



CENTRE FOR  
HUMANITARIAN  
LEADERSHIP

**Transformation in the aid  
and development sector?**  
South-South and North-South  
partnerships



# Transformation in the aid and development sector?

## South-South and North-South partnerships

Partnerships can help to foster stronger collaboration between INGOs and LNGOs. [Key insights](#) gleaned from extensive consultations capturing the views and experiences of global South CSOs on critical actors within the ecosystem, reinforce the importance of “partnership arrangements that build and support bottom-up-oriented mindsets and approaches, [and] create more meaningful collaboration”. Further, consultations noted that creating enabling environments where global south CSOs can co-construct (INGOs) equitable practices build “a true partnership.”<sup>1</sup>

There are also continuing discussions around the roles, efforts and impacts of North-South Cooperation, South-South Cooperation and Triangular Cooperation framework structures. As defined by the UN Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC), “South-South Cooperation (SSC) has [become a broad framework](#) for collaboration and partnership among countries from the South in the political, economic, social, cultural, environmental, and technical domains”. Triangular Cooperation has also been established as a vehicle through which South-South CSOs, donors and multilateral organisations can seek to foster initiatives and funding and other forms of support.<sup>2</sup>

Research, learnings, and case studies in this section share examples of North-South and South-South partnerships that are working to strengthen equitable partnership-based aid and humanitarian action, as well as highlighting current inadequacies or approaches that can limit effective partnerships and collaboration between North-South organisations around decision-making, project design and implementation and predefined (often Western) systems, models, and structures.

<sup>1</sup> [Fostering equitable North-South civil society partnerships: Voices from the South](#), RINGO Rights CoLab & West Africa Civil Society Institute (2021), p. 3

<sup>2</sup> See [United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation \(UNOSSC\)](#)



### Case study 1: [Strengthening leadership of national and local actors in partnership-based humanitarian action](#)

The 2017 [Accelerating Localisation through Partnerships: Recommendations for operational practices that strengthen the leadership of the national and local actors in partnership-based humanitarian action globally](#) research, commissioned by a consortium of five INGOs (Christian Aid, CARE, Tearfund, ActionAid, CAFOD and Oxfam) and through consultation with over 200 local and national NGOs and NGO networks, seeks to explore the “operational elements of partnerships between local, national, and international NGOs” that can support or restrict effective and efficient localisation of humanitarian aid. The study draws on data collected from across Myanmar, Nepal, Nigeria, and South Sudan to share recommendations and proposed actions NGOs can take to develop and engage in partnerships which enable and promote the localisation of humanitarian action.



**📍 Case study 2: Humanitarian partnerships and the role and lessons learned on missed opportunities for local actors in humanitarian responses**

A series of research papers commissioned by a consortium of INGOs that seeks to demonstrate the role those national organisations have and can play in humanitarian responses, which includes:

- [Missed Out: The role of local actors in the humanitarian response in the South Sudan conflict](#) (2016): This paper aims to review and document local and national NGOs' experiences in responding to the 2013 South Sudan crisis, their interaction with the humanitarian system, and the ways the humanitarian system hindered or fostered inclusive practices.
- [Missed Again: Making space for partnership in the Typhoon Haiyan response](#) (2014): This report looks at the challenges and opportunities for humanitarian partnerships, using a case study example of the Typhoon Haiyan response. It presents recommendations for the humanitarian community, particularly in how to address the challenge of taking partnerships to scale.
- [Missed Opportunities: The case for strengthening national and local partnership-based humanitarian responses](#) (2013): This paper looks at the benefits, shortfalls, and challenges to partnerships in humanitarian responses, using four major emergency settings as case studies, and outlines lessons, opportunities, and recommendations to help systemically strengthen partnerships in humanitarian response.

**📍 Case study 3: South-South in Action and South-South and Triangular Cooperation in Action, Pacific Islands Development Forum (PIDF) & UNOSSC**

[South-South in Action – South-South and Triangular Cooperation in Action](#) (2019): outlines the PIDF's origins, principles, policy framework and structure for delivering South-South cooperation and shares some practical examples and case studies of how it has applied SSC in the Pacific (such as on Solar Energy initiatives) through research, capacity building and partnerships.

See also this case study analysis approach, detailed in this report [South-South Volunteering as a Driving Force for Development: Experiences from Asia and the Pacific](#) (part of a South-South in Action Series promoted by the PIDF and UNOSSC) that looks at volunteer programmes that have South-South components in Cambodia, China and Thailand.

## Research, reports & policy papers:

- [Fostering Equitable North-South Civil Society Partnerships: Voices from the South](#), West Africa Civil Society Initiative and Rights Co Lab (Mar. 2021). This report is based on the outcomes of a survey consultation conducted across Sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, the Middle East, South America, and Oceania, and presents the views, voices, and concerns of global south CSOs that have worked with INGOs in four key areas: partnerships, collaborations, decision making, structures and practices. The paper also presents ideas and proposes recommendations as to “how NGO north-south relationships and power dynamics should evolve”.
- [Making South-South Cooperation Partnerships Work for Africa](#): A situational analysis and policy recommendations, Reality of Aid Africa, Meja, V. (2014). This situational analysis paper looks how the “structure of development cooperation and partnerships” has intersected with finance architecture in the region. It also outlines several policy recommendations for African governments and regional and multilateral institutions around bolstering the opportunities for SSC and enhancing partnership engagement in this form of cooperation.

## Conceptual frameworks, guides, resources & practical tools:

- [Towards locally-led peacebuilding: partnership approaches](#) from Peace Direct is a brief intended to highlight gaps in current policy and practice, and offers nine principles for partnerships with an aim to help the sector maximise more effective local ownership, impact and sustainability.
- [Shift the Power Lab](#) and [The Power Awareness Tool](#) were developed by Partos (the Dutch umbrella organisation for development cooperation) designed with the aim of assisting organisations to assess how power dynamics impact partnerships.

## Other interesting reads:

- [Spearheading South-South and Triangular Cooperation with partners in Asia](#), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Tian, Y. (May 2021). This post shares a compilation of case studies, in which IFAD has been undertaking efforts to progress South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC) partnerships with institutions within and beyond the Asia Pacific region, that aim to “demonstrate the merits and contributions of SSTC to sustainable development through sharing experience and solutions”.
- [The Global South and development assistance](#), Brookings, Onyekwena, C. & Ekeruche, M. A. (Sept. 2019). This blog looks at the growth of SSC and outlines recommendations on coherence between actors, data collection and dissemination and evaluation approaches, as ways to achieve more effective and efficient cooperation between SSC member countries.

## Podcasts, conversations & platforms:

- [Partnerships and principles in conflict contexts: Voices from Nigeria and South Sudan](#). Professionals in Humanitarian Assistance and Protection (PHAP) hosted a launch event, as well as a podcast to discuss a study that consulted with over 120 local actors working in humanitarian response in North-eastern Nigeria and South Sudan to look at “how partnerships and humanitarian principles were managed and implemented”. This [Messages on Principles and Partnership in Conflict Settings](#) paper also outlines key takeaways.

- [A conversation on the 'Accelerating Localisation Through Partnerships' programme](#) (May 2021). Commissioned by the Humanitarian Practice Network, this podcast hears from discussants who led the project, 'Accelerating Localisation Through Partnerships' implementation in Myanmar, Nepal, Nigeria, and South Sudan. The programme sought to “foster and leverage the power of strong partnerships between national and local NGOs and INGOs” and to “strengthen local leadership of humanitarian response” in these four countries.

- [Alliance of NGOs and CSOs for South-South Cooperation](#) (ANCSSC). Launched in 2018, the ANCSSC is a network which works in collaboration with the UNOSSC seeking to “enhance civil society’s understanding of the value of SSC in developmental, humanitarian, and related spheres”, and promotes knowledge sharing.

- [Asian Preparedness Partnership](#) (APP). Managed by the Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC), the APP seeks to strengthen the region’s “preparedness and emergency response to disasters” through “strengthening humanitarian leadership and technical capacity of governments and local humanitarian actors to better engage in the humanitarian framework”.



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This project was developed in partnership with the [RINGO Project](#), hosted by [Rights CoLab](#). Many thanks to the IKEA Foundation for supporting the initiative.

The RINGO Project is a systems change initiative that seeks to transform global civil society to respond to today's challenges, aimed at reimagining the role of the international non-governmental organisation.

As a part of the project, this thematic series maps various initiatives under key areas that cover decolonisation, finance and funding models, technology, leadership, ways of working, partnerships, and business operating models.

The purpose of this resource is for the use of practitioners in keeping up to date with the evolving discussions in this area, and promoting greater awareness of actions, knowledge-sharing, and collaboration among humanitarian actors of the role of INGOs in spearheading, facilitating, or supporting change in the sector.

The Centre for Humanitarian Leadership is an innovative collaboration between Deakin University and Save the Children that combines good humanitarian practice with academic rigour. Our mission is to lead and influence change within the humanitarian system through critical analysis, transformational and disruptive education and research, and meaningful contributions to policy and practice.

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