

# Role of civil society platforms in coordinating disaster risk reduction and post-emergency interventions

## Research report, findings, and draft proposals for toolkit

14<sup>th</sup> May 2020

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## 1. Executive summary

This report is produced in line with the project specification as agreed in the revision of 18<sup>th</sup> December 2019. (Stage 10: *'Production of research report, findings, and draft proposals for toolkit and presentation to Steering group'*).

Initial research for this project recognised that many platforms do not have an explicit focus on disaster risk reduction, response and recovery. Research also suggested that an important entry point for such platforms might be the relevance of addressing the small scale extensive 'everyday disasters' which undermine development gains from their work in sustainable development and climate change adaptation.

Further consultation through questionnaires highlighted the comparative emphases of CSO platforms who are members of Forus with GNDR platforms who have a more explicit focus on DRR, response and recovery. This research resulted in hypotheses concerning the opportunities and challenges for platforms in responding to disasters and these hypotheses formed the basis of consultations with platform members to gather richer experiential learning from their work

Analysis of all the above research and complementary desk research resulted in production of a series of six case studies illustrating diverse contexts and civil society actions in relation to disasters. It highlighted challenges of securing civil society identity and participation, the value of partnerships, coordination and collaboration, and the importance of founding action and advocacy on local knowledge, needs and priorities.

The analysis generated a series of findings relating to platform roles in intensive and extensive disasters, which in intensive disasters highlight effective coordination, collaboration and communications between all actors, the challenges of CSO exclusion from these processes and the role CSO platforms play in strengthening CSO inclusion in disaster response. In extensive disaster contexts findings emphasised the value of local knowledge and peer to peer learning between CSOs. It was also found that CSO platforms play an important role in advocacy based on this knowledge and that effective DRR underpins integrated approaches to development. Finally CSO Platforms also play a significant role in capacity development for integrated approaches.

The report proposes a structure and contents for a toolkit to support CSO Platforms in effective disaster risk reduction, response and delivery. This is derived from the findings of the research, identifying topics relevant to platforms. These are outlined and a web microsite giving flexible and tailored access to the content is proposed, complemented with the facility to download offline versions of the content.

An underlying theme of the research is that while many platforms do not see themselves as concerned with disaster risk reduction, response and recovery in this focus is relevant to an integrated approach to development, underpinning work in sustainable development and climate change adaptation.

## 2. Introduction

From project inception this project has proceeded through a number of research stages responding to the original terms of reference and original agreed proposal from Inventing Futures

### 1a. Initial findings regarding DRR, response and recovery orientation of platforms

The project design was revised after initial desk research<sup>1</sup> in the light of research findings that the majority of Forus member platforms did not have an explicit focus on DRR, response or recovery from disasters. The approach was therefore revised to profile the broader activity of platforms, recognising that their activities in sustainable development, climate change adaptation, civil society strengthening etc. may include implicit examples of involvement in DRR, response and recovery and that these might address extensive (or 'everyday' disasters) which lead to a significant proportion of losses, as well as the more visible intensive disasters. We also agreed to consult GNDR platforms as well as Forus platforms, given that the former were more likely to have specific experience of DRR, response and recovery.

### 1b. Profiling the orientation of Forus and GNDR platforms to DRR, response and recovery

The report builds on the previous report 'Identification and Profiling of Platforms' (12<sup>th</sup> February 2020). This report was based on questionnaire consultation of 35 organisations and found that while many platforms do not demonstrate specific emphasis on DRR – the concern of this study – they do consider threats to development. *Climate change* is a dominant concern in many contexts, and indeed is prioritised by a number of GNDR platforms, and the *nexus of climate change and DRR* is also considered by several platforms. *Sustainable Development, Climate Change, Poverty and DRR* interlock. It also noted that many platforms emphasise *coordination*. The importance of *shared action* and *support* varies depending on the group of platforms, related to their respective missions. Learning between platforms whose working methods are contrasted in this way may aid understanding of how these different methods can be relevant to all platforms. Finally, the example comparison and dialogue between NFN and the GNDR Nepalese platforms (led by NSET) suggests insights and horizontal learning between these two organisations providing broader insights into strategies and tactics for effective coordination and mobilisation of member CSOs; whether in narrowly defined DRR and response or more broadly defined reduction of erosion of development gains.

### 1c. Consultation with platforms in line with the stated objective: 'To research the role of civil society leaders in coordinating disaster risk reduction and post emergency interventions'<sup>2</sup>

The aim at this stage of the project was to consult with between 10 and 20 organisations<sup>3</sup> in order to gather richer qualitative case study material providing information in line with the

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<sup>1</sup> Desk Research and Geographical Focus: Submission to Steering Committee. 11<sup>th</sup> December 2019

<sup>2</sup> Contract: 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2019. Page 5.

project objective. This stage has been undertaken with adaptations resulting from the constraints of the COVID-19 pandemic<sup>4</sup>, which made the group webinar approach originally envisaged logistically impossible, so that in most cases material was gathered through individual consultations.

We were able to consult with 18 of the 22 potential participants agreed with the Forus secretariat (13 March 2020). In each case we had at least one discussion of approximately 1 hour duration which was recorded and transcribed. In several cases we had follow-up communications and in one case were able to organise a further discussion between two organisations in Columbia.

The detail of this approach appears in the methodology below and findings from this phase follow.

### 3. Methodology

The methodology is designed to address the objective as stated in the ToR for the project:

*'The objective of this project is to research the role of civil society leaders in coordinating disaster risk reduction and post-emergency interventions''*

It meets this objective through a participatory action research approach with civil society leaders, emphasising the active contributions of all participants in presenting accounts of actions, shared critical reflection on these and co-creation of knowledge from experience. The research is entirely qualitative in nature and a *hybrid grounded theory* approach has been adopted.

In an entirely grounded approach no hypotheses are established and observations and theories emerge from the qualitative data gathering and analysis.<sup>5</sup> However in reality no research is hypothesis free and learning proceeds iteratively through single, double and triple loop learning.<sup>6</sup> In participatory action research an important element is iterative consultation of participants or 'member checking'<sup>7</sup>.

This project has therefore adopted a hybrid approach where hypotheses have formed the basis of investigation, but are modified in response to the data gathered at each stage. For example an initial hypothesis was that platform members would provide information on DRR, response and recovery. However desk consultation found this not, generally, to be the case. This and other factors led to evolution of a new hypothesis involving investigation of

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<sup>3</sup> Contract: 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2019. P8. Agreed revised proposals of 18 December 2019 specify 'approximately 20 organisations' (P2)

<sup>4</sup> See note on COVID-19 in Annex

<sup>5</sup> GLASER, B. and STRAUSS, A. (1967) *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies For Qualitative Research*. New York: Aldine. STRAUSS, A. CORBIN, J. (1990) *Basics of qualitative research: Grounded theory procedures and techniques*. Thousand Oaks, US: Sage Publications.

<sup>6</sup> ARGYRIS, C & SCHON, D. (1974) *Theory in Practice. Increasing professional effectiveness*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

<sup>7</sup> YIN, R. (2003). *Case Study Research Design and Methods* (3rd edn.) Thousand Oaks. US: Sage. (page 97)

*implicit* involvements in DRR, response and recovery which was investigated during the questionnaire phase. This led to further development of hypotheses as a basis for further consultations, which were expressed for internal use by the researchers in two conceptual diagrams (*See Annex 1: Hypotheses informing consultation phase*). These diagrams expressed interrelationships identified in the initial phases of the research, and were used by the researchers to sensitise them to themes to be explored in consultations, without constraining them from exploring the topics and themes emerging during consultations.

Consultations were based on recorded skype calls with participants, in most cases one-to-one (*see section 5, 'Limitations'*). In one case a three way conversation was arranged between the researcher and two participant organisations in Columbia. An attempt to have a thee way conversation with CCOD and the Cercle des Droits de l'Homme et de Développement in Congo Brazzaville failed, although one to one conversations continue.

The participating organisations are detailed below:

Forus platforms	GNDR platforms	Country
VANI	UDYAMA	India
	PREDES	Peru
ASONOG		Honduras
CCONG	Fundación Azimuth.	Columbia
UNNGOF	Deniva, Humanitarian Platform	Uganda
NFN	NSET	Nepal
CCOAIB		Rwanda
CCOD	Cercle des Droits de l'Homme et de Développement	Congo
NAHAB	Participatory Development Action Program.	Bangladesh
FECONG	AFAD	Mali

A record of the schedule of recordings is included in Annex 7.

The recordings of consultations were transcribed, initially using machine transcription software and then manually checked and revised. Where necessary they were also translated so that the research phase could be conducted in English. Selected country contexts were used as a basis for drawing on conversations with participants in those countries and complementary research data to produce a series of six case studies depicting CSO platform experiences in relation to intensive and extensive disasters (*See Annex 2: Case studies*).

The next phase of hypothesis generation was based on comparative qualitative analysis of all conversations, employing an informal coding method<sup>8</sup>, leading to a series of findings, detailed below in section 5, which form the basis of proposals for toolkit production

<sup>8</sup> YIN, R. (2003). *Case Study Research Design and Methods* (3rd edn.) Thousand Oaks. US: Sage. (page 110)

answering the project objective *To research the role of civil society leaders in coordinating disaster risk reduction and post emergency interventions*, by producing a ‘best practices sharing tool’ based on the aim of the research: ‘to understand which factors led to successful coordination between national civil society organizations prior to, during, and after disasters. This will include (but is not limited to):

- governance structures
- prevention / mitigation actions
- modes of communication
- national programs put in place
- partnerships formed
- policies or legislation drafted and implemented by local and national governments’<sup>9</sup>

The research methodology will continue to be based on this iterative loop learning approach, researching with participants, as the findings and content proposals are in turn offered to participants for feedback.

#### **4. Limitations of the report**

A principle of the research was ‘research with’ rather than ‘research for’ and this approach is felt to be valid and relevant in developing peer to peer learning from practitioners. The following limitations to the report are identified:

1. Participative research is valuable in examining complex phenomena and drawing on experiential learning. However it is dependent on relatively limited sampling compared with quantitative methods and is also dependent on analysis and interpretation. Nevertheless a qualitative method such as is employed here is most effective where the data is complex in nature rather than simple and causal.
2. The DRR orientation of participants was limited and this restricted the contributions of Forus members in particular. However the research recognised that a DRR orientation was implicit in broader development work so study was extended, with a focus on everyday disasters alongside intensive disasters.
3. The COVID-19 pandemic coincided with the research period, with a majority of participants in lockdown and often experiencing limited communications as a result. Making contact was therefore more time-consuming than expected and the logistical challenges of connecting two or more participants simultaneously led to most consultations being one-to-one. *See the note on COVID-19 in Annex 5*

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<sup>9</sup> Contract: 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2019. P6

## 5. Case Studies

Information from consultations conducted with Forus and GNDR platforms, combined with desk research was used to compose a series of six case studies (*See Annex 2 for the full studies*):

- 1: Columbia - In the wake of the war: Strengthening Civil Society responding to disasters
- 2: Dhaka, Bangladesh - Responding to everyday disasters in city slums
- 3: India - Top Down and Bottom Up responses to disasters
- 4: Mali - civil society in the firing line - the consequences of conflict
- 5: Nepal - Facing the earthquake - civil society facing intensive disaster
6. Uganda - linking disaster response from local to government level through partnerships

The cases highlight a number of themes relating to the roles of platforms in disasters which are analysed in further depth in the findings (Section 6):

### 5a. Distinction between roles in intensive and extensive disasters

In intensive disasters, such as those discussed in the Nepal and Uganda cases, CSOs become part of a response involving national and international actors. In contrast in the case of extensive, everyday disasters little or no attention is paid by such actors and the roles of CSO platforms, as in the Columbia and Dhaka examples, are quite different.

### 5b. Coordination and communications roles in intensive disasters

Intensive disasters demand rapid and coordinated response which emphasises the ability of CSO platforms to create effective coordination and communication at all scales, national to local. The multi-organisation structure in Uganda is an example of this, as is the wide reach of the Indian CSO Platform

### 5c. Managing relations with government and international actors

While relationships with government and international actors are often constructive there are also challenges. The work of the CSO Platform in Bangladesh illustrates the need to establish equitable relationships with international actors, as does the emphasis of the CSO Platform in Columbia on strengthening relationships with government. The challenges faced by CSOs in Mali in distinguishing between security and humanitarian action and the risks they face as a result are a very particular example of challenges faced in securing civil society space.

### 5d. Ensuring that response leads to sustainable recovery after intensive disasters

Whilst an intensive disaster unlocks emergency response, as in Nepal, India and Uganda, long term commitment to sustainable recovery is often weaker and the complementary 'top down' and 'bottom up' roles depicted in the India case illustrate the necessity for sustainable recovery as well as short term response

## **5e. Limited awareness of the nature and impact of extensive disasters on local populations**

The small scale ‘everyday disasters’ experienced in many contexts are often not well understood. The Ugandan and Malian VFL studies, and the experience of urban informal populations in the slums of Dhaka demonstrate the prevalent impact of such disasters

## **5f. The role of platforms and members in gathering and sharing local knowledge of extensive disasters**

The case studies show how platforms and their members are able to engage locally, gathering and sharing local information, in Columbia, Nepal, Mali and Uganda for example, as a prerequisite for both appropriate action and advocacy

## **5g. The need to advocate for effective response to extensive disasters**

Knowledge gathered and aggregated by platforms through local involvements and through formal programmes such as Views from the Frontline is the basis for making invisible everyday disasters visible, as emphasised by the Columbian, Bangladeshi and Ugandan platforms for example.

## **5h. Resource mobilisation for extensive disasters**

Away from the publicity and crisis of an intensive disaster resources are much harder to attract for integrated responses to everyday disasters. The Nepalese GNDR platform acknowledges the challenge of securing resources which are not projectised or time-limited and this is echoed by the Columbian and Malian platforms, for example.

These cases depict particular contexts and the iterations between CSO platforms and other actors facing the challenges of both intensive and extensive disasters. The conversations which formed the foundations of these case studies were qualitatively analysed, along with contributions from platforms in Rwanda, Republic of Congo, Peru and Honduras. This analysis led to the detailed findings presented in the following section.



## 6. Findings

The findings documented in the report are based on the consultations carried out during March-May 2020 (*detailed in section 4. Contact records in Annex 7*)

Findings from the consultations are supplemented by the previous desk research and questionnaire consultation with 35 organisations, and by other relevant resources including in particular the GNDR 'Coherence Cookbook' (2019). 13 findings are summarised under titles which emerged from the qualitative analysis of transcripts and draft case studies (See *Annex 3*):

1. Capacity building of CSOs before intensive disasters.
2. Knowledge brokering between actors for intensive disasters
3. Communications and intensive disasters
4. Managing the influx of external actors – 'Surge' in intensive disasters
5. Managing resource flows in intensive disasters
6. Manage relationships between CSOs and National and Local government for intensive disasters
7. Support sustainable recovery long term after intensive disasters
8. Place an emphasis on gathering, aggregating and sharing local knowledge to address everyday disasters
9. Peer to peer knowledge sharing unlocking experience from individual CSO in addressing everyday disasters
10. Advocacy to local and national government and international actors for support for everyday disasters
11. Resource mobilisation for everyday disasters
12. Integrating Disasters and Development as a response to everyday disasters
13. Capacity building for local action in response to everyday disasters

### 5a. Summary of Findings

The findings are set out below. Findings 1-7 pertain to intensive disasters and findings 8-13 to extensive or 'everyday' disasters as it has been found that the roles of CSO Platforms and members are quite different in the two contexts. More detail on the findings is provided, including supporting data summaries drawn from transcripts, case studies and complementary research which underpin each finding in *Annex 3*.

## 1. Capacity building of CSOs before intensive disasters.

**Finding:** In order to strengthen CSOs response in intensive disasters, capacity building *before* the event is vital, but often under-resourced. Platforms address this challenge with an emphasis on capacity building to improve the ability of their members to act as credible actors, form partnerships, access resources and participate in clusters and other groupings

## 2. Knowledge brokering between actors for intensive disasters

**Finding:** CSOs often have limited access to knowledge. Platforms can initiate mapping and surveying activities, create collaborations and hubs to strengthen knowledge sharing and also support formalisation of knowledge in training resources and events

## 3. Communications and intensive disasters

**Finding:** Communications before disasters need to be developed to ensure that all relevant actors are well connected and that other opportunities for communications and influence, for example via the media are exploited. During a disaster this preparation needs to be complemented with technical solutions to ensure that communications are not disrupted, and also that communities themselves are included in communications and guidance

## 4. Managing the influx of external actors – ‘Surge’ in intensive disasters

**Finding:** When an intensive disaster strikes local CSOs are often ‘swamped’ by the large-scale response including international actors, but this creates problems when the initial surge is complete and continuing response and recovery is left to these local organisations. Platforms can strengthen relationships and local partnerships as well as taking advantage of emphasis on localisation to transform surge response

## 5. Managing resource flows in intensive disasters

**Finding:** Access to resources is a challenge for CSOs and platforms play important roles in negotiating funding with government, INGOs, other donors and private enterprise, improving the application of funding to match local priorities and needs

## **6. Manage relationships between CSOs and National and Local government for intensive disasters**

**Finding:** Effective coordination depends on building good relationships with local and national government before disaster strikes. Platforms can engage at government level to build relationships and institutions forging trust and understanding, making a clear 'value offer' from CSOs to government

## **7. Support sustainable recovery long term after intensive disasters**

**Finding:** The intensity of the response and recovery phase of an intensive disaster can obscure the need for recovery to be based on 'building back better' which is a developmental and integrated approach. Platforms can strengthen the role of CSOs to pursue long-term sustainable development and livelihood resilience which ensures that communities 'bounce forward' after a disaster

## **8. Place an emphasis on gathering, aggregating and sharing local knowledge to address everyday disasters**

**Finding:** 'Everyday disasters' are complex and valuable information about them is often found locally from communities and local CSOs working with them. Organising and communicating this information is an important first step for action and relationships with external actors who have limited understanding of local contexts need to be carefully managed, ensuring local voices are heard

## **9. Peer to peer knowledge sharing unlocking experience from individual CSOS in addressing everyday disasters**

**Finding:** Concerning everyday disasters, relevant actionable knowledge often comes from local experience and is held by CSOs. Platforms can play an important role in creating opportunities for that knowledge to be shared between CSOs and at higher levels

## **10. Advocacy to local and national government and international actors for support for everyday disasters**

**Finding:** The needs and priorities of local populations are often 'invisible' in local and national government planning and policy and where everyday disasters are concerned it is important that this knowledge is made visible. CSO platforms can play an important advocacy role here concerning everyday disasters

## 11. Resource mobilisation for everyday disasters

**Finding:** Much humanitarian funding is controlled by international actors and projectized. Appropriate funding for response to everyday disasters needs to be locally accessible and flexible, based on mechanisms to pool and distribute local funds.

## 12. Integrating Disasters and Development as a response to everyday disasters

**Finding:** Integrated approaches to development which include disaster risk reduction can strengthen sustainable development. Enabling this requires tackling the challenges of project based funding and also forging partnerships such that CSOs can collaborate in integrated approaches

## 13. Capacity building for local action in response to everyday disasters

**Finding:** Capacity building can improve operational response of CSOs. Importantly it can also improve the visibility, credibility and influence of CSOs through improving accountability and governance.

### 5b. Observations on Findings

**Findings concerning intensive disasters** (Findings 1-7) – events which result in large scale disruption and typically invoke emergency legislation – indicate that effective coordination, collaboration and communications between all actors is paramount. CSOs are sometimes excluded from these processes and CSO platforms play an important role in strengthening the inclusion and participation of CSOs in disaster response. As an adjunct to immediate response, capacity building of CSOs before disasters is essential as when the disaster happens it is too late to undertake this. Evidence also shows that whilst immediate response may be effective limited consideration is given to long term sustainable recovery which would result in ‘bounce forward’ rather than ‘bounce back’ and CSO platforms and their members play a key part in both advocacy and action for sustainable recovery.

**Findings concerning extensive disasters** (Findings 8-13) indicate that local knowledge and peer to peer learning between CSOs are both important in understanding extensive disasters as these are typically context specific, multi-causal and are also much less visible than intensive disasters. CSO Platforms can play an important role in making local needs and priorities more visible to local and national government through advocacy and can also press for resource provision. Though many CSO platforms do not explicitly focus on disaster risk reduction, response and recovery it is important to recognise that effective DRR underpins integrated approaches to development and should therefore form a component of sustainable development. CSO Platforms also play a role in capacity development for integrated approaches.

A table cross-referencing the findings to the case studies is included in *Annex 6*.

## 7. Discussion

Observations on the case studies and findings have been made in sections 5 and 6 above. This further discussion is framed by the question ‘What do the case studies and findings indicate would be relevant elements of a *toolkit to support a civil society leader platform in emergency prevention / mitigation and emergencies*<sup>10</sup>,

The initial research phase<sup>11</sup> found that a majority of Forus members do not have an explicit focus on DRR, response and recovery, and therefore the toolkit should be generally produced in a form accessible to a wide range of users without such specialist knowledge, and should also provide material giving an outline of concepts, terminology etc. relating to DRR, response and recovery to disasters.

This research phase also distinguished between intensive disasters, which in many regions are infrequent and not part of the ‘everyday business’ of CSOs, and extensive ‘everyday disasters’ increasingly recognised as having a more persistent impact on the lives and livelihoods of vulnerable populations. Considering CSO platform roles in relation to both types was therefore proposed.

The second research phase, based on questionnaire consultation of 35 participants from Forus and GNDR platforms<sup>12</sup>, is discussed in section 1b of this report. It found that many platforms have a primary concern for addressing sustainable development and climate change adaptation. It therefore suggested that an entry point for a toolkit might draw on the significance of the DRR/Sustainable Development/Climate Change Adaptation nexus, making the point that for platforms not concerned with intensive disasters an understanding of DRR, response and recovery in relation to extensive, ‘everyday’ disasters was nevertheless important as without this development gains tend to be eroded by the shocks and stresses of such disasters. This understanding might also be an element of the toolkit.

The third research phase based on consultations with participants and qualitative analysis of these discussions has generated case studies and detailed findings which concern coordination and communications in the case of intensive disasters. Enabling factors also include strengthening Civil Society recognition and roles among the many national and international actors who engage in intensive disasters and championing sustainable recovery rather than just short response. Regarding extensive disasters it highlights the role of CSOs and Platforms in gathering, using and advocating on the basis of local knowledge, needs and priorities. Platforms also have a role in strengthening the capacities and identity of CSOs, particularly where governments and other actors undervalue or even undermine civil society.

The findings (*Section 6 and Annex 3*) form the basis for a series of specific resources in the toolkit providing guidance on the topics identified in those findings

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<sup>10</sup> Contract. 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2019. p7.

<sup>11</sup> Desk Research and Geographical Focus: Submission to Steering Committee. 11<sup>th</sup> December 2019

<sup>12</sup> ‘Identification and Profiling of Platforms’ (12<sup>th</sup> February 2020)

In summary the case studies and findings suggest that the toolkit should be designed to be accessible to non-specialists, should provide material giving orientation on disaster risk reduction, response and recovery, should meet the needs of those addressing intensive disasters, and also of those more typically concerned with everyday disasters, and should provide material reflecting the key findings identified above.

## 8. Proposals for Toolkit production

### 8a. Toolkit Content Outline

- The content is specified below, followed by a proposal for delivering the content via a microsite as well as for download as PDFs.
- *In the content outline below sections numbered 1, 2 etc. are separate sections and sections numbered a, b, c etc. are separate sections. Each individual section is a web page with a corresponding downloadable PDF. Each section will be between 400-1000 words approx.*

#### **Section 1: ‘The Disasters Primer’: Orientation on DRR, response and recovery for non-specialists**

- Do Disasters Matter?
- Disasters and Development
- Disasters and Development are linked
- Civil Society Platforms and Large Scale Disasters
- Civil Society Platforms and smaller scale and slower developing disasters
- Reducing the impact of disasters
- Mobilising communities and engaging governments
- Integrated action

#### **Section 2: Platforms responding to Disasters. What action can they take?**

- Roles include coordination, knowledge gathering and sharing, advocacy and influencing, bridge-building between different actors and coordinating shared actions
- These roles are different in responding to different disaster types: Intensive, Extensive and Slow Onset

#### **Section 3: Platform roles in response to intensive disasters**

Section 3a. Capacity building of CSOs pre-disaster. Much evidence shows this is often lacking and means CSOs have limited capacity when disaster strikes

Section 3b. Knowledge brokering between actors – matching up needs, priorities, resources, personnel, etc.

Section 3c. Communications – bridge-builder ensuring all voices are heard and important information reaches those who need it

Section 3d. Managing the influx of external actors – ‘Surge’ – to ensure they engage properly with local contexts, and support local actors rather than swamping them

Section 3e. Managing resource flows: Influencing the provision of resources to ensure they meet needs appropriately

Section 3f. Manage relationships between CSOs and National and Local government to ensure coordinated action and give CSOs a voice

Section 3g. Support sustainable recovery long term – after the surge support is often short term and on the ground CSOs need support to maintain longer term recovery resulting in ‘building back better’

#### **Section 4: Platform roles in response to everyday and slow onset disasters**

Section 4a. Place an emphasis on gathering, aggregating and sharing local knowledge as the starting point for understanding priorities, needs and actions to address everyday disasters (i.e. activities such as VFL)

Section 4b. Peer to peer knowledge sharing unlocking experience from individual CSOS and sharing it to strengthen all

Section 4c. Advocacy to local and national government and international actors for support for these ‘under the radar’ disasters

Section 4d. Resource mobilisation: Acting to access resources to support local actors and local communities in resilient livelihood building to counteract everyday disasters

Section 4e. Integrating disasters and development: integrating action on disaster risk reduction and management with action on climate change adaptation to support sustainable development

Section 4f. Capacity building for local action. Providing knowledge and organisational development support to enable local CSOS to act effectively

#### **Supporting sections**

- How this toolkit was developed
- How to use the toolkit
- About us
- Contact us
- Glossary of terms

#### **Format for accessing the toolkit**

- We propose a suite of web pages as the main access to the toolkit. This may form a micro-site as part of the Forus website
- The front page will allow users to access the specific information relevant to them in concise sections
- The main material will be supported by a glossary of all terms and short summaries of key features of the contributing platforms
- There will be rich hyperlinks in each section linking users to other relevant sections, the glossary and information on contributing platforms
- There will also be a pull down menu allowing users to pose questions relevant to them and be directed to relevant sections
- All sections will also be downloadable as PDFs
- The site will be available in English, Spanish and French

See mock-up of possible format for the home page of the toolkit microsite in *Annex 4*



## 9. Next steps: Timetable for completion of toolkit

As previously discussed there have been a number of delays to the progress of the project. As the budget and resource input are fixed it is not possible to flexibly extend the project and a fixed timetable is important to managing the project. The researchers offer to move the deadline back from 26<sup>th</sup> June to 17<sup>th</sup> July.<sup>13</sup>.

Produce report and draft and present to SG (10)	15/05
Summary version of toolkit content outline and supporting report produced and circulated to a range of CSO platform practitioners ('expert group') for comment on content and format (11)	20/05
Feedback on report received from SG	22/05
Feedback received from consultation to CSO practitioners and shared with Steering Group. (12.13) <i>(Researchers will proceed during this period with developing the toolkit content, revising it if necessary in line with feedback received from practitioners)</i>	27/05
Full toolkit content produced and presented to SG (14,15)	29/05
Feedback from SG (16)	05/06
Presentation of final draft to Steering Committee ((17)	10/06
Translation (18)	26/06
Design and Artwork (19)	10/07
Contingency time allowance	17/07

## 10. Conclusion

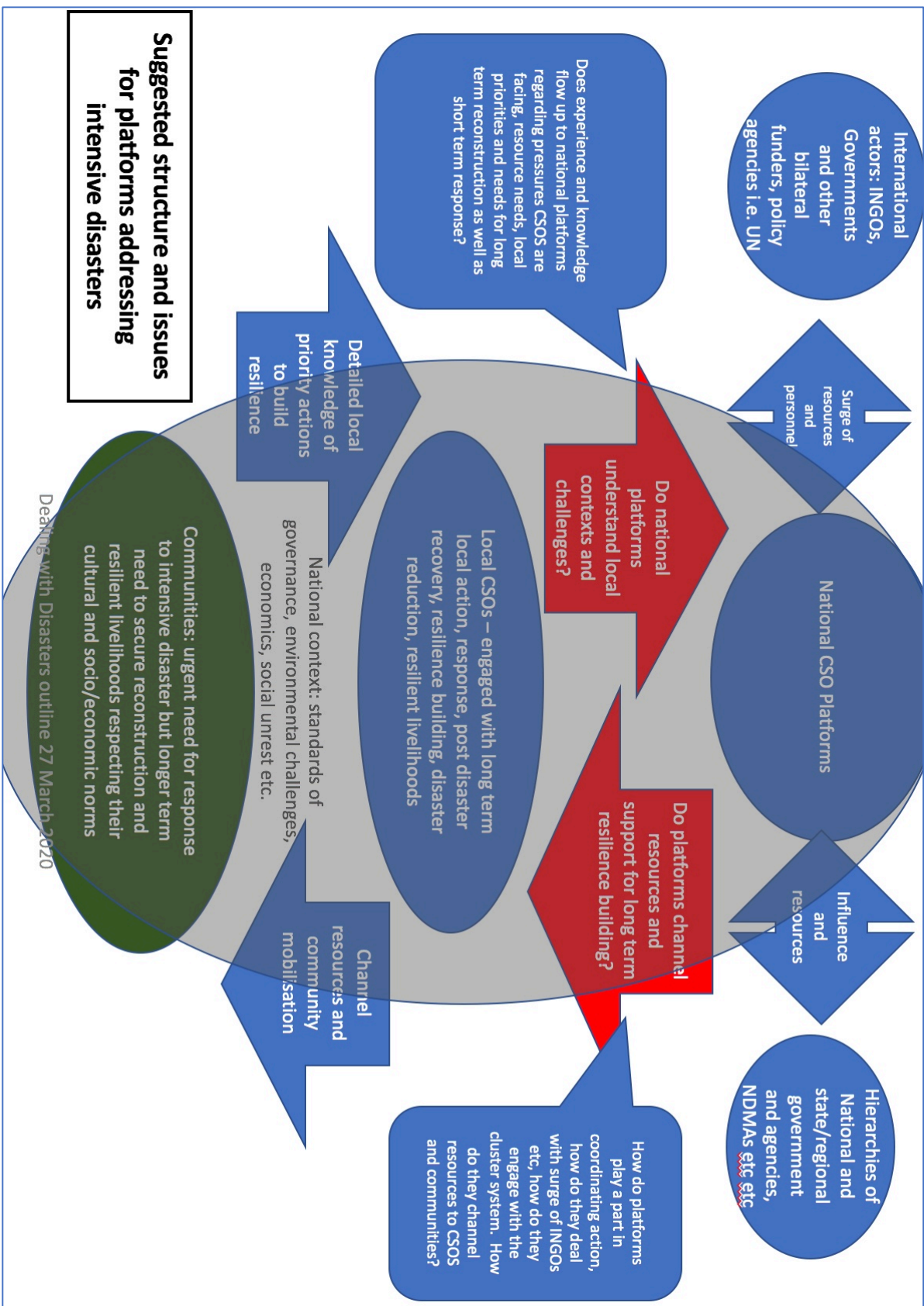
The research conducted in this project has revealed a wide range of expertise and good practice among participating platforms. This has been formalised in findings which underpin proposals for a toolkit to support platforms in responding to both intensive and extensive disasters. It also shows that many platforms are non-specialists in this area and that material developed from the research must be accessible and relevant to non-specialists. Finally it highlights the opportunity for platforms to strengthen their ability to promote sustainable development and climate change adaptation by developing their capacity to integrate DRR to protect development gains and strengthen livelihood resilience.

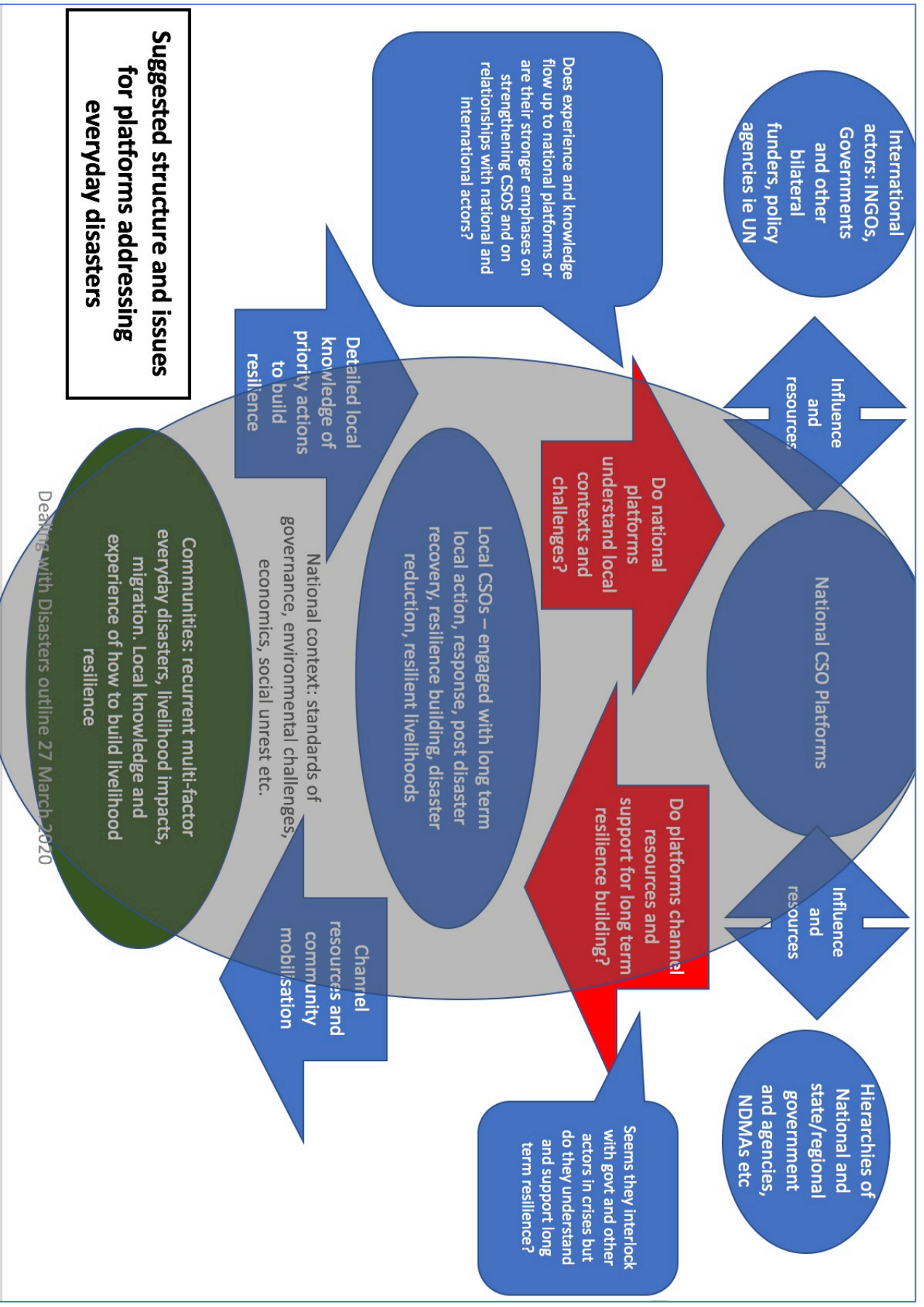
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<sup>13</sup> Any change to the contract period must be agreed by both parties in writing per Contract. 22<sup>nd</sup> Nov 2019, p1.

## Annexes

# Annex 1: Hypotheses informing consultation phase





Dealing with Disasters outline 27 March 2020

## Annex 2: Draft Case Studies

### *Case Study 1: In the wake of the war: Strengthening Civil Society responding to disasters in Columbia*

**Organisations:** CCONG, National CSO Platform, Forus Member. Fundacion Azimuth (FA), regionally based CSO, GNDR member.

Civil Society in Columbia has been embroiled in the long-running crisis of the civil war and its consequences including internal displacement and consequent poverty and insecurity. Civil Society platforms and members recognise the challenges of forging positive relationships with government, establishing their ‘value offer’ and gathering and communicating local knowledge of needs and priorities in response to both intensive and everyday disasters

#### **Introduction: In the wake of the war**

The people of Columbia lived through fifty years of civil war, suggested by some to be triggered initially by land reforms taking away small farms to create large corporate enterprises; leading to the emergence of the left-wing group FARC and in response right wing paramilitaries such as AUP. Peace was only generally restored after this fifty year period of civil war, oppression and atrocities in 2017. This case study doesn’t attempt to document this background<sup>14</sup>, but simply notes it as context along with stark statistics including the death of 220,000 people between 1958 and 2013, and the internal displacement of over five million civilians between 1985 and 2012.<sup>15</sup>

During and since this period Columbia has possessed a vibrant civil society which has been intimately engaged with human rights, justice and poverty alleviation issues over that period.<sup>16</sup> One estimate is that there were a total of 296,467 CSOs in the country in 2016, equating to one CSO for every 163 inhabitants, the highest number of registered CSOs per capita in the Americas, save the United States<sup>17</sup>.

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<sup>14</sup> The following links from diverse sources offer accounts of the period of the war:

<https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/colombias-civil-conflict>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-latin-america-19390164>

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/magazine/2018/01/colombia-civil%20war-farc-guerillas-peace/>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colombian\\_conflict](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colombian_conflict)

<sup>15</sup> GMH. BASTA YA! Colombia: Memories of War and Dignity, Bogotá, CNMH, 2016

<http://www.centrodehistoriahistorica.gov.co/descargas/informes2016/basta-ya-ingles/BASTA-YA-ingles.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> See the following links for information on the role of civil society:

<https://www.wola.org/analysis/civil-society-is-colombias-best-bet-for-constructing-peace/>

<https://www.devex.com/news/wave-of-killings-threatens-civil-society-work-in-colombia-91435>

<sup>17</sup> THE CIVIL SOCIETY OF COLOMBIA Van C. Evans Ph.D thesis 2016 Indiana

<https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/46964685.pdf>

## Civil Society responding to disasters in Columbia

A conversation between national CSO platform CCONG and regionally based CSO Fundacion Azimuth reveals shared concerns about the challenges of securing CSO recognition and participation alongside other actors in response to disasters.

CCONG is the national CSO platform in the country. FA is a regionally based CSO and member of the GNDR network. After meeting individually with Inventing Futures researcher Lucy Figueroa, they met together to discuss the challenges of civil society at different scales responding to disasters in the country, recognising that much of their work has been shaped by the disasters of conflict, massacres, land mines and internal displacement as well as other events such as floods, earthquakes and volcanic eruptions which the country are also exposed to. Lucy spoke with Liliana Rodriguez Burgos, the Secretary General of CCONG and with Claudia Castillo, the General director of FA. This case study has been presented as an edited account of the discussion, reflecting the interaction between the national perspective of Liliana at CCONG and the local action perspective of Claudia at FA. In the individual conversations with CCONG and FA, recurring themes were those of the visibility and influence of Civil Society in the country, its ability to engage with government and be seen as a relevant actor, and its ability to understand needs and priorities at local level. These themes form the basis of some of the questions in the following conversation.

### Strengthening Recognition of Civil Society

Q: 'What are your respective concerns about the visibility of local CSOS and their ability to be accepted and acknowledged by local government and other actors, and how can these concerns be addressed?'

**FA:** It hasn't been easy to make local CSOs visible and bring them up to the municipal scale, even when they are institutional members of a Municipal Council for Disaster Risk Management (**DRM**<sup>18</sup>). Our own experience as a member of the Municipal Council of El Cauca (Department of Cauca) has been mostly as a State contractor and less as a member of a CSO.

The indigenous communities in El Cauca, such as the Naza and the Mizak, are very well consolidated and organized, they maintain their autonomy guaranteed by the constitution, they have been allowed certain recognition and have their own systems of political organization and education. They've been able to push the DRM agenda forward and are more visible; however what CSOs need to work on becoming more visible and join in the [national] system, which on paper looks great.

**CCONG:** It's been a long process of 5 - 7 years in helping member organizations make their "oferta de valor" (value offer: their added value as an organization) more visible, and change the narrative in order to become recognized as an actor and ally for development. CSOs in Colombia tend to be stigmatized by the private sector and are poorly understood by the government. There's almost an effort by government to weaken CSOs, which is why it's important (even now with the current COVID-19 emergency) not to start by asking for

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<sup>18</sup> **Note:** Disaster Risk Management (DRM) is used throughout this document since it's the term that is well known and used in Latin America, but it is very close in concept to DRR

funding but rather by offering the CSOs know-how, the process they have started with communities. They can create plans to increase solidarity with the affected communities and be co-responsible with them. At the national platform level we focus on working with the government during emergencies and making recommendations about the measures that should be taken.

We agree with FA that local committees that have been created, such as the Committees for DRM which already have some visibility need to work with other actors and develop proposals for action. CSOs have to be clear who they are speaking for, which specific community or collective they represent, and how the proposal is backed by the grassroots communities. We need to learn how to dialogue with other actors in the region as peers, under equal conditions but with an understanding that we have our own methods and processes, which help to contribute in the face of a crisis.

During the heavy rainy season we started to have that dialogue about what we can contribute from the CSO platform, including advocacy and other actions and plans that we can propose to the government from this sector. That's how we add value and make visible the actions of the organizations that have been working for so long in improving lives. This represents a vast amount of accumulated experience that can be included in the joint offer for the region.

In summary, forming alliances in a joint, articulated way with other actors in the region is essential for visibility.

**FA:** We feel that a way of strengthening visibility of organizations is through actions, which lead to change in policies and practices. For example the Popayán earthquake which happened 37 years ago led to establishment of new policies and laws that strengthened social cohesion. Now we have to become more visible as agents of change with inter-institutional alliances and civil society. For example, the Hydrological services are working with indigenous communities and civil society, along with other corporations in the region; however, at the political level they need to be recognized not just as a political object at which policies are aimed, but as agents of change.

**CCONG:** It has to do with an additional role for advocacy in the entire cycle of public policy.

*Comment: In common with the experience of CSOs in many countries governments often lack understanding of CSOs and their 'value offer' and may even be suspicious of them. It is suggested here that CSO platforms need to take the initiative in making the value of CSOs clear to government so that they are offered a 'seat at the table'.*

### **Ensuring that CSO Platforms and their members use local knowledge as a foundation for their legitimacy**

Q. "What are your concerns about gathering, recording and applying local knowledge in disaster risk reduction, response and reconstruction and how can those concerns be addressed?"

**FA:** In Colombia we have made great progress. At the level of policy and legislation we have a very well structured DRM system; the challenge is how to bring it down to the local level. At the regional levels we have the Department Council for DRM and the Municipal Councils for DRM, but these working roundtables don't include many local indigenous actors because

they have their own ways of organizing socially, culturally and politically. These local perspectives need to be heard.

The 'Views from the Frontline' programme is one useful way of learning from local experience. This is a way of gathering methodologies, public policies and other tools that can be replicated in other scenarios.

Another way of learning from local experience is through organizing meetings with small actors in the region and forming working networks to help 'sistemazar' (systematize - collect and document lessons learned) their work as well. But we need economic resources to do this. We have also tried to make use of Information and Communication technologies (ICTs) as much as possible. We haven't been able to go beyond the local level and scale up, as we would hope to do.

**CCONG:** - It is very important to go beyond the more formal and legal spheres to the community level where communities and DRM processes are organized. It's important to recognize these communities and link their actions so they have access to the formal spheres where decisions are made.

We feel there is a challenge in this process of systematization of knowledge, because everyone is so occupied with their day-to-day work that it doesn't often happen in practice. Their pace of work means they are not working on generating pertinent information on what they're working on and how they are doing it, or working on how that information is made available for the public sphere. If they did this, it would help in getting support and funding for their work.

It's important to understand how organizations can come to be valued for their actions and their knowledge, and how this is made available to the collective community, the broader society and decision makers, so they have an input on public policies.

FA – Yes, another challenge with systematizing experiences is to make sure it is valid for both communities – expressed in their own "language" as well as for organizations that use a more technical language about geology and disasters, for example. All the information had to be validated by the community actors and this made it difficult to also express it in technical terms. We need to build bridges between communities and their knowledge, and external actors such as private companies in the territory so they can join and work together.

That's why multi-stakeholder meetings, such as the one we carried out for GNDR, are so important, to gather all kinds of CSOs and institutional actors and share experiences.

*Comment: The legitimacy and right to be heard of CSO platforms and members depends largely on the knowledge they possess and share and this is rooted in local experience, priorities and needs. Local organisations are typically busy activists and processes of reflection and systematisation of knowledge are often neglected but are vital in establishing the key role of civil society.*

### **CSO Platforms should challenge centralised approaches to disaster risk reduction, response and recovery which don't take account of local contexts**

Q. 'What are your concerns about 'understanding what generates the conditions of emergency' – as CCONG says – and the specific vulnerabilities populations are exposed to: 'communities



living in adverse regions, such as post-conflict which displaced so many people, Many poor displaced communities in urban areas are in high-risk areas. (FA) and how can these concerns be addressed?

**CCONG:** In terms of funding, currently all the funding [in Colombia] is focused on the topic of peace, so it's important to make sure that we all collaborate in our development efforts according to the value offer we each have, including international cooperation organizations and the private sector.

The first ones that can identify a need are [local] organizations. For example when they identify needs in specific populations, such as the elderly, women, the handicapped, etc. So our recommendation is to generate a political dialogue and sound the alarm. As a platform we don't work directly with communities, so we are always waiting for the organizations to alert us about a situation where we can have joint action.

As a platform we also try to have an input on the policies that are adopted in a situation of disaster, making sure the rights of the CSO aren't infringed.

**FA:** We share that vision with respect to vulnerable communities, through contacts or alliances we are invited to participate in community assessment of the territory. This is when we start using our participatory methods to provide insights for planning for the short, medium and long term, not just for DRM but in general, for the vulnerable community's welfare.

These can concern extreme events such as a river flooding or a volcano erupting and also 'everyday' events, such as a mudslide or waterway obstructing a road. At the moment there are many women heads of households that are facing the pandemic and ask us to help them through a process of doing an assessment and creating a plan. We keep close contact with the communities to make sure they are strengthened in their capacities to prevent or reduce risk.

The approach we use for DRM is three-fold: knowledge, reduction and management, all of these are what makes up the process to reduce disaster risk.

**CCONG:** This is so important with respect to disasters. We don't agree with the way the government tries to centralize disaster response when these events occur. We have to favour local efforts and support communities in building stronger capacity to provide response through their own institutions, since they are the ones that know their own territory and have the trust of the population.

At the CCONG platform we see our role as generating the joint actions and providing guidelines for follow-up. But never with the intent of replacing those that are working in the territory, we always go to the territory with a local actor. This is a key message that has to be given, we have to respect the autonomy of the territory, and not just allow in anyone who wants to come in from outside and override what is already in process there. This is always a challenge when an emergency arises.

*COMMENT: In response to intensive and everyday disasters the actions and advocacy of CSO platforms must be clearly grounded in local knowledge and challenge centralised government approaches which don't take account of diverse local contexts*

**In response to complex multi-causal 'everyday disasters' CSO Platforms should coordinate the specialist expertise of different members to ensure effective response**

Q. What about the many smaller and recurrent 'everyday' disasters that affect people – disproportionately the poor, which are highlighted mainly by FA – what role do these organisations have in addressing these?

**FA:** It's necessary to "walk the territory"; because as external agents, even though you may have a technical expertise and knowledge, you don't know the particular situations or understand the reality about an area or community. It's important to be willing to understand from the point of view of the real "scientists" of the region: people who live there every day, and share with them, recognize and validate their knowledge.

In the department of Cauca, there have been some unsuccessful efforts as a consequence of not asking for permission before taking action. You have to ask local authorities for their permission and work with them.

DRM should be a cross-cutting theme to all other topics. With respect to everyday disasters, we have learned about other threats and social risks, such as "anti-personnel mines", rape, and violence associated to the conflict. We have to understand these issues in the context of each specific region.

**CCONG:** With respect to that, it's important to understand the scope of each actor, so that when there is a disaster, you may have clarity on the role of each organization and not take on something that is not within your role and competence. For example in dealing with anti-personnel mines, it's important to know what the protocol is and who should do what, each actor should know their role for each moment.

Comment: CSO platforms have an important role in co-ordinating the expertise of different member organisations, particularly in complex and everyday disasters.

**An overall objective of DRR (DRM) is to work for 'hipervivencia' or 'bouncing forward' – seeing transformation as an outcome.**

Q. What other points would you like to highlight about your experience with DRM in the Colombian context.

**FA:** My most important learning experience has come from working closely at the local, grassroots level. Throughout the years of working with the Foundation, I have been able to get close to the indigenous and Afro-descendent communities and learn from their experience and cultural diversity. It's been interesting to learn from their knowledge and their ancestral culture about their resilience; something they had learned so long ago but we come in with new terms such as "climate change adaptation". They have been working on this for years already, using different terms such as "safeguards" and "*resistencia*". They no longer talk about supervivencia (survival) but hipervivencia (hyper survival). It has to do with conserving their communities.

**CCONG:** Just to add a little to that: we need to think globally but make sure to act locally using the knowledge that the communities have been developing from the basis of their knowledge and feelings. It invites us to see things from a different perspective.

And complementary to that, I would say that we have to reclaim and value local knowledge and work on DRM from an angle of complementary action with other actors in the territory. We need to have the capacity to explain the worth of what we have at the community level so that others can understand it, so others don't come to impose their agendas, but rather to construct with the local actors in a territory. This requires **resistance!**

Comment: The term 'hipervivencia' (hyper survival) expresses locally what is also recognised globally that the objective of DRR (DRM) is not simply to bounce back from disasters – large or small – but to 'bounce forward' through transforming communities, strengthening sustainable livelihoods

## Case Study 2: Dhaka, Bangladesh: Responding to everyday disasters in city slums

**Organisation(s):** NAHAB (National CSO platform) and PDAP (GNDR VFL Platform)

The slums of Dhaka present particular challenges in building livelihood resilience in the face of multiple everyday disasters. Civil Society Platforms recognise the need for partnerships with many actors, including government and international agencies. The nature of those partnerships is changing, driven partly by the localisation debate. Making them effective depends on establishing them 'on an equal footing'

### Life in the city

Life in the city is challenging for those living in the informal sector, slums or shanties. According to the statistics it is particularly so in Bangladesh's capital city, Dhaka. The latest World Bank estimate (2018) puts the density per square kilometre at 1,239,579<sup>19</sup>, making it the most densely populated city in the world, with 30%<sup>20</sup> of its total population of 19,578,421 living in slum areas.<sup>21</sup> In 2017, Dhaka was ranked as the fourth least live-able city in the world by the Economist Intelligence Unit's Global Livability Ranking<sup>22</sup>

Quazi Baby, Executive Director of Participatory Development Action Programme (PDAP) describes some of the challenges faced by residents in the slums which as she wrote (April 2020) were magnified by the spread of COVID-19: 'At the moment, the slum condition is very bad. Most of the slum dwellers are daily wage earners, but they are not able to earn money. They are not able to maintain social distance, because in one room, 4-5 members are living, Maximum people are using common bathroom. It's very difficult to maintain hygienic toilet. There is not sufficient space for sitting or sleeping at home while maintaining sufficient distance. Due to lack of money, many slum dwellers are eating one or two times daily. Violence is increasing in the community due to congested family situations. Children are not going school. Sexual harassment and social gathering are going on in the slum areas.' These pressures add to the challenges regularly faced, according to her of air pollution and garbage management, flooding, water logging land, and poor quality water.

The disasters she documents are 'everyday disasters' which are not responded to in the way intensive crises are, but which daily affect the livelihoods of the millions in the slums.

### CSO Platforms and the city

Civil society inevitably plays a large role in response to these small-scale disasters, as the government doesn't have the capacity or information to meet the needs of the slum dwellers. As Quazi Baby says 'When a cyclone happens, there is lots of government action, but post-disaster, they do not reach the people'.

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<sup>19</sup> <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/EN.POP.DNST?locations=BD>

<sup>20</sup> <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/82121528.pdf>

<sup>21</sup> <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/EN.URB.LCTY?locations=BD>

<sup>22</sup> <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/607511534337128809/pdf/WPS8552.pdf>

(p2)

Many civil society actors at different scales therefore engage with the needs of slum dwellers. In one case Habitat for Humanity (HfH) established a partnership with PDAP to undertake a one year pilot project on 'Building Resilience in Urban Slum Settlements' in Talab Camp, a slum area established after the partition of Pakistan and Bangladesh to house Muslim refugees. The camp is protected from evictions because of its refugee status, a significant point as a common strategy in slum management is the eviction or relocation of residents to clear areas for development, though agencies such as the World Bank have promoted slum upgrading.<sup>23</sup> The project aimed to pursue community based participative risk assessments, leading to action planning, implementation and development of a long term action plan. The progress of the project and the partnership between HfH and PDAP was documented by an external researcher<sup>24</sup>. They found basic challenges to achieving the goals of the project including:

- Community consultation and engagement was time-consuming
- Achieving sufficient understanding of local contexts is also time-consuming
- Building local capacity through training required more time
- Differing expectations between the external agency and the local partner required more time to improve understanding and build trust
- Ensuring sustainability required more time

The challenges found by the researcher are documented here as they reflect a broader challenge in forging partnerships between local and external actors, made visible by the 'localisation' debate and discussed by both participating organisations in this case study: NAHAB at national level and PDAP at local level. The keyword common to all these challenges is '*time*'. INGOs and other external actors – under donor pressures to achieve results, conduct evaluations and deliver reports – sacrifice the time needed to forge relationships, develop local understanding, engage with communities and develop capacity and sustainability.<sup>25</sup> One year is clearly an insufficient period of time to achieve any of these.

### **Re-setting partnerships**

NAHAB acknowledge the need to 'reset' the relationship with local actors and give stronger voice to local actors and have used the focus of 'Localisation' and the 'Grand Bargain' emerging from the World Humanitarian Summit<sup>26</sup> as a foundation for their work. They are now building up localization models in different districts where local organizations take the lead and define their own coordination & cooperation mechanism among local actors. They are also prepared to partner with the international actors working in that area. The

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<sup>23</sup> World Bank, 2011. Urban Poverty and Slum Upgrading.  
<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTURBANDEVELOPMENT/EXTURBANPOVERTY/0,,menuPK:341331~pagePK:149018~piPK:149093~theSitePK:341325,00.html>

<sup>24</sup> Ahmed. I. 2016. 'Building Resilience of Urban Slums in Dhaka, Bangladesh'. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 218 (2016) 202 – 213

<sup>25</sup> See for example ICVA (2015) Partner Capacity Assessments of Humanitarian NGOs - Fit for purpose? [https://www.icvanetwork.org/system/files/versions/150610\\_Partner\\_Capacity\\_Assessment\\_0.pdf](https://www.icvanetwork.org/system/files/versions/150610_Partner_Capacity_Assessment_0.pdf) (Accessed 13/08/18) and Terry Gibson 2019 'Making Aid Agencies Work'. Emerald. P54

<sup>26</sup> IASC. (2018) The Grand Bargain In a Nutshell (2018, May) <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/grand-bargain-hosted-iasc> (Accessed 22/05/18)

important point is that their system is developed to establish partnership on an equal footing. In collaboration they can decide on raising alerts, they can collectively allocate resources, and open up proposals from the actors in their respective areas.

The programme developed by NAHAB contrasts strikingly with work done on partnerships in Dhaka by INGO World Vision. In their study they recognise the need to extend partnerships, highlight the particular need for collaboration with NGOs, but list only international NGOs and make no mention of local or national CSOs at all<sup>27</sup>. This appears a further example of the challenges facing international actors in engaging with local and national civil society; who have strong and sustainable relationships and rich knowledge of local communities and their needs and priorities.

Quazi Baby, at PDAP underscores this point. She believes that ‘there should be good relationship between donor and partners. But if donors interfere directly for project implementation then why does the donor need partnership? PDAP have been working in the urban areas more than 20 years ‘Our observation is that it is important to develop leadership in the community and try to keep contact with the local government for getting basic services. It is also important to push government for their formal settlements rather than eviction.’

PDAP contrast the experience of their partnership at Talab camp with another organisation they collaborate with: ‘For more than 10 years we are getting support from them to work in urban areas. The main thing is they trust us.’

### **On an Equal Footing?**

Both conversations with CSO Platforms in Bangladesh, working in the city slums of Dhaka and elsewhere in the country, highlight the need for establishing partnerships emphasising the relative strengths of local and external partners on an equal footing, echoing the principles of ‘Localisation’.

Particularly in urban informal contexts, which are particularly challenging in Dhaka, local knowledge, engagement and trust are valuable assets held strongly by local Civil Society actors and such an equal footing is vital to ensuring the contributions of all actors are complementary rather than, as in the case documented above, outcomes being limited by lack of local engagement, understanding and trust.

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<sup>27</sup> Clare Stott. 2014. ‘From Urban Landscape to opportunities for DRR integration.’ World Vision. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/273765212\\_Disaster\\_Risk\\_Reduction\\_in\\_Dhaka\\_City\\_From\\_urban\\_landscape\\_analysis\\_to\\_opportunities\\_for\\_DRR\\_integration](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/273765212_Disaster_Risk_Reduction_in_Dhaka_City_From_urban_landscape_analysis_to_opportunities_for_DRR_integration)

### *Case Study 3: India: Top Down and Bottom Up responses to disasters*

**Organisation(s):** VANI (Forus member) and Udyama (GNDR VFL Platform)

India is a global leader in development of Disaster Management Policy. Nevertheless much of this progress has been in disaster response rather than resilience building through disaster risk reduction. The experience of CSO platforms operating both nationally and locally highlight the need to strengthen connections to local level to understand ways of enhancing disaster risk reduction, and the role of civil society in enabling this.

#### **India's world-leading development of Disaster Management Policy**

After UNISDR (now UNDRR) launched its latest DRR framework, the 'Sendai Framework for Disaster Reduction' in March 2015, India was the first country in the world to launch a National Disaster Management Plan (NDMP), in May 2016<sup>28</sup>, building on the earlier establishment of the 2005 Disaster Management Act and the development of a National Policy on Disaster Management in 2009.<sup>29</sup> In addition to this many states have developed their own State Disaster Management Plans (SDMPs) and District Disaster Management Plans. What factors have driven this increasing commitment to disaster reduction and response?

Since the year 2000 several major disasters have struck the country including the Indian Ocean Tsunami in 2004, causing approximately 11,000 deaths, Cyclone Paradip in 1999, causing approximately 10,000 deaths and the 2013 floods in Uttarakhand floods in 2013, causing 5,748 deaths<sup>30</sup>. These and earlier disasters have pushed the country's government towards putting legislation, plans and policies in place to deal with disaster risk.

It is suggested that the fact that Cyclone Phailin in 2013 was of a similar scale to Paradip, but resulted in virtually no fatalities, showed the positive impact of this development of disaster management<sup>31</sup>. Nevertheless studies suggest that the emphasis is still on response rather than on strengthening resilience through disaster risk reduction, and highlight the need to capitalise on community level capacities, complementing 'top down' institutional responses with 'bottom up' local capacities.

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<sup>28</sup> NDMP: published by Indian National Disaster Management Authority:  
<http://pibphoto.nic.in/documents/rlink/2016/jun/p20166201.pdf>

<sup>29</sup> The role of the affected state in humanitarian action: a case study in India. ODI. 2009:  
<https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/4281.pdf>

<sup>30</sup> Strengthening Disaster Risk Management in India: A review of five state disaster management plans: CDKN. 2016 <https://cdkn.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/India-disaster-management-web.pdf>

<sup>31</sup> CDKN, 2016, Ibid.

## **The role of Civil Society**

What is the experience of Civil Society platforms of working in both directions? The two platforms contributing to this case study work at very different scales, VANI extending to a national level with an approach which can be described as 'Top Down' and Udyama working regionally and taking different approaches to civil society mobilisation with a 'Bottom Up' approach.

### **VANI: conversation with Harsh Jaiti and Nivedita Datta**

VANI is a large and well established National platform of CSOs and a FORUS member. It has operated for 30 years old and as a Large CSO membership representing the volunteer sector with over 10, 000 CSO members. It engages with the lower level of State Networks and through them down to local CSOs and the reverse. The role of the VANI network is to work around the regulatory framework within which CSOs function alongside Government, Private Sector and Academics. Their research and advocacy strengthens the administration and accounts capacity of member organisations and addresses disaster issues.

The platform's stated aim is to work towards achieving holistic development, SDG integration and creation of an enabling environment through triangular cooperation between Government, CSOs and the private sector.

In the case of a disaster event VANI acknowledge that local CSOs and local community are the first on the spot. Therefore the first responders are at the grassroots, and civil society volunteers depend initially on their own resources. In the example of the Kerala cyclone given by the platform, response was as usual initially by local CSOs. The event didn't initially attract international attention as Kerala is seen as a relatively developed state. However due to the scale of the emergency, national and international NGOs became involved;

Resource provision is a particular issue. VANI is not a conduit for financial support; but makes linkages; In the case of the Kerala cyclone there was a process of linking CSOs with national and international NGOs, and with business/donors, who see the VANI platform as a credible and trustworthy channel to finding out who might be reliable partners. In the Indian context this financial 'matchmaking' is increasingly important as VANI find fewer INGO are active, disaster relief can reach local organisations and there is knowledge about the institutions that are in place.

VANI also play an important communications role from their membership to government as the government planning processes are often flawed and these shortcomings are well understood by CSOs. However CSOs at the frontline are under resource pressure and need the support of VANI to mediate information and advocacy as well as resources.

### **Udyama: Conversation with Pradeep Mohapatra**

By contrast UDYAMA have a local perspective with a focus on the phrase 'community resilience'. Though they are involved in response, for example in the monsoons and cyclones striking Orissa annually, they regard long-term community development to build



resilience as critical in reducing the impact of disasters. They participate in GNDR 'Views from the Frontline' action research to understand better the factors affecting peoples' lives and the needs and priorities to strengthen their resilience. They find that disasters are complex. For example in the case of Orissa cyclones and coastal flooding a consequence is distress migration and this in turn leads to increased vulnerability through loss of livelihoods, loss of income and assets. However in a different geographic context – for example hill country – the challenge may be drought.

The localised understanding of disasters which Udyama possess underscores their emphasis on integrating developmental actions rather than simply focusing on response. However they find that this is not well understood at government level: *'Government is required to support mainstream development process, but sometimes it fails to do this. Effective support starts with local action, based on specific contexts and needs - disaster or drought or community diseases. Learning from local contexts: action and reflection is a basis for developing knowledge to be used in influencing policy to address community needs. In practice it is sometimes very difficult to continue work because policies may not be pro-poor, may not be pro-people, policy may not be pro-planet!'*

Udyama recognise that the local action which is their focus needs to be allied to national and international policy influence. *'Global networking and global support is essential to engage civil society and community towards resilience building; and this ability of adaptation and ability to cope with disasters requires advocacy to influence policy'*. Advocacy in turn requires demonstrations and evidence based work, so there is a strong connection between action, reaction, reflection and learning and research so that learning can support the resilience processes.

### **From response to risk reduction – making the connections**

From both perspectives, top down and bottom up, the complementary activity of these two platforms, national and local, in the very large scale national context of India highlights the necessity to forge strong connections between understanding and knowledge derived from local level action through to advocacy at state and national level to deepen the understanding of policies and partnerships connecting to community capacities and understanding which can build on the work done nationally and at state level to drive a transition from response towards disaster risk reduction, strengthening the resilience of affected populations.

## Case Study 5: Mali - civil society in the firing line - the consequences of conflict

**Organisation(s):** FECONG (National CSO platform) and AFAD (GNDR VFL Platform)

In Mali CSOs find themselves facing a complex mix of disasters driven by drought and floods, population growth and poverty, conflict and instability in an extremely poor country. Working in this situation demands strong coordination between CSOs, mediated by the CSO platform, and with other actors. The challenge is made worse by the actions of the various peacekeeping forces, who blur the lines between military and humanitarian action

### Introduction

The population of the landlocked country of Mali, in the southern Sahara desert, are spread across rural areas, mostly maintaining livelihoods through subsistence farming and exposed to both frequent droughts and floods. The country is ranked 184<sup>th</sup> out of 189 on the Human Development Index<sup>32</sup>. Livelihoods were impacted further when the country was destabilised in 2012 by a Tuareg rebellion in the north of the country after which Islamists took control of the region. Further conflict broke out in the central region of the country in 2015<sup>33</sup>, partly tribal in nature but also involving Islamist forces.

### Civil society and multi-disasters in Mali

National CSO platform FECONG, a member of Forus, and CSO AFAD, a member of GNDR, have both worked in the country since before the conflict. Ahmed Sékou Diallo works with both organisations, leading AFAD and acting as treasurer of FECONG. He acknowledges the complex situation they face:

*'The multifaceted crisis that we have been experiencing since 2012 is first of all due to the attack of the jihadists who came from Libya and who invaded the north of Mali and were advancing towards the capital. And there was the intervention of the international community through France and since then the insecurity caused by this banditry it is really a big crime. In this crisis we saw all kinds of abomination, ethnic groups who killed each other. The Fulani or even Dogon kill each other and other ethnic groups are involved. Villages have been burnt and we have seen immense loss of life. This has added to the impacts of famine and malnutrition resulting from the unpredictable rains.'*

*The most recurrent crises are floods almost every year which affect people partly due to the nature of the land and partly because of land use. Due to population increase there is a lack of land in some places and we often see people who will build on low lying land. Often it might not rain a lot for years, and therefore they think there is no risk, but on the days that it rains a lot the river beds overflow and flood, and it goes straight in these houses which are actually on these riverbeds. Mali is really is a country of multi disasters'.*

<sup>32</sup> <https://www.wfp.org/countries/mali>

<sup>33</sup> 'Situation in central Mali 'deteriorating' as violence, impunity rise, UN rights expert warns. UN News. 2020'. <https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/02/1057911>

## The National CSO Platform

FECONG is the Federation of Collectives of NGOs in Mali, acting as a collective at national level, and also having representatives at regional level. Its essential role is advocacy with donors and the government, and it also undertakes promotion of the role of CSOs and seeks funding for CSOs internationally. One way in which it responds to 'multi-disasters' is by coordinating the work of specialist members who can address different issues. For example, 'Secours ONG' is specialized in environmental protection; other members focus on health and others deal with SMEs, with basic education, and with work focused on women. FECONG itself does not engage locally, it sees its role as receiving information from members from which it identifies requests for which it advocates at the level of the authorities through declarations and press releases and also by developing project proposals. But its resources are limited. If specific needs arise FECONG can seek information and build the capacities of members, FECONG can also relay information at the highest level by giving alerts and undertaking advocacy so that areas which are affected can be helped and supported; also, for example by speaking with or technical and financial partners who can contribute to work in the field.

The link between FECONG at national level and its members' knowledge at local level is through regional coordinators who act as relays. It recognises that its members are in touch with local populations and understand their needs.

## The Local CSO

AFAD is an example of a member organization working locally.

*'We have had a humanitarian project for 3 years. We are working in an area on the humanitarian aspects linked to the floods: we have set up boreholes, latrines, schools that were flooded, with donations of food, cash to women and then lots of food and cereals on the ground.'*

Alongside response AFAD are involved in information gathering. They have conducted the GNDR 'Views from the Frontline' (VFL) action research study twice in the country and coordinated the work of other CSO in conducting the study. The studies are intended to find out more about the situation regarding disasters in Mali. Based on the priorities which emerge, CSO are currently developing action plans. The information which has been gathered is also being drawn together into a report to be presented at a national workshop of CSOs to validate and finalize the study.

In the 2013 VFL report Diallo already commented that *"The findings are bitter. People take a lot of risks without worrying about the consequences. Most often, this state of affairs is due to illiteracy and ignorance. The authorities and communities do not also play the role of awakening of conscience and avant-garde. Laxity always leads to a catastrophe, hence the urgency for each actor to fully play their role. In Mali, the concept of crisis and disaster prevention is little known"*.

In interviews with Diallo in 2020 he summed up *“Often disasters are not seen as a priority, but as soon as something happens, that blocks normal development actions and living conditions. We think it’s important to see how to protect our development work through prevention. We’ve seen this most recently through the Coronavirus pandemic which is impacting on the economy, health and other aspects of development because people are confined, can no longer work and in other cases populations are decimated.”*

In its April 2020 Mali situation report OCHA warns that “About 3.5 million people are currently in food and nutritional insecurity, including 757 000 in severe food insecurity [...] and projects that in the lean season (June-August 2020), nearly 5 million people will be food insecure”<sup>34</sup>. This will inevitably have huge impact on the focus of actions by civil society organizations such as AFAD, who depend to great extent on partnerships with and funding coming via INGO.

### **Blurring the Lines: military and humanitarian action**

One of the most insidious challenges to the work of CSO in the country comes from the actions of the various ‘peacekeeping’ missions which attempt to stabilise the situation, but, in the case of G5 Sahel joint force, have also been accused of committing a rising toll of extrajudicial killings in their battle against jihadist groups in the Sahel region. “The security forces are mandated to protect, and protect equally,” Corinne Dufka, Sahel director at Human Rights Watch, told The New Humanitarian. “And yet we see them far too often engaging in collective punishment, in retaliatory attacks against communities for their real or perceived affiliation with armed Islamist groups.”<sup>35</sup>

Civil society organisations, such as FECOG members, long established in the region and supporting development activities and humanitarian response, suffer from increasingly blurred lines between humanitarian and military actors. They find that collaboration with the military is limited and communications poor and often as they attempt to bring humanitarian aid military action starts. The peacekeeping forces also involve themselves in short term humanitarian actions to improve relations with local communities, effectively competing with Civil Society actors. They sometimes use white vehicles, normally recognised as signifying humanitarian work, leading to increased risk of attack on humanitarian workers<sup>36</sup>.

Mali is truly a country of multi-disasters and the coordination of many local and specialist CSOs by platforms such as FECONG is increasingly under threat as they are sidelined by security forces.

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<sup>34</sup> OCHA Mali Rapport de situation Dernière mise à jour: 24 avr. 2020

<sup>35</sup> *Obi Anyadike, in - <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/news/2020/05/05/Sahel-Mali-Niger-Burkina-Faso-security-forces-killings>*

<sup>36</sup> *In militarised Mali, humanitarian responders say aid is an afterthought’. New Humanitarian, 2019. <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/news-feature/2019/03/11/militarised-mali-humanitarian-responders-say-aid-afterthought>*

## *Case Study 5: Nepal - Facing the earthquake - civil society facing intensive disaster*

**Organisation(s):** NFN (Forus member) and NSET (GNDR VFL Platform)

In Nepal infrequent but intensive disasters, most recently the 2015 Gorkha earthquake, trigger recognition that increased coordination and preparation are required. CSO platforms have played an important part in this and partnership with government nationally and locally has been strengthened by new legislation in the wake of the disaster. Previous history of disasters shows that CSOs face the challenge of maintaining commitment to reducing risk as political and public memory fades.

### **Living on the Himalayan Collision Zone**

Nepal runs along the edge of the Himalayan collision zone where the Indian Subcontinent, moving north over geological time, crashed into Eurasia, thrusting up the Himalayan mountains. Its position exposes it to powerful geological hazards, resulting in the major Gorkha earthquake of 2015, and previously the 1934 Bihar-Nepal earthquake. Even these would be dwarfed, according to scientists, by the scale of earthquakes along the main fault to the south, or in the west or central Himalayas, whose last occurrences were in 1344, 1505 and 1555<sup>37</sup>. But with even the 1934 earthquake only just within living memory how do societies, and civil society, cope with such unpredictable but devastating events?

### **Responding to the Gorkha Earthquake**

The National Society for Earthquake Technology (NSET) leads the GNDR platform in Nepal. It is also a member of the Disaster Prevention network (DPNet) and of the national CSO platform NGO Platform of Nepal (NFN). All were deeply involved in response to the 2015 Gorkha earthquake.

On April 25, 2015 the initial earthquake, measuring 7.6 on the Richter scale struck 31 out of 75 districts of the country. 17 days later on May 12, 2015, another earthquake measuring 6.8 on the Richter scale caused further damage and loss of lives. The earthquakes claimed 8,896 lives<sup>38</sup>, and displaced about 2 million people. 604,930 homes were completely destroyed and 288,856 houses badly damaged<sup>38</sup>.

Nisha Shresha, working at NSET, commented that after the earthquake everybody did their

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<sup>37</sup> 'Nepal Quake 'Followed Historic Pattern' BBC. (2015) <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-32472310>

Casualty Estimates to Repeat Himalayan Earthquakes in India: Bull. Seis. Soc. Am. (2018) <https://pubs.geoscienceworld.org/ssa/bssa/article-abstract/108/5A/2877/548190/Casualty-Estimates-in-Repeat-Himalayan-Earthquakes?redirectedFrom=fulltext>

<sup>38</sup> Chandra Lal Pandey, (2018) "Making communities disaster resilient: Challenges and prospects for community engagement in Nepal", Disaster Prevention and Management: An International Journal, <https://doi.org/10.1108/DPM-05-2018-0156>

best in their own way, but they realised that this was not good enough: for a very large event a coordinated approach and government leadership are needed, one local organisation cannot do enough.

As with many disasters the ‘first responders’ are local communities and local CSOs coping with their effects. There can sometimes be a gulf between that immediate response and action at other scales. Kailash Rizal at Nepali CSO DEPROSC says *‘what we see is there are local organizations and an indigenous mechanism of response, but the mechanism has not really reached to the donor level. There are a number of intermediary organizations in between where the distortion of communication and knowledge distribution causes a lot of frustration’*. Sumeera Shresha at Nepali CSO ‘Women for Human Rights’ adds that *‘That’s why I think that the whole capacity analysis of the local level NGOs has always been put into a state that local NGOs and national level NGOs are not taken as a partner but always as a receiver’*<sup>39</sup>

### **Strengthening coordination**

A major project led by Christian Aid looked at ‘Accelerating Localisation’ and its research in Nepal found that *‘Nationally, given the changing environment for civil society organisations in Nepal demonstrated in new and draft legislation, NGOs should coordinate together closely within relevant international and national networks and forums to advocate for a fair deal for civil society organisations, and a protected space to reach those who are being left behind. Ultimately, capacity strengthening, planned phase out, and hand over strategies are also vital in partnerships between INGOs and L/NGO’*<sup>40</sup>.

NFN play a major part in coordination. Their Executive Director B.B. Thapa says *‘Of course, there was frustration in the beginning’* He explained that *‘after a few months the government welcomed all INGOs and NGOs to join hands together for immediate response to people in need . . . , every NGOs and INGO should follow the guidelines and system through the DRR committee which was chaired by the Chief District Office (CDO) in each district.’*

NFN Work at national and federal level, in seven provinces and their districts, through their own network with a secretariat in each province and at district level. They have a strong relationship with government system: when a disaster happens they gather information from CSO members and communicate to the government to get them to act.

### **New partnerships with government**

Advocacy by NFN and its member organisations has also played a role in strengthening coordination through the establishment a new act, policy and strategy for *“reducing disaster*

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<sup>39</sup> Pathways to Power podcasts. GFCF. 2019. [https://globalfundcommunityfoundations.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Podcast1\\_Transcript.pdf](https://globalfundcommunityfoundations.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Podcast1_Transcript.pdf)

<sup>40</sup> Accelerating Localisation Summary Report: Nepal. Christian Aid. 2019. <https://www.christianaid.org.uk/sites/default/files/2019-02/Accelerating-localisation-research-summary-nepal.pdf>

*risk with preparedness plan, program and projects and building resilience with the goal of sustainable development.”* The Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act 2017, Local Government Operations Act 2017, National Policy on Disaster Risk Reduction 2018, and National Strategic Action Plan for Disaster Risk Reduction 2018–2030 together emphasise risk reduction and the establishment of local, provincial and national coordination involving communities, civil society and private actors<sup>41</sup>.

Nisha, at NSET, agrees that now there is coordination with and through central and local government and the new municipalities.

The learning from the Gorkha earthquake has led to a new commitment by both civil society and government to effective coordination not only in response to disasters, but in disaster risk reduction and preparation to reduce the impact on affected populations and to enable more coherent response.

Nisha says *‘So that’s why we are trying to work as much with the government and as much with the local organization as far as possible for those activities are kind of replicated to a wider scale, which we are still able to do.’*

B.B. Thapa agrees: *‘I am very optimistic and hopeful that we have to be cool and think seriously how we can be instrumental in supporting the people in need and participating in government initiatives and supporting policy formulation, system upgrade and functional DRR systems placed in the country.’*

### **Maintaining commitment to disaster risk reduction**

Five years on from the earthquake much has been achieved; but will this effort be sustained in the decades likely to pass before the next major earthquake? A small stone memorial to the 1934 earthquake stands in a grassed area by a busy street in Kathmandu. Nearby, houses built afterwards stand three stories high, limited by an act passed to reduce the impact of a subsequent earthquake. At least they are clearly originally three stories high. Further stories have been built on top, destabilising the buildings, as memory recedes and learning fades<sup>42</sup>. In Nepal one challenge faced by civil society is maintaining long term commitment to effective disaster risk reduction when political and public commitment falters.

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<sup>41</sup> Pandey: Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Making Aid Agencies Work. Terry Gibson. Emerald. 2019. (p133)

## *Case study 6. Uganda: linking disaster response from local to government level through partnerships*

**Organisation(s):** UNNGOF (Forus member), and DENIVA (GNDR VFL Platform), Humanitarian Platform for Local and National Organisations

In Uganda, positive relationships between government and civil society have led to coordinated response to intensive disasters. In the case of extensive disasters examples show the importance of strengthening local knowledge and local capacities

### **Risk profiles in Uganda**

Uganda experiences a complex mix of intensive and extensive hazards. The GNDR Views from the Frontline (VFL) platform leader DENIVA gathers data concerning disasters based on local knowledge, and reported on these in its 2015 VFL report<sup>43</sup>. It examined five distinct risk zones: In the city slums of Kampala residents suffer the effects of persistent flooding due to bad drainage and garbage management. Inward migration to the informal communities increases overcrowding, drug use, alcoholism and prostitution are consequences. A lowland rural zone in Katakwi suffers persistent drought sometimes followed by heavy rains and floods, leading to poor agricultural productivity and food insecurity. The highlands rural zones in Kabale, Mbale and Kasese all experience floods and landslides leading to internal displacement and food insecurity. Deforestation for fuel destabilises the land further, and is believed to influence localised climate change. In addition the Kasese district borders D.R. Congo and Rwanda and has been exposed to intertribal and ethnic conflict.

The Frontline analysis found that across all regions, those consulted reported that 76.97% of disaster events were small scale 'everyday' events. 80.5% of respondents had experienced at least one small scale disaster in the previous year. Asked to prioritise the threats they faced, they ranked the five most dominant threats as follows<sup>44</sup>:

1. Flooding
2. Alcoholism
3. Climate Change
4. Poverty
5. Disease

The profile revealed here shows that, in line with wider evidence, a majority of impacts on

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<sup>43</sup> The report uses the 'Frontline' methodology which involves a number of locally based partner CSOs in conducting 'structured conversations' with local community respondents. Through a qualitative analysis method it is able to present peoples' perceptions and experience of threats, consequences, actions and barriers in response to disasters aggregated at local, national and (through GNDR) global level  
[https://www.gndr.org/component/jak2filter/?Itemid=534&issearch=1&theme=ja\\_k2filter&isc=1&category\\_id=305&xf\\_11\[0\]=226](https://www.gndr.org/component/jak2filter/?Itemid=534&issearch=1&theme=ja_k2filter&isc=1&category_id=305&xf_11[0]=226)

<sup>44</sup> Note that the Frontline method invites open-ended responses and analyses these, so threats and actions are those expressed in conversation by respondents, not selections from a questionnaire



lives and livelihoods in the risk zones studied in Uganda result from small-scale 'everyday disasters' and that these are a multi-hazard mix of social, economic and environmental factors.

### **Ugandan Civil Society responding to disasters**

The Civil Society structure in Uganda which addresses risk reduction, response and recovery from intensive and extensive disasters has a number of layers. DENIVA is itself a network operating nationally, and the partner CSOs collaborating on the VFL study are locally based, typical of the many local CSOs working in the country.

CSOs and networks are in turn linked together by the Ugandan National NGO Forum (UNNGOF): a Forum member. The platform was established in 1997 as many NGOs recognised the need to engage the Government and donor community on policy issues and poverty concerns. The government in turn found it increasingly important to involve CSOs in design and implementation of policies and programmes. The Office of the Prime Minister coordinates humanitarian response, collaborating with UNNGOF and other organisations.

In addition the recently established Humanitarian Platform for Local and National Organisations provides coordination and communication in the case of intensive disasters. These organisations also interact with the Prime Minister's office when a disaster occurs, and much resource mobilisation is undertaken by the Uganda Red Cross.

### **Government collaboration with CSOS in response to intensive disasters**

- In the case of an intensive disaster such as large scale flooding rapid and comprehensive coordination is required. The 'first responders' are local communities and local CSOs exposed to disaster impacts. They apply their local knowledge and capacities to tackle the disaster.
- At national level the Disaster department, hosted by the Prime Minister's Office, declares a national emergency. This triggers national level mobilisation.
- In the case of weather related disasters such as floods and landslides the meteorological authority sends warnings.
- The Humanitarian Platform disseminates information to regional actors via regional platforms.
- Funding is managed through UNNGOF. For larger disasters the Uganda Red Cross coordinates resource mobilisation and works with donors and directs them to the disaster zones.
- The Humanitarian platform (HP) helps get things together, (materials, food, etc.) to help victims.
- CSOs coordinated by UNNGOF and the Humanitarian Platform, undertake local level response and recovery operations.

In Uganda, the role of CSOs is recognised and valued and as a result structures for coordination and communication between government, national and local organisations have developed and are mobilised in response to *intensive disasters*. The data summarised earlier from the Uganda Frontline study shows that a majority of impacts on lives and

livelihoods locally are from small-scale *everyday disasters*, which do not trigger emergency response. DENIVA engages with local communities to address these disasters. Two examples of this are VFL and 'Neighbourhood Assemblies':

### **Views from the Frontline**

VFL is an action research programme. As well as generating evidence to be employed in advocacy nationally and globally it produces recommendations for action. In the study reported above respondents were asked to prioritise actions that could be taken. The top five priorities were as follows:

1. Advocacy
2. Awareness raising of DRR
3. Community awareness raising
4. Community agriculture
5. Community reforestation

These priorities reflect a concern to communicate priorities and needs through advocacy, and also to develop awareness and action at local level. Communities are often driven into inaction and passivity and these priorities, reflecting broader findings from the VFL and accompanying AFL programmes<sup>45</sup> show that a critical response to everyday disasters is community mobilisation. The example of 'Neighbourhood Assemblies' reflects this insight:

### **Neighbourhood Assemblies**

DENIVA has supported the establishment of Neighbourhood Assemblies, or 'Community Parliaments', since 2012. These enable local people to articulate their needs and concerns and to prioritise these, and they can then communicate to the relevant institutions and press for action. Deniva stand in the background to back this up. For example if there is a mudslide they can discuss and decide who should take action. The groups also run other projects such as revolving funds for local loans. The structure creates a connection between local knowledge and other scales. The concept was shared with DENIVA by Kenyan CSO groups.

The Ugandan case shows the development of coherent response between government and civil society in the case of intensive disasters. In the case of everyday disasters examples such as the VFL programme and the establishment of Neighbourhood Assemblies show the importance of developing local knowledge and local capacities.

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<sup>45</sup> Views from the Frontline: <https://www.gndr.org/programmes/views-from-the-frontline.html>  
Action at the Frontline: <https://www.gndr.org/programmes/action-at-the-frontline.html>

## Annex 3: Findings with supporting data

### 1. Capacity building of CSOs before intensive disasters.

**Finding:** In order to strengthen CSOs response in intensive disasters capacity building *before* the event is vital, but often under-resourced. Platforms address this challenge with an emphasis on capacity building to improve the ability of their members to act as credible actors, form partnerships, access resources and participate in clusters and other groupings

#### Data Summary

- Studies highlight the need to strengthen the capacities of local CSOs working in partnership during crises and note that international agencies often do not support strengthening of local capacities in times of stability, which means capacity is limited when disaster strikes<sup>46</sup>.
- A survey of Forus platforms showed that they placed a high priority on Capacity Building in their mission statements, and in response to a questionnaire placed a high priority on supporting CSOs.<sup>47</sup>
- CSOs are often side-lined during surge response because of limited capacity. Local CSO leaders in Nepal describe this experience in relation to the 2015 Gorkha earthquake. Though excluded from cluster meetings being treated as service delivery contractors during the crisis, when the international agencies move on in a matter of months local CSOs are expected to sustain the recovery effort.<sup>48</sup>
- Indian platform VANI highlights the need for capacity building before the event, explaining that when CSOs are at the frontline they are under resource pressure and cannot handle large scale events.
- FECONG undertakes activities to strengthen the capacity of members, seeking information and building the capacities of members,
- Bangladesh CSO platform NAHAB makes a strong link to the theme of 'localisation' and places an emphasis in its work on advocating for localised resourcing to strengthen the capacity of local CSOs, as well as strengthening information sharing and collaboration.
- Fundación Azimuth in Columbia leads a GNDR platform with a focus on disaster risk reduction and sees the 'invisibility' of local CSOs as a major problem. Though the government claims it recognises local CSOs in practice as soon as there is a crisis they are ignored.

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<sup>46</sup> START Network (2013) Missed Opportunities: The case for strengthening national and local partnership-based humanitarian responses (2013, November 3) <https://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/missed-opportunities-the-case-for-strengthening-national-and-local-partnership-302657> (Accessed 20/09/18)

<sup>46</sup> START Network (2014) Missed Again: Making Space for Partnership in the Typhoon Haiyan Response (2014, September) <https://www.christianaid.org.uk/sites/default/files/2016-03/missed-again-typhoon-haiyan-evaluation-report-sep-2014.pdf> (Accessed 20/09/18)

<sup>47</sup> 'Identification and Profiling of Platforms': research study for Forus. February 2020. Unpublished

<sup>48</sup> GFCF: Pathways to Power Podcasts (2019) episode 3: [https://globalfundcommunityfoundations.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Podcast3\\_Transcript.pdf](https://globalfundcommunityfoundations.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Podcast3_Transcript.pdf)

## 2. Knowledge brokering between actors for intensive disasters

**Finding:** CSOs often have limited access to knowledge. Platforms can initiate mapping and surveying activities, create collaborations and hubs to strengthen knowledge sharing and also support formalisation of knowledge in training resources and events

### Data Summary

- Individual CSOs often have limited access to practical knowledge and expertise due to pressures of time and limited resources. CSO National Platforms play key roles in knowledge brokering between actors. Platforms employ networking, mapping, local consultation, partnerships, regional collaborations, round tables and educational resource production to gather and share risk knowledge:
- UDYAMA lead a GNDR platform in India and have learnt that networking, pooling knowledge resources and information are essential in building community resilience to disasters.
- PREDES in Peru assert an important starting point is the creation of a national risk map to identify the most pressing threats and vulnerabilities. When they did this they recognised that 8 departments in the southern region of the country were most exposed to disasters, and Lima is under particular threat of seismic activity
- Fundacion Azimuth highlights the value of gathering detailed local knowledge. It is necessary, they say, to 'walk the territory' by which they mean there is no substitute for learning locally from people, recognising and validating their knowledge.
- FECONG, Mali, acknowledge that they operate at national level, but rely on regional coordinators and local member organisations to gather and share detailed risk knowledge
- GRIDES, in Peru, networks different sources of knowledge in 12 regional hubs comprising local government, CSOs, academics, community leaders and unions. As well as providing local information and training they are able to work together to apply their shared knowledge in advocacy to influence national policy.
- ASONOG organised Risk Management Round Tables for knowledge sharing after Hurricane Mitch. A total of 8 Round Tables were organized for the national territory. They have also promoted local knowledge sharing and education, developing "Escuelas de Incidencia or Advocacy Schools" for communities' education. They also designed a curriculum for advocacy education called "Methodology Guide for Integrated Risk Management", which guides community members on how to provide follow-up during a drought (or other disaster), create risk maps, design community and municipal plans.

### 3. Communications and intensive disasters

**Finding:** Communications before disasters need to be developed to ensure that all relevant actors are well connected and that other opportunities for communications and influence, for example via the media are exploited. During a disaster this preparation needs to be complemented with technical solutions to ensure that communications are not disrupted, and also that communities themselves are included in communications and guidance

#### Data Summary

##### Communications before disasters

- CCONG, links member CSOs with the needs of the population in that region, as well as coordinating the actions of the organizations with local authorities
- PREDES in Peru do this by creating dialogue platforms with local government and the population to discuss the problems and decide what each should do in the face of that problem.
- FECONG in Mali have a communications role at national level. They can relay information to the highest level by giving alerts and making advocacy so that areas which are affected can be helped and supported.
- Indian platform VANI points out disasters are widely covered, if there is a collapse of old building or accident at a construction site, immediately the media covers it.
- Pakistani CSO Pattan make use of newspaper media locally to press for action on flooding, and nationally to advocate for changes in disaster policy and practice

##### Communications during disasters

- VANI point out in any large disaster it is local people and local CSOs who are first responders. The platform's role is to establish communications between local groups and outside agencies including government and international agencies.
- NFN in Nepal identify a similar role, finding out needs from their member organisations and through strong links with government sharing that information to seek support.
- Nepalese CSO DEPROSC agrees that in a crisis the first responders are local organizations and indigenous response mechanisms, but it is more difficult to communicate to donor level. The role of platforms in speeding up and clarifying communication rapidly is critical
- Basic communications are often badly affected in a crisis. Platforms can facilitate expert knowledge to mitigate this. CSO NSET has accumulated technical expertise on using radio communications in a crisis as mobile telecoms towers are often damaged or lose power during a major seismic event
- When telecommunications break down affected communities are often left without any information to support response and survival, or any means of communicating their needs. Civil Society Organisations have a particular responsibility to reach and support the 'last mile'<sup>49</sup>. For example, ASONOG in Honduras emphasise participatory communication with communities before, during and after a crisis.
- Platforms may have members, such as NSET above, with technical expertise, and there are also specialist organisations which can provide knowledge and support, for example CDAC: <http://www.cdacnetwork.org/>.

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<sup>49</sup> This article provides a brief and useful overview: <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2013/apr/03/disaster-communications-ict-internews>

## 4. Managing the influx of external actors – ‘Surge’ in intensive disasters

**Finding:** When an intensive disaster strikes local CSOs are often ‘swamped’ by the large-scale response including international actors but this creates problems when the initial surge is complete and continuing response and recovery is left to these local organisations. Platforms can strengthen relationships and local partnerships as well as taking advantage of emphasis on localisation to transform surge response.

### Data Summary

- GNDR platform leader AFAD in Mali describes the problem that: ‘Too often international NGOs seize aid without involving local structures, neither technical nor local NGOs, and take direct action. This does not benefit local NGOs, because local NGOs are not able to fully play their role which is to support. They can provide local support because they are closer to the communities, knowing the realities. If not there is a lot of risk of diversion, risks that prevent aid from reaching those who need it.’
- PREDES in Peru also recognise the danger of competition rather than collaboration with INGOs, who they find compete for emergency funding for disasters.
- Platforms have an important role in building relationships enabling them to achieve collaboration rather than competition. VANI, in India, give the example of a cyclone in Kerala, whereas in many cases local CSOs are the first responders. When the profile of the cyclone led to international response VANI brokered links between local CSOs and INGOs and also with the CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) functions of large businesses who wanted to provide support.
- NAHAB in Bangladesh is strengthening the capacity and partnerships of organisations at local level. They showed in a comparative analysis of response time that local actors were faster than international and National actors, and that they could share responsibility with a competitive advantage. They are developing hubs to create an environment for collaboration. Local organizations can take the lead and define their own coordination & cooperation mechanism among the local actors, also partnering with the international actors working in that area. The system puts partners on an equal footing; they can decide on raising the alert, collectively allocate resources, and then invite proposals from actors in their respective areas.
- A major study by the START network of INGOs: ‘Transforming Surge Capacity’ addressed the well recognised challenges to national and local CSOS and identified four models which might strengthen national capacity<sup>50</sup>: Capacity building of national NGOs to lead response – replacing international with national surge; Working collaboratively to transform surge capacity through INGOs working with national level platforms and consortia of CSOs. Prior agreements to reduce national CSO losses. Seconding INGO staff into national CSOs to strengthen response.

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<sup>50</sup> ‘Time to Move On’: START network 2017. <https://www.christianaid.org.uk/sites/default/files/2017-09/Time-to-move-on-humanitarian-surge-study-apr2017.pdf> (note that a fifth model is not cited as there was no evidence it was effective)

## 5. Managing resource flows in intensive disasters

**Finding:** Access to resources is a challenge for CSOs and platforms play important roles in negotiating funding with government, INGOs, other donors and private enterprise, improving the application of funding to match local priorities and needs

### Data Summary

- Timely access to resources is often cited as a challenge to CSOs and this is particularly pressing where resources are required urgently. Sometimes resources are available but expertise on how to secure them is required. CCONG in Columbia cited government funding for local reconstruction projects which local groups did not secure because they didn't know how to access and complete official forms.
- Knowledge of how and where to secure resources is a valuable asset for CSO platforms. For example VANI in India trades on its recognition and credibility to act as a conduit for funding from the private sector, as they are able to provide assurance which is more difficult for individual CSOs. Fundacion Azimuth in Columbia acknowledges that this is necessary, as they find that larger organisations are always selected for grants.
- In Uganda this understanding has led to a partnership between the Ugandan CSO Platform, UNNGOF which operates nationally with government recognition, the newly established Humanitarian Platform (HP), which has strong local connectivity but doesn't have strong institutional recognition, the Ugandan Red Cross which is able to attract and distribute resources, and the Prime Minister's office. Through this partnership disaster response is based on the governmental acknowledgement of the emergency, the Red Cross attracting resources which are managed by UNNGOF and with HP coordinating practical response at the frontline.
- ASONOG in Honduras find that government agencies release funding in a reactive way, in response to the immediate disaster, so they have worked to lobby and advocate to improve public policy, pressing for releasing funding in a more strategic way to support risk reduction, response and recovery in transparent ways that support the needs of the most vulnerable
- Another form of partnership was established in Cadiz city in the Philippines after the devastation of Typhoon Haiyan. An INGO, Tearfund, had been involved in the immediate response phase but recognised that longer term recovery and rehabilitation were critical so they formed a partnership with local CSOs, government agencies, technical specialists and community groups. Through their facilitation and resourcing they enabled a locally developed five year DRR and Climate Change Adaptation plan to be developed and implemented<sup>51</sup>.
- It is clear that a major aspect of the work of Platforms in response to intense disasters is securing timely resources. As UDYAMA in India acknowledge this is challenging and while they place an emphasis on the widely recognised principles of localisation they find in practice that continuity of funding is difficult to achieve.

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<sup>51</sup> 'Coherence Cookbook. 2019. GNDR.

## 6. Manage relationships between CSOs and National and Local government for intensive disasters

**Finding:** Effective coordination depends on building good relationships with local and national government before disaster strikes. Platforms can engage at government level to build relationships and institutions forging trust and understanding, making a clear 'value offer' from CSOs to government.

### Data Summary

- When a disaster strikes, effective coordination between everyone involved in response is vital, and an important but often overlooked aspect of this is sharing information about needs and priorities at the frontline of response from affected communities and CSOs working with them.
- NSET reported that coordination was a challenge in response to the 2015 Gorkha earthquake. They found that while everyone – agencies, communities, volunteers, agencies and government – did their best in their own way, this was not enough to effectively meet urgent humanitarian needs. There was recognition that stronger coordination was required with central and local government and the local municipalities.
- There are challenges to effective coordination. Local CSO members of platforms often have weak relationships with local government units who, often burdened with pressures of upward accountability to national government, have limited understanding of local needs<sup>52</sup>.
- CCONG recognise this problem in Columbia and have had to demonstrate to their members the importance of working with local government to ensure coordinated action, as well as building credibility with national government so that their members are heard.
- In Peru PREDES works pro-actively with local government to improve their understanding, and ASONOG in Honduras conduct lobbying and advocacy for improved integration of government response.
- Platforms can support individual members in forging proactive relationships with local government, as PREDES have done. For example in rural Eastern Kenya ADSE worked proactively with local government to establish joint steering groups, develop climate governance policies and secure seed funding from international donors for local projects<sup>53</sup>.
- In Uganda the government recognised the need to collaborate with Civil Society Organisations as they could supplement the government's limited resources and this led to the establishment of UNNGOF to facilitate relationships with CSOs.
- These examples all illustrate a principle described by CCONG making an "oferta de valor" or 'value offer', demonstrating added value to local government as a basis for forging constructive relationships in times of stability so that when a crisis strikes there is strong coordination and local voices are heard.

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<sup>52</sup> Coherence Cookbook P8. GNDR, 2019

<sup>53</sup> Coherence Cookbook P29. GNDR, 2019



## 7. Support sustainable recovery long term after intensive disasters

**Finding:** The intensity of the response and recovery phase of an intensive disaster can obscure the need for recovery to be based on ‘building back better’ which is a developmental and integrated approach. Platforms can strengthen the role of CSOs to pursue long-term sustainable development and livelihood resilience which ensures that communities ‘bounce forward’ after a disaster

### Data Summary

- ‘Building back better’ – ensuring that affected populations emerge better able to build sustainable livelihoods, rather than simply ‘bouncing back’ depends on preparation for sustainable recovery. ASONOG in Honduras emphasise that one cannot talk about development without taking into account municipal, community or national threats.
- Fundacion Azimuth in Columbia suggest development and poverty alleviation processes cannot be separated from disaster risk reduction because for communities living in adverse situations such as post-conflict, or displaced communities moving to high risk urban areas pursuing the SDGs depends on also pursuing DRR.
- Studies of the outcomes of five different intensive disasters show that international agencies typically leave within months of a disaster and that in all these cases greater investment in capacity development of the local agencies who are there for the long term was necessary<sup>54</sup>.
- In practice this means that alongside immediate reconstruction the development of sustainable livelihoods is essential to long term recovery.
- At Escuintla in Guatemala the eruption of the Volcan del Fuego led to the loss of 300 lives and evacuation of over 10,000 people. A group of CSOs focused on livelihoods development through involving professional institutes, businesses and local authorities in providing training in new skills such cooking, carpentry and hairdressing so that people could establish new trades and businesses<sup>55</sup>.
- In Aleppo, Syria, the Tamkeen project adopted a similar approach. Recognising that humanitarian response alone was not sufficient, the project worked with local people and organisations to establish new training and businesses. This ‘humanitarian/development nexus’ not only created sustainable livelihoods but re-established vital services<sup>56</sup>.
- CCOAIB in Rwanda focus in particular on agriculture, animal husbandry and environmental protection and the protection of socio-economic rights in general; but they argue that they do deal with disasters because they cannot work in these areas, especially agriculture, without talking about the erosion of great rains and drought and other disasters that can hinder development at the local or even national level.

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<sup>54</sup> START Network (2013) Missed Opportunities: The case for strengthening national and local partnership-based humanitarian responses (2013, November 3) <https://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/missed-opportunities-the-case-for-strengthening-national-and-local-partnership-302657> (Accessed 20/09/18)  
START Network (2014) Missed Again: Making Space for Partnership in the Typhoon Haiyan Response (2014, September) <https://www.christianaid.org.uk/sites/default/files/2016-03/missed-again-typhoon-haiyan-evaluation-report-sep-2014.pdf> (Accessed 20/09/18)

<sup>55</sup> Coherence Cookbook P41. GNDR, 2019

<sup>56</sup> Dadu-Brown, S, Dadu, A and Zaid, M (2017). Exploring the nexus between humanitarian and development goals in Aleppo. IIED working paper <http://pubs.iied.org/10855IIED> (Accessed 14/08/18)

## 8. Place an emphasis on gathering, aggregating and sharing local knowledge to address everyday disasters

**Finding:** ‘Everyday disasters’ are complex and valuable information about them is often found locally from communities and local CSOs working with them. Organising and communicating this information is an important first step for action and relationships with external actors who have limited understanding of local contexts need to be carefully managed, ensuring local voices are heard.

### Data Summary

- Everyday (‘extensive’) disasters don’t normally hit the headlines. Not only are they less publicised, they are less well understood. The ‘experts’ are often the people who experience them – local populations exposed to them and local CSOs working with them. For example in the republic of Congo, as the country emerged from the latest civil war in 2017 the CCOD platform reported: ‘We still have the consequences: broken houses, looting and economic activities that are destroyed, etc. Not counting the illnesses that have developed, not counting deaths, not counting arrests, etc. So basically these two so-called natural and human types are still there, but made worse by the changes due to the climate, and to the other conflicts. And that feeds a lot of poverty and unemployment problems.’
- The GNDR platform in the country gathers data for the ‘Views from the Frontline’ studies and says it ‘allows us to participate not only in the survey of seniors, families, communities at risk but also a strategy for the local action plan to help communities in difficulty and also to have advocacy programs and better advocacy with departments. This allows us to have an idea of the attitudes which, which can contribute to building community resilience ... We organize many activities not only to the new public authorities to remind them of the role which is theirs for the quality, the security of the citizens in the country, but also for families’.
- As well as local consultations, local institution building allows people to express their needs and priorities to each other and to other actors. For example in Uganda Deniva have supported the establishment of ‘Neighbourhood Assemblies’ or community parliaments. They enable people to articulate their needs and priorities and then to communicate them to relevant institutions and press for action.
- In Colombia CCONG created "Consejos de Gestión del Riesgo" (Risk Management Councils). These councils create their own plans of action for their territory.
- An important role for CSO platforms in strengthening access to local knowledge is mediating relationships with external actors who often have limited awareness of local needs and priorities. For example in Dhaka slum areas local CSO PDAP has worked closely with communities but has found that external partners have approached them with short term project based agendas which are not sensitive to the local conditions, they have learnt that longer term relationships based on equal partnership are more effective.
- Bangladeshi platform NAHAB is also working under the banner of localisation on establishing local partnerships so that when international actors are involved the relationship is on an equal footing.

## 9. Peer to peer knowledge sharing unlocking experience from individual CSOS in addressing everyday disasters

**Finding:** Concerning everyday disasters, relevant actionable knowledge often comes from local experience and is held by CSOs. Platforms can play an important role in creating opportunities for that knowledge to be shared between CSOs and at higher levels.

### Data Summary

- Because of the complex and locally specific nature of everyday disasters those working close to them often have the best understanding of their nature and of options for action. CSO platforms have an important role in ‘brokering’ such knowledge between local CSOs. Who themselves are often too busy and have too limited capacity to pro-actively share it. For example CCOD in the Republic of Congo say ‘really we serve as an interface; we also do analysis and reflection. And we also make proposals since among us, we also have the appropriate expertise, and we have the capacity to mobilize the expertise around us, national expertise, expertise in civil society at large. You can ask another technician, what can you do, etc. We also know that contacts can be made to supplement the knowledge that we have locally.’
- CSO Platforms can provide opportunities for this sharing to take place, for example in Peru ANC has created a DRM group.
- PREDES has helped to promote discussions and preparation of action plans. A wider group has also been established to share knowledge at a national level: *Mesa Nacional de Concertacion para la Lucha contra la Pobreza* (National Roundtable for Agreement for Poverty Alleviation). This enables public organizations to meet with CSOs to discuss problems and propose specific projects to the government.
- NSET in Nepal works to reduce vulnerability to everyday disasters as well as on preparedness for major disasters. They meet and share with other CSOs under the leadership of the NFN CSO platform and they also participate in a specialist network DPnet (Disaster Prevention network) which enables CSOs specialising in disaster risk reduction to share and collaborate.
- ASONOG in Honduras see learning, training and education on local realities as important and promote this between CSOs and also at community level
- Organisations such as NSET, ASONOG and PREDES also participate in the GNDR ‘Views from the Frontline’ action research, which enables them to gather, share and analyse local information and use it as a basis for local and national action planning.
- Fundacion Azimuth: have an objective to validate local knowledge in these communities, working to gain their trust where the State has failed them. They have also been stigmatized because they live in territory that was part of the armed conflict (civil/guerrilla war). They see this as an opportunity to help in a broader way, using participatory methods to work with different segments of society from an initial risk management perspective.

## 10. Advocacy to local and national government and international actors for support for everyday disasters

**Finding:** The needs and priorities of local populations are often ‘invisible’ in local and national government planning and policy and where everyday disasters are concerned it is important that this knowledge is made visible. CSO platforms can play an important advocacy role here concerning everyday disasters

### Data Summary

- The next step for CSO platforms after promoting the gathering and sharing of local knowledge from their members is to bring this knowledge and the implications it has for policy and action to the attention of local and national government. Both ASONOG and Fundacion Azimuth refer to the ‘invisibility’ of local knowledge and voices and wider evidence shows that local voices are often the least heard in policy, planning and action. Correcting this is particularly important in terms of everyday disasters, where it is local actors who appreciate the needs and priorities.
- CCOD in the Republic of Congo highlight the need for an advocacy role in their context: ‘it is often we NGOs who are in contact with the populations and who are directly questioned. : Yes, an actor at the platform level. An actor who acts as an interface between, on the one hand, populations and public authorities and, on the other hand, populations and international donors and international organizations. Whether they intervene under the technical aspects or the aspects of financing. People are still having a bit of trouble contacting public authorities.
- In Uganda for example the national platform UNNGOF and a more recently established network, the Humanitarian Platform (HP) collaborate on advocacy as well as on action. HP has strong links with members and to indigenous knowledge. It recognises that generating indigenous information has been a gap. So they encourage research; to support developmental policy briefs and policy advocacy and engagement, where we review policies and how we engage the government, the state actors on policy issues.
- Making inputs to national level policy and planning, making the needs and priorities of local populations visible is a focus of many platforms. CCONG in Columbia see this as their most important role, being present in different national forums, including councils dedicated to planning, participation, peace, etc. where they have different levels of participation, in some cases as observers to help monitor agendas of International NGOs.
- NAHAB in Bangladesh also see this as an important role, promoting: ‘ . . . *collective voice advocacy at the national level as well as at the local level particularly for the inclusion of local organizations in the local coordination process as well as at the national level coordination process, so, the voice of the local is taken it into consideration for national level planning and implementation mechanisms.* ‘
- CCONG in Columbia also see advocacy to and monitoring of the activities of INGOs as necessary in ensuring effective support for everyday disasters based on local knowledge, priorities and needs

## 11. Resource mobilisation for everyday disasters

**Finding:** Much humanitarian funding is controlled by international actors and projectized. Appropriate funding for response to everyday disasters needs to be locally accessible and flexible, based on mechanisms to pool and distribute local funds.

### Data Summary

- Accessing resources at local level to address the many shocks and stresses people face has often been a challenge. It was recognised in negotiations at the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016 that only 1.2% of humanitarian aid went directly to local and national CSOs and the consequent calls for localisation of aid led to the establishment of a 'Grand Bargain' promising that by 2020 at least 25% of aid would go direct to national and local level. Those working in local CSOs are dubious about this target being met, suggesting that the figures can be manipulated.
- Lizz Harrison, working on a Christian Aid project to accelerate localisation, gives an example: *'some are using that '25 percent by 2020' and saying that can be on a global average. So if we transfer 50% in one country, we don't have to transfer 0% in another country. Let's get to 25% on a global level which I think misses the point, of course!'*
- PDAP: believes that there should be good relationship between donor and partners. But if donor interfere direct for project implementation then why donor need partnership? PDAP is working in the urban areas more than 20 years and we like to work independently. If there will be any middle man for implementing the project, then we do not want to continue that project
- NSET in Nepal say that project funding has limited value as it is time-limited and once the funding ends, so does the project. They favour developing pooled funding mechanisms to provide more flexible funding to organisations when they need it, and NAHAB in Bangladesh also promote this approach.
- UDYAMA in India also apply this approach at community level to pool resources, and DENIVA in Uganda have developed funds based on revolving loans to give local access to funding – this is a model which in various formats has proved successful in many countries.
- Both the pooled funding and revolving loan mechanisms are examples of ways of making funding available locally and flexibly, responding to local priorities and needs and this is vital in addressing complex, locally specific everyday disasters
- NAHAB use the current interest in the localisation agenda as a basis for advocating for locally managed funding through partnerships at local level, giving them access to government and international funding

## 12. Integrating Disasters and Development as a response to everyday disasters

**Finding:** Integrated approaches to development which include disaster risk reduction can strengthen sustainable development. Enabling this requires tackling the challenges of project based funding and also forging partnerships such that CSOs can collaborate in integrated approaches

- The need for '*Coherence*' between frameworks for Disaster Risk Reduction, Climate Change Adaptation and Sustainable Development, so that they are mutually reinforcing, is widely recognised at policy level. At country and local level the corresponding idea is '*integration*' of these interlinked activities as Fundacion Azimuth in Columbia, for example, suggest: '*We can't see how development or poverty alleviation processes can be separated from Disaster Risk Reduction because communities are living in adverse regions, such as post-conflict which displaced so many people. Many poor displaced communities in urban areas are in high-risk areas.*'
- Integrating disasters and development secures the gains of sustainable development by preventing them being affected by disasters. *Intensive Disasters* have massive impacts on progress, demanding large scale interventions in response and recovery. *Extensive disasters* persistently erode development gains. Both can be mitigated by *disaster risk reduction*. Therefore integrated action combines work to pursue sustainable development with mitigation and adaptation to the effects of climate change, and disaster risk reduction to reduce the impact of both intensive and extensive disasters on sustainable development. For example CCIAB in Rwanda highlight how such integration is essential in practice: '*we cannot say that the CCOAIB association does not deal with disasters because if we work in all these areas, especially agriculture, we cannot do without talking about the erosion of great rains and drought and other disasters that can hinder development at the local or even national level*'
- However the project based nature of much funding impedes integrated approaches: NSET in Nepal report: '*. . .there are like different funding organizations and most of our activity of is project based. And once the project is over, we cannot continue those activities so that there are limitation*'
- Platforms are well placed to address the challenges of project based working. Platforms can build connections with national and international sources of finance which allow local CSOs to take integrated approaches.
- ASONOG in Honduras attempts to ensure funds can be used in the most effective way: '*Our work is focused on advocacy so that risk and disaster funds are used to help those who are affected the most, with even the most basic needs. We see our role as making sure that the Government uses resources in the most transparent way for those that need it the most.*'
- Platforms are well placed to facilitate the development of *partnerships* between their members to achieve integration, for example at *NFN* in Nepal and *VANI* in India where everyday disasters are eroding development gains,

### 13. Capacity building for local action in response to everyday disasters

**Finding:** Capacity building can improve operational response of CSOs. Importantly it can also improve the visibility, credibility and influence of CSOs through improving accountability and governance.

#### Data Summary

- Capacity building among platforms consulted falls into two categories, firstly skills and organisational development to strengthen organisational capacities and secondly increasing the credibility and visibility of CSOs to enable them to influence local and national actors, secure partnerships and resources.

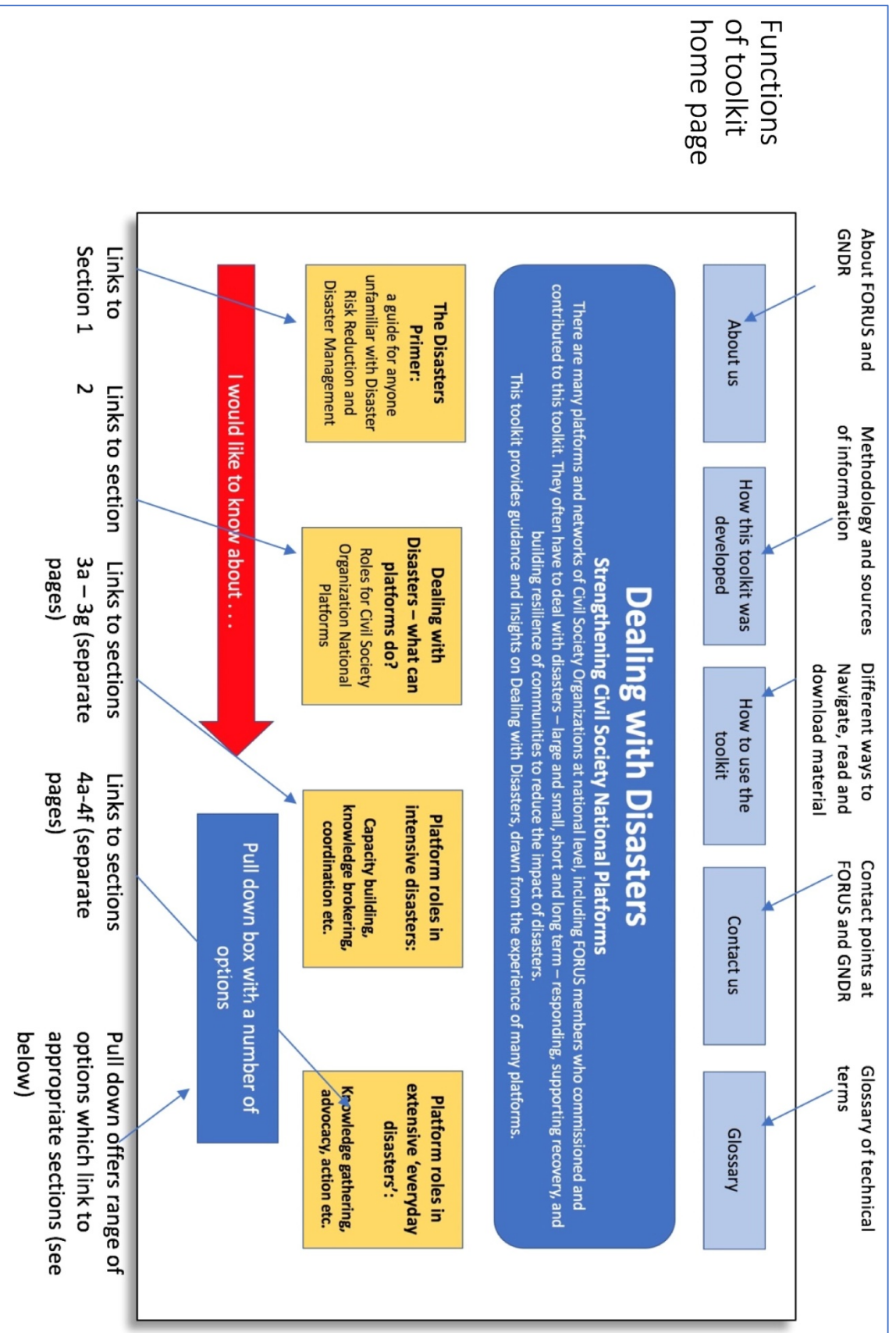
#### Organisational development

- ASONOG in Honduras constantly works to strengthen CSOs capacity in Risk Management so they can adequately manage adverse situations when they occur. Honduras is recognized worldwide as extremely vulnerable to climate change. They have been involved at both levels of disaster in different capacities: They've worked on capacity building for CSO to reduce the impact of disasters. As a pilot country for the Sendai agreement, they've been implementing experimental prevention programs with different CSOs, including the Chambers of Tourism and IT businessmen./They have been implementing the IMPECO project which creates capacities for involving businesses with civil society
- CCONG: have a number of capacity building initiatives focusing on Transparency, accountability and good governance, a system of NGO accreditation and strengthening organizational capacity
- NFN in Nepal Coordinate with the respective organizations and development professionals for capacity development activities; focusing operationally on how to provide response through providing support to people who can make correct actions at the community level.

#### Credibility and Visibility

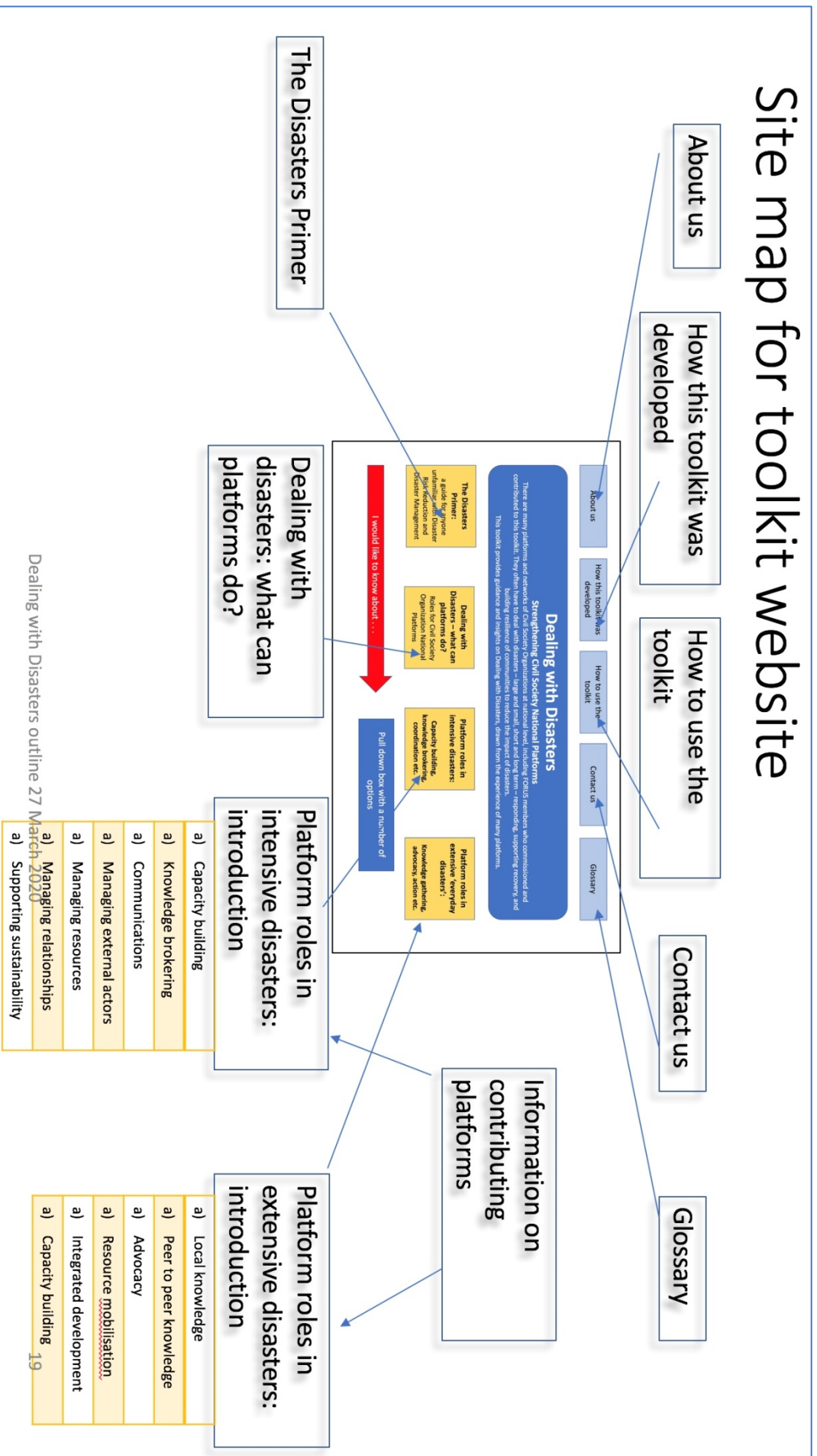
- Whilst capacity development to strengthen operational response is important, several platforms emphasise the need to increase the capacity of CSOs to be regarded as credible actors.
- Fundacion Azimuth highlight this challenge, describing local level CSOs as often 'invisible' and unable to secure funding or partnerships.
- VANI, a large platform in India, see a pillar of their work as strengthening organizations from within. A key aspect of this is demonstrating accountability and good governance so they work on accountability enhancing mechanisms, developing internal resilience, governance management and accountability.
- In Bangladesh NAHAB place an emphasis on building localised networks of CSOs to strengthen their credibility and visibility.
- Similarly FECONG in Mali operate nationally and use regional coordinators to create two-way communications links to their members so they can provide information, relay needs from members to national level and also link them to technical and financial partners.
- CCONG emphasise Transparency, accountability and good governance and helping CSOs to be more credible and visible, so their contributions to society are considered valuable

Annex 4: Toolkit microsite design suggestions





# Site map for toolkit website



## Annex 5: Note on COVID-19

The research period coincided with the global spread of coronavirus. The researchers and all the participants in the research conversations (March-May 2020) have been affected by this, nearly all of them being isolated in lockdown. Several referred to the additional impact of the emergency on the lives of the people they work with, for example in Mali and in Bangladesh. No one was able to speak at this stage about constructive response to the crisis. Unlike intensive and extensive disasters for which CSOs have experience the nature and scale of the pandemic, particularly in the initial crisis period, have overwhelmed systems at local and national level.

As a globally shared experience of an intensive disaster it has not only a practical but an emotional impact. People in the midst of a disorientating crisis find themselves in what is referred to as 'liminal space' - a term originating from anthropological studies of rites of passage which refers to the experience of being on a threshold between two states<sup>57</sup>. Such a situation is disorientating and brings with it feelings of confusion, uncertainty and frustration. Nevertheless, liminal space is in some ways sought after as a situation in which the world can be seen in a new way, outside one's normal experience. In disaster studies this connects with the tri-partite nature of possible responses to a disaster - *resistance, adaptation or transformation*<sup>58</sup>. Resistance is a response based with coping, surviving and carrying on as before. Adaptation is based on recognising that some adjustment is needed to return to a stable state. Transformation is to recognise the opportunity to configure life differently - individually and/or corporately. It is often said that disasters represent an opportunity, and this is the sense of 'transformation'. The liminal space in the midst of a disaster represents an opportunity to consider a different future state.

In the case of the COVID-19 pandemic there is already public discussion about the massive negative impacts on society. Not only the huge scale of disease and death but the oncoming economic disaster as countries fall into recession. There are also clear gains from the clearing of the skies and healthier air in cities. What will societies do as they emerge from the liminal space of the crisis. Will they exert resistance, fighting back to the previous stage as far as possible? Will they make some adaptations (what is referred to in the UK at present as the 'new normal') or will they take the potential opportunity to radically change patterns of working, use of transport, and even the underlying economic parameters of growth?

Our experience in consultation with participants has been that in this early crisis period and liminal space it is too early to extract learning. Some early comparative observations are starting to emerge, for example contrasting responses in Africa with public responses in the U.S.<sup>59</sup>. It seems important that individually and corporately we take advantage of this liminal space to embark on that learning and to press, where we have the opportunity, for transformational outcomes rather than simply attempting to fight our way back through resistance or adaptation to a paler, poorer version of the status quo.

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<sup>57</sup> See section on 'the limin' in this article: <https://www.rethinkingpoverty.org.uk/rethinking-poverty/building-back-better/>

<sup>58</sup> Gibson, T. , Pelling, M. , Ghosh, A. , Matyas, D. , Siddiqi, A. , Solecki, W. , ... Du Plessis, R. (2016). *Pathways for transformation: Disaster risk management to enhance resilience to extreme events*. Journal of Extreme Events, 3(1), Article 671002

<sup>59</sup> <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/opinion/2020/05/13/Fragile-States-Index-West-Africa-coronavirus-resilience>

## Annex 6: Table cross-referencing findings to case studies

Finding	Case Study					
	Columbia	Dhaka	India	Mali	Nepal	Uganda
1. Capacity building of CSOs before intensive disasters.		√		√	√	
2. Knowledge brokering between actors for intensive disasters					√	√
3. Communications and intensive disasters			√		√	√
4. Managing the influx of external actors – ‘Surge’ in intensive disasters		√		√	√	
5. Managing resource flows in intensive disasters		√	√			
6. Manage relationships between CSOs and National and Local government for intensive disasters		√	√		√	√
7. Support sustainable recovery long term after intensive disasters	√			√		√
8. Place an emphasis on gathering, aggregating and sharing local knowledge to address everyday disasters	√		√			√
9. Peer to peer knowledge sharing unlocking experience from individual CSOS in addressing everyday disasters		√	√			
10. Advocacy to local and national government and international actors for support for everyday disasters	√		√	√		√
11. Resource mobilisation for everyday disasters		√				
12. Integrating Disasters and Development as a response to everyday disasters	√					√
13. Capacity building for local action in response to everyday disasters	√	√	√		√	√

## Annex 7: Contact dates

Forus platforms	GNDR platforms	Country	Call/Transcription date
VANI		India	18.03.2020
	UDYAMA	India	18.03.2020
	PREDES	Peru	31.03.2020
ASONOG		Honduras	31.03.2020
	Fundacion Azimuth	Columbia	18.03.2020
CCONG		Columbia	24.03.2020
CCONG	Fundación Azimuth.	Columbia	31.03.2020
UNNGOF & Humanitarian Platform		Uganda	02.04.2020
	DENIVA	Uganda	25.03.2020
NFN		Nepal	17.03.2020; 24.03.2020
	NSET	Nepal	26.03.2020
CCOAIB		Rwanda	20.03.2020
CCOD		Congo	25.03.2020
	Cercle des Droits de l'Homme et de Développement	Congo	21.03.2020; 11.05.2020
NAHAB		Bangladesh	23.03.2020
	Participatory Development Action Program.	Bangladesh	22.04.2020; 02.05.2020
FECONG		Mali	24.03.2020
	AFAD	Mali	24.03.2020