

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

PHASE 1 – THE PARTNERSHIP JOURNEY  
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HUMANITARIAN  
ADVISORY GROUP





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Cover photo: View of a remote IDP camp in Kachin State, Myanmar @ Trócaire 2013

## **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 play a key role in implementing 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 can positively contribute to excellence in humanitarian practice.

# ABBREVIATIONS

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DFID	United Kingdom Department of International Development
EFSL	Emergency Food Security & Livelihoods
HARP	DFID Burma Humanitarian Assistance and Resilience Programme
HARP-F	HARP Facility
ICR	Indirect cost recovery
IDP	Internally displaced person
MEAL	Monitoring, evaluation and learning
KMSS	Karuna Mission Social Solidarity
NFI	Non-Food Items
NSS	Northern Shan State
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
RRF	Rapid Response Fund
WASH	Water, sanitation and hygiene
WHS	World Humanitarian Summit

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# FOREWORD

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## KMSS

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In its 18-year journey as a local faith-based organisation, KMSS has witnessed local-international engagement in various forms. Some relationships have been grounded in mutual respect, accountability and equality but there has been some undue power exercise by international partners upon KMSS resulting in disappointment and broken relationships.

It is a sad experience that injustice is practiced by powerful organisations over powerless locals. Even though the Grand Bargain prime focus is on 'funding allocations', the exercise of power between international and local actors emerged as an equally important issue to address under the 'localisation' work stream.

KMSS and Trócaire have a long-term partnership relationship and both are active supporters of the Grand Bargain localisation agenda. The humanitarian program in response to Kachin/NSS armed conflict is a platform on which the localisation transition is materialised. Handing over leadership from international to local is the key in this relationship and this three-phase study will help the socialise actors on how best to manage the transition.

KMSS expects that this piece of work will augment and accentuate the localisation agenda and also lay a foundation on which similar experiences in different contexts can flourish.

## Trócaire

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Trócaire has long strived to achieve real and lasting change through empowering individuals and communities to achieve their basic rights and challenge unjust structures and unequal relationships.

As a partnership agency, we believe this is best achieved by promoting and supporting the evolution and growth of a strong, vibrant, effective and independent civil society in the countries in which we work, one that represents the views of people affected by humanitarian crises, poverty and marginalisation, and advocates for their rights and interests.

Localisation represents an extension of this partnership approach, taking the same values and principles several steps further to relocate the decision making, power, and influence back to local organisations.

Through shared values and principles of partnership, and a strong history of collaboration between KMSS and Trócaire, together we were able to embark on this ambitious localisation transition.

This report comes mid-way through the localisation transition, and captures the learning, growth, and challenges for both KMSS and Trócaire to date. It has been a remarkable experience so far, and one that we hope will provide many lessons on how best to support localisation, and ultimately, those affected by humanitarian crises around the world.

Ashley Proud, Country Director, Trócaire Myanmar



*Nhprang Kai Htang lives in an IDP camp in Kachin State supported by KMSS and Trócaire through HARP-F funding, pictured working in the fields to supplement her household income. @Cyung Dau, Trócaire 2018.*

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The localisation of humanitarian aid emerged as a central reform priority in the lead up to and during the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) in 2016. At the Summit, international actors made commitments to shift resources and decision-making to local and national responders through initiatives including the Grand Bargain and the Charter for Change. Three years on, effectively supporting local and national leadership of humanitarian response remains a critical issue for the sector.

Strengthening local and national leadership of humanitarian action through partnership is a journey. Karuna Mission Social Solidarity (KMSS) and Trócaire have been working together in Myanmar to respond to conflict and displacement in Kachin and Northern Shan State (NSS) since 2012. Over the past seven years the partnership has evolved significantly, in particular to support key localisation objectives.

The 'localisation transition' over the last year has focused on enabling KMSS to take up management of a large multi-year grant as a primary recipient, under the Humanitarian Assistance and Resilience Programme (HARP). This ambitious and important step has seen a fundamental shift in the partnership between KMSS and Trócaire. This research documents that evolution, and provides reflection on the successes and challenges of the journey. It also outlines key opportunities for the partnership to continue to support localisation and to strengthen joint humanitarian action.

Analysis of change in traditional INGO–NGO partnership models to reflect localisation objectives remains limited. There is little practical evidence available to inform the process or to understand the outcomes associated with *how* the shifting of funding and leadership works in practice at an organisational level and the impact for both national and international organisations. This journey of transition between KMSS and Trócaire provides an example of this process and can inform the broader localisation agenda.

### Research findings

Beyond the effectiveness of the partnership's program in Kachin and NSS, the partnership has achieved a great deal in supporting the localisation objectives that the partners defined at the beginning of the transition process.

The transition of the roles of partners and the shift away from a traditional INGO–NGO funding partnership model demonstrate the opportunities and challenges in relation to localisation for the broader humanitarian sector. Both partners recognise localisation of humanitarian action as a process in which both national and international actors have complementary roles in partnership, but the emphasis is on shifting relationships and power. The evolution of the partnership has had different impacts for each partner, which are continuing to emerge during this transition process.



## KEY TRANSFORMATIONS



### KEY TRANSFORMATION 1 – PARTNERSHIP

The partnership model has fundamentally transformed over the last two years, to become more equitable and complementary between the two partners and to support increased power, decision-making and funding for KMSS. Partners are developing a new type of collaborative relationship, underpinned by their shared history, mutual values and trust. The new way of working has been challenging for both partners and has led to a re-examining of roles.



#### EXAMPLE: Transforming partnership models

Transforming partnership models to support localisation requires clear objectives, including defining 'what success looks like.' The design phase of multi-year grant for humanitarian programming in Kachin and Northern Shan State enabled both partners to define these objectives and outcomes. This included how to support grant management acquisition and articulating what an alternative partnership model could look like.



### KEY TRANSFORMATION 2 – CAPACITY

The partnership has transformed its approach to capacity-strengthening to a longer-term and more strategic approach, with mutually agreed areas, and complementary skillsets defined.



#### EXAMPLE: Strategic capacity strengthening to support transition objectives

Transforming traditional partnership models to support direct management of donor grants in protracted crises requires creative and longer-term strategic thinking on capacity strengthening. KMSS and Trocaire jointly developed a Capacity Building Framework and Plan for a three-year period. This enabled partners to focus on longer-term outcomes, including human resourcing, technical support and organisational system strengthening based on mutual agreed priorities and needs.

*View of a remote IDP camp in Kachin State, Myanmar @ Trócaire 2013*



### **KEY TRANSFORMATION 3 – FUNDING**

The transition process and the partnership's history have contributed significantly to strengthening KMSS' financial independence and decision-making and substantially progressed Grand Bargain and Charter for Change commitments in relation to funding of national organisations.



#### **EXAMPLE: Increasing funding to local and national actors**

Following discussions between Trócaire and KMSS, it was proposed that KMSS become the principal grant recipient; this new model fits perfectly under HARP's localisation agenda. Trócaire provided close support to KMSS throughout the transition to direct grant management, and as of 2019 KMSS started to receive funding directly from HARP-F. Over the course of the partnership, KMSS has significantly increased its overall income, and diversified its funding partners.



### **KEY TRANSFORMATION 4 – LEADERSHIP**

KMSS has developed a key leadership role in the humanitarian sector in Myanmar, supported and strengthened by the partnership with Trócaire.



#### **EXAMPLE: Strengthening local and national leadership**

This partnership has effectively supported increased national and local leadership of humanitarian action. KMSS is now a key humanitarian actor in Myanmar, and is a member of the Joint Strategy Team in Kachin and NSS. It is also a leading actor in several clusters, and a key partner for other international organisations. Both partners recognise the contribution of Trócaire in supporting KMSS's leadership.

## Key learning

The partnership can continue to build on its demonstrated strengths and successes in Years 2 and 3 of the project. It should maintain the focus on learning and reflection, and look for opportunities to share experiences and influence processes across the sector in Myanmar and internationally.

**For KMSS**, the organisation can continue to leverage the support role of Trócaire as the international partner in a complementary way where relevant and required to support organisational development and programming. KMSS can also explore replicating relevant transition processes with other international partners and donors.

**For Trócaire**, the organisation can explore the implications of this partnership transition for its work globally. This could involve producing strategic direction for localisation processes in partnership with national organisations in other programs.

## 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, as outlined below. Findings respond to the main research questions

- ? *What does the partnership journey and localisation process entail for Trócaire and KMSS?*
- ? *How has this supported KMSS' leadership, and what have been the organisational and humanitarian outcomes?*

## Overview of the research phases

This report is the outcome of the first phase of the research. It explores the evolution of the partnership journey to date, with a focus on the localisation transition as part of the HARP-F program. It examines the successes and challenges for the partnership, analyses the key catalysing events in the partnership's evolution, and explores various dimensions of localisation including partnership, leadership, capacity and funding.

## 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, DFID took a different approach to humanitarian assistance in Myanmar, including an explicit focus on localisation. Under the HARP Facility (HARP-F), a significant proportion of grantees are local organisations; these partners receive tailored support focused on capacity-building and organizational development, in line with Grand Bargain commitments and the principles of localisation. HARP-F directly funds Trócaire and KMSS under this localisation project.



### RESEARCH PHASE 1

The partnership journey from 2012-2018



### RESEARCH PHASE 2

The localisation transition across 2019-2020



### RESEARCH PHASE 3

Outcomes from the transition process at the end of 2020

# INTRODUCTION

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The localisation of humanitarian aid is a process of recognising, respecting and strengthening the leadership and decision making by national actors in humanitarian action, in order to better address the needs of affected populations.<sup>1</sup> This approach is not new, but it gained increased momentum and was galvanised through commitments following the WHS. International actors committed to reforms including increasing funding and shifting decision-making and power to national actors to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of humanitarian aid and reduce financing gaps.

KMSS and Trócaire commissioned a multi-year research study to understand and document the successes and challenges associated with their localisation journey in their partnership in Kachin and NSS. Recent research suggests that there is progress in some localisation areas globally, and more organisations are increasingly seeking to document these changes in practice.<sup>2</sup> In Myanmar, recent research initiatives have explored themes of partnership and localisation in relation to humanitarian aid. Localisation has also been an

ongoing conversation in key forums between international and national actors.<sup>3</sup>

The enablers and challenges for partnerships to transition to support leadership and direct funding for the national partner remain poorly understood. This is particularly the case for large donor grants such as the HARP-F program in Myanmar, where donors have sought to fund national partners as directly as possible.

This paper seeks to facilitate learning for both KMSS and Trócaire and provide reflections on the successes and challenges of the localisation journey. It explores the evolution of the partnership, with a focus on the major successes, challenges and dynamics in relation to the localisation transition. It also outlines key opportunities for the partnership to continue to support localisation and to strengthen joint humanitarian action. Section one examines the initial partnership phase from 2012–16, and section two explores the transformations as part of the localisation transition in 2017–18.

## About this research

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### Scope

This report describes the outcomes of the first of three phases of research. It is focused on the internal partnership journey, the reflections and experiences of each partner and the shifts during the collaboration. Phases two and three of the research will analyse the impacts associated with the transition towards localisation, with a focus on the outcomes for project participants in affected populations in Kachin and NSS.

### Research questions

The overarching research questions are presented below (sub-questions are contained in Appendix 3). This research report focuses on research questions 1 and 2. Subsequent phases of research will explore research question 3.

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?

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1 This report uses a definition adapted from Australian Red Cross, *Achieving a more appropriate and fit-for-purpose humanitarian ecosystem in the Pacific*, 2017 and OECD, *World Humanitarian Summit Putting Policy in to Practice, The Commitments into Action Series*, 2017.

2 ODI, *Grand Bargain Annual Independent Report*, 2018; HAG and PIANCO, *Tracking progress on localisation: A Pacific perspective*, 2018; Ground Truth Solutions, *Field Perspectives on the Grand Bargain*, 2018.

3 IRMA, *Accelerating Localisation through Partnerships: Recommendations for operational practices that strengthen the leadership of national and local actors in partnership-based humanitarian action in Myanmar*, 2019.

# Methodology

The research was qualitative, using a mixed methods approach. Data was drawn from interviews, documents and a partnership workshop with a range of KMSS and Trócaire staff from different organisational areas. For the first phase of the research, primary data collection was undertaken with KMSS and Trócaire internal staff stakeholders, including staff involved in managing the partnership, programming, finance, senior leadership and human resources. Findings from this process were triangulated during joint debriefings with the research team, and through a document review.

## Analysis framework

The research explored the dimensions of partnership, capacity, funding and leadership. Where possible, it also included other localisation aspects such as policy influence and advocacy, and coordination and complementarity. It uses some of the high-level impact indicators outlined in HAG and PIANGO's Localisation Measurement Framework that has been piloted in the Pacific region and that draws on the dimensions of localisation developed by the START Network.<sup>4</sup> The research used a baselining approach (outlined in Appendix 2) to track change over time.

Exploration of key practices in the localisation areas of partnership, capacity, funding and leadership, and how these had shifted over time was undertaken during interviews, and during the workshop. This baseline will be supported by an endline process to be undertaken in 2020.

## Supporting localised research processes in Myanmar

This research sought to follow emerging best practice in relation to conducting localised research.<sup>5</sup> A national researcher led the research process and analysis of data in Myanmar; Humanitarian Advisory Group (HAG) provided support with design and data collection, and writing. This meant that interviews and the workshops were conducted in the local language. It

also meant that the national researcher was able to draw on previous research experience in relation to localisation, and knowledge of the context.

## Limitations

The research methodology had strengths – notably that the national consultant led the research in their own national language, generating a wealth of data and nuance of interpretation – but also limitations. Some of the limitations are outlined below.

**Timing:** Staff turnover in both organisations meant that few staff had worked consistently with Trócaire or KMSS across the entirety of the partnership period. This meant the research team had to rely on documentation for this period, and extrapolate findings in relation to broad aspects of the partnership.

**Use of baseline and midline indicator approach:**

The baseline indicators form an important part of the research, but gathering data on some of them was challenging. Visibility and profile of the partners over the partnership period and representation in forums and media were particularly challenging to measure. Where possible, these findings have been triangulated with data from other sources.

Figure 1 Overview of research approach



4 HAG and PIANGO, START Network and NEAR Network have developed ways of measuring progress according different dimensions of localisation. This phase of the research explores the dimensions of partnership, capacity, funding and leadership and uses HAG and PIANGO's Framework. See HAG and PIANGO, Localisation in Vanuatu: Demonstrating Change, 2018 ; NEAR Network, Localisation Performance Measurement Framework, 2019; START Network, Seven Dimensions of Localisation, 2017, <https://startnetwork.org/resource/localisation-practice-emerging-indicators-and-practical-recommendations>

5 Australian Red Cross and HAG, Localising the research process: Walking the talk, 2017, <https://humanitarianadvisorygroup.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Localising-the-research-process.pdf>



# PARTNERSHIP SNAPSHOT

## What has the partnership journey been?

Trócaire and KMSS have been working together to respond to the crisis in Kachin and Northern Shan State (NSS) since 2012. KMSS has been one of the key local players in the response to the crisis since its onset, due to its access to conflict-affected communities and grassroots volunteer network. Trócaire has been working through civil society in Myanmar since 1995, and established a country office in 2008 during the response to Cyclone Nargis. Trócaire and KMSS had been working in partnership in Kachin and NSS since 2006 on development activities for Diocesan Offices in Myitkyina, Banmaw and Lashio.

## Partnership in 2012-16

From 2012 to 2017, KMSS and Trócaire worked together to respond to the conflict and displacement in Kachin and Shan State as part of DFID-funded programming. This was the first time the partners had worked together in humanitarian response in Myanmar at this scale. It was also the first time that KMSS had delivered multi-sectoral humanitarian response programming. Programming in these areas during this period was funded on an annual basis by DFID, across eight funding phases.

The collaboration involved two approaches.

- ▶ In 2012-15 (program phases I-IV), KMSS and Trócaire worked in partnership, with KMSS leading program implementation in the food security, emergency shelter, WASH, protection and livelihoods sectors.
- ▶ In 2016-17 (program phases V-VIII), a consortium was formed with the Danish Refugee Council to design and implement programming in the food security, protection and WASH sectors

Figure 2 Overview of partnership



## KMSS-Trócaire Partnership snapshot

- 1 international partner
- 1 national partner operating through one National and two Diocese offices
- Humanitarian response in 2 states – Kachin and Northern Shan
- 2 phases of programming – DFID annual funding from 2012-2017 and DFID HARP-F funding from 2017-18

## Partnership in 2017-18

In 2016, DFID undertook a design process for the new HARP Facility (outlined below) as part of transitioning to multi-year programming for humanitarian response in Myanmar. A key driving factor was to enable funding to local and national actors. In 2017, KMSS and Trócaire designed a three-year proposal to continue humanitarian programming in Kachin and NSS and to undertake a transition process to enable KMSS to manage the grant directly. The original concept saw a handover at the end of the transition in year 3 (2020). During the process of proposal development, HARP-F requested that the 'localisation transition' take place earlier in the process, in year 1 (2018) of the grant, with KMSS taking on direct management in year 2 (2019). Trócaire supported KMSS across 2018 in a range of ways, building on their earlier partnership, to enable KMSS to manage the grant in 2019.

## About DFID HARP-F

The Humanitarian Assistance and Resilience Programme (HARP) is a UK Government Department for International Development (DFID) initiative designed to respond to humanitarian needs within Myanmar and on the border with Thailand. It will provide £108.5 million from 2016-2020 for both protracted conflict-related crises and natural disasters. The HARP Facility is a component of DFID's broader HARP. The facility provides grants, technical assistance and capacity building, including a focus on supporting national organisations and overall sectoral effects to enhance effectiveness for the humanitarian system in Myanmar.<sup>6</sup>



Galau Lu Mai lives in an IDP camp in Kachin State supported by KMSS and Trócaire through HARP-F funding, pictured cutting her son's hair @Gyung Dau, Trócaire 2018.

## WHAT DOES LOCALISATION MEAN TO BOTH PARTNERS?

*"Localisation is an integral part of this project, and is also integral to both KMSS and Trócaire's wider approach and vision. KMSS and Trócaire, under their work together on this project, refer to this change process as a 'localisation transition'."*<sup>7</sup>

Localisation is an ongoing priority for both partners outside of their partnership. Both organisations have engaged in several localisation initiatives nationally and internationally. KMSS has been a strong advocate in Myanmar and was the first national actor to sign the Charter for Change. KMSS also participated in the WHS, and has engaged as a national actor in several localisation forums internationally.

Trócaire has identified localisation as one of four global advocacy priorities to take forward under the current organisational Global Strategic Plan 2016–2020.<sup>8</sup> Localisation is also outlined in Trócaire's Global Humanitarian Policy and Strategy.<sup>9</sup> Trócaire is a signatory to the Charter for Change. Trócaire has also undertaken research on localisation, published as *More than the money – localisation in practice*.<sup>10</sup>

Prior to 2017, a localisation transition for KMSS to directly manage grant funding was not a specific objective of the KMSS-Trócaire partnership.

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.harpfacility.com> . accessed 28 May 2019

<sup>7</sup> Annex G Localisation and Transition, HARP-F Delivery Grant Project Proposal, 2017, p. 3

<sup>8</sup> Trócaire, Global Strategic Plan 2016–2020, 2016.

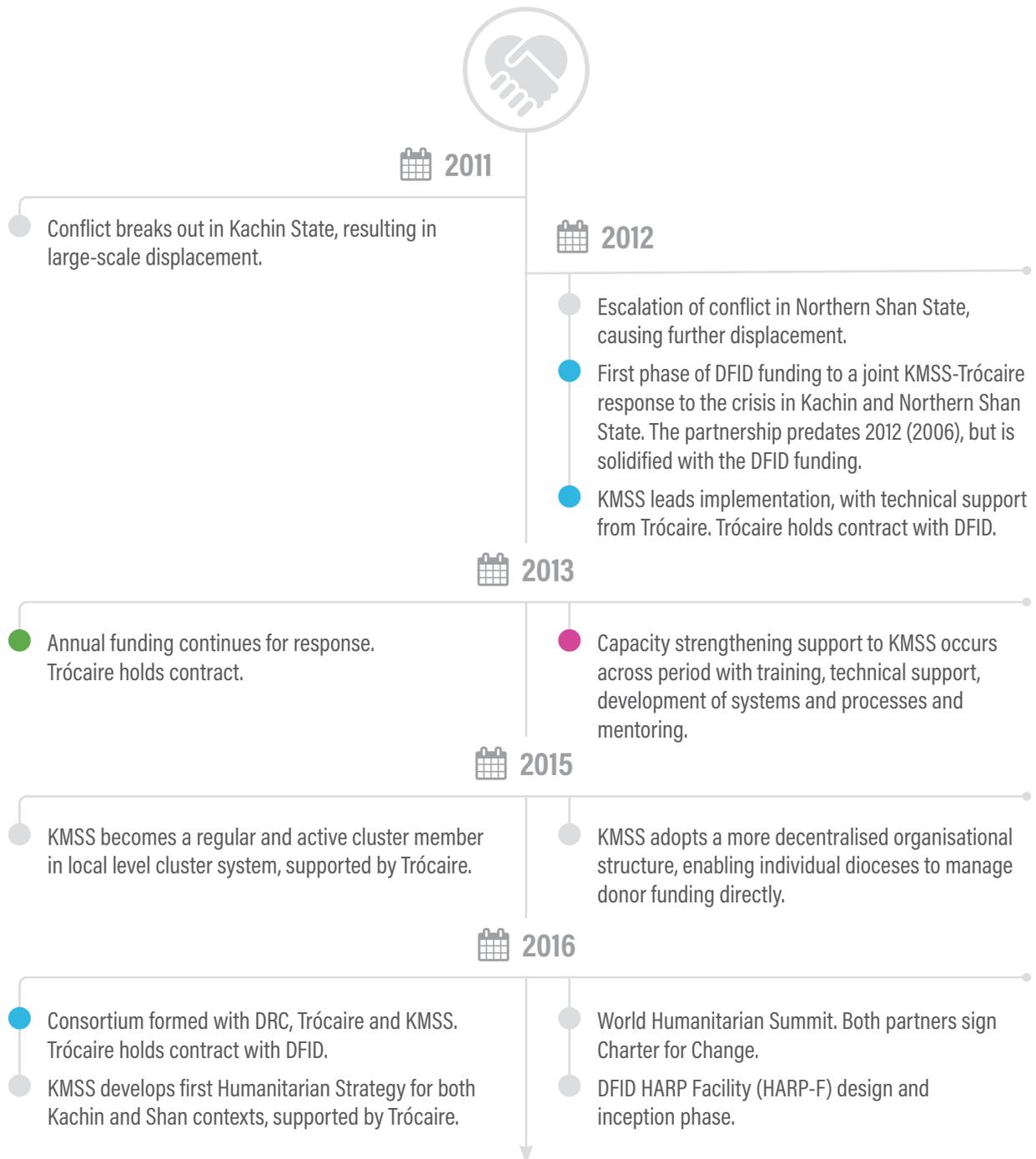
<sup>9</sup> Trócaire, Global Strategic Plan 2016–2020, 2016, p. 3 and Humanitarian Policy and Strategy, 2016. p.5

<sup>10</sup> Trócaire, *More than the money – localisation in practice*, 2017, <https://www.trocaire.org/resources/policyandadvocacy/more-than-the-money-localisation-practice>

# THE PARTNERSHIP JOURNEY

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

The following key is used to categorise the key events:





## 2017

- KMSJ joins consortium Steering Committee.
- JAN: Grant for 2017 provided by HARP. Grant provided to Trócaire as primary grant holder.
- JUL: KMSJ and Trócaire commence design of HARP-F delivery grant proposal for 2018-21.
- JUL: KMSJ and Trócaire hold workshops to discuss proposal and localisation transition process.
- AUG: Capacity Building Framework negotiated for transition process.
- SEP: Three day joint KMSJ-Trócaire HARP-F proposal development workshop.
- SEP: Trócaire and KMSJ submit proposal to HARP-F.
- OCT-NOV: Proposal feedback and negotiations with HARP-F.
- DEC: HARP-F 2018 grant agreement signed by Trócaire.

## 2018

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

## 2019

- KMSJ becomes primary grant holder for the HARP-F response grant.

# THE INITIAL YEARS 2012-16

This section examines the key aspects of the partnership from 2012 to 2016, with a focus on the dimensions of partnership, capacity, funding and leadership. It provides a basis to explore the key localisation shifts and understand how and why the partnership transformed.

## How things started

The development of the partnership approach for the response in Kachin and NSS was underpinned by KMSS and Trócaire's previous work together and joint membership of the Caritas Internationalis Confederation. KMSS and Trócaire share history and values as members of the Catholic network, and have partnered on development projects elsewhere in Myanmar, which provided a strong basis for this new collaboration in humanitarian response. KMSS had presence, and was embedded in many affected communities through the structure of the Catholic Church, enabling operation in areas that many other international agencies could not reach.<sup>11</sup>



### Partnership: ways of working

**"Trócaire's role was as a technical partner as well as fundraiser in the beginning and KMSS' role was as an implementer."<sup>12</sup>**

In 2012–16, the partnership model was based on a traditional INGO–NGO model for humanitarian response.<sup>13</sup> Trócaire held the contractual agreement with DFID and received the grant funds. KMSS decentralised half-way through this period to give more autonomy to Diocese Offices to manage

grants. The result was that international partners worked through the National Office as well as directly with individual Diocese Offices, depending on the type of project. KMSS also partnered with other Caritas Internationalis member agencies across this period on technical support initiatives, however the relationship with Trócaire was unique due to their presence in-country, and work together on programming in affected areas.

### PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT AND PRINCIPLES

*"For KMSS, the nature of the partnership with Trócaire is different to the type of cooperation they have with other INGOs and UN agencies, as Trócaire is seen as 'a member of the family' [the Caritas family]."<sup>14</sup>*

Both partners stated that the partnership was based on mutual trust and respect and that this helped them resolve numerous challenges across this period.<sup>15</sup> Partnership principles and agreed ways of working based on ethical practices were contained in the initial partnership agreement for the response funding. The partnership agreement was based on Caritas Internationalis Guiding Principles and Trócaire's partnership policy.<sup>16</sup> The partnership agreement outlined ways of working in the spirit of partnership, the values of KMSS and Trócaire, and principles for working together, including transparency, confidentiality and integrity.

<sup>11</sup> Interview 4; Evaluation of the DFID-funded Comprehensive Response to the Kachin conflict, 2013

<sup>12</sup> Interview 7

<sup>13</sup> See the types of partnership models outlined in the NGOs and Risk: Managing Uncertainty in Local-International Partnerships Study, 2019, p. 15

<sup>14</sup> Evaluation of the DFID-funded Comprehensive Response to the Kachin Conflict', 2013, p. 26

<sup>15</sup> Interviews 1, 3, 4, 5, 8, 10; Focus group discussion

<sup>16</sup> The Caritas Partnership Guiding Principles, 2002; Trócaire Partnership Policy 2012 and Trócaire Partnership Guidance Note

Figure 3 Overview of partner approach 2012-16

	KSS NATIONAL PARTNER	TROCAIRE INTERNATIONAL PARTNER	
●	Supports proposal development and project design with targeted input based on contextual knowledge and experience	●	Leads proposal development and project design
●	Leads on implementing programming in affected areas	●	Supports implementation of programming, does not directly implement
●	Sub-contracted through international partner	●	Manages donor grant directly as primary recipient, sub-contracting to national partner
●	Provides input into program budgets	●	Oversees program budgets
●	Supports on reporting processes	●	Responsibility for risk management, quality, compliance and reporting processes with donor
●	Engages in donor liaison	●	Leads on donor liaison and management
●	Capacity strengthening is a key objective of the partnership with the international partner	●	Leads on technical support for capacity strengthening of national partner
●	Partnership for humanitarian response is project based	●	Partnership for humanitarian response is project based

## Capacity strengthening - how was it approached?

Across this period, the partnership invested in many capacity-strengthening initiatives, including training, mentoring and technical support, as well as support for KMSS’ organisational development, systems and processes. Priority areas in this phase included financial management and compliance, logistics and human resources. Capacity strengthening initiatives were mostly written into proposals, partnership agreements and project logframes, and budgeted for.<sup>17</sup> KMSS also heavily invested in capacity-strengthening internally, as evidenced by its growing lead role in

humanitarian response in Myanmar, recognised in several evaluations.<sup>18</sup> Both partners participated in dialogue around capacity needs, gaps and priorities that fed into proposal and program development, but Trócaire – as the international partner – took the lead on conducting an informal capacity assessment with KMSS. KMSS highlighted that capacity assessments were not always documented formally, meaning each partner viewed and identified capacity gaps differently.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Interviews 1, 4, 5, 6, 7; Narrative reports and program evaluations for phases 1-VIII

<sup>18</sup> Trócaire, Phase IV Final evaluation report, p. 26, 2015

<sup>19</sup> Interviews 4, 5, 7, 9, 10

“Sometimes we had differences of opinion about capacity gaps and sometimes the support was mismatched with what we needed.”<sup>20</sup>

Both partners articulated that over 2012–16, KMSS had grown significantly as a key humanitarian actor and recognised Trócaire’s supporting role as part of this. The most effective capacity-strengthening initiatives identified by KMSS were the longer-term coaching, mentoring and on-the-

job accompaniment for staff.<sup>21</sup> Trócaire staff found it challenging to engage with KMSS on some capacity strengthening initiatives, due to buy-in or ownership from KMSS staff. Program evaluations and partner staff indicated that there was little planning for a longer-term strategy or plan for capacity-strengthening with agreed strategic outcomes across this period.<sup>22</sup> Formal review processes of capacity-strengthening initiatives or feedback processes, such as 360-degree reviews, were not undertaken.<sup>23</sup> This reduced the ability to measure the impact of the capacity-strengthening initiatives as a whole.

### Key elements of capacity strengthening approach across 2012-16

Area	How it worked
Formal capacity assessment	Informal capacity assessment and plan led by international partner. National partner did not formally assess international partner capacity.
Capacity-strengthening plan	Included on a project/annual basis, but no overarching strategy articulating shared outcomes or national partner priorities.
Types of capacity-strengthening initiatives	Large number of trainings, mentoring and accompaniment and technical support across both programming and organisational system strengthening.
Measuring impact and effectiveness	Internal assessment process and analysed in program evaluations, but no strategic measurement of impact and effectiveness.
Budgeting for capacity-strengthening initiatives	Included on a proposal basis with DFID. Coordinated across other Caritas members and other international agencies to ensure complementarity.
Performance reviews	Partners informally provide feedback on performance to each other in meetings, workshops and as part of evaluation processes, but had no formalised method for national partner to review the technical support provided by international partner (e.g., 360-degree review).

“It [capacity support] was very positive. We [KMSS] learnt a lot from Trócaire on planning, budgeting, monitoring and donor reporting. But I think it was not sufficient and needed to be considered to be more strategically based.”<sup>24</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Interview 4

<sup>21</sup> Interview 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 11, Focus Group Discussion, Trócaire phase IV Final evaluation report

<sup>22</sup> Trócaire-KMSS Comprehensive Response to the Kachin Crisis-15 Month Report-Phase I-III, 2013, p. 19; Trócaire phase IV Final evaluation report, pp. 26, 38; Interviews 3, 8

<sup>23</sup> Interview 8

<sup>24</sup> Interview 4



## Funding - how did it work?

Overview of partnership funding model for DFID-funded programming from 2012–16

Funding aspects	How it worked
Funding model	Annual grant from donor for a humanitarian response project.
Contractual arrangements	DFID funded Trócaire directly who on-granted to the KMSS National Office, who then on-granted to Diocese Offices.
Agreement on ICR costs	Process negotiated and agreed upon by both partners.
Decision-making on budgets	Budgets developed separately and then negotiated by both partners.
Liability and risk management	Led by Trócaire.
Financial reporting	Led by Trócaire.

The funding model in the initial years of the partnership for the humanitarian response program in Kachin and NSS operated on an annual cycle. As the conflict in Myanmar continued, DFID extended the grant on a yearly basis until 2016, and then through a consortium arrangement over 2016–17. Trócaire held the contract with DFID, which was a concise document.<sup>25</sup> Trócaire and KMSS developed separate program budgets initially and then negotiated; both indicated that this was a challenging process to undertake annually. KMSS did not have visibility over the entire project budget that included both partners' components in this period. Partners mostly indicated that funding decisions were shared, but sometimes lengthy negotiations occurred, particularly in 2014–15, when partners had different priorities due to the evolving conflict and IDP crisis.<sup>26</sup>

In several instances Trócaire supported KMSS by leveraging broader Caritas Internationalis funding to offset funding gaps for proposed new activities that DFID had not approved. The partnership also enabled KMSS to diversify funds and increase financial independence through capacity-strengthening support, but also through facilitating access to other funding opportunities.

**“[As] evidence of the successful advocacy led by Trócaire for the recognition of local capacity, KMSS had over 10 different partners supporting its relief operations in Kachin ...Trócaire together with like-minded**

**organisations had a positive impact on the level of funding made available for the response, and on the proportion of funding channelled through INGO/LNGO partnerships.”<sup>27</sup>**

### HOW DID THE PARTNERS APPROACH ADMINISTRATION COSTS?

In 2012 Trócaire did not have a standardised approach or policy on Indirect Cost Recovery (ICR) with KMSS or other national partners. With KMSS' advocacy, the partners negotiated an approach whereby the Trócaire Country Office shared 50 per cent of ICR with the Trócaire Head Office, and the remaining 50 per cent with KMSS.

***“At beginning it wasn't that clear. Trócaire didn't have a policy in sharing ICR. At the beginning, up until 2016, it was provided on an ad hoc basis and not to all partners. With KMSS it has been institutionalised.”<sup>28</sup>***

<sup>25</sup> Interview 1

<sup>26</sup> Interviews 1, 3, 4, 5, 8; Focus Group Discussion; Trócaire Phase IV Final Evaluation Report, 2015, p. 37

<sup>27</sup> Evaluation of the DFID-funded Comprehensive Response to the Kachin Conflict, 2013, p. 27

<sup>28</sup> Interview 1



## Leadership

Both partners articulated that promoting KMSS' leadership was a key priority for the partnership, however that the impacts of this had been varied.<sup>29</sup> For example in the initial few years of the response in Kachin and NSS, Trócaire scaled up its presence and operations in Myanmar and this increased its visibility as a leading humanitarian actor in country with strong presence in coordination forums.<sup>30</sup> As the response evolved this shifted and KMSS took more of a leadership role in coordination forums, with increased visibility and presence.

There was limited formal investment in leadership initiatives, but the partnership with Trócaire supported increased opportunities and engagement in forums in which KMSS would eventually take a lead role such as the Joint Strategy Team, Area Humanitarian Country Team and clusters. This was also the case in the consortium arrangement in 2016-17 – KMSS initially did not join the Steering Committee, but this changed when the program proved effective and the relationship constructive, and KMSS took more of a leadership role. This was highlighted as a key success.<sup>31</sup>

Whilst KMSS led programming, engagement with communities and participated in coordination forums such as clusters with Trócaire, there was a strong sense that Trócaire led the partnership with the donor and other international actors due to its role of managing the grant. This was particularly the case for direct donor liaison in the beginning of the partnership, but partners felt that this had evolved over subsequent years and KMSS saw itself as engaging more in donor liaison.<sup>32</sup> Trócaire stakeholders indicated that a key priority for them was supporting and strengthening the leadership and profile of the KMSS as the national actor, and other international actors confirmed this:

“Many external actors ... felt that Trócaire had successfully influenced most INGOs and UN agencies in supporting local organisations through continuous awareness raising and also through leading by example.”<sup>33</sup>

However, in the early years KMSS was not always part of these advocacy forums.

“One of the weaknesses of Trócaire's advocacy highlighted by external stakeholders was the fact that KMSS's voice was almost always physically absent from the advocacy forums.”<sup>34</sup>

## Summary of 2012-2016 period

This period of the partnership achieved a great deal in both humanitarian response programming, and supporting the leadership and capacity strengthening of KMSS as the national partner. Although the partnership did not have an explicit focus on localisation as defined key WHS initiatives, including transfer of funds management of the grant, the partnership did support some localisation objectives, such as organisational system strengthening and promoting local leadership. The partnership during this period for humanitarian response was framed by an annual donor project funding cycle, influencing the time and resources available to support the partnership itself. Overall, this period provided a strong basis and relationship on which to further key localisation objectives as part of the newly established HARP program in 2017.

29 Interviews 2, 3, 4, 8

30 Trócaire Management Response to Evaluation Report Phases I-III, p. 2; Evaluation of the DFID-funded 'Comprehensive Response to the Kachin Conflict', 2013, p. 6

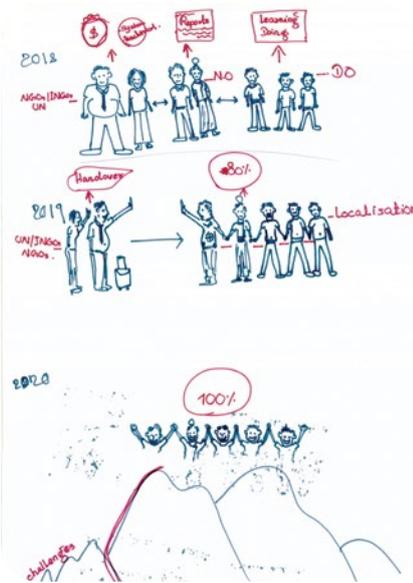
31 Evaluation for the DFID Funded Joint Response in Kachin and Northern Shan State, 2017; Interview 1; Focus Group Discussion

32 Interviews 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8; Focus Group Discussion

33 Evaluation of the DFID-funded Comprehensive Response to the Kachin Conflict, 2013, p. 26

34 Ibid., p.27

# THE LOCALISATION TRANSITION 2017-2018



This section explores the findings in relation to the key transformations that have occurred as part of the localisation transition, in the dimensions of partnership, capacity, leadership and funding. This transition has had benefits and challenges for both partners. This research maps these shifts against some of the 'localisation journey' outcome areas and indicators in the PIANGO and HAG Localisation Measurement Framework. It provides an assessment of how strong the evidence is for progress in each area. Evidence for each area draws on data from the baselining process (see Appendix 2).<sup>35</sup>

*Drawing by participants of the KMSS-Trócaire project inception workshop conducted at the beginning of the localization project in 2018. This drawing shows a visualization of the localization process year by year, with the handover process from the international organization to the local organization, and finally achievement of localisation and full independence after overcoming challenges. © KMSS/Trócaire 2018*



## KEY TRANSFORMATION 1 – PARTNERSHIP

The partnership model has fundamentally transformed over the last two years, to become more equitable and complementary between the two partners and to support increased power, decision-making and funding for KMSS. Partners are developing a new type of collaborative relationship, underpinned by their shared history, mutual values and trust. The new way of working has been challenging for both partners and has led to a re-examining of roles.

Impact indicators	Indicators	Evidence of progress
Equitable and complementary partnership between national and international partner	1. Partnership is based on equitable and ethical practices	✓✓ Strong
	3. Increased power and decision-making of local and national actor within partnership	✓✓ Strong

<sup>35</sup> This framework was designed to measure progress on localisation at a systemic level. It draws on the START Network's approach, Seven Dimensions of Localisation, 2017, <https://startnetwork.org/resource/localisation-practice-emerging-indicators-and-practical-recommendations>

Across the sector, the localisation agenda prompted discussions on the need to develop new types of partnerships that support and strengthen local and national leadership. In 2017, Trócaire and KMSS designed and submitted a proposal for multi-year funding with a focus on supporting several key localisation objectives under the new DFID HARP-F delivery grant program. The proposal articulated a change process that involved a shift away from a traditional INGO–NGO model, to a new transformative partnership approach. This involved:

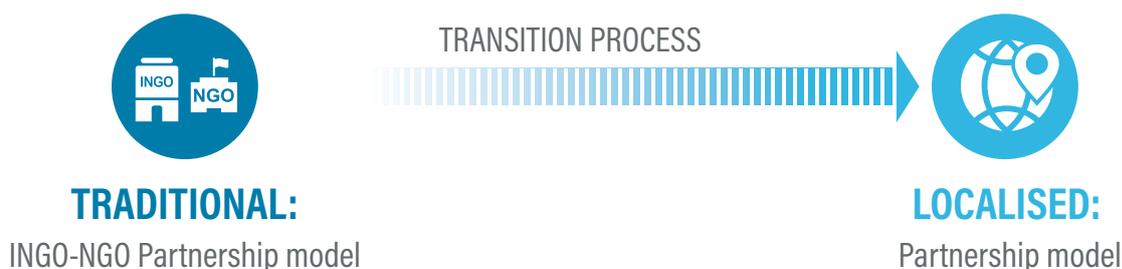
- ▶ Clearly articulating key localisation outcomes including KMSS becoming lead agency for the partnership and primary grantee for HARP-F funding

- ▶ Re-defining the complementary roles of each partner
- ▶ Supporting increased power in decision-making and power for KMSS

For Year 1 (2018), Trócaire undertook primary role of planning and budgeting and grant management. Throughout Year 1, Trócaire supported KMSS through a phased approach to take on responsibility for planning and budgeting, and grant management for 2019.

The figure below shows the evolution of this new type of model.

Figure 4 Partnership model – an alternative approach



## How it happened

KMSS invested heavily in an internal process to discuss and plan for the transition in 2017 and 2018, and this was considered effective and useful.<sup>36</sup> The complementary role for Trócaire in this localisation transition emerged through a process of negotiation, and included targeted support for KMSS to take on management of the grant and technical humanitarian programming support in WASH, Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning (MEAL) and Emergency Food Security & Livelihoods (EFSL).

The process involved a re-examining of designated roles and responsibilities within a INGO/NGO partnership. This approach is outlined in the table below, highlighting the key roles and responsibilities within the partnership that have shifted across this period. Trócaire and KMSS are continuing to create and adapt these new roles within their partnership, providing a new partnership model for the humanitarian sector.

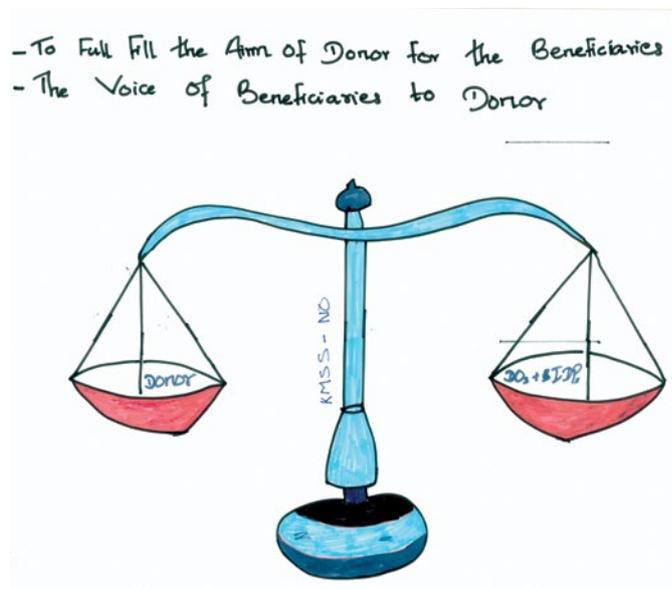
<sup>36</sup> HARP-F Delivery Grant Project Proposal, 2017, p. 7

## Overview of new partnership approach under HARP-F funded response program

Aspect	2018	Planned for 2019
Partnership model	Multi-year phased process commenced for KMSS to become primary grantee. Traditional INGO-NGO contract model.	Shift away from traditional model. KMSS becomes primary grantee.
Grant management	Trócaire held direct contract with donor; planning commenced for grant management transition.	KMSS directly holds the contract with HARP-F as primary grantee. Trócaire has a separate contract with HARP-F to provide technical support to KMSS for program implementation.
Compliance	Led by Trócaire; KMSS supported to take on this role.	KMSS has responsibility for risk management, quality, compliance and reporting processes with donor.
Reporting	Trócaire provided support to KMSS to transition management of reporting.	Led by KMSS.
Capacity-strengthening	Formal capacity-building framework and plans negotiated with prioritised technical support to enable KMSS to manage grant, and program delivery.	Continuing implementation of jointly agreed capacity-building framework.
Donor liaison	Led by Trócaire ; KMSS supported to take on liaison role.	KMSS lead on donor liaison for partnership; both partners also have separate relationships with donor.

## The role of donors as a 'push' factor for localisation

This transition also highlights the influence of donors in progressing localisation commitments. Following the WHS in 2016, the operationalisation of localisation of humanitarian aid became a focus for humanitarian donors who signed the Grand Bargain. Key actions included increased funding for local and national actors, multi-year protracted crisis funding, shifting traditional models of international–national partnerships, and harmonised reporting. Donors such as DFID sought to progress their Grand Bargain localisation commitments through initiatives such as HARP-F (see p. 12 for an overview of HARP-F).



*Drawing by participants of the KMSS-Trócaire project inception workshop conducted at the beginning of the localization project in 2018. This drawing depicts how the KMSS National Office sees its position, as balancing the needs and requirements of donors and IDPs.*  
© KMSS/Trócaire 2018

## ABOUT HARP-F AND LOCALISATION

**The HARP-F program incorporates the following aspects related to localisation and Grand Bargain Commitment 2: *More support and funding tools for local and national responders.***

- HARP-F delivery grants are multi-year investments (Commitment 2.1 Increase and support multi-year investment in the institutional capacities of local and national responders)
- HARP-F actively requires increased access to funding of national NGO partners in conflicted-affected areas (Commitment 2.6 Make greater use of funding tools which increase and improve assistance delivered by local and national responders and 2.4 Achieve by 2020 a global, aggregated target of at least 25 per cent of humanitarian funding to local and national responders as directly as possible)
- The HARP-F grant supports a transition period for KMSS and Trócaire to address barriers to KMSS taking on direct grant management (Commitment 2.2 Understand better and work to remove or reduce barriers that prevent organisations and donors from partnering with local and national responders in order to lessen their administrative burden)

HARP-F and DFID required KMSS to become the direct primary grant holder from HARP-F within 12 months of the multiyear program, highlighting the influence of donors on progressing localisation.

“Despite initial hesitation by the two partners to commit to a one-year transition which was felt to be too short, in KII [key informant interviews] with the assessment team, they acknowledged that DFID’s push has ensured that they speeded up the process of transition through investment in capacity-building.”<sup>37</sup>

Whilst partners recognised the push from HARP-F as progressing the transition, there were some challenges in undertaking the transition in one year instead of three:

- ▶ The short time frame to work together on implementing capacity-building framework and plan – overworked staff and reduced buy-in because a lot of initiatives were underway
- ▶ A decentralised KMSS structure meant Trócaire was working with four partners with different processes
- ▶ Some stakeholders indicated that a focus on grant management transition meant less focus on the needs and priorities of program participants.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>37</sup> HARP Interim Assessment, 2018, p.40

<sup>38</sup> Interview 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8; Focus Group Discussion



Lazing Hkawn Lum lives in an IDP camp in Kachin State supported by KMSS and Trócaire through HARP-F funding. She has been displaced for over 8 years due to conflict. @ Yawng Htang, Trócaire 2018.

**CONTRACTING AND LOCALISATION:  
ENHANCING OR HINDERING?**

HARP-F was designed to promote and enable access to more funding for national organisations, however the contractual process is more complex than the previous direct donor grant and required extra resourcing to establish and manage.<sup>39</sup> As the managing contractor for the program, Crown Agents hold direct contracting responsibility with partners, rather than the DFID-partner contract model as in previous years.

The establishment of the new mechanism also required partners to separately develop new relationships with HARP-F.<sup>40</sup>

For some Trócaire respondents, this also meant less direct contact with DFID in Myanmar, as the grant was managed by HARP-F. Without the direct link to DFID,

this affected Trócaire's ability to engage in strategic discussions with DFID on key humanitarian issues or programmatic matters, and thus had implications for their work, profile and visibility in Myanmar.

**Forging a new type of relationship:  
dynamics and differences**

A key impact has been the creation of a new type of collaborative relationship, with a set of new dynamics that have required adaptation by both partners. Both partners outlined that the agreed partnership principles and values provided a solid base for the transition phase. The constructive, long-term working relationship between partners also supported the delivery of programs for affected communities across the transition phase, including those to which many other humanitarian actors have had limited access.

<sup>39</sup> Interviews 1, 6, 7  
<sup>40</sup> Interviews 1, 8

Figure 5 Reflections on partnership

I felt that we have had equal partnership and we respect each other. **IN EXTERNAL MEETINGS SUCH AS WITH OCHA, KMSS HAS BEEN TREATED AS A WELL-KNOWN ORGANIZATION IN THE KACHIN CONTEXT AND HAS RECEIVED TRUST FROM OTHER INGOS AND UN AGENCIES**<sup>42</sup> KMSS appreciates Trócaire for **their fruitful relationship, mutual accountability and respect to us.**<sup>43</sup> Trócaire and KMSS have a good understanding of each other. Otherwise there would not be success and a smooth partnership.<sup>44</sup> The partnership between Trócaire and KMSS is one of the best partnership models I have seen. **TRÓCAIRE WAS AT FOREFRONT WITH KMSS IN LIGHT OF THE WHS COMMITMENTS TO LOCALISATION.**<sup>45</sup> **MORE TRANSPARENT RELATIONSHIP** that is complementary to each skill is needed more for transition.<sup>46</sup> I think [our partnership] was about **mutual trust and being treated as real partner not like a grant recipient or receiver.**<sup>47</sup>

The agreed ways of working together in the spirit of partnership have been tested due to the changing roles and power dynamics of the partners. It was acknowledged that partnerships have 'ebbs and flows', and that this transition process had challenged the collaborative relationship and required time to address differences in approach and ideas.<sup>47</sup> A key challenge at this stage is that the significant focus on grant management and funding elements have overshadowed other elements of the partnership and program.

Partners are negotiating the level of transparency required within the new model of partnership, recognising that this transition necessitates open and frank conversations. Partners articulated that the transition requires a greater level of

mutual transparency due to the complexity of the transition and impact on partnership arrangements.<sup>48</sup> For example, with KMSS taking on the lead of planning and budgeting for 2019, one of the challenges outlined by Trócaire is limited visibility into this planning and implementation process.<sup>49</sup>

The time and resource investment in the transition process has also been significant for both partners. KMSS' senior leadership, for example, documented more than 50 meetings and discussions with Trócaire, HARP-F and DFID over the proposal design process and first year of implementation (2017–18).

41 Interview 4

42 Interview 2

43 Interview 6

44 Interview 1

45 Interview 5

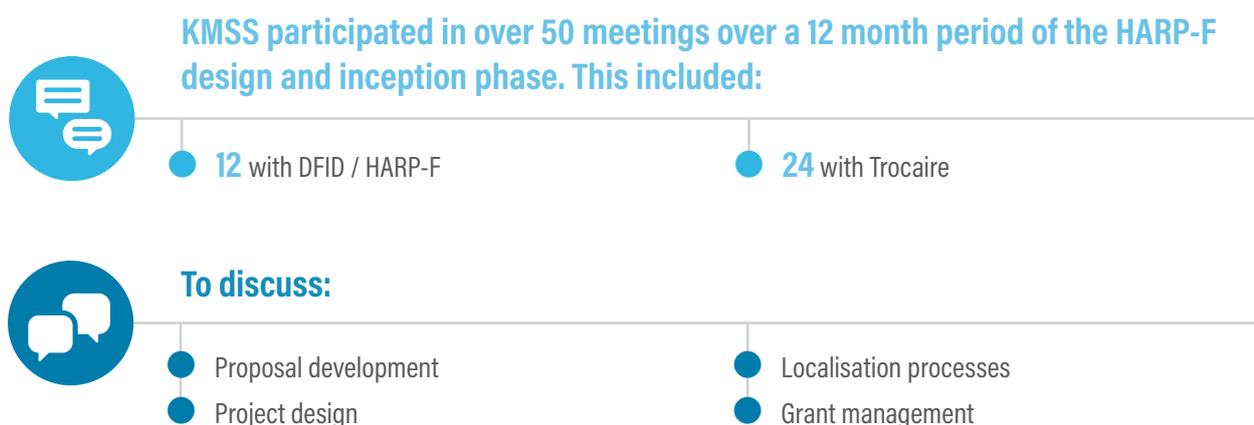
46 Interview 6

47 Interview 2, 3, 5, 6, 9, 10; Focus Group Discussion

48 Interview 3, 5, 6, 7; Focus Group Discussion

49 Interview 3

Figure 6 The investment in working in partnership



## Transition role of the international partner in supporting localisation

“Our biggest call to HQ is more of an existential question – what is the future role of Trócaire? What are we as an organisation in the future? Do we become a localisation resource for other NGOs? Or purely a capacity-strengthening NGO? ... Is this an outlier or is it eventually going to be how we work as Trócaire? Or just a component? Systems need to adapt to match those changes.”<sup>50</sup>

This transition process with KMSS contributed significantly to ongoing reflection within Trócaire about their broader localisation objectives and processes. It has prompted thinking about its impact on Trócaire’s ways of working and role in the humanitarian sector. In its Humanitarian Strategy for 2016–20, Trócaire articulates how it aims to add value to partnerships in support of localisation through “funding, knowledge of donor compliance, technical expertise, knowledge of

international standards, network connections, learning possibilities, and research and advocacy opportunities and strengthening organisational functions.”<sup>51</sup> As an organisation, Trócaire is committed to localisation and striving to support partners and reduce competition with local NGOs for funding streams. Reduced funding to Trócaire in line with more direct funding to KMSS however impacts on another one of Trócaire’s strategic objectives of increasing organisational income and a growth in institutional funding across humanitarian programming.<sup>52</sup>

The operational implications of this strategic direction have yet to be articulated clearly to country offices. This localisation process with KMSS is an opportunity for Trócaire’s Myanmar Country Office to provide learning for Trócaire globally on priorities, roles and ways of working. Trócaire, at the headquarters level, can consider redefining what success looks like in supporting localisation, including articulating new types of partnership models and reassessing how strategic objectives around increasing income can include other measures of success, such as supporting national actors to access and leverage funding, and measuring diversification of donors.

<sup>50</sup> Interview 3

<sup>51</sup> Trócaire Humanitarian Strategy 2016-2020, p. 5.

<sup>52</sup> Trócaire Global Strategy 2016-2020, p. 15



## KEY TRANSFORMATION 2 – CAPACITY

The partnership has transformed its approach to capacity-strengthening to a longer-term more strategic approach, with mutually agreed areas, and complementary skillsets defined.

Impact indicator	Indicator	Evidence of progress
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.	 <b>Strong</b>

In a significant shift from the previous period, capacity-strengthening has become longer term and more strategic, with clearly defined and measurable outcomes based on mutually identified needs. As part of the design for the program, a formal capacity-strengthening framework and plan was developed and agreed on for the 2018–21 period. This was to support KMSS to take on grant management as well as program delivery in 2019, including financial management, compliance and technical support for programming areas including developing policies and standards. As part of this, a separate budget for capacity-strengthening was agreed on, written in to the project proposal and formed an explicit outcome of the program.<sup>53</sup> Both partners outlined how the shift in this approach was more beneficial to KMSS than in previous years, and Trócaire noted that this agreed outcome for KMSS to manage the grant had fundamentally shifted the way capacity-building was approached and how success was measured.

“HARP forced the discussion ‘if we [Trócaire] are trying to support you [KMSS] to take on management then what do we need to focus on?’ This is a good question to focus on – we say we want to step out of the equation but yet when we look at how we approach capacity development it is technical. But if it is about managing funds independently of Trócaire then it changes the analysis completely.”<sup>54</sup>

<sup>53</sup> Drawn from HARP-F proposal, Annex G Transition and Localisation. In the logframe several outputs were identified and are being tracked by KMSS and Trócaire, such as number of workshops, action plans, trainings and systems/manuals.

<sup>54</sup> Interview 2

## KEY ACHIEVEMENTS IN RELATION TO CAPACITY-STRENGTHENING

Partners invested significant resources and time across 2018. Key achievements include:

- Effective financial support through contracting BSA, a local accounting firm
- Development of standard operating procedures for cash and food programming
- Improved understanding and implementation of the participatory hygiene promotion/community engagement approach for WASH
- Accountability mechanism and tools developed across the organisation
- Production of first monthly M&E report for the entire organisation.

Similarly, the focus on experiential learning and accompaniments was considered to be effective:

*"It was like learning by doing and learning by seeing how Trócaire staff were working with KMSS staff... Trainings are not sufficient to be a successful partnership. It needs mutual understanding, complementarity, a lot of patience to [account] for each other's weaknesses, and working collaboratively. This is fundamental for success. Coaching of staff, joint monitoring and technical support are more effective experiences."<sup>55</sup>*

### Key aspects of the strategic capacity-building framework 2018

Aspect	Elements
Grant management	Support for quality reporting and programming, including adaptation of tools and templates, monthly reporting processes, joint quarterly report development for HARP-F, accompaniment for joint work planning and program adaptation.
Humanitarian programming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Support for mainstreaming gender and vulnerable groups</li> <li>▶ Developing safeguarding mechanism and policy, and training for staff</li> <li>▶ Development of stronger MEAL Framework and system</li> <li>▶ Improved accountability mechanism and tools</li> <li>▶ Protection mainstreaming across project</li> <li>▶ Support for development of standard operating procedures for programming</li> <li>▶ Support for WASH tools and training</li> <li>▶ Adaptation and roll-out of Participatory Hygiene and Sanitation Transformation, including strategy and training</li> </ul>
Reflection and learning	Investment in quarterly learning and reflection meetings and reflection on the technical accompaniment and training in the areas of MEAL, EFSL and WASH.
Financial management	Development of stronger financial systems through accompaniment from BSA, support for developing quarterly financial reports to HARP-F, and quarterly financial monitoring visits and financial training for staff.

<sup>55</sup> Interview 5



*Nangzing Hkawn Yie lives in an IDP camp in Kachin State supported by KMSS and Trócaire through HARP-F funding. She recently gave birth and is pictured with her one month old baby @ Yawng Htang, Trócaire 2018.*

The two partners also planned for the human resourcing required to support the transition based on an assessment of existing skillsets. For Trócaire, this involved appointing a Localisation Coordinator to oversee planning for the transition process in Year 1, and for KMSS, a TASK Team at the National Office and Accountability and Learning Officers in the dioceses. Recruitment processes for technical support changed across 2018, with KMSS identifying that recruitment of the international technical advisors could have been reduced in favour of local consultants with knowledge of the context. This highlights that both partners need to agree on and feel comfortable that the capacity support is effective and reflects the needs identified.

“There should be a capacity assessment before developing institutional capacity. Assessors should have proper skills and should have master role in their professional area.”<sup>56</sup>

The multi-year grant and the development of a longer-term capacity-development framework for Trócaire and KMSS has led to longer-term strategic thinking and the potential to design interventions to reflect resilience programming.<sup>57</sup>

“We would roll from proposal to proposal with set of activities based on relief response (food, WASH, shelter, NFIs) in a context that was increasingly protracted... [this multi-year commitment] provided an opportunity for Trócaire to sit with KMSS and plan what it [resilience programming] could look like.”<sup>58</sup>

The focus on grant management and transition took a significant amount of time and resources from both organisations. For some stakeholders, this meant that there was a disproportionate focus on grant management capacity building rather than on quality programming and program needs.

<sup>56</sup> Interview 8

<sup>57</sup> HARP Interim Assessment 2018, p. 2

<sup>58</sup> Interview 2



### KEY TRANSFORMATION 3 – FUNDING

The transition process and the partnership's history have contributed significantly to strengthening KMSS' financial independence and decision-making and substantially progressed Grand Bargain (Workstream 2) and Charter for Change commitments in relation to funding of national organisations.

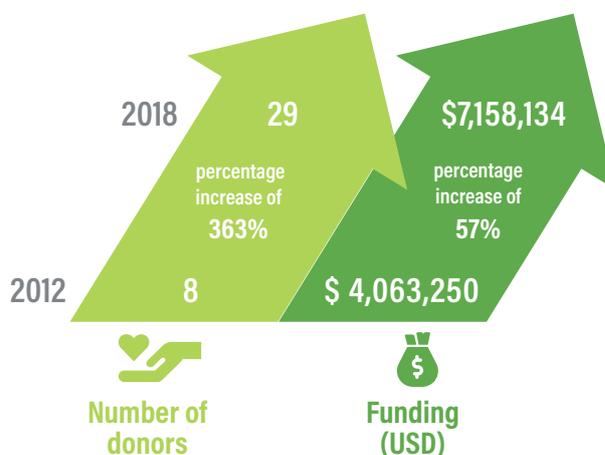
Impact indicator	Indicators	Evidence of progress
National partner has financial independence that allows them to respond more efficiently to humanitarian needs.	1. National partner has access to direct funding with limited or no barriers.	✓✓ Strong
	2. Increase in the amount of humanitarian funding to the national partner.	✓✓ Strong
	3. National partner has increased decision-making over financial matters.	✓✓ Strong

One of the key successes for the partnership is the strengthened financial independence of KMSS, which now is able to leverage grants and manage funding directly. Both partners acknowledged Trócaire's contribution to this outcome, as well as the leadership of KMSS and impacts of their work with other international partners. Trócaire continued to manage funding processes in 2018, but gradually transferred responsibility for grant management, financial decision-making, budgets and financial reporting to KMSS. In 2019, the partners have separate contracts with HARP-F, with KMSS having key responsibility for the budget.

The partners also negotiated an agreed approach to ICR. The HARP-F mechanism has a ceiling of 7% admin costs for grantees, and this cost was shared between Trócaire and KMSS as in previous agreements. Trócaire and KMSS have agreed to continue sharing this cost when KMSS contracts Trócaire directly. KMSS contracted national

accounting company BSA to help strengthen financial management across the national and diocese offices. This was seen as very beneficial, with clear outcomes and appropriate support, and engagement with Trócaire as needed.<sup>59</sup>

Figure 7 Overview of KMSS' financial growth 2012-18



59 Interview 3, 7, 9



Food distribution by KMSS staff and volunteers in an IDP camp in Kachin State © Trócaire 2016

“Using local resources to build local capacity is the best in some cases as KMSS has difficulty in always dealing with international experts.”<sup>60</sup>

Prior to this transition, KMSS had been managing other donor grants, such as the Livelihoods and Food Security Fund (LIFT),<sup>61</sup> which provided added impetus to support this shift. KMSS funding increased from around USD\$ 4 million in 2012 to USD\$ 7 million in 2018. Significantly, the number of donors increased from eight to 29 over the same period.<sup>62</sup> The allocation of funding directly to KMSS by HARP-F in 2019 supports the Grand Bargain commitment of “funding as directly as possible”, and provides a strong example for the broader humanitarian sector. Another key success was KMSS’ ability to access and use the HARP Rapid Response Fund (RRF). The RRF provides funding for

immediate response to quick-onset emergencies; potential response partners (including many national actors) are pre-qualified with the HARP-F to allow for rapid disbursement of funds. The ongoing HARP-F grant and the partnership with Trócaire played an important role in positioning KMSS to receive this grant.<sup>63</sup>

“The national office are very independent now in terms of identifying and going for funding opportunities. They are very effective at finding their own sources of funding.”<sup>64</sup>

Trócaire continues to identify support funding opportunities, including brokering relationships and acting as a conduit for donors who may not be willing or able to provide direct funding to KMSS.

60 Interview 6

61 <https://www.lift-fund.org>

62 Statistics provided by KMSS.

63 HARP Interim Assessment 2018, p. 2

64 Interview 3



## KEY TRANSFORMATION 4 – LEADERSHIP

KMSS has developed a key leadership role in the humanitarian sector in Myanmar, supported and strengthened by its partnership with Trócaire.

Impact indicator	Indicators	Evidence of progress
National partner leads on humanitarian action.	1. International partner supports and strengthens national leadership.	✓✓ Strong
	2. National partner leads response and dominates decision-making.	✓✓ Strong

This partnership has effectively supported increased national and local leadership of humanitarian action. KMSS is now a key humanitarian actor in Myanmar, and is a member of the Joint Strategy Team in Kachin and NSS. It is also a leading actor in several clusters, and a key partner for other international organisations. It is also recognised as a leading player by other international organisations and local authorities. Both partners recognise the contribution of Trócaire in supporting KMSS’s leadership.

In contrast to previous years, there is now a strong perception that KMSS leads the partnership and the relationship with the donor. Trócaire has identified this shift in the relationship with the donor, and articulated that it previously acted as a broker and liaison. KMSS staff felt that this has been one of the most impactful and important shifts in the partnership.<sup>66</sup> One of the key aspects for both partners is maintaining joint and separate relationships with donors into the future, and recognising the different needs and priorities for these relationships.

“KMSS is a heavyweight in humanitarian response and a go-to organisation for context analysis for donor relationship and coordination with government and military structures.”<sup>65</sup>

<sup>65</sup> Interview 1  
<sup>66</sup> Interviews 5, 6, 7, 8, 9

# KEY LEARNING

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The following summarises key challenges and learning across this process for both partners and other relevant stakeholders, in the areas of partnerships, capacity, funding and leadership.



## KEY LEARNING – PARTNERSHIP

**Defining what success looks like:** Transforming partnership models to support localisation requires clear objectives, including defining ‘what success looks like.’ The design phase of multi-year HARP-F grant enabled both partners to define these objectives and outcomes, including how to support grant management acquisition and articulating what an alternative partnership model could look like.

**Dynamics:** The localisation transition fundamentally transforms existing partnership relations and dynamics. A key challenge for partners is managing these changing dynamics, including mutual transparency, and prioritising open and frank conversations about implications for partners’ visibility, profile, programming and donor relationships.

**Time investment:** The process of a localisation transition for large donor grants involves significant investment for both international and national partners. A key challenge for both KMSS and Trócaire was the time and resources required to manage this process, in particular grant management acquisition.

**Donor role:** DFID played a key catalysing role in initiating the localisation transition, through requesting a shorter transition period and requiring the shift of funding and grant management to KMSS. A key challenge is managing joint and separate donor relationships for both partners, as well as the increased complexity of reporting, contractual and compliance processes in the HARP-F program.



## KEY LEARNING – CAPACITY

**Strategic framework:** Transforming traditional partnership models to support direct management of donor grants in protracted crises requires creative and longer-term strategic thinking on capacity strengthening. The HARP-F proposal process enabled partners to focus on developing a longer-term, strategic framework based on mutual agreed priorities and needs. A key challenge was that this meant there was at times a disproportionate focus on grant management acquisition, compared to programming.



## KEY LEARNING – FUNDING

**Shifting resources:** Enabling increased funding as per Charter for Change commitments to national partners is possible through transforming traditional INGO-NGO partnership models as part of large, multi-year donor grants in protracted crises. A key challenge for both partners is adapting to how this positions them as humanitarian actors in Myanmar, and for Trócaire, globally.



## KEY LEARNING – LEADERSHIP

**Shifting the power:** Shifting traditional partnership models has a significant positive impact on strengthening national leadership, particularly with donors. This localisation process has further strengthened KMSS’ leadership role, however a key challenge for both partners is managing expectations around what leadership entails.

# SUMMARY OF KEY TRANSFORMATIONS

The transition to support localisation through the partnership has been impactful and important. It has been challenging for the partnership, however key transformations have occurred that support increased national leadership of humanitarian action. Partners felt that this transition process strongly supported the localisation objectives defined at the beginning of the process, with a variety of impacts for each partner.<sup>67</sup>



## KEY TRANSFORMATIONS



### KEY TRANSFORMATION 1 – PARTNERSHIP

The partnership model has fundamentally transformed over the last two years, to become more equitable and complementary between the two partners and to support increased power, decision-making and funding for KMSS. Partners are developing a new type of collaborative relationship, underpinned by their shared history, mutual values and trust. The new way of working has been challenging for both partners and has led to a re-examining of roles.



### KEY TRANSFORMATION 2 – CAPACITY

The partnership has transformed its approach to capacity-strengthening to a longer-term more strategic approach, with mutually agreed areas, and complementary skillsets defined.



### KEY TRANSFORMATION 3 – FUNDING

The transition process and the partnership's history have contributed significantly to strengthening KMSS' financial independence and decision-making and substantially progressed Grand Bargain and Charter for Change commitments in relation to funding of national organisations.



### KEY TRANSFORMATION 4 – LEADERSHIP

KMSS has developed a key leadership role in the humanitarian sector in Myanmar, supported and strengthened by the partnership with Trócaire.

<sup>67</sup> Interviews 1-11, Focus Group Discussion



Grant 'handover' ceremony between Trócaire and KMSS in November 2018, prior to the transition of grant management responsibilities © Trócaire 2018

## Opportunities - looking forward

The overarching recommendation is for the partnership to build on its demonstrated strengths and successes in Years 2 and 3 of the project to continue to deliver programming to effectively meet humanitarian needs. Future joint work between the two partners both within and external to the HARP-F grant has the opportunity to adapt based on learning provided in this research. The second and third phases of this research will explore the impacts of this transition on program participants, including effectiveness and efficiency of programming.

The following provides some guidance based on the learning in this research to inform the future work of the partnership and individual partners.

**For KMSS**, the organisation can continue to leverage the support role of Trócaire as the international partner in a complementary way where relevant and required to support organisational development and programming. KMSS can also explore replicating relevant transition processes with other international partners and donors. KMSS can continue to play a leadership role for localisation in Myanmar and share learning on localisation processes with other national and international organisations.

**For Trócaire**, the organisation can explore the implications of this partnership transition for its work globally. This could involve producing strategic direction for localisation processes in partnership with national organisations. Trócaire can articulate a range of different types of partnership models and how they could be supported to strengthen localisation across its programming. It can also consider approaches to strategic, multi-year capacity strengthening for other humanitarian programs based on the learning from this project. It could use the learning from the Myanmar context to produce guidance for other Country Offices or partnerships also seeking to support localisation. It can also re-assess current measures of organisational success in the context of localisation.

**For the partnership**, partners should continue to commit to transparent and frank dialogue around the successes and challenges of the transition. It should main the focus on learning and reflection, and look for opportunities to share experiences and influence processes across the sector in Myanmar and internationally.

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# APPENDIX 2 BASELINE DATA

Retrospective Baseline	2012	2018	Data Source
 <b>PARTNERSHIP</b>			
1. Was there a partnership MoU in the beginning? Did this contain a set of partnership principles that had been discussed? What about now?	Yes	Yes	DR, KII
3. 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	DR, KII
4. Did you feel that the partnership was publicly recognised e.g. equal representation of both partners in project reports / donor meetings etc.? Yes completely / sometimes / no not enough / no not at all		Sometimes	KII
5. Did Trócaire and KMSS have an agreement in the beginning whether it was a multi-year funded partnership?	No	Yes	DR
6. To what extent was the initial project co-designed in the beginning of the project? Completely we had many co-design workshops / Partly both parties had some input / not very much / not at all.	Partly	Completely	DR, KII, FGD
 <b>LEADERSHIP</b>			
1. Did KMSS attend all the meetings with DFID in 2012? Yes completely / sometimes / no not enough / no not at all	Sometimes	Yes completely	KII
2. Was KMSS the public face of all in-country media about the partnership project? Yes completely / sometimes / no not enough / no not at all			
3. Was there sufficient investment in KMSS leadership of the partnership project in 2012 or in the beginning? Yes completely / sometimes / no not enough / no not at all	Sometimes	Yes completely	KII, FGD
4. Who was the public face of the partnership project in cluster meetings / inter-agency meetings etc.? Trócaire mostly / both / KMSS mostly	Both	KMSS mostly	KII, FGD, DR
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	

Retrospective Baseline	2012	2018	Data Source
  <b>CAPACITY</b>			
1. Did the partnership support the adaptation and use of international and national and local standards in humanitarian response?	International mostly	Both national and international	DR, KII
2. How many national staff members from your organisation were working on the project versus international in the beginning/now?			
3. Who identified and prioritised areas for capacity development in the beginning/now? Trócaire mostly / both / KMSS mostly	Both	Both	KII, FGD
4. Which areas of capacity were prioritised? (HR / Finance / Administration / Project management/ Compliance/ Communication)	PM	Finance, grant management and PM	KII, FGD
5. Was there a strong understanding of the complementary skill sets/capacities of Trócaire and KMSS in relation to the partnership or project? Yes completely / sometimes / no not enough / no not at all	Sometimes	Completely	KII
 <b>FUNDING</b>			
1. What percentage of the budget was allocated to KMSS and Trócaire?	Less	More	KII, DR
2. Was the overall budget and financial reports shared with KMSS in the beginning?	No	Yes	KII
3. Do you think that funding decisions were shared by KMSS and Trócaire in 2012? Yes completely / sometimes / no not enough / no not at all	No not enough	Yes completely	KII
4. How many donors did KMSS have in 2012?	8	29	DR

# APPENDIX 3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

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## Research questions

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?<sup>68</sup>
  
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?

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<sup>68</sup> Drawing from HAG and PIANCO's Measuring Localisation Framework, as well as the START Network's research in this area, these are: Leadership, Capacity, Funding, Coordination and Complementarity, Participation (of communities) and Policy Advocacy and Influence.





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