually invisible to external actors.

The opportunities for local agency and micro-grants to **leverage additional support** were apparent in several of the pilots. Whether this came from autonomous community contributions (in kind, labour or financial) or from the LNGO **actively connecting** groups to other actors<sup>7</sup>, several pilots revealed that the process of enabling networked self-help led to greater support than that original provided.

A recurring theme across many of the pilots was the positive outcomes on **women empowerment**. The majority of SHGs were either all women groups, or predominantly female. This appears to be a result of a mix of factors: the approach itself is sensitised to supporting women-led initiatives, women are often more effective in forming and working in groups than are men, men were in some cases absent (seeking work or engaged in failing livelihood activities). These pilots are far too small and short to anticipate any significant transformative impact from their outcomes alone, but the indication is there that enabling community-led crisis response may contribute to changes in local gender norms.

Many of the pilots indicated the important **capacity (and confidence) building experience** for local SHGs of actually planning and implementing their own projects themselves. While in itself a positive impact contributing to increased resilience, all involved were frustrated by the lack of funds to enable 2<sup>nd</sup> cycle grants that could allow such learning-by-doing to be used to allow more effective interventions in the short term. Similarly, several LNGOs indicated that they were unable to provide the level of mentoring, follow-up and facilitated learning that they felt was needed to allow the full benefits of such **experiential learning** to be realised in practice.

<sup>7</sup> Examples include: the LNGO DEAR Myanmar connecting villagers in Kayan State with experts from the Disease and Pest Management Section of Department of Agriculture (DoA) to provide technical training and traps; the LNGO CIFA connected 1 group to livestock health trainers in the local DoA and three groups to existing successful SHGs in other towns to learn from their experiences.



As a cross-cutting set of tools providing the core “software” to mobilise, promote and enable informed inclusive, accountable self-help and learning, it appears that the **PALC** (see Box 3 below) shows promising signs as being much needed, relevant and largely fit for purpose.

However, there were a great variety of experiences amongst the different LNGOs and there is room for improving the content-especially the initial training on how to apply PALC in practice. When more resources and time are available to support LNGOs in longer term support for community-led crisis responses, PALC should also include more attention on helping SHGs think about root causes of their vulnerability and how to tackle them.

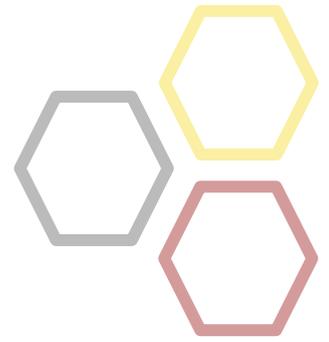
**Box 3 Core functions of a complete PALC process**

1. **Appreciative inquiry and dissemination** – seek out existing examples of coping and opportunities for increasing self-help and spread information, knowledge, ideas, experiences, self-mobilisation
2. **Informing** existing or emerging groups about community led response and how to apply for assistance to carry out their own initiatives (whether they want training, micro-grants, mentoring or connections).
3. Identifying to local ways of ensuring **accountability and transparency** for community micro-grant disbursement
4. Identifying risks or cases of **exclusion** of HHs in particular need and informing relevant responsible actors
5. Seeking out opportunities for **women, youth or other marginalised** to fulfill their potential as local leaders
6. Strengthening **do-no-harm** and conflict sensitivity by alerting community led response facilitators to risks of contributing to conflict, and also to opportunities for avoiding and transforming conflict
7. Collecting basic information for **rapid needs assessments** if needed by NGOs or authorities to inform proposals and plans for external interventions.
8. Facilitating **evaluations and learning** from micro-grants and disseminating lessons locally
9. Starting community conversations about longer term resilience and **addressing root causes**; encouraging people to look at longer term issues and opportunities
10. Seeking out opportunities for community-based **coordination and information hub** where relevant data collected through PALC can be stored and made available to relevant actors

**Coordination with local government** was seen as a positive outcome of the approach in several of the pilots, with several examples of improved working relationships between relevant arms of local government and community SHGs arising. In South Eastern Myanmar, the role that Government played in providing effective technical training on coordinated rat control and use of different traps was particularly important. It was also clearly beneficial to have Government officials participate in the original co-design/training workshops. Indeed, in many ways it would be exciting to see local Government actually managing the process themselves in collaboration with local NGOs.

3.3 Learning about how to introduce INGOs and LNGOs to the emerging practice

The LPRR project generated valuable experiences in terms of *how* best to build the confidence, mindset and capacities of L/NGOs and INGO teams to best participate in the process of developing and testing methodologies for supporting community-led responses to crises. Working to get the initial co-



design/training workshop to reflect the context, capacities and relationships of the agencies involved is crucial. Indeed, the facilitators involved consider that many of the comparative levels of success encountered in the different pilots may be as much a reflection of weaknesses in the initial co-design/training workshops as of emerging practice being tested: how they were facilitated, who participated and what was focused on.

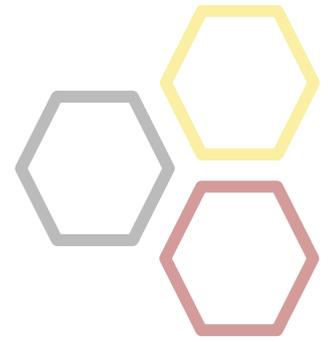
The core challenge experienced by the facilitators was in trying to change the mind-set of the staff of both the INGO and NNGOs about what is allowed in terms of “humanitarian” response and about the relationships they have with each other and with communities in crisis. NGO staff are so used to accepting certain normalised, externally-led ways of responding to humanitarian crisis, that convincing all involved that it is reasonable, even permissible, to try things differently is not easy. Furthermore, as all involved gradually internalise that they will be *losing* a certain amount of power as a result of adopting community-led systems, there can also be some resistance to some of the changes being proposed resulting in the shift in power falling short of reaching crisis affected people. Similarly, it is also important that the additional “intra-community” step is taken to ensure that no such blockages to participation occur at community-led level. The initial co-design/ training must highlight the need to support multiple grass-roots leaders rather than just work through the often hierarchical, male-dominated power systems that can sometimes constrain local creativity and accountability.

This in turn needs to be reflected in the ToT provided during the workshop aimed at enabling PALC facilitators (from the NNGOS) and PALC volunteers (from the community) to prioritise such issues of inclusivity and power sharing.

Once all involved are clear that what is being proposed is not only a paradigm shift in how we respond to emergencies, but a change that is also approved and *desired* by those providing the funds (which is where the power rests: whether with the back donor, the INGO head office, or the INGO country office) then the actual programmatic and technical side of the co-design/training becomes much more effective. This point was also raised by the findings of the KCL research that INGOs and donors must start to respond structurally to the demands of survivors to lead their own responses.

While the basic model of an initial co-design and training workshop followed by immediate piloting appears to have been relevant, the experiences to date have generated the following recommendations for strengthening impact:

- Ensure that you have the right participants at the workshop: include senior decision makers from the LNGOs and from local Government as well as the relevant team members who will implement the work on the ground with communities. In addition, 2 or more representatives of the existing local CBOs or SHGs from communities where the LNGO is already working and
- Carry out the workshop in a venue as close as possible to the target areas (and context) where the approach will be used. Avoid doing it in distant capital cities or grand hotels.



- Ideally, co-design and training would be with just 3-6 people from 1 LNGO. This would then allow the process to move between the workshop venue and the villages/camps themselves, so that practical engagement with communities can become part of the 'learning-by-doing'<sup>8</sup>. When this is not possible prioritise more time for role-play and especially for demonstration of key parts of the PALC process
- Ensure that funds are in hand for immediate piloting after the co-design workshop and, as recommended below, ensure that they are sufficient to avoid some of the problems encountered with this first LPRR project.  
The limited amount of funds that were available forced some of the pilots to be much more prescriptive in how they should be used and by whom than envisaged by the original concept. This is in part because of their worries that the competition (and inevitable exclusion) that would occur if a more open approach were used when the funds for awarding micro-grants were so limited could have increased intra-communal tension.
- For a number of reasons there was very little real-time mentoring provided to the 7 LNGOs when they were carrying out these pilots. Providing supportive and experienced real time mentoring could add significant value to the on-the-job aspect of developing the practice.

#### 4. Implications and recommendations to date

Despite the challenges resulting from limited funds and time, the seven pilots go a long way to validate the original findings of the KCL research carried out through the LPRR project. They demonstrate the multiple benefits of supporting crisis affected communities to identify and manage their own emergency responses

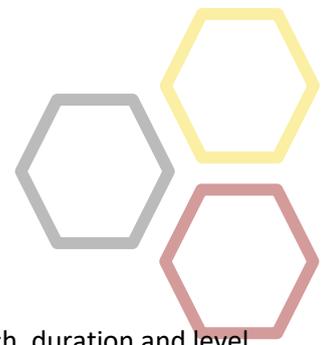
while also showing how process of accountability, inclusion, community cohesion and psychosocial recovery can be developed and strengthened through such locally-led approaches.

The prevailing focus on livelihood recovery is very obvious, but the pilots also indicate how communities can integrate conflict transformation into their more holistic 'humanitarian' responses to start addressing root causes. We also see how effective coordination with local duty bearers in Government can arise from these locally-led crisis responses.

However, it is also clear that the pilots were too short and small scale to generate the evidence base needed to really understand the full potential, the limitations and optimal means of supporting community-led responses to humanitarian crisis. There is strong case for providing continued support to the 7 LNGOs in Kenya and Myanmar to build on their initial experiences and enable them to significantly scale-up. To date,

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<sup>8</sup> This was the approach taken by L2GP when working with Palestinian LNGO EJ-YMCA in the West Bank of Palestine: 1<sup>st</sup> two days in the training room, 3<sup>rd</sup> day in the villages, 4<sup>th</sup> day back in the training room, 5<sup>th</sup> day back in the villages, 6<sup>th</sup> day in the villages etc.



there are few examples of these approaches being used at scale<sup>9</sup> (in terms of outreach, duration and level of financial investment) and these pilots provide an important opportunity to fill this gap. The LPRR action-research shows how even the small-scale introduction of locally-led approaches act as a catalyst for promoting further self-help, helping communities (and INGOs and LNGOs) to see themselves not as helpless victims but as active leaders in their relief and recovery. There is an important but possibly short-lived opportunity to build on this momentum created by the 7 pilots.

Similarly, there is a risk that without rapid expansion of the work started by LPRR and KCL, the inertia to change inherent in current humanitarian aid systems could result in the seven LNGOs and the country offices of Christian Aid to reverting to ‘business as normal’ – with the externally-led model will prevail. One of the facilitating NNGOs from Myanmar noted *“it would need more time applying the approach to bring about a real change in current aid relationships between the INGO, the NNGOs and the communities. They all need to see that this is not just a one-off experience”*. Another highlighted the importance of continuing and scaling up the approach to deepen the impact of resilience building with local communities:

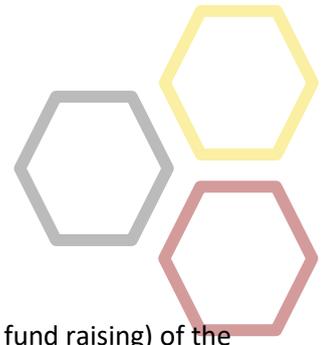
*“... they [the villagers] gained experience and confidence gradually throughout the implementation process, but in order to maintain and enhance this momentum, it is necessary to provide further support to these communities”*.

Similarly, a NNGO from Marsabit emphasised that *“more time and support is needed to derive [full] learning from the experience”*.

With this in mind, the authors of this paper (who undertook the social research involved in this initial capturing lesson capture from the pilots) note the following additional opportunities for building on the action-research initiated by the 7 LNGOs and the LPRR project:

- Convene as soon as possible some sort of ‘post pilot learning and redesign’ event in the two countries with the seven participating NGOs (this is much needed if the lessons from the initial experiences supported by LPRR are to be capitalised on).
- Rapidly design a programme for allowing the same NGOs to continue the approach but at a significantly greater scale. This would allow all stake-holders to better understand the “spring board” nature of survivor-led group action at a time of crisis to initiate longer term collective action to deal with deeper issues and address root causes.  
Strengthen initial training on PALC to ensure that appreciative inquiry, mobilisation, inclusion, connecting, learning and addressing root causes are given equal importance to micro-grant disbursal
- Respond to demands for further skills training as already apparent from lesson capture, including further training on marketing for rural micro-enterprises in Kenya, on PALC process in Myanmar, on supporting illiterate groups to generate proposals, reports and accounts, on local leadership, on experiential learning

<sup>9</sup> One example is providing by the locally-led response to cyclone Nargis supported by the NNGO Paung Ku, described in the 2009 ALNAP Humanitarian-Exchange (No. 41): “Helping the heroes: support for a civil society emergency response after Nargis”; pages 23-26 of 2009 (see [alnap.org/cyclone-nargis-response](http://alnap.org/cyclone-nargis-response))



- Work with other departments (including programme, financial management, fund raising) of the INGOs and back donors involved to ensure that all stake-holders have a solid understanding of the approach
- Link with on-going locally-led initiatives being supported by Christian Aid and other INGOs in other countries where similar approaches are now being tested and rolled out<sup>10</sup>
- Continue to explore opportunities for breaking down barriers between ‘humanitarian’, ‘protection’ and ‘development’ programming within INGOs and donors and build on the mechanisms tested in these pilots to allow resilience-strengthening to become central to crisis response
- Seek/create opportunities to support local Government to manage their own support for community-led crisis response (using PALC, micro-grants etc) in collaboration with local NGO

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<https://www.christianaid.org.uk/about-us/programmes/linking-preparedness-resilience-and-response-lprr>

<https://www.local2global.info/>

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<sup>10</sup> For example, in the Philippines (through the LNGO ECOWEB and its international partners); in Palestine (through the LNGO EJ-YMCA and its international partners); in Myanmar with other LNGOs already using locally-led approaches.