



LOCALISATION THROUGH PARTNERSHIP: SHIFTING TOWARDS LOCALLY-LED PROGRAMMING IN MYANMAR

PHASE 3 - OUTCOMES OF THE TRANSITION
DECEMBER 2020



HUMANITARIAN
ADVISORY GROUP



HARP-F
Humanitarian Assistance and
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Cover photo: Volunteers at the Je Yang Camp, Kachin State conduct temperature checks as part of measures in place to safeguard against COVID-19 (Photo: Yawng Htang, Relief Action Network for IDPs and Refugees (RANIR), 2020)

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About KMSS

Karuna Mission Social Solidarity (KMSS) is a faith-based social network at the service of the Catholic Church of Myanmar. KMSS is a network of 16 Diocesan Offices and a Yangon-based National Office. The Diocesan Offices implement multi-sectoral programming, while the National Office provides technical support and coordination.

About Trócaire

Trócaire is the overseas development agency of the Catholic Church in Ireland. Trócaire is a partner-based organisation that has been working with a range of local partners in Myanmar since 1995, which has included supporting KMSS to deliver humanitarian response to the crisis in Kachin and Northern Shan State.

About Myanmar Development Network and Humanitarian Advisory Group

Myanmar Development Network was established in 2015. It is a non-profit, non-government organisation which provides social and professional services to communities in Myanmar.

Humanitarian Advisory Group (HAG) was founded in 2012 to elevate the profile of humanitarian action in Asia and the Pacific. Set up as a social enterprise, HAG provides a unique space for thinking, research, technical advice and training that contributes to excellence in humanitarian practice.

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We use the following symbols throughout the report to indicate the level of evidence:

LEVEL OF PROGRESS				
	NO	LIMITED	SOME	STRONG

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ABBREVIATIONS

DR	Document review
FCDO	Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office of the United Kingdom
FGD	Focus group discussion
HAG	Humanitarian Advisory Group
HARP	FCDO Burma Humanitarian Assistance and Resilience Programme
HARP-F	HARP Facility
IDP	Internally displaced people
INGO	international non-governmental organisation
KII	Key informant interview
KMSS	Karuna Mission Social Solidarity
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MEAL	Monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning
NSS	Northern Shan State
RANIR	Relief Action Network for IDPs and Refugees
WASH	Water, sanitation and hygiene

FOREWORD

KMSS

KMSS and Trócaire has encrypted a significant partnership milestone in this HARP project by transferring the project lead from Trócaire to KMSS in 3-year time. Much learning has enriched both organizations and the accumulation of institutional wisdom from this unique experience opens a new chapter for Trócaire and KMSS. As Trócaire has been incorporating this into their 5-year strategic planning process, KMSS is reflecting the localisation transition in its relationship with diocesan offices and fellow CSOs partners in Myanmar. KMSS has grown to this stage through the long-term support of trusted partners like Trócaire and it is the right time for KMSS to share the institutional development journey to the Myanmar CSOs which are eager to pursue the organization development and improve their services to the people. This is an exciting moment of local-to-local capacity strengthening opportunity and KMSS is dedicated to accompanying its fellow CSOs to become professional and sustainable local actors. Strengthening CSO is multidisciplinary effort and KMSS is committed to accomplish this mission in collaboration with like-minded partners. Guided by the Caritas Internationalis Fraternal Cooperation principle, Trócaire and KMSS will continue their partnership journey based on respect, equality and mutuality.

Dr. Win Tun Kyi

Director, Karuna Mission Social Solidarity (KMSS)
Yangon, December 2020

Trócaire

At the end of a difficult year of change and transition due to the impacts of COVID-19, it really is a pleasure to read and reflect on some of the positive outcomes that can come from challenging times. As we draw to an end of the Trócaire and KMSS HARP project partnership, and the third phase of the research accompanying this localisation transition, I think we all feel a sense of pride. KMSS and Trócaire have a long-lasting partnership that started before the official HARP project and will continue for many more years. The foundation of our shared values and affiliation with the Caritas network gave us a strong base to work from, and we continue our close and evolving relationship as trusted partners – now with more equality of opportunity. KMSS is truly at the table in donor discussions and at the highest level of humanitarian decision making in Myanmar. As they have stepped into the lead for the HARP-F programming, other donors have also turned to them and their strong voice on localisation as trusted voices and as key partners. As Trócaire embarks on a new 5-year strategic plan in 2021, we now consider our role as an enabler of localisation as one of the greatest values we might add to the thriving local and national civil society groups that we partner with. Our experience on this road to localisation with KMSS has encouraged us to reflect and to question our role in a localised humanitarian response. We look forward to many more years on this journey with KMSS, and hope that our experience will also help other organisations reflect on their partnerships in a meaningful way.

Ashley Proud

Country Director, Trócaire Myanmar
Yangon, December 2020



Volunteers at the Je Yang Camp, Kachin State conduct temperature checks as part of measures in place to safeguard against COVID-19 (Photo: Yawng Htang, RANIR, 2020)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In its third year, the Humanitarian Response and Transition to Localisation: Kachin and Northern Shan States project faced unforeseen challenges brought about by COVID-19 that affected project implementation, including the localisation process, and particularly activities undertaken by Karuna Mission Social Solidarity (KMSS). COVID-induced health and travel restrictions cut access to internally displaced people (IDP) camps; some project activities had to be recalibrated to respond to the health crisis, while others continued in a COVID-safe manner. While the impact was not as severe for Trócaire, they had to review and adjust their planned capacity-strengthening strategies to work within the COVID-19 environment. The partners continued to work closely together nonetheless, and benefited from the strong foundational relationship that exists between them.

About the Project

The project funded is a partnership between KMSS and Trócaire and takes a multi-sectoral approach to addressing critical needs among displaced populations in Kachin and northern Shan State (NSS), Myanmar. The three-year project commenced in 2018, and built on the achievements of work that began in 2012. Funded by the Humanitarian Assistance and Resilience Programme Facility (HARP-F), the project had a specific aim to transition the project grant recipient role to KMSS by providing it with the necessary technical support.

About this Research

KMSS and Trócaire commissioned this research to facilitate learning for both partners during this localisation journey, and for the broader humanitarian sector at the national and international levels. The research consists of three phases, each the focus of a report:



Report 1: Mapping the partnership journey from 2012 to 2018



Report 2: Reviewing the localisation transition in 2019



Report 3: Reflecting on the localisation process at the end of 2020

This final report presents the findings of phase 3 of the research.

The commitment of HARP-F and the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office of the United Kingdom (FCDO) to the localisation process has been a key factor in delivering the project.



After fleeing her village due to conflict in the area, Maji Hka Ra lives in Lana Zup Ja Camp, in Kachin State. She is pictured preparing a meal with the rice distributed by KMSS, in partnership with Trócaire, funded by the HARP-facility (Photo: Yawng Htang, RANIR, 2020)

In August 2020 HARP-F extended KMSS activities to December 2021, but Trócaire's technical support to KMSS will cease as planned (presented in table below). This concludes the partnership between the two organisations under the project, but their relationship beyond the project remains strong. The decision not to extend Trócaire, although influenced by funding limitations, also affirms recognition from HARP-F and the FCDO of KMSS's ability to deliver the project without dedicated technical support.

"This was a very long partnership journey in the country, where I think many of the partnerships are project-based and short-term. And I think that Trócaire and KMSS could shape and formulate one of the best models of partnership through localization in the country that turns international leadership into local leadership in humanitarian programs."¹

The good thing is, [even though] we failed to solve some of the issues, we didn't stop there. We tried to re-engage again, tried to get out of the deadlock situations. It required patience as well as seeing this event as a learning opportunity. While it can be difficult movement, the best thing is [to] keep going.²

interview 16
2 Interview 10

Summary of proposed and actual transformation of the partnership

	Proposed transformation model	How it was implemented
2018	<p>Trócaire: Primary (direct) grant recipient. Provision of capacity strengthening to KMSS</p> <p>KMSS: Sub-grantee of Trócaire. Implementation of activities on the ground</p>	AS PLANNED
2019 +	<p>KMSS: Primary (direct) grant recipient. Implementation of project activities</p>	<p>January - March 2019 AS PLANNED</p> <p>April 2019 onwards</p>
2020	<p>Trócaire: Sub-grantee of KMSS. Provision of technical support to KMSS</p>	<p>KMSS: Direct grant recipient for own component. Implementation of project activities</p> <p>Trócaire: Direct grant recipient for own component. Provision of technical support to KMSS (Additional funding for provision of technical support to other local CSOs under HARP-F)</p>
2021	NOT PLANNED	<p>KMSS: Direct grant recipient for only component. Implementation of activities</p>

In 2020, Trócaire and KMSS built on the lessons from the 2019 transition year, when a rushed process created significant challenges, with Trócaire technical advisors and KMSS project teams working more closely than in previous years. The capacity-strengthening frameworks developed in 2019 (and revised in 2020) remained a key resource that helped to guide this engagement. With COVID-19 requiring changes to project activities and their ways of working, KMSS also received more relevant technical input from Trócaire – including on developing remote monitoring guidelines and receiving specific water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) training for application in COVID-19 contexts.

Direct grant management, while creating a steep learning curve for KMSS, has also helped increase their self-assurance in managing large grants, and helped to open up new project opportunities. For Trócaire, reduction in funding due to this transition has been substantial, but they have also adapted by using this opportunity to develop new service offerings and shift to a leaner model more reliant on national staff .

The impacts of COVID-19 have changed the partnership process and ways of working for KMSS, Trócaire and HARP-F. From online meetings, to remote monitoring and engagement via social media and messaging platforms, 2020 has seen a fundamental shift in how the project partners

and the humanitarian sector in general operate. This change has had both negative and positive impacts. For some areas of work, the remote engagement process has increased coordination between Trócaire and KMSS staff. However, for KMSS and Trócaire, existing staff relationships and familiarity was an important aspect that enabled them to transition to this new way of working relatively smoothly.

The increased interest and impetus on the issue of localisation generated as a result of COVID-19 also saw Trócaire and KMSS partner beyond the project on several aspects, while KMSS’s profile and visibility expanded within Myanmar and globally.

The successes achieved in the project are a culmination of a much longer relationship between Trócaire and KMSS. This relationship has benefited from numerous staff from both organisations working through challenging situations over the years. The partnership between Trócaire and KMSS will continue to evolve in the coming years as new joint projects and interventions are identified or developed. The experience from the Humanitarian Response and Transition to Localisation: Kachin and NSS project will undoubtedly help shape future engagements of Trócaire and KMSS, and provide valuable lessons for other actors in Myanmar and globally looking to transform humanitarian partnerships.

Key Transformations

This report presents the outcomes of the localisation process under the Humanitarian Response and Transition to Localisation: Kachin and NSS project and the progress achieved since 2018. It also reflects on key transformations that have taken place during the project period. High-level summaries of the key transformations in the areas of partnership, capacity, funding and leadership are provided below.



KEY TRANSFORMATION 1 – PARTNERSHIP

The partnership between KMSS and Trócaire has matured significantly in the past three years. Mutual respect and trust underpin the broader organisational relationship, and was a crucial element in navigating the challenging transition year. The long history of working together, as well as the familial relationship through the Caritas network, anchor the partnership even more firmly. The evolution of the partnership has been accelerated by this particular project because it created challenges and posed questions that pushed both organisations out of their comfort zones.

Impact indicator	Progress indicators	Progress as of 2020
Equitable and complementary partnerships between local, national and international actors	Partnerships are based on equitable and ethical partnership practices	✓✓✓ Strong
	Increased power and decision-making of local and national actors within partnerships	✓✓✓ Strong



KEY TRANSFORMATION 2 – CAPACITY

The capacity-strengthening approach between the two organisations has evolved throughout the project. Developing a capacity-strengthening framework was an important step that helped to structure and formalise a more strategic approach. This also enabled KMSS to be more actively involved in determining their own capacity needs. As KMSS moves into 2021 to deliver the project on their own, there may be a further evolution of this relationship via direct engagement with Trócaire for specific capacity-strengthening activities.

Impact indicator	Progress indicators	Progress as of 2020
Local and national partners can respond effectively and efficiently, and have targeted support from the international partner	Strategic partnerships that build systems and processes which mirror the ambitions and goals of the national partner; use of local over international expertise	✓✓✓ Strong



KEY TRANSFORMATION 3 – FUNDING

KMSS transitioned to being the primary recipient of the grant in 2019, after being a sub-grantee of Trócaire in 2018. Due to issues that emerged in the first three months of making KMSS the primary recipient, in April 2019 HARP-F split the contracts to manage Trócaire and KMSS separately. This grant management experience has allowed KMSS to recognise their gaps in skills and processes, but also helped to build confidence in their potential and ability to manage a sizable grant directly. Financial implications of the localisation transition beyond the project have been largely positive for KMSS and challenging for Trócaire, requiring the latter to rethink some of their practices.

Impact indicator	Progress indicators	Progress as of 2020
National partner has financial independence that allows them to respond more efficiently to humanitarian needs	National partner has access to direct funding with limited or no barriers	✓✓✓ Strong
	Increase in the amount of humanitarian funding to the national partner	✓✓✓ Strong
	National partner has increased decision-making over financial matters	✓✓✓ Strong



KEY TRANSFORMATION 4 – LEADERSHIP

The role of KMSS in the humanitarian sector has continued to grow in Myanmar, with the partnership with Trócaire seen as a strong example of how localisation can be put into practice. The profile of KMSS has also expanded globally with the increased focus on localisation during COVID-19, providing opportunities to share their experiences with the broader humanitarian community.

Impact indicator	Progress indicators	Progress as of 2020
National partner leads on humanitarian action	International partner supports and strengthens national leadership	✓✓✓ Strong
	National partner leads response and dominates decision-making	✓✓✓ Strong

INTRODUCTION

The progress made on localisation since the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016 has been uneven and insufficient,³ due to structural issues in the international humanitarian system and resistance to change on some fronts. Nonetheless, there is increasing momentum to progress the localisation agenda. The global impact of COVID-19 has also generated discussion around how the pandemic could catalyse localisation of humanitarian aid.⁴ Indeed, there are examples of how COVID-19 restrictions have led to a greater role for local actors in some humanitarian response contexts.⁵ In Myanmar, as in most other parts of the world, while the pandemic has resulted in progress on certain aspects of localisation, other areas have experienced a reversal.⁶

Partnerships remain one of the most essential components of progressing localisation, and more importantly in supporting those in need in an efficient manner.⁷ Strong and longstanding partnerships have been important in allowing local

and national organisations to play a greater role in Myanmar's humanitarian context.⁸ The relationship between KMSS and Trócaire Myanmar has evolved over the years, becoming a potential model for how partnerships between international and national actors should change.

Under the FCDO (formerly DFID) and HARP-F funded Humanitarian Response and Transition to Localisation: Kachin and Northern Shan States project, the partnership has undergone significant evolution, primarily driven by changes to the funding relationships with each other and the donor.⁹ From being a sub-grantee at the start of the project (2018), KMSS progressed to become a direct recipient of their grant (2019), while Trócaire's role shifted from being the primary grant recipient to providing focused technical support. This report captures lessons that have emerged from the evolution in roles and relationships during the three-year project period.

About the Partnership

Karuna Mission Social Solidarity (KMSS) is a faith-based social network at the service of the Catholic Church of Myanmar. Trócaire is the overseas development agency of the Catholic Church in Ireland and is a partner-based organisation. Trócaire and KMSS have been working together to respond to the crisis in Kachin and Northern Shan State (NSS) since 2012.

The UK government established the Humanitarian Assistance and Resilience Programme (HARP) in response to commitments made under the Grand Bargain. In designing HARP, FCDO took a different approach to humanitarian assistance in Myanmar,

including an explicit focus on localisation. Under the HARP Facility (HARP-F), a large proportion of grantees are local organisations, who receive tailored support focused on capacity strengthening and organisational development, in line with Grand Bargain commitments and the principles of localisation. HARP-F directly funded Trócaire and KMSS under this localisation project.

BI (2020) Grand Bargain annual independent report 2020

Chris Roche, Fiona Tarpey (March 2020): COVID-19, localisation and locally led development: A critical juncture

BG and VANGO (June 2020): No turning back: Local leadership in Vanuatu's response to Tropical Cyclone Harold

6 HAG and MDN: Two steps forward, one step back: Assessing the implications of COVID-19 on locally-led humanitarian response in Myanmar

RMA (2019): Accelerating Localisation through Partnerships (Myanmar)

7 TuW Kyi-Kuno Platform (2020) 'Towards a risk-sharing approach in Covid19 response and beyond - Perspectives from a national NGO in Myanmar'

9 HAG (August 2020): Localisation through partnership: Shifting towards locally-led programming in Myanmar, Phase 2 - Navigating the

Transition

About the Research

Scope

Trócaire and KMSS commissioned a multi-year study to understand and document the successes and challenges associated with the localisation journey in their partnership in Kachin and NSS. Delivered in three phases, the first phase focused on the internal partnership journey since 2012, the reflections and experiences of each partner and shifts in the collaboration.¹⁰ The second report focused on 2019, when KMSS took over primary responsibility for managing the HARP-F grant, and

describes the successes, challenges and lessons that emerged from how the partners delivered the project within their transitioned roles.¹¹

This final report reviews and summarises the outcomes of the localisation process and reports end line data that represent the progress achieved. It also presents learning emerging from the partnership for the humanitarian sector in Myanmar and more broadly.



RESEARCH PHASE 1:

The partnership journey from 2012-2018



RESEARCH PHASE 2:

The localisation transition in 2019



RESEARCH PHASE 3:

Outcomes from the transition process at the end of 2020



Research questions

The overarching research questions are presented below (sub-questions are contained in Appendix 1).

1. What was the partnership journey and localisation process for Trócaire and KMSS to date?
2. How has the partnership transitioned to support KMSS' leadership of the project?
3. What are the outcomes of this localisation transition process for project participants?

Distribution of food with COVID-19 safe physical distancing measures in place at the Bum Tsit Pa camp, Kachin State (Photo: KMSS, 2020)

Journey

- 11 HAG (August 2020): Localisation through partnership: Shifting towards locally-led programming in Myanmar, Phase 2 - Navigating the Transition

Methodology

Humanitarian Advisory Group and the national consultant used a primarily qualitative mixed methods approach for the research. The research process drew information from key informant interviews (KIIs), a self-administered survey, relevant project documentation and additional data provided by partners. Data gathered through the interviews, document review and self-administered survey were analysed and triangulated to present findings. Respondents to the KIIs included staff from KMSS, Trócaire, HARP-F and FCDO as well as respondents external to the partnership – that included camp management committee members supported through the project, and a national non-governmental organisation representative.

Limitations

While the research was able to engage with respondents from Trócaire, KMSS, HARP-F, FCDO and external partners, some limitations existed, as outlined below.

Remote data collection: COVID-19 pandemic conditions and enactment of health restrictions (including global and in-country travel limitations) meant that data collection in-person within Myanmar was not possible. Data collection was carried out remotely. While all planned interviews were completed, the remote data collection process creates some limitations on observation of respondent reactions and the potential ability to ask follow-up questions.

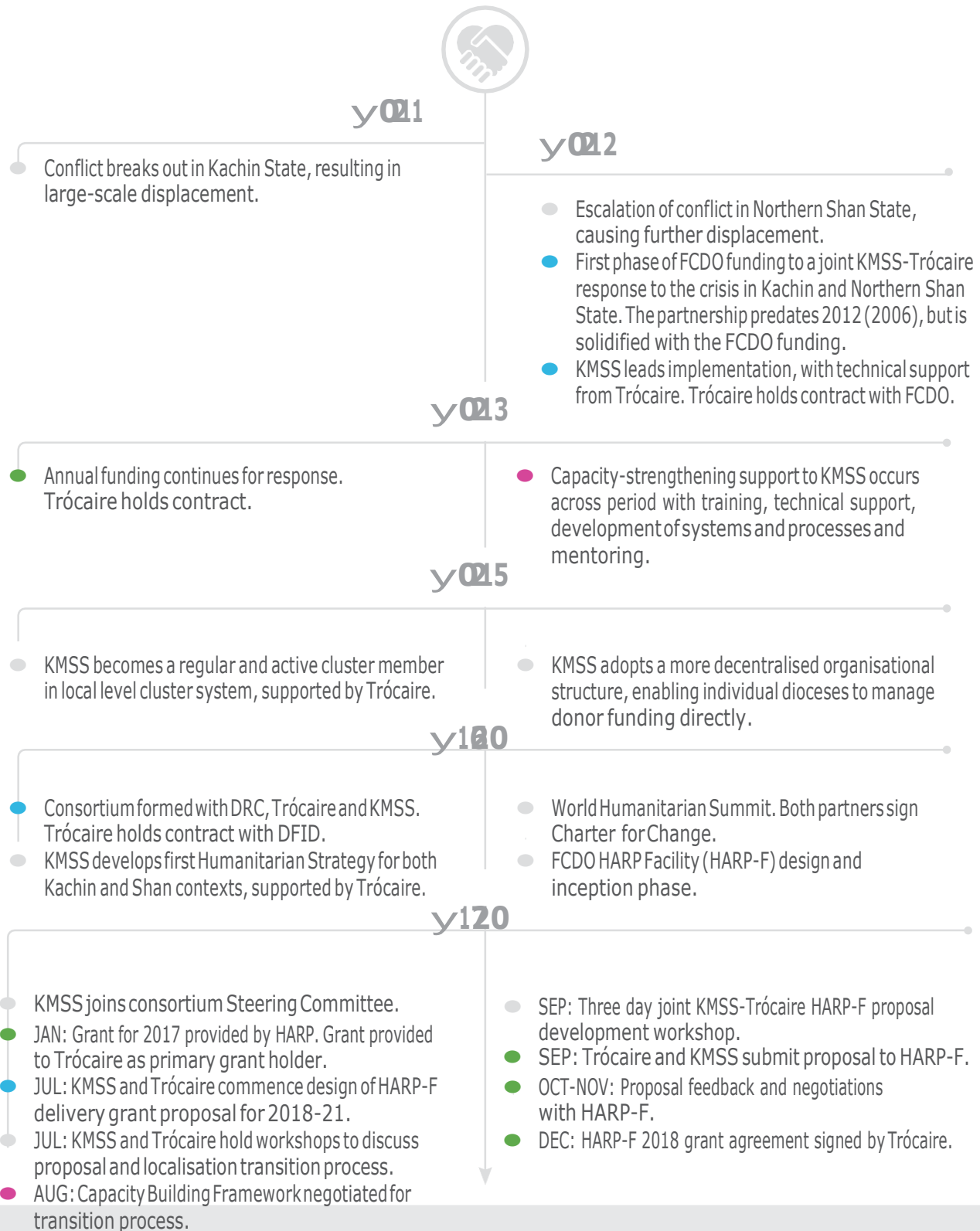
Interpretation bias: The data may be influenced by differing interpretation of key terms used during the survey and interview process. Translation between languages may also have affected understanding.



THE PARTNERSHIP JOURNEY

This timeline shows key events in the evolution of the partnership.

The following key is used to categorise the key events:



Localisation through partnership

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- HARP-F grant starts - three-year funding for humanitarian response in Kachin and NSS. First year of grant funds managed by Trócaire.
- KMSS and Trócaire hold inception workshop.
- Trócaire appoints a Localisation Coordinator to oversee the transition and capacity-strengthening process. KMSS TASK team members and Accountability and Learning Officers start.
- KMSS contract Best Solutions Accounting to strengthen financial management within the Diocesan Offices.
- Joint KMSS-Trócaire workshop on developing Standard Operating Procedures. KMSS supported to lead this process.
- First quarterly learning and reflection workshop is conducted; second quarterly workshop conducted jointly.
- Trócaire and KMSS hold a series of workshops and trainings on technical areas (WASH, EFSL, MEAL) and grant management/cross cutting areas (project management, financial management, budget revision, protection mainstreaming, disability and inclusion).
- HARP-F awards KMSS separate rapid response funding funds to support many of the newly displaced population in Kachin and Shan states.
- KMSS (with Trócaire's support) produce their first monthly M&E report for the project.
- Trócaire supports KMSS with the revision of the program budget.
- KMSS leads quarterly learning and reflection workshop in Myitkyina.

y190

- JAN: KMSS becomes primary grant holder for the HARP-F response grant.
- JAN: HARP-F grants three-month costed extension to enable development of next phase of the project.
- JAN – Mar: KMSS receives funding directly for the project, including component for Trócaire.
- APR: KMSS (supported by Trócaire) begins implementation of next phase of the project for 21-month period till DEC 2020.
- APR: HARP-F directly engages Trócaire for their component of work and they are no longer a sub-grantee under KMSS.
- APR: KMSS continues to receive direct funding (except for Trócaire component of work).
- MAY: Trócaire and KMSS joint workshop to develop M&E plan for project.
- SEP: HARP-F increases budget for Trócaire to include WASH support to other HARP-F partners, using the same modality as with KMSS.
- NOV: Trócaire and KMSS (with input from WASH and MEAL Advisors of HARP-F) jointly develop WASH and MEAL capacity-strengthening plans to guide capacity building till December 2020.

y200

- FEB-MAR: Government implements COVID-19 related restrictions.
- JUN: COVID-19 restrictions begin to be eased as case number come under control.
- JUN: Competency assessment of KMSS M&E Officers conducted by Trócaire MEAL advisor together with Junior Project Manager. Learning plans developed for implementation.
- JUL: KMSS and Trócaire jointly organise "Localisation Experiences during COVID-19", a webinar to discuss localisation lessons learned.
- KMSS and Trócaire review and revise capacity-strengthening plan to factor in needs for and impact of COVID-19.
- Trócaire WASH advisor conducts an analysis/review of WASH interventions in KMSS-managed camps and provides recommendations to address identified gaps.
- Trócaire MEAL advisor works with KMSS to develop remote monitoring process for HARP-F project WASH, food and cash support.
- SEP: COVID-19 restrictions increased with second wave of infections.
- SEP: KMSS begin developing proposal for HARP-F extension of grant for year 2021. Trócaire grant not extended for 2021.
- NOV: KMSS and Trócaire discuss opportunities for Trócaire to provide technical support as needed in 2021.



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KEY TRANSFORMATION 1 – PARTNERSHIP

The partnership between KMSS and Trócaire has matured significantly in the past three years. Mutual respect and trust underpin the broader organisational relationship, and was a crucial element in navigating the challenging transition year. The long history of working together, as well as the familial relationship through the Caritas network, anchor the partnership even more firmly. The evolution of the partnership has been accelerated by this particular project because it created challenges and posed questions that pushed both organisations out of their comfort zones.

PARTNERSHIP indicators	2012	2018	2020	Data Source
1. Were a partnership MoU in the beginning? Did this contain a set of partnership principles that had been discussed? What about now?	Yes	Yes	In place. Not recently reviewed	DR, KII
2. Did KMSS undertake a formal/informal capacity assessment of Trócaire at the start of the project? How does this work now?	Yes	Jointly designed framework	Jointly designed framework	DR, KII, Survey
3. Did you feel that the partnership was publicly recognised (e.g., equal representation of both partners in project reports, donor meetings, etc.)?		Sometimes	Completely	KII, Survey
4. Did Trócaire and KMSS have an agreement in the beginning whether it was a multi-year funded partnership?	No	Yes	Yes	DR
5. To what extent was the project activities co-designed?	Partly	Completely	Mostly	DR, KII, Survey

The partnership between Trócaire and KMSS has developed over many years (for an overview of this history, see Report 1). This relationship evolved further as part of the HARP-F funded projects. Each partner has continued to support the growth and evolution of the other. With each new experience and working through challenges, the two organisations have settled into their respective roles and firmed up interpersonal relationships that have become a crucial element in their partnership.¹²

“In 2018, there were a lot of new [Trócaire] staff... coming in and telling KMSS what needed to happen. There was a lot of push back. Now, two years down the line, we understand each other better. They know us now. The relationship has changed. KMSS is much more open to our feedback. We have established that trust, which is a big success.”¹³

¹² Interviews 8, 10, 16
¹³ Interview 15

There has been no formal discussion between the two organisations on the partnership principles and agreement in the final two years.¹⁴ The opportunity to conduct this review was missed due to the difficult transition period and subsequent impact of COVID-19. However, there continues to be regular strategic engagement at an organisational leadership level – both in relation to the project and wider partnership aspects.¹⁵ These discussions are consistently linked to the values and principles of their work as faith-based organisations.

“We do not practise having higher and subordinate roles between the two [organisations]. I noticed the ways individual staff communicate really carefully to build mutual trust.”¹⁶

Managing a tripartite relationship since April 2019 (HARP-F managed the two contracts separately, and there was no formal relationship between Trócaire and KMSS) was challenging (as captured in the phase 2 report¹⁷). However, all parties have made conscious efforts to build on their existing relationships and the two partners have benefited from joint meetings facilitated by HARP-F to ensure coherence in focus and approach.¹⁸

“This is a good model of partnership, I think. It will provide strong evidence for building partnership through a longer journey between two organisations.”¹⁹

Within KMSS, the diocese offices – at a senior management level – have been sharing lessons and experiences emerging out of the Trócaire

partnership in their internal coordination forums. This was also an important opportunity for them to provide feedback on the continuation of the partnership.²⁰ However, there is a gap in communication and information sharing between KMSS technical focal points in the field and national office. This makes it more complicated for the Trócaire technical advisors to coordinate their activities.²¹

The more formal quarterly review meetings organised between KMSS and Trócaire – also involving the diocese offices – were seen as an important part of the partnership process under the project. Meetings organised in 2018 and 2019 were useful in identifying gaps and lessons for both organisations.²² In 2020, the coordination meetings did not go ahead as planned due to COVID-19. While there were update meetings, their focus was mainly on the implementation of activities and less on the broader partnership discussion and capturing lessons.²³ Such meetings were important for strategic discussions and feedback with broader participation from the organisations. While technical-level (WASH and MEAL) meetings helped fill some of this gap, these were more siloed in focus.

“Quarterly coordination meetings were helpful. We could raise our concerns and issues in the meeting, and we can request missions from Trócaire to provide necessary support for thematic needs.”²⁴

That the project was jointly developed based on needs identified by the implementation teams on the ground is seen as one of its most important aspects, especially by KMSS field staff. This has been crucial to maintain the buy-in and commitment of the diocese offices through the

Interviews 6, 7, 8

¹⁵ Interviews 8, 10

¹⁶ Interview 1

¹⁷ HAG (August 2020): Localisation through partnership: Shifting towards locally-led programming in Myanmar, Phase 2 - Navigating the Transition

¹⁸ Interviews 8, 9, 13

¹⁹ Interviews 3, 16

²⁰ Interviews 5, 16

²¹ Interviews 11, 12

²² Interview 7; HAG (August 2020): Localisation through partnership: Shifting towards locally-led programming in Myanmar, Phase 2 - Navigating the Transition

²³ Interviews 1, 4, 5, 7

²⁴ Interview 6

three years of the project.²⁵ Similarly, co-designed capacity-strengthening plans (jointly revised) have been important in creating a more collaborative relationship between the technical teams.²⁶

Clear identification of roles that recognise the value-add of each partner (in both project design and capacity plans) has helped to ensure that while there were operational and inter-relational challenges, the core work delivered on the ground was not affected substantially.

"[When designing the project] the diocese offices presented the proposals in terms of identifying activities, beneficiaries, locations, and own budget. The national office pooled these proposals together and presented in the planning meetings with Trócaire. This has helped to get clear roles between organisations and partners."²⁷

Interpersonal relationships were an important factor in the capacity-strengthening process. For MEAL, the technical advisor from Trócaire worked closely with the KMSS junior project manager in the final year to coordinate the engagement with the MEAL teams in KMSS. This ensured consistency of messaging and internal follow-up. This was an important step considering some of the challenges faced in previous years. For WASH, there has been an occasional disconnect between the WASH advisors of Trócaire and KMSS on certain aspects of the implementation.²⁸ This has caused confusion about the role of the Trócaire technical advisor and detracted from the work of the Trócaire advisor with KMSS field staff.

The longstanding relationship between the two organisations means there is regular engagement beyond the project. Some examples of such non-project activities include organising a joint webinar in July 2020 to discuss localisation lessons learned

during the COVID-19 period, and the KMSS National Director participating as the keynote speaker for the Trócaire Myanmar annual strategy session.²⁹

COVID-19 as a driver of change

"When you meet it's real, you can talk more about things immediately. When we talk about sensitive things, it's friendly. I feel now there's an invisible screen between us."³⁰

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, some KMSS staff were unable to meet with their Trócaire technical counterparts in 2020.³¹ Virtual communication became the primary mode of engagement, with both positive and negative impacts. At a senior management level, engagement became more frequent as meetings moved online, and there was more opportunity for collaboration beyond the project. Moving meetings online increased the regularity of meetings among technical teams compared to 2019. However, the level of rapport building in online meetings was not the same as in physical meetings – a sentiment more strongly expressed by KMSS staff. Despite this, the existing relationship and mutual trust between Trócaire and KMSS staff was important in continuing the engagements virtually, and enabled a relatively smooth transition to online and remote engagement.³²

"I would say COVID-19 has strengthened the communications and connections at the leadership level."³³

In KMSS diocese offices, staff faced constraints in accessing the IDP communities they work with due to health restrictions. They had to mobilise

Overview 5

26 Interviews 1, 4, 15, 16

27 Interview 5

28 Interviews 11, 12

29 Interviews 8, 10

30 Interview 10

31 Interviews 1, 10

32 Interviews 6, 11, 13

33 Interview 8

camp management committee members and community volunteers to implement some of the planned activities.³⁴ For KMSS, the personal relationships and interactions with communities was an important part of their work, and all support to communities (prior to COVID-19) was conducted in person. Therefore, moving to a remote operating model required more effort from KMSS staff (especially those in the field) to adjust programming. One option – strongly supported by HARP-F – was to move into cash support to affected communities, which helped minimise the risks of COVID-19 transmission.³⁵

“We reduced access to the camps from the people from outside. And we assigned youth team for guarding and camp safety and security. We educated the people in the camps through providing health and preventive messages. KMSS provided soaps, masks and IEC [information, education and communication] materials and we distributed all materials by our committees because outsiders are not allowed to come to the camps, including KMSS staff.”³⁶

Coordination between the national office, diocese offices and community-based staff was hampered by various constraints such as equipment and network availability. This affected the provision of remote technical support by Trócaire staff and maintenance of relationships with technical teams. For HARP-F, there were implications on how they could carry out engagement and monitoring activities, mainly with KMSS. It meant that HARP-F staff also had to opt for remote monitoring and online meetings to monitor progress and conduct verification activities.

“We had to find how we could still be connected to the people we’re serving. There was a rapid expansion of use of technology like Viber, Facebook Messenger, WeChat.”³⁷

“[Camp management committee staff] could not meet with KMSS staff directly, but we can talk through phone. Sometimes KMSS staff used messenger or Viber application for group meetings. Internet was not good at that time.”³⁸

Looking to the future

Both organisations recognise that their partnership will continue its long and productive history of direct partnership, and their relationship with each other as part of the Caritas network. This continuation will likely be in the shape of jointly developed projects, but also in terms of more strategic collaborations on common topics of focus, such as localisation. It is also likely that KMSS will partner with Trócaire for specific technical support under the project extension they received from HARP-F for 2021. However, there was no formal process for obtaining input from the Trócaire team into the new project design at the time of proposal development.³⁹

“For the review of the whole partnership, we plan to conduct a comprehensive review in December 2020 and to identify the remaining activities for 2021.”⁴⁰

Interviews 2, 10, 13, 18, 19

35 Interview 10

36 Interview 18

37 Interview 10

38 Interview 18

39 Interviews 8, 10, 16

40 Interview 16

The change of national director at KMSS in 2021 will be an important consideration, because the incumbent director (in 2020) has worked closely with Trócaire through the evolution of the partnership. Re-establishing the personal rapport between Trócaire and KMSS senior management will be important for their ongoing relationship. However, due to their strong organisational links and longstanding partnership, this change is not expected to harm the relationship or future collaborations.⁴¹

Some diocese offices are already working with Trócaire to develop additional projects for the

future. This approach is consistent with how KMSS operates, because diocese offices engage autonomously with partners on projects, with little or no involvement from the national office. However, Trócaire has also made a conscious effort to keep the relevant staff at the national office informed so that relationships are closely managed. The new projects being developed will build on the model developed in this project, where Trócaire will initially be the direct recipient of the grant, with a plan to transition to make the KMSS diocese office the direct recipient in 18 months.

TRACKING TRANSFORMATION – PARTNERSHIPS

Impact indicator	Progress indicators	Progress as of 2020
Equitable and complementary partnerships between local, national and international actors	Partnerships are based on equitable and ethical partnership practices	✓✓✓ Strong
	Increased power and decision-making of local and national actors within partnerships	✓✓✓ Strong



Sumhka Zau Seng who lives in Lana Zup Ja camp, in a non-governmental controlled area in Kachin State and receives support from the project, goes on with his daily routine (Photo: Yawng Htang, RANIR, 2018)



KEY TRANSFORMATION 2 – CAPACITY

The capacity-strengthening approach between the two organisations has evolved throughout the project. Developing a capacity-strengthening framework was an important step that helped to structure and formalise a more strategic approach. This also enabled KMSS to be more actively involved in determining their own capacity needs. As KMSS moves into 2021 to deliver the project on their own, there may be a further evolution of this relationship via direct engagement with Trócaire for specific capacity-strengthening activities.

PARTNERSHIP indicators	2012	2018	2020	Data Source
1. Does the partnership support the adaptation and use of international, national and local standards in humanitarian response?	International mostly	Both national and international	Contextualised international	DR, KII
2. How many national staff members from your organisation were working on the project, and how many international?		KMSS Natl. 68 Intl. 2 Trócaire Natl. 10 Intl. 10	KMSS Natl. 66 Intl. 2 Trócaire Natl. 7 Intl. 4	DR
3. Who identified and prioritised areas for capacity development in the beginning? Who does it now?	Both	Both	Both (with more input from KMSS)	KII, FGD, Survey
4. Which areas of capacity strengthening (for KMSS) were prioritised? (HR/Finance/Administration/Project Management/Compliance/Communication)	PM	Finance, grant management and PM	Technical areas (WASH and M&E); project management; compliance	KII, FGD, survey
5. Was there a strong understanding of the complementary skill sets/capacities of Trócaire and KMSS in relation to the partnership or project?	Sometimes	Completely	Sometimes	KII

All parties expressed confidence that KMSS’s capacity increased through the project period, especially after taking on the direct grant management role. This is also exhibited in HARP-F giving KMSS an extension to 2021, without dedicated Trócaire technical support. This highlights that regardless of training and support provided, the practical experience gained by managing the grant had a substantial impact on

KMSS, both in terms of skills and confidence in their ability.⁴² The capacity-strengthening plans co-developed in 2019 were useful in ensuring a more consistent approach to defining technical support needs. These plans were jointly revised in 2020, and subsequently refined further in response to COVID-19.⁴³

⁴² Interview 10
⁴³ Interviews 12, 15, 16

“We had to use virtual ways to support the dioceses and project implementation staff [due to COVID-19]. We made regular calls to project staff to know how they are working in the time of pandemic and we changed our field monitoring activities.”⁴⁴

An ongoing challenge for KMSS has been the turnover of key staff.⁴⁵ This has mainly affected overall project management at KMSS, making it difficult to monitor progress, follow up on issues and proactively manage risks.⁴⁶ For example, when the national program manager resigned in 2019, the Transparency, Accountability, Compliance and Knowledge Management Coordinator had to fill the role until the end of 2020, while continuing their own role. During 2020, KMSS redesigned their staff structure within the project to improve reporting and coordination. A new structure has been in place since October 2020, with expectations that it will help to deliver the program more efficiently in 2021.⁴⁷ KMSS’s lack of staff continuity has been one of the ongoing challenges for Trócaire in delivering technical support.⁴⁸

Coordination meetings between staff for technical capacity-strengthening areas (MEAL and WASH) took place more regularly in the final year.⁴⁹ Moving the meetings online enabled more consistent engagement – in contrast to the transition year, when the Trócaire technical specialist had difficulty in securing regular in-person meetings. With the meetings moving online, technical coordination meetings were held weekly.⁵⁰

Trócaire technical staff involved in the project have reduced over the three years, proportionate to reduced budget. But Trócaire have also changed their approach as staff numbers reduced, shifting

to an accompaniment model of technical support.⁵¹ With only two technical advisors in the final year, Trócaire could coordinate their engagement with KMSS more closely.

While Trócaire regularly reviewed their support, and updated capacity-strengthening plans together with KMSS, there was no formal process for KMSS to give feedback on the performance of the Trócaire staff who provided technical support.⁵² Nonetheless, the WASH and MEAL technical support KMSS staff received from their Trócaire counterparts was valued, with field staff considering hands-on technical support sessions the most impactful.⁵³ The approach to WASH technical support remained the same in as 2019, with the focus on practical field application and technical input. However, the WASH advisor has encouraged more trainings to be delivered by already trained KMSS staff.⁵⁴

“Hands-on supports and deployment missions [to diocese offices and camps] are the most effective ways of capacity strengthening I think.”⁵⁵

The technical support for MEAL has gradually transitioned to review and advisory support as KMSS staff have taken on more responsibility in line with the capacity-strengthening plan.⁵⁶ The KMSS MEAL team has been taking on more responsibilities, including generating reports, preparing tools and conducting the endline data collection (with technical review support from Trócaire).⁵⁷ Unlike in previous years, KMSS shared M&E monthly reports with the Trócaire MEAL advisor for their input. This was the result of an open conversation between the MEAL advisor and the KMSS teams on areas for improvement.

Footnote 1

- 45 Interviews 1, 10; HAG (August 2020): Localisation through partnership: Shifting towards locally-led programming in Myanmar, Phase 2 - Navigating the Transition
- 46 Interviews 11, 12
- 47 Interview 10
- 48 Interview 11; HAG (August 2020): Localisation through partnership: Shifting towards locally-led programming in Myanmar, Phase 2 - Navigating the Transition
- 49 Interviews 1, 3, 5, 6, 11
- 50 Interviews 11, 12, 15
- 51 Interviews 2, 3, 8, 15
- 52 Interviews 1, 8, 10, 16
- 53 Interviews 1, 4, 6, 16
- 54 Interviews 12
- 55 Interview 5
- 56 Interview 8
- 57 Interview 15

In line with the capacity-strengthening plan, the Trócaire MEAL advisor and the KMSS junior project manager completed competency assessments of KMSS MEAL staff in June 2020.⁵⁸ This was carried out using the competency framework jointly agreed on by KMSS and Trócaire. The Trócaire MEAL advisor also worked with the HARP-F MEAL advisor in developing the framework. The idea of conducting a formal assessment had been resisted within KMSS in 2019, but through ongoing engagement, agreement was reached to complete this process.

“Each MEAL officer was assessed on their writing skills – we then gave out a learning plan. The learning plans were agreed with the diocese and project manager.”⁵⁹

Trócaire staff have faced some challenges to ensure their technical input is incorporated into KMSS activities. The formal tripartite technical support agreement (signed by HARP-F, Trócaire and KMSS) has set up a reporting and escalation process between Trócaire WASH advisor and the HARP-F team. This process was commonly used to address identified technical issues by engaging with key KMSS staff and the HARP-F technical advisors. But Trócaire staff have in some instances found it difficult to influence change in KMSS activities if the KMSS staff choose not to consider the concerns raised.⁶⁰ It highlights practical challenges that come with managing agreements separately, even with the technical support agreement that is in place. Trócaire retains some concerns about the WASH activities to be delivered in 2021, but this is not reflected on the part of HARP-F.⁶¹

Through their technical support, Trócaire has looked to support their partners incorporate or align with international standards where possible. This includes standards around WASH and MEAL practices, but also on safeguarding and durable solutions. COVID-19 also meant there was a need for national partners (including KMSS) to learn best practices for minimising risk of COVID transmission,

primarily through WASH approaches.⁶² Trócaire did face obstacles in introducing some of these international standards based on the level of buy-in from their partners, including KMSS. Working with the partners to appropriately contextualise these standards has helped Trócaire to increase buy-in.

For KMSS, there is recognition that Trócaire brings in international good practices, and that international staff play an important role in this process. However, there is also a preference to have more local technical specialists work with their own teams, considering ease in communication with local field staff and also in travelling to sites. This does not reflect any negative experience with international technical specialists, but rather reflects the practical aspects they have experienced during the project and beyond.

“The model that worked best is to have a local specialist who can closely accompany us. The local national staff can travel with our staff and closely watch what we are doing. This is what we want, and it has worked out quite well.”⁶³

COVID-19 as a driver of change

COVID-19 created challenges in delivering technical capacity support in the final year as these processes mainly moved online. Despite creating complications and introducing limitations, it did not substantially hinder the capacity support process; the teams found ways to work with each other.

The impact of COVID-19 has been a greater problem for the WASH component because it has hindered regular monitoring activities. Several field-level WASH trainings were conducted in January and February before travel restrictions were imposed.⁶⁴ With COVID-19 restrictions, these also moved online, restricting the WASH advisor’s ability to provide technical input (which usually

⁵⁸ Views 1, 15; KMSS HARP-F Quarterly Narrative Report (July 2020)

⁵⁹ Interview 15

⁶⁰ Interviews 11, 12

⁶¹ Interviews 9, 11, 12, 13

⁶² Interviews 8, 12

⁶³ Interview 10

⁶⁴ KMSS HARP-F Quarterly Narrative Report (April 2020)

requires field observation and physical examples). However, the teams adjusted to these as much as possible, and with the restrictions reducing in July, the Trócaire WASH advisor was again able to conduct some in-person trainings at sites, which were beneficial in terms of managing the relationship and physically observing activities.⁶⁵ However, re-imposition of travel restrictions during the second wave meant final follow-up visits before the Trócaire project closed could not be undertaken.

“Because of COVID Trócaire staff can’t visit [the field sites]. We have had quite good technical support from Trócaire, but we lost almost one year due to COVID-19.”⁶⁶

The Trócaire WASH technical specialist also worked closely with KMSS staff to provide input on COVID-19 response activities, on request.⁶⁷ Given that the pandemic context was a new situation, KMSS was keen to obtain Trócaire support on WASH activities and required the WASH advisor to work closely with the field teams, although this had to be done remotely.

For MEAL capacity support, the coordination process was moved online due to COVID-19, with weekly meetings held over Skype. The Skype group allowed the KMSS team and Trócaire technical advisor to engage in real time and created a more fluid relationship than in previous years, when the interactions were mostly done through email, making it a more formal process, and organising meetings with full participation was more difficult.

COVID-19 restrictions affected the MEAL process for KMSS, due to restrictions on travel and access to IDP camps. To address this problem, the KMSS team and the Trócaire MEAL advisor worked together to develop a strategy to transition MEAL activities into remote monitoring. This also included building in protection, safeguarding, inclusion and other considerations into the remote monitoring tools and processes.⁶⁸



Hand washing before food distribution at Bum Tsit Pa camp, Kachin State (Photo: KMSS, 2020)

Looking to the future

KMSS are confident of their capability to continue delivering the project activities in 2021 without designated Trócaire technical support.⁶⁹ This is stronger among the diocese or regional staff, while there is more recognition at the national office that Trócaire’s technical input can add value in line with needs determined by KMSS. Overall confidence within KMSS also stems from their experience in managing HARP-F funds directly for two years under this project, as well as managing other donor and United Nations-funded projects.⁷⁰ Investment in strengthening KMSS capacity and process over the past several years (through this and other

⁶⁵ Interview 12, KMSS HARP-F Quarterly Narrative Report (October 2020)

⁶⁶ Interview 10

⁶⁷ Interviews 10, 12

⁶⁸ Interview 15

⁶⁹ Interviews 1, 2

⁷⁰ Interviews 4, 6, 13, 16

projects and partnerships) has put KMSS in a much stronger position to continue their work.

HARP-F’s extension of the KMSS project without linked Trócaire technical support also highlights HARP-F and FCDO’s confidence in KMSS’s ability to manage and deliver the project on their own.⁷¹

In addition to the progress shown by KMSS over the years, the recognition that KMSS will have ongoing access to technical support as part of the Caritas network (including from Trócaire) beyond the HARP-F project was seen as further assurance that HARP-F could reduce the technical support specifically funded by their shrinking resource pool.⁷²

However, KMSS acknowledge that there may be a need for specific support during implementation. As such, KMSS intends to build in provisions in their budget for 2021 to obtain support. Their indicated preference is to obtain this support from Trócaire given the existing partnership and history of working together. HARP-F is supportive of KMSS working with Trócaire to identify how this could work. At the time of data collection for this report, this process had not been finalised. If COVID-19 restrictions continue to restrict travel in 2021, they could affect how KMSS chooses to proceed with obtaining remote capacity-strengthening support.

KMSS have also integrated some input from Trócaire into the project design for 2021.⁷³ This includes the Trócaire WASH advisor’s recommendations following an evaluation of WASH activities.⁷⁴ Both WASH and MEAL advisors from

Trócaire have identified areas in which they feel KMSS will need more support or must manage more strictly in 2021, which they intend to share with their KMSS counterparts.



Food distribution activities at Bum Tsit Pa camp, Kachin State being managed with physical distancing measures in place (Photo: KMSS, 2020)

TRACKING TRANSFORMATION – CAPACITY

Impact indicator	Progress indicators	Progress as of 2020
Local and national partners can respond effectively and efficiently, and have targeted support from the international partner	Strategic partnerships that build systems and processes which mirror the ambitions and goals of the national partner; use of local over international expertise	✓✓✓ Strong

⁷¹ Interviews 9, 10, 13

⁷² Interviews 9, 13

⁷³ Interview 13

⁷⁴ Interview 12; KMSS: Draft grant proposal form for HARP-F 2021 extension



KEY TRANSFORMATION 3 – FUNDING

KMSS transitioned to being the primary recipient of the grant in 2019, after being a sub-grantee of Trócaire in 2018. Due to issues that emerged in the first three months of making KMSS the primary recipient, in April 2019 HARP-F split the contracts to manage Trócaire and KMSS separately. This grant management experience has allowed KMSS to recognise their gaps in skills and processes, but also helped to build confidence in their potential and ability to manage a sizable grant directly. Financial implications of the localisation transition beyond the project have been largely positive for KMSS and challenging for Trócaire, requiring the latter to rethink some of their practices.

FUNDING indicators	2012	2018	2020	Data Source
1. Percentage of the budget was allocated to KMSS and Trócaire?	Less to KMSS	More to KMSS	More to KMSS	KII, DR
2. Were the overall budget and financial reports shared with KMSS?	No	Yes	Budgets managed separately. Not shared.	KII
3. Do you think that funding decisions were shared by KMSS and Trócaire?	No, not enough	Yes completely	No, not enough	KII, Survey
4. How many donors does KMSS have?	8	29	15	DR

The funding arrangements have continued to evolve over the project period. While the initial change at the beginning of the 2019 – when KMSS became the primary recipient of the grant – was planned at the time of project design, the subsequent decision in April 2019 by HARP-F to manage the two partners through separate contracts was not. Both organisations worked through the issues that flowed from this decision, including changes in their relationship that ultimately strengthening their ways of working.⁷⁵

One of the challenges that emerged with the separate contracts was that the two organisations did not have clear visibility on the provisions included in each other’s budgets. This continued into 2020, as both managed and reported their budgets independently of each other.⁷⁷ However, building on lessons from 2019, there have been improvements in how the technical staff plan and coordinate their work in line with budget availability, and in terms of cost sharing.

“I think there have been negative impacts [of having separate contracts] in terms of us now being seen as two separate entities. A funding relationship creates an interdependency.”⁷⁶

“Last year [2019], it was chaos since KMSS and Trócaire had budgeted for the same things. This year it was a lot more organised. Anything related to capacity strengthening came from Trócaire, [while] anything on monitoring and implementing came from KMSS.”⁷⁸

AS (August 2020): Localisation through partnership: Shifting towards locally-led programming in Myanmar, Phase 2 - Navigating the Transition

76 Interview 8

77 Interviews 8, 10, 16

78 Interview 15

Within KMSS, diocese offices indicated that they did not have full visibility of the overall KMSS budget under the project and how it is managed. Their focus remains on the component of the budget assigned to the diocese and how best to utilise the budget efficiently to deliver their work.⁷⁹ However, the national office has full visibility on the overall KMSS budget, as they consolidate the separate budgets for reporting to HARP-F.

COVID-19 as a driver of change

For both KMSS and Trócaire, not all funds planned for 2020 could be spent due to the COVID-19 pandemic. HARP-F provided more flexibility in how the funds could be used to more efficiently support the COVID-19 response activities, mainly in relation to the work done by KMSS.⁸⁰ HARP-F was also supportive of KMSS to transition from food support programming to cash support. KMSS had to revise their budgets to align with the changing context, with HARP-F approval. HARP-F also expressed interest in channelling additional funding to KMSS and other local organisations as part of the COVID-19 response.⁸¹

For KMSS, most of the unused funding was from the return and resettlement, WASH and food activities. Unfortunately, KMSS were slow in responding to these requests from HARP-F. As such, their proposed changes came in too late to allow a contractual amendment in 2020, and the unused money wasn't allowed to be carried forward to 2021. It is estimated that KMSS this will be approximately £548,000 at the end of 2020 (final figure to be determined). The final amount of underspend will be deducted from 2021 disbursements to KMSS but will not affect their budget for 2021. This underspent amount is a considerable 12.5% of the KMSS budget for the April 2019 and December 2020 period, and even higher when considering only 2020. Missing the opportunity to realign this money to meet increasing needs during COVID-19 reflects poorly on the operational and decision-making processes at KMSS.

While some of the diocese offices have struggled to secure more funding for COVID-related responses,

others have focused on using the unspent (due to COVID-19) budgets of existing programs as part of the response to the pandemic.⁸² With the onset of COVID-19 and organisations mobilising to respond to needs on the ground, some of the diocese offices also partnered with Trócaire (outside the HARP-F project) to meet emergency response needs.⁸³

Looking to the future

In August 2020 HARP-F, in consultation with FCDO, decided to extend the project for a further year. However, only KMSS will receive this extension for 2021, while Trócaire will complete their work under HARP-F at the end of 2020. With the contracts managed separately since April 2019, this will not necessarily create any major changes to the contractual arrangements. As indicated above, KMSS have also expressed interest in obtaining specific technical input from the Trócaire team in 2021, for which they intend to engage Trócaire using project funds.⁸⁴ This will be a new phase for the partnership between the two organisations, with KMSS contracting Trócaire directly for technical input.

The additional funding Trócaire was receiving from HARP-F for further technical support to other partners (replicating the work under the KMSS project) will also cease at the end of 2020 as part of the HARP-F realignment for 2021.⁸⁵ For Trócaire Myanmar, the past several years has seen a significant reduction in funding availability, one of the main factors being the change in the grant arrangement in the HARP-F project. This has also meant that the organisation has lost staff. With a further funding reduction projected in 2021, Trócaire Myanmar is planning for considerable staffing losses. A silver lining is that Trócaire will nationalise some of the roles, by promoting existing national staff or bringing in new staff. To facilitate this process, Trócaire have revised their national salary scales to be more competitive in recruiting key staff.

⁷⁹ Interviews 1, 2, 4, 5, 7

⁸⁰ Interviews 1, 9, 10

⁸¹ Interviews 9, 10, 13

⁸² Interviews 2, 3

⁸³ Interview 5

⁸⁴ Interviews 9, 10, 13; KMSS: Draft grant proposal form for HARP-F 2021 extension

⁸⁵ Interviews 8, 9

2018	JAN-MAR 2019	APR 2019 - DEC 2020	2021
<p>TOTAL BUDGET £ 2,943,690</p> <p>Primary Recipient Trócaire £ 445,@50</p> <p>Shared budget £ 31,@,630</p> <p>Sub-grantee (pass through) KMSS £ 1,@85,532</p>	<p>TOTAL BUDGET £ 736,202</p> <p>Primary Recipient KMSS £ 635,137</p> <p>Sub-grantee (pass through) Trócaire £ 52,@04</p>	<p>TOTAL BUDGET £ 4,644,328</p> <p>Direct Recipient KMSS £ 4,355,241</p> <p>Direct Recipient Trócaire £ 28@,087</p>	<p>TOTAL BUDGET £ 2,488,656</p> <p>Only Recipient KMSS £ 2,488,656</p>

CHANGES AT HARP-F AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS

After an FCDO review, HARP-F has been extended for a further 18 months beginning January 2021 – with 12 of those months for implementation, and the final six months for evaluation and learning. Staff changes will occur as HARP-F realign to administer a lower number of contracts and partners, which includes closing down regional offices.⁸⁶ HARP-F worked with FCDO to finalise the projects that could be funded given the lower amount of funding approved for the extension period.

HARP-F have been required to prioritise funding of implementation projects when allocating funds for 2021. As part of the budget cuts, HARP-F will shed staff (mainly based in Rakhine and Kachin) who provided capacity support to partner organisations. However, the impact of the changes on KMSS, who benefited from the additional capacity support made available by HARP-F, is expected to be minimal. This is because the HARP-F office in Myitkyina will continue to operate (albeit with reduced capacity) and the WASH and cash technical advisors who have worked closely with KMSS will remain.

TRACKING TRANSFORMATION – FUNDING

Impact indicator	Progress indicators	Progress as of 2020
National partner has financial independence that allows them to respond more efficiently to humanitarian needs	National partner has access to direct funding with limited or no barriers	✓✓✓ Strong
	Increase in the amount of humanitarian funding to the national partner	✓✓✓ Strong
	National partner has increased decision-making over financial matters	✓✓✓ Strong



KEY TRANSFORMATION 4 – LEADERSHIP

The role of KMSS in the humanitarian sector has continued to grow in Myanmar, with the partnership with Trócaire seen as a strong example of how localisation can be put into practice. The profile of KMSS has also expanded globally with the increased focus on localisation during COVID-19, providing opportunities to share their experiences with the broader humanitarian community.

LEADERSHIP indicators	2012	2018	2020	Data Source
1. Did KMSS attend all the meetings with HARP-F/FCDO?	Sometimes	Yes completely	Yes completely (however most meetings held separately)	KII
2. Was KMSS the public face of all in-country media about the partnership project?			Sometimes	KII, Survey
3. Was there sufficient investment in KMSS leadership of the partnership project?	Sometimes	Yes completely	Sometimes	KII, FGD, Survey
4. Who was the public face of the partnership project in cluster meetings, inter-agency meetings etc.?	Both	KMSS mostly	KMSS mostly	KII, FGD, DR, Survey
5. Did KMSS and Trócaire have equal opportunities to contribute to assessments of staff performance (including people deployed from Trócaire for short-term missions, if relevant)?	No	Somewhat	Not enough opportunity for KMSS to provide input	KII, Survey

Trócaire and KMSS have also continued to work closely to champion localisation in Myanmar, be it through joint advocacy or sharing lessons from their partnership in national and international forums.⁸⁷ For KMSS, the partnership and the experience of working through the transition process of the project helped to boost their confidence that they could share practical examples of localisation in action.⁸⁸ KMSS's actions under the project have contributed to their growing recognition in the community, other local and national organisations, as well as government and international partners in Myanmar.⁸⁹ KMSS is also recognised by some of the smaller CBOs and local organisation as an organisation they can contact for technical support.

“The way in which KMSS has taken a leadership role around conversations on localisation, supported by Trócaire and others has been quite important. This is because mostly... work on [localisation] has been led by international organisations, paradoxically.”⁹⁰

⁸⁷ Interviews 8, 10, 17
⁸⁸ Interviews 10, 16

89 Interviews 1, 2, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 13, 16, 17, 18
90 Interview 9



Jangma Roi lives in Nhkawng Pa camp, in Kachin State has been unable to work as her health has deteriorated with time. Her family who care for her are supported by the KMSS-Trócaire project, funded by the HARP-Facility (Photo: Yawng Htang, RANIR, 2018)

The national office of KMSS has been engaging with HARP-F directly – more so after the transition year, and especially once the contracts were managed separately. The diocese offices within KMSS do not have direct engagement with HARP-F for this project; all their input is channelled through the national office. However, this coordinated engagement is viewed as suitable and strategic in managing KMSS’s relationship with HARP-F.⁹¹

“I think their [KMSS] engagement is really strong. They are very professional and extremely competent. They are in key

coordination meetings, and have direct access, which I think has been very positive.”⁹²

For Trócaire, the transition to KMSS becoming the direct recipient of the project has reduced their engagement with HARP-F over the years, given the smaller value of the project and specific technical support focus. KMSS staff now have regular engagement with multiple levels of the HARP-F team, improving the relationship. As HARP-F administers the funding, they are the direct interface for formal sharing of project updates and learning by KMSS and Trócaire.⁹³ While it has reduced opportunities for KMSS and Trócaire to engage with FCDO as they would in a directly managed contract, it did not preclude direct interaction. HARP-F, on their part have encouraged partners including KMSS and Trócaire to share their learnings with FCDO directly, offering to convene such meetings. However, the partners have continued to face challenges in meaningfully engaging with FCDO on the project activities and beyond. Incidentally, KMSS’s increasing prominence as a national organisation, their presence on the ground and access to community insights have increased their engagement with donors in the past few years, including FCDO.⁹⁴

“The experience of managing HARP-F grant as a prime recipient was a good case for KMSS, I think, and this will support future partnership. And other donors also would have views and thoughts on the possibilities of local organizations to take the primary role in grant management together with other INGOs.”⁹⁵

While KMSS have continued to lead in delivering the work in Kachin and NSS, their long-term partnership with Trócaire (continued under this specific project) has been an essential part of expanding their footprint in the two states, and

⁹¹ Interviews 1, 2, 5, 6

⁹² Interview 8

⁹³ Interviews 8, 14

⁹⁴ Interviews 10, 14

⁹⁵ Interview 16

in turn for the increase in their profile.⁹⁶ As KMSS is on the ground working with communities, they have remained the public face of the project, especially with the beneficiaries.⁹⁷ KMSS is also valued by the communities it serves because it is a local organisation.⁹⁸ With KMSS beginning to receive funding directly, its visibility has increased. While there is some recognition of the previous collaborative work of Trócaire and KMSS, beneficiary groups are not fully aware of the partnership between Trócaire and KMSS in the current project.⁹⁹

COVID-19 as a driver of change

During the COVID-19 pandemic, KMSS has seen an increase in its role in advocacy for localisation within the country, as well as on global platforms.¹⁰⁰ For example, the national director of KMSS was an invited speaker at a briefing of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee on funding the COVID-19 response.¹⁰¹ In Myanmar, Trócaire and KMSS have continued to build on their partnership to generate discussion about and the visibility of localisation.

“I know that KMSS leadership is very active in promoting local organisations’ capacity in humanitarian responses in Myanmar. They have been engaging in the global dialogues and platforms to raise local

voices in terms of localisation and local-led humanitarian response.”¹⁰²

Looking to the future

The increased prominence of KMSS in the localisation debate is linked closely to the profile of the national director, who will be stepping down at the end of 2020. To minimise the impact on KMSS’s profile as well as its operations, a transition process for the new director has been ongoing. With greater focus on localisation, and increasing donor interest in supporting local partners,¹⁰³ KMSS is in a good position to expand its role within Myanmar’s humanitarian community.



An IDP living in Je Yang Camp receiving support from the HARP-F-funded KMSS-Trócaire partnership project prepares a meal for her children (Photo: Yawng Htang, RANIR, 2018)

TRACKING TRANSFORMATION – LEADERSHIP

Impact indicator	Progress indicators	Progress as of 2020
National partner leads on humanitarian action	International partner supports and strengthens national leadership	✓✓✓ Strong
	National partner leads response and dominates decision-making	✓✓✓ Strong

96 Interview 8

97 Interviews 8, 18, 19

98 Interviews 1, 4, 18

99 Interviews 3, 8, 18, 19

100 Interviews 9, 13, 14

101 <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/events/iasc-briefing-funding-front-lines-efforts-unlock-and-disburse-funds-covid-19-response>

102 Interview 17

103 Interviews 9, 14; HAG and MDN: Two steps forward, one step back: Assessing the implications of COVID-19 on locally-led humanitarian response in Myanmar

LESSONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Approaching localisation from a partnership perspective enables polarising aspects to be jointly addressed and resolved. In Myanmar, an overwhelming majority of humanitarian funding is channelled to international partners,¹⁰⁴ which creates an imbalance of power when they engage local and national actors to implement work on the ground. Altering this and transitioning longstanding partnerships to a local partner-led model requires commitment and willingness to invest in a long-term journey by all parties – national and international partners and donors. These changes cannot be achieved overnight: personnel dynamics, operational bottlenecks and financial implications influence how organisations accept and adjust to changes in practice.

“Localisation without transferring or changing the way grants are managed, transferring the role of leadership, and changing the way of thinking to give full recognition to the locals, is not real localisation .. This type of localization can be fostered only through [a] long journey.”¹⁰⁵


The transformations achieved during the three years of the Humanitarian Response and Transition to Localisation: Kachin and NSS project cannot be attributed only to the work carried out in the project or during that period. The foundation for the transformation lies in the long-term relationship between Trócaire and KMSS, and the mutual trust and sense of partnership created in the organisations. The project itself helped to push the transformation of the Trócaire-KMSS partnership within a tight timeframe and some dedicated resource investment.











The transition process during the project has at times been difficult for Trócaire, KMSS and HARP-F, and their staff, often in unforeseen ways. However, by adapting to needs and working through problems, the project partners are now at a stage where KMSS is a direct recipient of a major grant.

The three-year journey of the Humanitarian Response and Transition to Localisation: Kachin and NSS project provides some lessons for future partnerships or projects seeking a partnership transition. These lessons are presented below in terms of how they can be applied to the partner groups that will be involved in such a project.

The following symbols are used in this table to identify international and national actors



Recommendations	For donors and funding instruments	For international and national partners
PLANNING AND DESIGN		
<p>Set realistic yet ambitious targets for shifting the power in existing partnerships. Partners should agree on what success looks like individually, and jointly for the transition</p>	<p>Resource partners to invest required time and staff so they can jointly design the required shifts, transition timelines, activities and capacity support frameworks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Encourage stretch targets for all parties (including donors) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">  - Plan and invest time and resources in co-designing the transition timelines, activities and capacity support frameworks  - Objectively review transition opportunities and map existing capacities with operational and compliance needs and technical support needs
<p>Develop mutually agreed transition plans based on mutual capacity assessments, and include milestones linked to reassessments</p>	<p>Require jointly developed transition plans based on mutual capacity assessments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Build in milestones to contracts linked to reassessments of capacity - Commit to appropriately resourcing incremental/phased transition plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">  - Work with partners to develop agreed transition plans, based on mutual capacity assessments (carried out by both national and international partners) and include transition milestones linked to reassessments  - Reflect an accurate timeline to enable required process and staff capacity strengthening
PARTNERSHIP CULTURE		
<p>Create a culture of clear communication and mutual accountability within partnerships</p>	<p>Facilitate open discussions on the resources that are allocated to partners for the work on which they will collaborate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure ongoing clarity about the scope and role of each organisation - Include compliance clauses or indicators on partner organisation collaborations to ensure there is mutual accountability - Set up interdependent targets and coordination mechanisms to discuss and monitor progress as well as escalate issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">  - Commit to more open reporting and information sharing with national/international partners  - Manage expectations about the level of support that can be provided and any limitations  - Communicate clearly about the expectations of international partners  - Commit to open dialogue and discussion with partners, especially during difficult stages of the transition

<p>Ensure any changes are openly discussed and agreed by all parties</p>	<p>Commit to managing changes that affect the partnership in an open and collaborative manner</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Encourage partners to mutually plan for any proposed changes and subsequent implications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">  - Commit to working with national/international partners when discussing changes with donors   - Ensure any changes to agreed timelines include a review of the accompanying capacity-strengthening frameworks 
<p>CAPACITY</p>		
<p>Commit to long-term operational capacity strengthening, which requires organisational change and transformation, rather than short-term plans or one-off trainings</p>	<p>Invest in continuous operational capacity-strengthening of national partners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Provide equal and adequate administration costs for all partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Plan for long-term operational/organisational capacity strengthening of national partners  - Remain open and committed to long-term operational capacity strengthening that will require organisational change and transformation
<p>Agree on operational and management capacity markers as part of the transition process to determine the scope and speed of the transition</p>	<p>Require partners to mutually determine operational and management capacity markers to guide the scope and speed of the transition</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">  - Work with national/international partners to establish agreed capacity markers for the transition process 
<p>Use a capacity-strengthening approach that increases buy-in and engagement from national partner staff</p>	<p>Require that capacity support processes for national partners prioritise using local/national experts, and that using international experts is considered the exception, not the norm</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">  - Utilise, as much as possible, local experts and specialists in providing capacity support  - Work with national partners and experts to contextualise international standards and practices  - Advocate for use of local experts and specialists and identify those who can provide this support

APPENDIX 1: PROJECT LOCALISATION ENDLINE

PARTNERSHIP indicators	2012	2018	2020	Data Source
1. Were a partnership MoU in the beginning? Did this contain a set of partnership principles that had been discussed? What about now?	Yes	Yes	In place. Not recently reviewed	DR, KII
2. Did KMSS undertake a formal/informal capacity assessment of Trócaire at the start of the project? How does this work now?	Yes	Jointly designed framework	Jointly designed framework	DR, KII, Survey
3. Did you feel that the partnership was publicly recognised (e.g., equal representation of both partners in project reports, donor meetings, etc.)?		Sometimes	Completely	KII, Survey
4. Did Trócaire and KMSS have an agreement in the beginning whether it was a multi-year funded partnership?	No	Yes	Yes	DR
5. To what extent was the project activities co-designed?	Partly	Completely	Mostly	DR, KII, Survey

PARTNERSHIP indicators	2012	2018	2020	Data Source
1. Did the partnership support the adaptation and use of international, national and local standards in humanitarian response?	International mostly	Both national and international	Contextualised international	DR, KII
2. How many national staff members from your organisation were working on the project, and how many international?		KMSS Natl. 68 Intl. 2 Trócaire Natl. 10 Intl. 10	KMSS Natl. 66 Intl. 2 Trócaire Natl. 7 Intl. 4	DR
3. Who identified and prioritised areas for capacity development in the beginning? Who does it now?	Both	Both	Both (with more input from KMSS)	KII, FGD, Survey
4. Which areas of capacity strengthening (for KMSS) were prioritised? (HR/Finance/Administration/Project Management/Compliance/Communication)	PM	Finance, grant management and PM	Technical areas (WASH and M&E); project management; compliance	KII, FGD, survey
5. Was there a strong understanding of the complementary skill sets/capacities of Trócaire and KMSS in relation to the partnership or project?	Sometimes	Completely	Sometimes	KII

FUNDING indicators	2012	2018	2020	Data Source
1. Percentage of the budget was allocated to KMSS and Trócaire?	Less to KMSS	More to KMSS	More to KMSS	KII, DR
2. Were the overall budget and financial reports shared with KMSS?	No	Yes	Budgets managed separately. Not shared.	KII
3. Do you think that funding decisions were shared by KMSS and Trócaire?	No, not enough	Yes completely	No, not enough	KII, Survey
4. How many donors does KMSS have?	8	29	15	DR

LEADERSHIP indicators	2012	2018	2020	Data Source
1. Did KMSS attend all the meetings with HARP-F/FCDO?	Sometimes	Yes completely	Yes completely (however most meetings held separately)	KII
2. Was KMSS the public face of all in-country media about the partnership project?			Sometimes	KII, Survey
3. Was there sufficient investment in KMSS leadership of the partnership project?	Sometimes	Yes completely	Sometimes	KII, FGD, Survey
4. Who was the public face of the partnership project in cluster meetings, inter-agency meetings etc.?	Both	KMSS mostly	KMSS mostly	KII, FGD, DR, Survey
5. Did KMSS and Trócaire have equal opportunities to contribute to assessments of staff performance (including people deployed from Trócaire for short-term missions, if relevant)?	No	Somewhat	Not enough opportunity for KMSS to provide input	KII, Survey

APPENDIX 2: KEY RESEARCH QUESTIONS TO GUIDE RESEARCH

The following research questions are used to guide the study:

1. What was the partnership journey and localisation process for Trócaire and KMSS to date?

- a. What were the key events and successes within the partnership journey?
- b. What were the strengths and challenges in the partnership?
- c. To what extent did the partnership reflect the dimensions of localisation?¹⁰⁶

2. How has the partnership transitioned to support KMSS' leadership of the project?

- a. What was the process involved in the transition?
- b. What aspects worked and what didn't work?
- c. What learning can be applied more broadly?

3. What are the outcomes of this localisation transition process for project participants?

- a. What concrete changes have occurred as a result of the process for the organisations (KMSS and Trócaire)?
- b. What are the outcomes for project participants, including communities that the project reached?
- c. To what extent did the partnership support and enhance KMSS' capacity to take a leadership role in future responses (across areas including organisational, programming, visibility and reputation)?
- d. How is the partnership recognising, respecting and building on existing processes, tools and approaches (rather than replacing or undermining them)?
- e. To what extent was the visible role of KMSS in humanitarian action enhanced and supported?

¹⁰⁶ Drawing from HAG and PIANGO's Measuring Localisation Framework, as well as the START Network's research in this area, these include: Leadership, Capacity, Funding, Coordination and Complementarity, Participation (of communities) and Policy Advocacy and Influence.



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