

Collective Learning Report

Learning Report of Enabling Grants Initiated by HARP-F and Implemented by
Nine CSO Partners in 2019 and 2020
December 2020
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Acronyms

ABCD	Action-Based Community Development
CBDRM	community-based disaster risk management
CBO	community-based organization
CERA	Community Empowerment and Resilience Association
CERDA	Center for Environment and Resources Development in Arakan
CRMCO	Coastal Region Mangrove Conservation Organization
CSO	civil society organization
DfID	Department for International Development (Government of UK)
DRR	disaster risk reduction
ECD	Environmental Conservation Department
FD	Forest Department
FSD	Fire Services Department
HARP	Humanitarian Assistance and Resilience Programme
HARP-F	HARP Facility
INGO	international non-governmental organization
LNGO	local non-governmental organization
MEAL	monitoring, evaluation and learning
MRCS	Myanmar Red Cross Society
MSN	Mangrove Service Network
PfP	People for People
PRA	participatory rural appraisal
RWCF	Rainbow Women and Children Foundation
TA	travel authorization
ToT	training of trainers
UN	United Nations
VDMC	Village Disaster Management Committee
WASH	water, sanitation and hygiene
WMC	Water Management Committee
YSA	Youth Strength Association

1. INTRODUCTION

The level of humanitarian need in Myanmar is likely to remain high and the drivers of crisis will continue to be complex and multi-faceted. Humanitarian actors face a continuing challenge in attempts to reach many populations in need, especially the remote townships of Rakhine State, with high vulnerability to both natural and complex disasters.

The Humanitarian Assistance and Resilience Programme Facility (HARP-F) is the largest component of the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), formally Department for International Development (DfID)'s Humanitarian Assistance and Resilience Programme (HARP), which aims to positively influence the way that humanitarian assistance is provided within Myanmar. HARP-F has funded and overseen delivery of FCDO-supported humanitarian assistance to crisis-affected people in Myanmar, as well as Myanmar refugees living in border areas of Thailand. The Facility has also enhanced the resilience of crisis-affected communities and built the country's capacity to respond to future humanitarian need through disaster risk reduction (DRR) programming.

For HARP-F, monitoring incorporates generation of evidence, ensuring this is used for practice and policy both internally and externally, and promotion of practitioner learning. Under the Enabling Grants portfolio, HARP-F established partnerships with nine local civil society organizations (CSOs) in Rakhine State to support the resilience of communities through DRR activities. All the grants came to an end in late 2020. A learning process was then initiated by HARP-F and its partner organizations to celebrate the achievements made and to document best practices. The objectives of the learning process were as follows:

- HARP-F and partners acknowledge the level of success of DRR projects implemented through Enabling Grants
- HARP-F and partners collectively learn and agree on common, different and unique best practices
- HARP-F and partners identify ways to do better in future projects
- Partners experience and appreciate the values of project reflection and learning, to apply to future projects

2. METHODOLOGY

The learning process was a three-step process (sections 2.1 to 2.3) to capture the different approaches used by different partners. The process was scoped as 'technical learning', looking into how activities were carried out and documenting approaches from a learning perspective. Unlike project evaluations, feedback from beneficiaries and other project stakeholders was not included. The information provided in this document is a combination of information from staff members and information taken from project-related reports. Around 30 staff members from eight of the nine CSO partner organizations were able to provide information. However, by the time this learning event was carried out, one of the partners (Rainbow Women and Children Foundation [RWCF]) had already

completed its grant, therefore staff members were not able to participate in the process. Information from RWCF was taken only from the final report and mini project evaluation workshop report.

2.1 Self-Reflection Exercise

A self-reflection exercise tool was developed and disseminated with training on its use provided to each partner in the third week of October 2020. The tool was designed for discussion among project staff members of each organization without any opinion and influence from outsiders. A scorecard-style tool also enabled partners to reflect on the level of achievement for each project objective and activity, and why these would be given a certain score. This caused participants to recall and reflect on good and bad experiences throughout the project implementation, preparing them for discussions at the next step, the organizational reflection workshop.

2.2 Organizational Reflection Workshop

Based on the completed and returned self-reflection exercises, a facilitation guide was tailored for each organizational reflection workshop. The workshop was facilitated by the HARP-F consultant and organized individually with each partner organization, to best capture the details and unique practices of each partner. The Community Empowerment and Resilience Association (CERA), technical-lead CSO for the Enabling Grant, facilitated organizational reflection workshops for three partners (Center for Environment and Resources Development in Arakan (CERDA), People for People (PfP) and Wan-Lark) using the same facilitation guide provided by the consultant. Brief individual organizational reflection reports were also developed and provided to partners. Eight half-day workshops were conducted in the first and second weeks of November 2020.

2.3 Collective Learning Workshop

Observations from individual organizational reflection workshops were gathered and analysed to determine commonalities and differences within the Enabling Grant initiative. A collective learning workshop was designed to capture key best practices and lessons learned from all CSO partners. The highly engaged workshop was conducted on 17 and 18 November 2020, jointly facilitated by the HARP-F Capacity Enhancement Manager and the consultant. The discussion points from the collective learning workshop, in combination with findings from individual organizational reflection workshops and self-reflection tools, are the basis of this collective learning report.

2.4 Contribution to Other Learning Initiatives

As HARP-F is highly motivated in learning and evaluation, other learning components such as an Organizational Capacity Assessment and Programme Evaluation were also carried out in parallel, or are planned for the future. Therefore, reflection and learning points from this report will significantly complement other parts of HARP-F's programme. Individual reflection reports for partners will also contribute to further institutional capacity development.

3. OVERALL SUCCESS IN BRIEF

The overall success of the Enabling Grant-funded projects¹ is high, with over 75% of proposed activity completed. This has been achieved despite the major interruptions of COVID-19 and conflict outbreaks. The success is not simply measured in terms of achieving project goals and objectives, but also in the professional satisfaction and confidence of CSO partners, motivating them to initiate more projects in future. This will facilitate implementation of more effective and efficient DRR and humanitarian activities for Rakhine communities.

In two years, the Enabling Grant in Rakhine has reached over 83,000 beneficiaries from Rakhine State covering 94 villages from eight townships. The following table provides a summary of the projects, along with partner names.

#	Partner	Township	# Village	Sector	Period	Beneficiaries	Budget (£)
1	ABCD	Mrauk-U	5	DRR	From 1/3/2019 to 31/12/2020	6,547	131,980
2	CERA	Myebon, Pauktaw	16	DRR, WASH, Mangrove	From 1/2/2019 to 31/12/2020	16,150	227,078
3	CERDA	Kyaukphyu	8	DRR, Mangrove	From 1/4/2019 to 31/12/2020	3,212	79,160
4	CRMCO	Kyaukphyu	8	DRR, Mangrove	From 1/7/2019 to 31/12/2020	3,634	59,641
5	MSN	Munaung	13	DRR, Mangrove	From 1/1/2019 to 31/12/2020	8,829	262,193
6	PfP	Mrauk-U, Kyauktaw	20	DRR	From 1/6/2019 to 30/11/2020	26,364	162,191
7	RWCF	Rathedaung, Mrauk-U	6	DRR	From 1/3/019 to 30/9/2020	6,218	79,606
8	Wan Lark	Mrauk-U, Ponnagyun	10	DRR	From 1/3/2019 to 31/12/2020	9,081	106,709
9	YSA	Kyaukphyu	8	DRR	from 1/3/2019 to 30/9/2020	3,266	65,111
		8 townships	94			83,301	1,173,669

Remark: additional villages were covered in COVID-19 response activities.

Project outputs were fulfilled at the most attainable level and all partners were satisfied with tangible achievements in the target communities. No major problems or negative impacts were observed within the partner organizations or in the villages and townships where projects were implemented. As identified through the collective learning process, the main success factors of the projects were:

- Community: high acceptance and participation
- Partner CSO: high understanding of local context
- Staff: high level of commitment
- HARP-F: strong mentoring and coaching to partners

¹ The Enabling Grant fund was established to support local organizations in Myanmar to deliver humanitarian projects. A total of 17 Enabling Grants were provided, including nine specifically for DRR projects in Rakhine. Enabling Grants included funding and capacity-enhancement activities for the local organizations.

The projects could have been even more effective if some planned final wrap-up activities such as community disaster simulation, open conversation on land issues, final handover mass meetings, township-level joint events between community members and concerned government representatives, etc., were implemented. Such activities could have tied different pieces of the projects together, facilitating a more organized handover and project closure; however, it was not possible to conduct these activities during the time period of the grant because of COVID-19-related implementation delays. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, some partners adapted to shift projects from DRR to emergency response by carrying out COVID-19 awareness-raising activities, demonstrating commitment to project success and community resilience.

4. ACTIVITY IMPLEMENTATION

Most of the projects did not initiate ‘full-flash’ activity implementation in the first quarter. There was an intentionally designed project start-up period between HARP-F and each partner, allowing the partners to make proper arrangements within their organizations before engaging with target communities. This was designed to minimize risks as some partners had no previous experience of managing projects with high compliance and international standards.

Almost half of the project period was interrupted by armed conflicts and the COVID-19 pandemic, meaning multiple pauses to activity implementation, which affected project momentum. Participants described the situation as being similar to a ‘slow motion movie’, as extra effort was required to achieve the targets within the project time frame. Most activities had to rely more on community leadership and initiative. Nevertheless, as already mentioned in section 3, the partners achieved success with the projects. The factors responsible for this are detailed below.

4.1 Appropriate Activity Selection

Primary Sector: For all partners, selection of the project activities was matched with the needs of the target communities. Most target community members were unaware of the concepts and approaches of community-based disaster risk management (CBDRM) and that ‘hazards’ can be prevented or mitigated to lessen the impacts. Therefore, an approach combining software [awareness-raising, training, discussions, etc.] and hardware ‘small-scale mitigation’ [roads, bridges, embankments, etc.] was deemed appropriate, meaning that risk reduction endeavours did not end at training and plans, but continued to tangible activities. Some communities have limited resources to resolve disaster risks after identifying them, and greatly appreciated the project interventions. Only one partner, Youth Strength Association (YSA), did not include infrastructure-related activities, thus relatively reducing the effectiveness of the project.

Integrated Sectors: Positive add-ons to DRR included mangrove plantation, fuel-efficient stoves, and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) activities. Such integration increased the interest and engagement of community members as these add-ons met vital needs in target villages [e.g., WASH became a priority in isolated villages after a small-scale flood because drinking ponds were contaminated and latrine pits had overflowed]. Similar to DRR activities, mangrove plantation, fuel-efficient stoves and WASH activities created opportunities for community members to get involved and experience the benefits first-hand.

Project Size and Scope: Each partner received an appropriate and manageable grant in terms of project size, funding and scope/area covered. The funding awarded to each partner depended on size, experience and institutional capacity of the organization, and ranged from £60,000 to £260,000. 'Project size' can also be interpreted as number of sectors, activities and target population covered by the project. In general, the size of the fund granted to each partner matched the scope of work that partner would be covering. The time frame of most of the projects was about two years, which appeared suitable for the focused size and scope. However, from the workshop discussions, it was suggested that there could be additional improvements if the projects were extended beyond two years in order to sustain the observed emerging project impacts.

4.2 Founded on Trust-Building

'Trust-building' is one of the most cited concepts by partners for success of a project. Fortunately, from experience, senior staff members of the CSO partners knew the importance of trust. In Myanmar, where policies and systems are not well established, people tend to make business decisions according to personal acquaintances. In this context, trust and relationships are virtual indicators of good stakeholder management. There is even a Myanmar saying "friend the person – bend the rule, hate the person – straight the rule", highlighting the importance of building trust and good relationships. From the workshop discussions, it was clear that project activities were founded on trust-building with stakeholders, especially with target communities and government authorities. The following details were also observed in terms of building higher levels of trust with the stakeholders.

Patience: Partners began projects tentatively because some community members and government authorities did not have good knowledge of the partner organizations and staff members. The partner CSOs took adequate time to explain the project, introduce their organizations and describe how vital the role of stakeholders is to the success of the projects. This allowed the stakeholders to become more familiar with the organizations, and to reduce any fears that the staff members, organizations and activities were a threat to their communities. In many cases, at the beginning, villagers were not very happy with a project because they did not 'get anything'. However, after some time, villagers realized that the project was designed for the whole community and beneficial to all. Community participation then increased. Partners also ensured that project-related activities were open to participation by as many villagers as possible, ensuring activities were carried out at times when people were available [e.g., evenings, weekends, etc.]. During project implementation, staff members also came to understand better how to approach each

community and could tailor their method of engagement. Starting slow does not necessarily mean less progress if organizations are building a foundation of trust.

Regular Engagement: Patience was applied together with regular visits and engagement so that stakeholders learned about the project and the partners. Regular field visits to target villages and conversations with village elders, village authorities and community-based organization (CBO) members, and spontaneous conversations with people living in the communities were also part of good practice in keeping all community members informed about the intention of the project and the activities in progress. Moreover, the practice of keeping local authorities informed through regular meetings, visits, reports and bringing them to project areas also enhanced stakeholders' trust in partners. In some cases, CSOs also maintained close engagement with local notables in town, who later became advocates for project activities. The presence of such local notables at project training sessions can help to unconsciously reduce levels of suspicion regarding government departments such as the Special Intelligence Department (Special Branch) of the Myanmar Police Force. In one extreme case, a partner staff member had to wait outside a township administrator's office for a whole day to get a chance to meet. Following the meeting, the administrator realized not only the need to engage with CSOs, but also appreciated the efforts made by the CSO staff member. Since then, the CSO staff have never had to wait for a long time to maintain regular engagement with the township administrator.

Respect: The fundamental principles of trust- and relationship-building were also adhered to by partner staff members. As politeness and respect are values held highly in Rakhine culture, the partners ensured that they prioritised these in communications approaches, especially when engaging with community members and government authorities, which also advanced the trust-building process. The genuine goodwill of partner staff was also recognized and respected by community members. Partner staff demonstrated patience and maintained respect to all villagers through difficult situations. At project meetings, some villagers showed disrespectful manners, for example not wearing a shirt, lying down while someone was speaking, putting their legs on a chair or smoking. Other villagers were angry and had complaints about methods of project implementation. After a few months, with partner staff having addressed complaints regarding respect and demonstrated patience, the villagers who complained (or showed disrespect) became champions and change agents in their communities. Paying respect to government authorities is also usual practice when dealing with them.

4.3 Implemented Through CBO

Although some partners were not familiar with DRR technical activities, they were familiar with community-based approaches and implementation. Senior staff members from partner CSOs² also had extensive experience in development activities and had worked for various international organizations, thus were able to replicate community-based

² CSOs refer to non-village-based (township level or above) local organizations/institutions with paid staff members. CSOs are more formal than CBOs, and apply formal systems and structures. In most cases, CSOs are registered organizations.

style implementation through the grant. This gave the partners huge advantages when carrying out 'CBDRR' projects as the 'CB' part was already a plus, and the addition of some inputs of technical knowledge on 'DRR', allowed projects to be carried out at full speed.

All partners used the same approach of carrying out the majority of project activities through community-based organizations [CBO³] formed in each village as core groups for implementing project activities at village level. The CBOs also connected project activities to village authorities and relevant community members taking part in the project. This minimized any misunderstanding of project activities by village authority and community members.

The CBOs also boosted the speed and success of activity implementation by organizing the appropriate target groups, assisting partner staff members with implementation and, most importantly, maintaining/monitoring village activities while partner staff members were not present. This practice was especially obvious during conflicts and the pandemic when travel restrictions were put in place. During these periods, partner staff established daily communication practice with CBO members and guided them to continue some project activities such as construction, training of trainers (ToT), mangrove nursery, etc. This helped to reduce the number of incomplete activities, although staff could not perform field visits. The importance of 'localization' was highlighted as it was demonstrated that CBOs have better access/reach than CSOs, which generally have a higher level of access than international organizations. There were some concerns from partners regarding the quality of activities (such as training delivery) implemented through CBOs, but any negative aspects of the increasing role of CBOs are scarcely noticeable.

The projects would not be successful if the role of CBOs was undermined. All partners promoted the role of CBOs throughout the projects, as they recognized their value, namely:

- CBO members are from the same community, thus, are available to respond to community concerns
- Villagers feel more comfortable approaching CBO members than partner staff members
- CBOs can mobilize villagers and contribute to high community engagement
- CBOs also advise on details of implementation style
- CBO members can easily identify threats to a project
- CBOs can immediately solve problems before they escalate
- CBOs can also advise on security-related information to partner staff members

CBOs were formed with villagers who had volunteer spirit and were active in village development initiatives. Influential persons and village elders were also included, providing appropriate representation to speak on behalf of the whole village community [e.g., when dealing with government departments], making it easier to deal with village

³ In this report, a CBO generally refers to any of the volunteer groups/organizations existing at village level. These could be a VDMC, WMC or task force initiated by the project or an existing volunteer group in a village such as village elders, youth groups, funeral service groups, etc.

authorities and more effective when convincing the villagers on some issues. With guidance from HARP-F, partner staff also were able to guide formation of CBOs to include women representatives. Most importantly, it was noted that CBO members should be nominated and selected by villagers, not appointed by the project. In this way, the partners tried not to influence the community decision-making process, even though it was part of the project activities. This indirectly promoted sustainability and reduced dependency on CSOs.

Each village could have more than one CBO, depending on the number of different project initiatives in the village. Commonly, each village had a committee [Village Disaster Management Committee, VDMC] to lead all DRR-related activities. Under each VDMC, smaller CBOs called Task Forces were formed, such as the Search and Rescue Task Force, First Aid Task Force, Early Warning Task Force, Task Force for Small-Scale Mitigation Construction, etc. In some villages, there were different CBOs for Mangrove Conservation and Plantation, WASH, etc. Use of different groups for different responsibilities allowed more space for community members to engage in project activities and triggered a higher level of participation and inclusion.

4.4 Participation and Inclusion

Throughout the project, with guidance from HARP-F, the concepts of participation and inclusion were systematically embedded as a requirement. Considerations were made with respect to gender, disability, the elderly and children. For example, village-level committee member selection was conducted through mass meetings to promote participation, transparency and a higher level of engagement. Village training and awareness-raising sessions welcomed anyone interested without limiting the number of participants. Some partners chose not to provide any meals or incentives for attending such meetings and training, as part of an approach to promote sustainability and all-inclusive participation. Rather than deterring people, in some villages following this approach it was observed that more people joined the training and meetings. However, it is worth noting that these villages have never previously engaged with such organizations. In other words, they had not been 'spoiled' by incentives offered by international organizations with higher budgets. An approach without incentives may not work in villages that have previous experience engaging with organizations.

CBO and task force member selection was conducted through a mass meeting nomination system, to promote an equal chance for all villagers to participate and contribute their votes. At the same time, partners encouraged the communities to recognize the role of women and female leaders, children and disabled persons in building a resilient community. As a result, in some villages, women were leading CBOs and task forces. Persons with disabilities were also involved in committees, including as primary suppliers for fuel-efficient stove production. Partners also established formal or informal mechanisms to listen to feedback from community members so that voices from every layer of the communities were heard and addressed. For example, as an informal mechanism, partner staff members spent time with community members before and after an event [such as training] and led the conversation into whether there was anything about the project with which the community was unhappy. Formal mechanisms

with which to share any grievances were also provided to the community, including details of phone numbers and mailing addresses.

The majority of the project target areas are in conflict-affected zones, which are multi-ethnic and multi-religion. CSO partners were acutely aware of basic principles such as humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence. These principles were applied at every step of project activity. Although the projects did not include peace-building components, the aim was to be conflict-sensitive and not to promote existing divisions in the community. In some cases, the project even promoted social cohesion through implementing small-scale mitigation activities [e.g. two different ethnic groups have to come together to a high-land identified as a safe evacuation place during a flood]. Although there were no obvious examples, it was generally agreed that being conflict-sensitive and applying a neutral working style protected partner staff members from being harmed or mistrusted by different groups.

5. TECHNICAL APPROACHES

Through the learning process, most partner staff members expressed that they were not fully satisfied with their technical knowledge, especially on DRR. A few partners had prior experience of implementing small or medium-sized DRR or mangrove plantation/conservation activities, but none had implemented emergency response-related projects before. At the project start-up stage, HARP-F technical staff with partners discussed and refined sectoral-related details of proposed activities and approaches. CBDRM training was also provided by DRR technical experts from HARP-F. Partners' technical skills for mangrove- and WASH-related activities were relatively higher than those for DRR.

Almost all target villages had never been exposed to any of the technical sectors focused by the partners, but all were well received by the communities. As the field-level initiatives used community-based approaches, CBOs and community volunteers were encouraged to lead the implementation, and, as a result, projects received stronger participation and contribution. However, the level of participation varied from one community to another, with engagement and participation generally higher in villages where projects included an infrastructure component.

Under the Enabling Grants, five different technical components were observed.

5.1 DRR

DRR was the main theme of all projects under the Enabling Grants, aiming to support the resilience of various communities in Rakhine State [the Coastal Region Mangrove Conservation Organization (CRMCO) did not include a stand-alone DRR component but a mitigation component as part of mangrove conservation]. DRR initiatives were limited to village-level activities, thus traditional CBDRM approaches were mainly used. The CBDRM approach used was very similar to the majority of DRR projects since Cyclone Nargis in

2008, so was already well adapted to the Myanmar context. CBDRM initiatives included the following components:

- VDMC and other committee formation
- Village-level risk assessment
- Development of preparedness plan
- Training and preparation
- Small-scale mitigation infrastructure [section 5.2]

VDMC Formation: The best practice for formation of a VDMC is the nomination system, which allows community members to choose the members who will lead them in DRR activities. Before the selection process, rather than rushing into activity implementation, partners took time to educate villagers on the project and the responsibilities of a VDMC member. This provided clear indications of what is required from a VDMC, who in the community might be suitable, what level of effort it may take, etc. This was an effective way of facilitating selection of suitable committee members, accepted by villagers. Task forces under the VDMC, such as Early Warning, Search and Rescue, First Aid, etc., were also formed following similar processes.

Risk Assessment: With the initiative of the VDMC, each community was encouraged to identify disaster risks based on exploring potential hazards, vulnerabilities, exposures and capacities. Traditional community vulnerability and capacity assessment methods allow for wide participation. The tools used in the assessment were based on participatory rural appraisal (PRA) tools, which are designed to capture different inputs from all participants; old or young, educated or non-educated, rich or poor.

Preparedness Plan: In the next step, the identified disaster risks were shared with community members, who were asked their opinion on which risks could be reduced and how, with the aim of ‘hazards’ never reaching ‘disaster’ stage. At this point, most communities did not have any ideas, so partner staff members assisted by coming up with relevant disaster preparedness plans. Some partners provided DRR awareness-raising activities in the communities before the communities identified disaster preparedness activities.

Implementing the Plan: Based on activities identified in the village disaster preparedness plan, training and awareness-raising sessions were carried out at village level. The number of awareness-raising sessions conducted with villagers exceeded the target, along with other training. Some partners also conducted awareness-raising activities with schoolchildren. During the COVID-19 lockdown period, it was not possible for partner staff members to provide training in the villages. As an adaptive approach, CERA converted the training to ToT style and trained selective community members in the town. The ToT trainers then conducted DRR training at respective villages [participants suggested it would be better to closely guide the first few training sessions for maximum effectiveness]. Depending on the target location, some partners moved planned training in town to villages as restrictions were stricter in towns.

Training by Government Staff: Most workshop participants highlighted the value of training supported by relevant government staff. For example, the state-level

Department of Disaster Management was invited to deliver and monitor DRR-related training and awareness-raising activities. The township-level Fire Services Department (FSD) was invited to deliver training for Search and Rescue Task Forces, and Myanmar Red Cross Society (MRCS) was invited to provide First Aid Task Force Training. This approach has many advantages:

- Links relevant government departments with target communities
- Builds a stronger relationship between the CSOs and government departments
- Creates opportunities to demonstrate the good work done by partners
- Builds mutual understanding among government departments, CSOs and communities

Material Support: Along with the ‘software’ activities [training, meetings, etc.], the projects also provided ‘hardware’ support complementing the knowledge gained by the villagers. This support included DRR kits, first aid kits and awareness information, education and communication materials. The VDMC appreciated these materials because they were able to maintain disaster mitigation and preparedness activities not just by knowledge gained, but with effective supporting materials to enable their responsibilities and those of the task forces.

CRA Handbook: One unique approach by YSA was production of a Community Risk Assessment (CRA) handbook, and dissemination to those involved in the process (CBOs, government officials, partners and HARP-F). The handbook was organized before the end of the project, capturing all the steps and experience of project implementation. It provided useful documentation of the work done, and could be part of institutional capacity for future DRR projects. Moreover, such an approach could be useful for resolution of any subsequent issues at community level [e.g., someone monopolizes community funds or assets], as different government departments would already be familiar with the relevant community systems. The handbook also provided a record of achievements from which CBOs could take pride in their contributions, encouraging them to maintain/do more activities. Government departments also appreciated the handbook and advised replication of the process.

Opportunity Missed: Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, partners had to cancel community-level disaster simulation exercises, activities that would have combined everything the community had learned from the project and applied in practice. Action-Based Community Development (ABCD) had also planned to conduct half-day workshops with VDMCs and township Disaster Management Committees to strengthen relationships/coordination between them, so the communities could continue to access township-level committees after the project ended. Nearby non-target villages had heard news of the effectiveness of the projects, and invited partner staff to expand project activities in their villages. They offered to make contributions [e.g. labour and/or money for construction activities, time and voluntary endeavours for soft activities] if projects were implemented in their communities where they felt disaster risks were high and wished to mitigate with technical assistance from the CSO. However, because of limited time, budget and staff availability, such requests were turned down.

5.2 Small-Scale Mitigation

As part of hardware support for village-level preparedness activities, infrastructure construction ‘small-scale mitigation’ activities were implemented by most partner CSOs. Small-scale mitigation activities incorporated bridges, roads/pavements, embankments, hillocks, etc. According to the workshop participants, villages with such small-scale activity tended to be more active and engaged than those without. All the small construction activities were identified by villagers themselves, based on findings from risk assessment exercises.

For technical accountability, partner CSOs recruited civil engineers [or hired part-time consultants/engineers] to ensure that such small-scale mitigation structures could withstand disasters and serve intended purposes. Partners were highly satisfied with these types of activity as they were of high quality and triggered active community engagement/participation. In most cases, villagers contributed labour for the construction. Some villages even contributed up to 50% of cost and labour, and some donated land to build an infrastructure. In one extreme case, a community of YSA initiated a road/bridge with their own funds because they realized the need from a community risk assessment exercise. Completion of small-scale mitigation infrastructures promoted confidence of VDMCs and community members as they realized their capability as a whole. While travel restrictions were imposed as a result of COVID-19, engineers provided monitoring and technical support via telephone, based on receiving daily progress photos.

5.3 Mangrove Conservation

Along with CBDRM, mangrove plantation and conservation were carried out as part of mitigation activities for potential floods, river embankment erosion and storm surges. Three of the partners, CERA, CRMCO and Mangrove Service Network [MSN], included mangrove conservation components as part of the Enabling Grants.

Technical Support: The three organizations have good in-house capacity and experience of mangrove conservation, thus did not struggle with the technical components. Moreover, the mangrove network is strong within organizations working in Rakhine State [such as Rakhine Coastal Region Conservation, Myanmar Environmental and Rehabilitation Conservation Network, etc.], making higher technical expertise easily accessible. The partners also arranged training with the Environmental Conservation Department [ECD] and Forest Department [FD] for nursery, selection of plant species and planting methods. This supported good links and cooperation between relevant government departments and community members. As the project activities contributed to ECD’s mandates, these also promoted ECD’s performance. The Minister of Agriculture, Livestock, Forestry and Mines of Rakhine State himself asked for reports on mangrove conservation areas and encouraged increased conservation works, providing a driving factor for better government support.

Results of Good Networking: During reflection, one significant example was observed as a result of a community’s increased awareness and networking with the ECD and FD. An

unauthorized fish cracker factory in a remote area at the bank of Kan River was not environmentally friendly, operating with coal. Inhabitants of nearby villages disliked the smoke and smell from the factory, and thus the community reported the factory to relevant government departments along official channels. The issue attracted the attention of state government and the factory was shut down. If the CBO had not had connections with government departments or had not had the environmental conservation-related knowledge, the case could have ended differently; for example, with villagers demonstrating in town and no action taken by the government.

Technical Feats: Regarding methods of plantation, community members often did not agree with advice from partner staff members, as the communities had previously attempted to use several different plantation methods without success. In one case, villagers were against new plantation at the shoreline because this had been tried before but had not worked. MSN technical staff did the research and achieved success by wrapping the seeds with a piece of net, anchoring this to a small stick so the seeds were not washed away. In another case, CRMCO staff were able to gain a community's acceptance by demonstrating success in mangrove nurseries with some adjustments to the traditional planting style, including distance between each plant, depth, fencing, timing to take off plant growbag (plant pouch), ways to tie a plant to its support, etc.

Challenges: Before witnessing these achievements, CSO partners faced a series of challenges in the communities, which were gradually resolved through trust-building. Examples of challenges include:

- The community misunderstood that land would be owned by an implementing CSO after mangrove plantation
- There were land ownership disputes between villagers
- Most land is occupied by rich persons from cities (some in an official way such as buying together with paddy field, some in unofficial possession), who are not interested in planting anything on the land
- The community has its own traditional land tenure system, which sometimes conflicts with the laws
- Jurisdiction of mangrove areas is not clear between FD and Department of Fisheries (partners also foresee further land dispute in future because the government is accepting large industrial projects in target areas, e.g. Kyauk Phyu Township)
- Differing concepts/opinions between FD and ECD; FD prefers to identify and establish more plantation areas while ECD prefers training and awareness-raising
- The community did not trust the CSO and did not support the technical approaches introduced by the CSOs
- Identifying and finding mangrove species adaptable in the target area
- Timely transportation of nurseries to the area

During the COVID-19 period, CSOs attempted to continue activities by adapting their community mobilization styles. For example, CSO staff went to target communities but did not cross into village territory. Or plantation demonstrations were made on site but following appropriate COVID-19 restrictions such as wearing masks, staying 6 feet apart from each other, no social activities like having tea/refreshments, etc.

Opportunity Missed: One major event missed [about 20% completed] due to the pandemic, but worthy of note, was the community-level ‘Conversation about Mangrove Conservation’, planned for December 2020. The conversation was designed to be an open discussion [similar to a workshop] between representatives from concerned government departments, CBOs, village administrator, village elders and other community representatives covering the following:

- How existing mangroves would be maintained after project completion
- To agree on rules/policies for mangrove-related initiatives at village level
- How and which government departments would provide support if problems/needs exceed community capacity
- To continue stronger collaboration between the CBO and government departments after project completion

5.4 Fuel-Efficient Stoves

A new approach used by some of the partners was introduction of concrete fuel-efficient stoves to target communities, which had always used firewood in open spaces. Use of such stoves is postulated to reduce the amount of firewood needed by around 50%, and thus, the activity gained communities’ [especially women’s] attention because of the potential to reduce time required to collect firewood or the cost of buying firewood. The project was able to educate communities on linkages between the use of fuel-efficient stoves and ecosystem and environmental conservation.

Initially, the stoves were intended to be part of community revolving fund⁴ initiatives. However, due to limited access and visit frequency to target areas [conflict and pandemic], some partners adapted to the challenges by teaching concrete fuel-efficient stove-making to selected community members for a more sustainable result [MSN and CRMCO]. Then, the project bought the stoves at Ks.3000/- each [approximately US\$2.3] and distributed to each household within the target area. This approach is cost-efficient, sustainable and generated some level of income for community members in need. The selected community members included persons with disability, people with limited source of income and women. Villagers from nearby villages also became interested in purchasing concrete fuel-efficient stoves from the makers [project beneficiaries]. A village named Tike Kyun, situated close to one of MSN’s target villages, approached MSN with a request for training on stove-making, but unfortunately, this could not happen because of COVID-19 travel limitations.

5.5 WASH

Based on needs assessment by CERA, WASH activities were integrated into its project. According to the assessment findings, WASH was identified as a secondary disaster because village drinking water ponds were easily contaminated after floods, and toilet

⁴ A community revolving fund is a fund or account at a specific village intended to finance development or disaster management-related activities within the village. Usually, a village CBO manages the fund in terms of appropriate usage and replenishment.

pits could not withstand floods. The scope of WASH intervention included construction/upgrading of WASH infrastructures, awareness-raising on water management and hygiene promotion. Similar to the DRR and mangrove interventions, WASH also used a community-based committee called the Water Management Committee (WMC), which mobilized almost all of the village-level activities with technical support from the CSO. In mid-2020, the partner directed its WASH activities towards COVID-19 approaches such as awareness-raising of the pandemic and distribution of hygiene materials to people staying at quarantine centres.

6. SUCCESS FACTORS

HARP-F's nine partners are different in terms of capacity, size of organization, previous experience working with international organizations, number of projects managed before, type and level of technical expertise, location of presence and area of interest. However, there are also similarities contributing to the success of the Enabling Grants:

- Having committed staff members
- Eager to learn new things and expand the expertise of the organization
- Being local organizations that easily blend into the community
- Positive attitude towards HARP-F
- Mutual respect for each other and HARP-F

6.1 Advantage of Being Local

The most important factor behind the success of the grant was that all partners were local organizations. From various conversation with partner CSOs, it became clear that a non-local organization may not be so successful. The following advantages of being a local organization were highlighted during the workshops.

Same Identity: All nine CSOs were based in Rakhine and were perceived as local charity organizations by the local communities and local governments. The majority of staff members and volunteers were also Rakhine, recruited within the townships (or nearby) in which projects were implemented. Therefore, there were no language barriers when communicating with villagers. Moreover, CSO staff members were more easily accepted and trusted by community members, not only people from target villages but also people from towns in which the CSO offices are located. Field visits were also easier and offered relatively less security concern for Rakhine staff members.

Sensitive to Local Context: CSO staff members knew about the area, the people and politics of where they were working. They were also sensitive to local culture, use of wordings and behaviours not well perceived by communities. These characteristics automatically mitigated possible problems that might have arisen during the project. It was observed that senior members of the partner CSO were especially sensitive to concerns of the local government and guided the team members appropriately. Moreover, the context-related knowledge was shared with non-local staff members so that they could also avoid problems while dealing with local stakeholders.

Access to Local Information Networks: The partners had access to local information networks in various ways such as social networks, friends and families, CBO members, other local CSOs, local government staff members, etc. The networks provided not only general information, but also intel such as local government's updated plans and special instructions, places armed groups would be monitoring and whether it was safe to travel or conduct activities in specific villages. Some partners were able to communicate indirectly with ethnic armed groups through friends of friends, and seek security of staff members on field visits; for example, by providing the name of the organization, date of the visit, vehicle colour and plate number, purpose, etc. Some CBOs offered to manage shipment of project-related materials [e.g. DRR kits] from towns to target villages according to their own timing and arrangements as they had more intel on when and how to do it safely than partners arranging the shipments. Use of information networks also allowed local CSOs to adjust travel plans and occasionally conduct project activities, even at times of conflict, while minimizing security risks.

Under the Radar: For the Enabling Grant projects, partner CSOs worked with a low profile and were mindful not to attract attention of stakeholders. Unlike international non-governmental organization (INGO) and UN organizations, government authorities and local communities were not very concerned with local organizations, which made it relatively easier for partners to carry out project activities during times of difficulties. For example, depending on location, CSOs were able to pass through check points without travel authorization [TA] from state or township administrators. Sometimes, partner organizations intentionally did not apply for TA and travelled as a local charity group to allow for quicker access to villages and attract less attention from government and armed group check points.

In a case unique to ABCD, the organization could not obtain permission from a township administrator to conduct DRR-related training. However, ABCD senior staff members had a very good relationship with the township police station and were able to obtain permission for Peaceful Assembly and Peaceful Procession (intended to allow peaceful demonstration and protest) issued under the jurisdiction of the police force. This highlights that local CSOs have an in-depth understanding of the local laws and how to navigate them to conduct their activities.

6.2 Attitude of Staff Members

Another factor for successful projects was having a good team of committed staff members. All partners recognized this as being a major contributor to success. Whether the staff were old or new to the organization, they immediately started to work hard with full commitment. Most CSOs expressed that having active and dynamic team composition was also key to success. As mentioned before, most staff members were locally recruited, so it did not take them long to know the area, language and context. One notable observation was the attitude of partner staff members. They were eager to learn new things and improve what they were doing. They also positively accepted mentorship of HARP-F staff members and tried to raise their professional working

standards. Moreover, in harmony with community-based approaches, partners knew that it was important to empower the role of community facilitators who worked at the closest level to project beneficiaries.

Obstacles: Despite the success, partners also faced many challenges in relation to staffing. High staff turnover, for both programme and support staff, was common to all partner organizations because people joined CSOs as a stepping stone to gain experience for better jobs. CSOs do not pay high salaries and benefits (INGOs can pay better, therefore attracting staff with higher qualifications), and the recruitment process is often lengthy, especially for technical positions. Partners had to recruit candidates who did not quite have the technical skills required and guide them along project implementation. CERA, having good technical capacity, was given extra responsibility by HARP-F to provide technical support to newer partners, which was recognized as a good approach.

6.3 Technical Skills and Training

All CSO partners regarded their organization as low or medium in technical capacity, in the areas of both programme and support responsibilities. At the same time, they realized that the capacity has been significantly improved because of Enabling Grant projects.

In terms of programme technical skills, DRR was identified as the most improved area, especially DRR process along with community mobilization skills using PRA tools. Partners already had relatively good technical capacity for mangrove plantation conservation, fuel-efficient stove making and WASH. Technical support was received from HARP-F, CERA, MRCS, local mangrove networks and relevant government departments.

Compared with programme skills, it was clear that improvement in programme support technical skills was much higher. This includes financial management, monitoring and evaluation, human resources and other relevant policies and guideline. Initially, most partners admitted that their skills in programme support were low and internal mechanisms were not systematic. Some even admitted that the Enabling Grant project was the first systematic project ever implemented. With continuous coaching from HARP-F, the organizational capacity of the CSO partners had significantly improved by the end of the projects. The most appreciated technical skills were financial management and monitoring, evaluation and learning [MEAL].

Being the first practical project management experience for many partner CSOs, some leadership had no project management skills. However, with a positive attitude, such weaknesses and challenges were viewed as opportunities for a positive learning experience. Moreover, partners took the opportunity during the COVID-19 stay-at-home period to initiate a series of capacity-building initiatives for staff members.

6.4 Intense Coaching by HARP-F

One of the significant project management approaches used by HARP-F was close and intense coaching for all partners at individual level. The coaching focused on programme support areas, in which partners had huge capacity gaps. At the beginning of the projects, partner CSOs had very limited capacities on strategies and approaches, MEAL capacity, compliance systems, policies and guidelines, proper financial management practices and reporting.

HARP-F staff members from Sittwe office were dedicated to mentoring and coaching of the nine partners at every step of project implementation. This included weekly check-ins, support between technical staff [e.g. finance staff to finance staff], helping partners to develop key policies and guidelines, regular follow-up, etc. This intense approach made it almost impossible to refuse (or give excuses for) international standards and proper ways of doing business. At the beginning, because of such intense coaching, there were clashes between HARP-F and partner staff members due to the imposed quality standards and ways of working. However, once people started to become familiar with the system and realize its value, HARP-F was highly appreciated by all the partners. The time spent by HARP-F staff with each partner varied depending on the size of organization, existing institutional capacity and willingness to learn. Monthly partner coordination meetings offered a useful platform to formally discuss progress and issues related to the projects.

As a result, partners were able to manage projects well and gained the confidence to take on other projects from international donors/partners. Partners identified MEAL as an area requiring further improvement as they were having difficulties tracking progress of projects, assessing quality of field implementation, reviewing projects periodically, etc.

7. CHALLENGES in 4Cs

Unfortunately, about half of the project period was interrupted by the following four challenges, over which partners and HARP-F had no control. Target areas being geographically remote and having very limited internet (sometimes mobile network) access added an extra layer of difficulties for partners. However, partners were able to finish more than 75% of the proposed activities, which is far beyond acceptable level. The reasons for this level of success included:

- High understanding of local context by partner staff members
- Commitment and creativity of partner staff members
- Regular communication between HARP-F and partners
- Flexibility of the Enabling Grant

7.1 COVID-19

The global pandemic coronavirus disease 2019 [COVID-19] provided the greatest challenge to all partners. The first wave, since the first in-country confirmed case on 23 March 2020,

mainly affected Yangon, Mandalay, Sagaing, Shan, Kayah, Kachin and Mon States/Regions with stay-at-home restrictions, with Rakhine State only lightly affected. However, after the Ministry of Sports and Health reported one new COVID-19 laboratory-confirmed case from Sittwe, Rakhine State, on 16 August, the second wave had started and this affected Rakhine State very badly. From 20 August, the Myanmar government imposed stay-at-home restrictions on people living in Sittwe township, Rakhine State. Three days after the announcement, there were a total of 47 cases in Rakhine State, which panicked the state government and people living in Rakhine State. The situation seriously affected the projects, making it almost impossible to implement all planned activities of the last quarter. This forced partners to drop or alter the project activities, and undermined the quality of some project interventions. The challenges of the pandemic included:

- Occasional travel restrictions making it difficult to plan project activities, or delaying activities
- Activities involving mass gatherings could not be conducted
- Villagers were reluctant to accept visitors
- Partner staff were required to do a COVID-19 test (must be negative) within 36 hours of a field trip

After discussions with HARP-F, some of the partners were able to transform activities into COVID-19 response activities. This not only mitigated the likelihood of COVID-19 impact to targeted communities but also allowed partners to extend engagement with target communities in the last quarter. COVID-19 responses included awareness activities such as hand washing awareness, distribution of hygiene items, information, education and communication materials, etc.

Adaptation: Despite all the imposed restrictions for travel and mass gatherings, the projects were still able to complete most activities and attain satisfactory level results. As mentioned in sections 4 and 5, the following is a summary of approaches used by the partners to adapt to the pandemic:

- ToT to selected community members instead of partner staff members directly delivering training in the community (the ToT graduates delivered the training to the wider community)
- More communications channels established (e.g., Facebook messenger group, Viber group, etc.) between partner staff members and CBO members to closely plan, monitor and support remaining activities
- Empowered CBOs to take a greater role in activity implementation (and community mobilization) at village level
- Technical support of construction activities provided by daily video calls
- COVID-19 approaches used in all activities, for example wearing masks, staying 6 feet apart, no social interaction such as having meals after training, provision of hand sanitizers and hand washing facilities at the events, etc.
- At the beginning of all activities, there was a standard 15-minute COVID-19 education session.

7.2 Conflict

Armed conflict between the Myanmar Army [Tatmadaw] and the Arakan Army [AA] near the project areas made project implementation challenging for all of the partners working in the area. The conflict has escalated since the middle of 2019, particularly in the northern and central townships of Kyauktaw, Mrauk-U, Rathedaung and Buthidaung. This restricted the travel plans of partner staff members and delayed most of the activities. The conflict also terrified villagers, who did not want to move from their own villages. Village administrators resigned to avoid risks of being killed or kidnapped. Without the village administrators, project activities were also delayed as no one in the village would approve the activities.

The conflict significantly affected local field visits and the ability to obtain TA from state-level government. The state government was very cautious when issuing TA as they were not in a position to guarantee security of the travellers. As a precaution, the government even denied TA to nearby locations not directly affected by the conflict. Increased check points from both sides also made field visits almost impossible. However, as partner staff members were locals, as described in section 6.1, partners were able to work around the challenges and slowly progress the projects. The adaptation strategy involved smart use of local information networks and maintaining a low profile [avoiding huge gathering activities, taking photos in communities, etc.]

7.3 Climate

Travel to and within remote townships such as Kyaukphyu, Ponnagyun, Pauktaw and Myabon by waterway was also very challenging and dangerous. According to the partners, strong winds and big waves were less predictable than before and had occurred in the pre-monsoon, monsoon and post-monsoon [May through October] affected half of each year. Because of such bad weather, travels was not favourable and activities were moved again and again. As an adaptive approach, partners discussed with the CBOs and put contingency plans in place. Although climate-related challenges were not broadly discussed during the reflection workshops, their effects on the projects were significant. From a positive point of view, such extreme weather increased concern from communities on natural disasters and amplified their interest in DRR activities.

7.4 Coordination

During the workshops, partners also defined coordination as one of the challenges for Enabling Grantees. In particular, there were gaps in coordination between the Rakhine State government and CSO partners, and between the Rakhine State government and other government departments at lower levels [especially townships]. Although coordination gaps are not an uncommon issue for all projects, these were significant for Enabling Grants in combination with add-on complexities such as COVID-19 and armed conflict. These factors added another layer to existing challenges, including:

- Issuing permission to carry out project activities
- Issuing TA [from one township to other, and within a township]

- Not having clear policies, guidelines and formal mechanisms for government departments on how and to what extent to engage with CSO/LNGO (Local Non-Governmental Organization)
- State-level government departments reluctant to work closely with CSO/LNGO
- Unclear role and function of disaster management bodies at state and township levels

According to the participants, better coordination occurred at the township level, which is the most needed. Partner senior staff were able to build good relationships with the key stakeholders, such as the township administrator of the General Administration Department, FSD, Department of Disaster Management (only exists at state level), ECD, FD and Department of Health.

Inviting relevant departmental staff to visit or provide training at target villages was not only technically effective, but also promoted relationship/coordination among government departments, CBOs and CSOs. Government staff also face budget and access constraints for field visits, and inviting them to target villages provided an opportunity to connect them with communities. During field visits government staff could observe project activities and guide/appreciate the work of CSOs and CBOs attempting to fulfil their department's objectives. At village track⁵ and village level, field staff members deliberately put much effort into engaging with village track authorities and always engaged them with project activities, while applying 'Do No Harm' tools if tensions were spotted between the authorities and community members.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

Despite the challenges mentioned in section 7, projects implemented under the Enabling Grant were as successful as they could be as a result of high levels of commitment from partners and HARP-F staff members. Had it not been for the creativity and adaptivity of partners and HARP-F, the projects may have had to stop early. It was also encouraging that there were no significant lessons learned identified by any of the partners. This is likely to be because of the close collaboration between the partners and HARP-F, agreeing on the best way to proceed before taking any new steps. However, it must be noted that the challenges could endure in the near future, and thus, partners and HARP-F should continue to innovate and adapt for successful project intervention under these circumstances. There follow some recommendations based on observation and analysis of the whole learning process.

Intense Coaching: The correct approach from HARP-F was intense coaching to partners (see section 6.4). HARP-F and partner staff members communicated almost every day, and HARP-F guided every activity (both office work and field implementation) and regularly monitored progress. HARP-F staff also made themselves available and approachable so that partners could openly discuss challenges and find solutions

⁵ 'Village track' refers to a cluster of villages. This is a subnational administrative level, and falls between 'villages' and a 'township'.

together. This approach helped partners, most of whom had very limited project management experience, to avoid mistakes and carry out good-quality activities. However, this approach is resource-consuming, and HARP-F had to dedicate the entire Sittwe team to provide close field-level support to partner offices. This approach is uncommon to international organizations but proved very effective not only to maintain project quality, but also for sustainable development of the local CSOs. Therefore, if any of the partner CSOs applies for a project, it is recommended to explain the experience of the Enabling Grant and encourage the donor to provide similar intensive coaching. It is also recommended that HARP-F share this effective approach with other donors in the network.

Opportunity to Grow: Other than CERA and MSN, the partner CSOs were relatively small in size, experience and institutional capacity. However, the two-year experience of managing the Enabling Grant resulted in significant growth in capacity. To maintain the organizational growth, partners are encouraged to start strategizing for their future, such as reviewing their identity, prioritizing sectors and area of expertise, formulating common approaches and building in-house technical capacities. Building relationships/engagement with all possible donors working in Rakhine State is also encouraged. To maintain qualified staff members, innovative approaches such as offering part-time jobs in between projects, seconding staff between CSOs, sending to free training, etc. may be useful. Based on the experience of the Enabling Grant, some internal documents, policies and guidelines could be polished/developed. Given time, some useful preparation exercises could be prepared such as stakeholder mapping, risk analysis, after action reviews, so that partners can position themselves well and be conflict-sensitive between all stakeholders. Some partners also indicated the importance of having official organizational registration, which is also recommended, to facilitate close work with government departments. HARP-F can also look for favourable donors and link up with the partners for future projects.

Promote Collaboration: All partners are based in Rakhine State and have a 'heavy footprint' in most geographical areas in terms of presence. Partners also have different strengths and expertise, and the majority of staff members are Rakhine. However, it is well observed that partner staff members are not familiar working or representing collectively; meaning thinking, speaking, working are never carried out as a whole but only at individual organizational level. Therefore, it would be positive if CSOs started to engage more collectively in some activities such as training, surveys, community activities and applying permissions from the state government. CSOs also need to think and speak as a whole, considering the capacity and needs of other CSOs, so that representation will be stronger and voices will be heard louder. If favourable, it is highly recommended to apply projects collectively, as consortia, strengthening and filling gaps for each other.

Communication Networks: One useful improvement would be establishment of local communication network(s) between CSOs working in the same area. Especially working in areas with multiple challenges, information-sharing between the CSOs would contribute to security of the staff members and effectiveness of programme implementation. The network could include social media groups, chat groups, existing

Arakan cultural organizations, etc. However, due to high sensitivity of the area, it is best not to establish a formal network that could be very obvious/outstanding to armed groups and government authorities.

Capacity Enhancement: Continuous capacity for partner staff members should be considered and planned by the CSOs as well as HARP-F if the opportunity is given. HARP-F can also explore sources of capacity-building within its network and link up with the partners as appropriate. According to the workshops, the following topics were identified for further improvement:

- Technical sectors – DRR, WASH, gender and inclusion
- Programme management – MEAL, Do No Harm and conflict-sensitivity, conflict-sensitive project cycle management
- Programme support – financial management, procurement and logistics, office administration and human resources management

Advocate for a Decent Partnership Approach: Using this document as an evidence learning point, when given the chance, HARP-F should advocate other international donors/organizations for a decent partnership approach, rather than simply finding a local organization to perform field activities on the organization's behalf. Partnership should consider capacity-building and systematic growth of local CSOs with adequate allocation of resources (time and budget). The partnership and support should allow the CSO to move on and sustain while adapting to all challenges of the area.

9. Annexes

- Annex 1 [Collective Learning Workshop Agenda](#)
- Annex 2 [Collective Learning Workshop Facilitation Guide](#)
- Annex 3 [Presentation on Common Challenges and Opportunities](#)
- Annex 4 [Self-Reflection Exercise Tool \(English\)](#)
- Annex 5 [Self-Reflection Exercise Tool \(Myanmar\)](#)
- Annex 6 [Organizational Reflection Workshop Facilitation Guide](#)
- Annex 7 CERA Reflection and Learning
- [Reflection Report](#)
 - [Completed Self-Reflection Tool](#)
 - [Success Story of DDR](#)
 - [Success Story Mangrove Plantation](#)
 - [Success Story of WASH](#)
- Annex 8 MSN Reflection and Learning
- [Reflection Report](#)
 - [Self-Reflection Tool](#)
 - [Collective Learning Workshop](#)
 - [Hmyaw Taw U 1](#)
 - [Hmyaw Taw 2](#)
 - [Sar Chat](#)
- Annex 9 ABCD Reflection and Learning
- [Reflection Report](#)
 - [Self-Reflection Tool](#)
 - [Success Story of ABCD](#)
 - [Success Story of MTA](#)
- Annex 10 CRMCO Reflection and Learning
- [Reflection Report](#)
 - [Self-Reflection Tool](#)
- Annex 11 YSA Reflection and Learning
- [Reflection Report](#)
- Annex 12 Wan Lark Reflection and Learning
- [Reflection Report](#)
 - [Self-Reflection Tool](#)

- [Success Story](#)

Annex 13 CERDA Reflection and Learning

- [Reflection Report](#)
- [Self-Reflection Tool](#)

Annex 14 PfP Reflection and Learning

- [Reflection Report](#)
- [Self-Reflection Tool](#)

Annex 15 [RWCF Mini Project Evaluation Presentation](#)