



Source: ELNHA Quality funding modality

Humanitarian Capacity Development Fund

Learning Review

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Executive summary

The ELNHA project

The ELNHA is a **3-year capacity development and advocacy** project that started in 2016 in **Bangladesh and Uganda** and will last until December 2018. The total budget for the ELNHA project is 7,343,603 euros and is funded by the IKEA Foundation.

The objective of the ELNHA is to empower “Local and National Humanitarian Actors (LNHAs) in Bangladesh and Uganda to play a leading role in humanitarian work, putting the interests of women, men and children affected by disaster at the centre”.¹ To do so, the project revolves around **three intermediate outcomes/pillars**:

- **STRENGTH**: LNHAs have the capacity to design, deliver and lead in humanitarian preparedness and response in Bangladesh and Uganda;
- **VOICE**: LNHAs in Bangladesh and Uganda have the voice and power to influence the humanitarian agenda in their country;
- **SPACE**: International humanitarian donors and NGOs tailor their policies, strategies and systems to enable LNHAs to lead in humanitarian preparedness and response.

The ELNHA **targets LNHAs involved in the humanitarian response**, and as such includes National NGOs (NNGOs), Local NGOs (LNGOs), Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), Faith-Based Organisations, the national government, district governments, the private sector, and the media. The ELNHA project comprises **two funding mechanisms** exclusively accessible to local organisations: The Humanitarian Response Grant Facility (HRGF) and the **Humanitarian Capacity Development Fund (HCDF)**. The latter is a flexible and demand-driven funding mechanism that allows local organisations to fund collectively self-defined capacity needs gaps at the district level, which have been collectively agreed upon at district level. The ELNHA team has designed the HCDF process to be demand-driven. As such, in-country teams, the supporting partners and LNHAs at district level could adjust the process to adapt to country and district context specificities. Although the project's Theory of Change describes the HCDF as a component of the STRENGTH pillar for being a capacity-strengthening fund, it **also plays an essential role in building the VOICE and SPACE of LNHAs**.

The HCDF process comprises six main steps.

1. **The HUCOCA** (Humanitarian Country Capacity Analysis), which aims at providing a comprehensive analysis of the humanitarian capacity of government and NGOs.
2. **The validation workshop**: Oxfam organises workshops to validate the HUCOCA findings with national stakeholders.
3. **The Joint Action Plan (JAP)**: the supporting partner,² with the support of Oxfam, organises a workshop with those local actors that play a role in humanitarian preparedness and response at the district level. Together they define, based on the

¹ Oxfam Novib, 'Updated ToC and Assumptions ELNHA', 19 September 2016.

² The supporting partner is a local organization selected by Oxfam to implement the HCDF process in one, or several, districts.

HUCOCA findings, key areas to address to strengthen the district humanitarian system.

4. **HCDF proposal:** local actors produce a narrative and financial proposal to Oxfam via the supporting partner. The proposals are then consolidated by the supporting partner.
5. **HCDF submission & review:** in-country and global ELNHA teams review proposals, select/reject activities and feedback to local organisations via the supporting partners.
6. **Implementation:** the lead actors in the district manage and implement the capacity-building activities for the rest of the year.

Each supporting partner is given flexibility to implement the process as long as it follows these main steps.

The learning review

With the project coming to an end in 2018, Oxfam Novib has commissioned a learning review of the HCDF, which covers the first and second intermediate outcomes listed above. The purpose of the learning review is to determine **the relevance and appropriateness of the HCDF, i.e. the process and funding mechanism, and its perceived results.**

The learning review took place from March to May 2018, over 30 days. Its findings are based on the detailed examination of secondary and primary data. In addition to the examining 83 ELNHA project documents and other available literature, the learning review team consulted 67 project stakeholders (Oxfam, supporting partners and LNHA) via key informant interviews, paired interviews, focus group discussions and process mapping workshops³ in Bangladesh and Uganda.

Findings⁴

The implementation of the HCDF process in both Bangladesh and Uganda has demonstrated that, from project stakeholders' perspectives, **the HCDF is an effective tool to build individual and organisational capacities**, due to the mix of capacity-building initiatives and "learning by doing" that the process provides to participating LNHA. Compared to a more traditional top-down capacity-building programme, its **inclusiveness of all relevant and interested actors, demand-driven approach, and adaptation to the varying needs of the districts/areas of implementation**, allow the programme to bring a systematic change at a district and national levels.

³ The process mappings were half-day workshop aiming to map the HCDF process in 2017 and 2018 with LNHA and supporting partners involved in the process.

⁴ While, as detailed in main text of the report, the processes are slightly different in Bangladesh and Uganda, there are no significant differences in the findings across countries. When there are, they are laid out in the body of the report

Relevance & appropriateness

In both countries, interviewees considered the **HCDF process was relevant and mostly appropriate to build the humanitarian capacity of LNHAs** in the districts. Compared to 2017,⁵ LNHAs' perception of the appropriateness of the process increased in 2018; the overall process and the link between each of the steps were better understood. The process was deemed transparent and inclusive of a wide range of actors. It also built **ownership** because it enabled LNHAs to reflect on their own needs as opposed to the more traditional approach of international actors assessing needs and then choosing capacity-building activities. The process also encouraged learnings as representatives of LNHAs **meet regularly and reflect** on the district capacity building needs and contribute to horizontal accountability in between LNHAs as all are aware of the different capacity-building activities taking place in the district and who benefitted from them. In addition, in both countries, interviewed government representatives particularly praised the HCDF process because it reportedly strengthened the linkages the district governments had with the local actors.

Interviewees also found that all of **the process's steps are necessary** and that it cannot be further streamlined. Specifically, the JAP was considered to be an essential step in the process as it ensured that district-specific perceived needs were consistent with the country overview and long-term vision.

For all LNHAs interviewed, **inclusivity was a cornerstone in the HCDF process**. The ELNHA teams play a pivotal role there as they required the supporting partner to get the list of all active LNHAs and planned a conflict analysis with the supporting partner to discuss the risks, power dynamics and tensions that characterize the context they work in and how these can be mitigated and monitored.⁶ More broadly, many respondents found that the inclusion of a broad variety of stakeholders (i.e. LNNGOs, media, private sector and government representatives) was key to making the process appropriate. They however flagged the relatively low involvement in the JAP of international stakeholders (e.g. INGOs and UN agencies). Such involvement would have reportedly meant a higher awareness and recognition about the increased capacities building resulting from the HCDF process, and potentially facilitated access to additional funding opportunities. Finally, this could be a way to foster engagement of international actors vis à vis the localisation Grand Bargain commitment. In addition, ELNHA teams in both countries want to **make sure in the future that the supporting partner's executive director is involved in the critical steps of the HCDF process**. This would help the SP's project team engage district stakeholders more easily.

All the stakeholders interviewed also concurred that **the HCDF process needs a local supporting partner** to ensure that the process is embedded locally, to engage all the relevant LNHAs, to facilitate and coordinate the process, to manage conflicts, to speak in one voice to the district government and to ensure transparency in the process. The fear that having a supporting partner to manage the HCDF process could negatively impact the power dynamics at district level between the INGOs and the other LNHAs has not been

⁵ In 2017, the process was new and supporting partners reportedly lacked clear guidelines from Oxfam to understand and implement the process

⁶ Oxfam Novib, 'IKEAF Interim Report ELNHA', 2016.

borne out in practice provided the SP met the four criteria of humanitarian legitimacy, inclusivity, equity of the process and having a strong local footprint.

Nonetheless, interviewees deemed that **specific aspects of the process could be improved**. First, while each step of the HCDF process was deemed necessary, the process as a whole was considered too lengthy, leaving lead actors with limited time for the implementation of capacity-building activities. Most stakeholders acknowledged the fact that the HCDF is a new and inclusive process and inherently time consuming, yet **all of them identified the HCDF proposal steps as the bottleneck** (i.e. the review and feedback stages being too long). Second, the process was deemed to be **somewhat complicated**, with a lack of clarity of the role and responsibilities in the different steps and the steps' expected outputs. While Oxfam chose this approach to give the supporting partners flexibility to implement a demand-driven process, the SPs would have liked Oxfam to provide them with more explicit instructions, especially on the JAP and the District Capacity Priority Plans' expected outputs

Furthermore, all stakeholders interviewed acknowledged the **added-value of HCDF because it is the first and only funding mechanism accessible exclusively to local organisations to fund collectively-defined capacity building needs**. In particular, there was an overall consensus amongst interviewees that it has allowed for initiatives to be adapted to the needs and particularities of the district. For instance, with the HCDF, LNHAs in Uganda were able to train and activate local disaster management committees. With traditional top-down funding, they believed these actors would not have been included. With the HCDF, it is the opposite. **The initiatives are adapted to the needs and particularities of the district and are inclusive of more numerous and diversified stakeholders**. This is possible because the HCDF's eligibility criteria are broad, thus allowing LNHAs to fund a wide range of activities on various topics and target many actors. As long as the activities had been collectively decided and prioritised during the JAP, the ELNHA team, SPs and LNHAs felt in both countries that they had room to propose any activity⁷ that they deemed relevant.

The HCDF is meant to be "demand-driven" and "flexible" in design. As such, the ELNHA team designed very loose HCDF guidelines to provide LNHAs with the flexibility to come up with capacity-building initiatives that will be beneficial to the district. The looseness of the guidelines however lead to misunderstandings and frustrations. While LNHAs understand that criteria such as cost efficiency are taken into account, the looseness of the guidelines has led them to believe that any collectively identified capacity-building activity is in theory eligible. Yet, LNHAs and SPs regularly reported that, in practice, **ELNHA rejected some activities that in their opinion meet the HCDF criteria, for various reasons, some of which were not always understood**. While the ELNHA team in countries strived to provide

⁷ The HCDF was used to funding a wide range of activities. In Bangladesh, it funded among others formal training activities (early warning, contingency planning, proposal writing, CHS, incorporating humanitarian aspects into an organisation's vision and mission, CTP, etc.), in-country humanitarian regulatory framework related workshops (Standing Order on Disasters 2012 (SOD), Disaster Management Act 2010 and National Disaster Management Plan (NDMP 2016-2010),⁷ exchange visits during the Haor response, mock drills in schools, volunteer training, etc. In Uganda, it funded among others formal training activities (CHS, proposal writing, financial and procurement), training of the District Disaster Management Committee, a 3-month disaster training by Uganda Ba Christian University, a Humanitarian & Leadership course, exchange visits in Karamoja district, job placements, secondments, etc.

feedbacks to SPs and LNHAs, SPs felt these feedbacks did not correspond to the criteria stated in the guidelines or referred to criteria not stated in the guidelines.

While all actors thought the HCDF had added value, most of them would have liked to put their learning in practice. Only a minority were able to do so thanks to HRGF funding. Others benefitted from secondment, placements and field visits, but these delivery mechanisms reportedly benefitted a handful, and were not practical enough. After having taken part in nearly two HCDF processes, a vast majority of LNNGOs felt that they had not had sufficient opportunities to put their theoretical learning into practice. These interviewees suggested that the **HCDF should fund small-scale activities related to the training that was funded.** This possibility already exists but is apparently unknown from local actors.

Regarding the process management, the ELHNA team designed the theoretical HCDF process to act as a general framework and provide a generic guidance for the supporting partners to implement a demand-driven and context-specific process. As such, the ELHNA team welcomed and encouraged adjustments and adaption in the implementation at country-level and district-level.

While the supporting partners understood their role and responsibilities, **they reportedly struggled to implement the HCDF process in 2017 and admittedly relied on Oxfam.** This was due to the primary perceived lack of involvement of SP in the process design, of the novelty of the approach and of the lack of clarity from SP on Oxfam's expectations. Supporting partners were also accustomed to working under the supervision of INGOs, with limited oversight and influence on the project's design and implementation. The ELHNA team got more involved to speed up the HCDF process and to mainstream **innovative training delivery methods going beyond the traditional "classroom-style" workshops.**

However, after having implemented the HCDF process once, supporting partners and Oxfam reported that for the second HCDF round, SPs understood the process, their role and their responsibilities more clearly. They also reported a greater level of trust and collaboration between the supporting partner and Oxfam in both countries, resulting from this first experience and from having worked together successfully for already a year.

Perceived results

All stakeholders interviewed reportedly witnessed positive outcomes such as an increase in the capacity of individuals and organisations to deliver and lead humanitarian preparedness and response. Based on the activities prioritised during the district joint action plans, the supporting partner and lead actors organised and conducted different types of capacity-building initiatives including, but not limited to, on Core Humanitarian Standards (CHS), humanitarian principles, contingency planning, financial management, procurement, governance, proposal writing, etc.

At individual level, the capacity building activities increased the abilities of participants to prepare and respond to disasters potentially affecting their districts. In addition to this acquisition of hard skills, trainees' participation in HCDF capacity-building activities resulted in an **increased confidence among participants** to lead an emergency response for an anticipated crisis. They reported feeling knowledgeable about the various roles and responsibilities during emergency responses and better equipped to implement

humanitarian preparedness and response activities in Bangladesh and Uganda. In particular, stakeholders who not only took part in the capacity-building activities but also in the entire HCDF process noticed the most significant increase in their capacity and confidence.

At the organisational level, the participation to the HCDF **was an eye-opener for many organisations** as regards standards required for emergency response, and the remaining gaps faced by their respective organisations. The project allowed them to set a target, a direction to strive for, whether members of LNGOs, the Media or government representatives. **To be better equipped to implement emergency response, many organisations operated changes in their policies and procedures** as a result of the HCDF (e.g. financial management, procurement, accounting, HR, governance). Other organisations reviewed their vision / mission statements and objectives to suit CHS & Humanitarian Principles and/or mainstreamed new practices or use of modalities (e.g. cash transfer programming, contingency planning, gender). The HCDF process led to LNHAs improving their organisational structures and processes; yet it reportedly did not provide them with sufficiently practical capacities or experience to put these into practice.

The HCDF process and capacity-building initiatives resulted in an **increased level of confidence to undertake humanitarian response** due to increased capacity, strengthened organisational policies, systems and procedures and an overall awareness of the localisation agenda. Data collection showed that, at individual and organisational levels, LNHAs are now more comfortable in raising their voices to INGOs and donors and feel confident enough to negotiate with them.

At **district and national levels**, most LNNGOs and government members interviewed reported that they understand the added value of engaging more with the media during humanitarian responses and were able to coordinate and collaborate with them. Similarly, **the media is now more aware of humanitarian principles**.

Also, the HCDF process, notably the JAP, resulted in **new and increased horizontal collaboration and coordination among actors in both countries, at district and national level**. By building the capacity of most of the organisations involved in responses in the different districts, the HCDF process built the individual strengths of each actor for future emergency responses at district level, and thus the collective strength of each district. LNNGOs, especially lead actors, in the 15 districts where the project was implemented, have strengthened their linkages with the Local Governments Institutions (LGI). As a result, the local coordination between LNNGOs and LGIs has increased; and LNNGOs will be able to support the LGIs that coordinate emergency responses during the initial days of a disaster. In addition, the HCDF process indirectly allowed LNHAs to think strategically collectively, which led to further cooperation and expression of a collective voice at district level. By acting now as a network, as a collective of actors as opposed to individual stakeholders, LNHAs' voice has been massively amplified. They can be heard as a single, united voice, which is way more powerful than a multitude of uncoordinated voices.

The HCDF process has proved an effective mechanism to reinforce the training content through a 'learning by doing' approach for three main reasons:

- First, being part of the full HCDF process was valuable because it required participants to think in an outcome-oriented way and then design an outcome-oriented strategy

based on pre-existing and identified strengths and gaps. Staff from Oxfam in both countries witnessed significant improvements in their strategic thinking between the first and second year of implementation of the HCDF process.

- Second, the proposal-writing activity as part of the HCDF process was described by most interviewees as a useful exercise allowing to immediately put into practice the capacity building training, and to learn how to write a proposal collectively as a consortium would do. In Bangladesh however, some participants regretted that the training did not cover drafting of HCDF-specific proposals and was thus deemed less useful than anticipated.
- Third, the HCDF process was a live practice and demonstration of coordination and collective thinking that they will be able to reproduce and instil within their organisation, and at district level.

However, an unintended negative outcome arose during the implementation of the project. LNHAs noticed **an increase in employee turnover**, especially in **Uganda**, following the HCDF with key LNNGOs staff members leaving their organisation to work for INGOs. This increased turnover is not specific to ELNHA and the HCDF but rather an unintended effect of most capacity-building initiatives. However, as ELNHA primarily targets small and local organisations, the deepening of this phenomenon could limit the effectiveness of the project, as staff could be leaving their organisation before implementing changes in policies and procedures. To mitigate that, some of the consulted LNHAs expressed their **desire for a stronger focus on the Trainings of Trainers** in the project or the delivery of specific training that would enhance the ability of trained staff to then train new comers within their organisation

Lessons learnt and recommendations:

The HCDF process has been implemented both as a pilot process and a funding mechanism. **Its implementation has been a pioneering example of adaptive management**, with tests and adjustments made along the way, as well as freedom given to supporting partners to make changes to the process where they believed necessary and appropriate for the district(s)⁸ in which they implemented said process.

Beyond the necessity to keep this flexibility, this learning review has determined several good practices that Oxfam or any other implementer interested in implementing the process could replicate:

- The Process at the district level should be as inclusive as possible and include all relevant and interested LNHAs.
- The HCDF process is an excellent tool to sensitise LNHAs on the localisation commitments taken by the international community at the Grand Bargain.
- The funder should let the supporting partner and LNHAs manage the process as much as possible to foster 'learning by doing' and encourage coordination and collaboration.

⁸ In Bangladesh and Uganda, supporting partners are sometimes managing two districts.

The HCDF is also a new and innovative process which counters ‘business-as-usual’ practices. As such, several areas have proven challenging:

- The HCDF can be a lengthy process, especially the first time as engaging with actors and building momentum takes time.
- Although HCDF is a demand-driven process, supporting partners are likely to need support in implementing the HCDF process, especially in the beginning, primarily because getting away from traditional ways of working takes time. In addition, when it comes to LNHAs, demand-driven activities may need some primary awareness raising as it may be hard to ‘know what you do not know’.
- LNHAs will not come up with innovative capacity-building delivery mechanisms by themselves and are most likely going to opt for delivery mechanisms they have been exposed to in the past such as workshops or trainings.

In that regard, recommendations can be made to improve on-going and future HCDF in Bangladesh/Uganda or elsewhere with regards to the following:

Process design:

- Selection of supporting partners: Oxfam or any NGO implementing the HCDF process should put in writing that the executive director should be involved in the HCDF process and state in which way he/she should be included.
- The stakeholder mapping should include a humanitarian capacity assessment as it would help to select lead actors and would allow designating which INGOs should attend the various capacity-building initiatives
- The HCDF guidelines should be formalised and list the total budget available per district. It should put aside a small percentage of the amount available to fund practical activities, giving the opportunity to participants to learn by doing.

Process implementation:

- The supporting partner should systematically sign a MoU with the lead actors permitting them to implement their HCDF-funded activities autonomously, manage their budget and report on their activities.
- Oxfam and the supporting agencies should put a strong emphasis on involving the INGOs and UN agencies in the HCDF process.
- Oxfam or any other implementer should strengthen the capacity of SPs to manage partnerships.
- The ELNHA team and other interested implementers should set coaching and mentoring networks.
- The lead actor selection process should be accessible to all, transparent with a clear set of criteria.
- ELNHA should collect data from stakeholders not involved or who disengaged from the process. It would allow them to monitor the inclusiveness of the process and help perceive level of relevance and effectiveness.

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Acronyms

CEFORD	Community Empowerment for Rural Development
CHS	Core Humanitarian Standards
DC	District Commissioner
DEPP	Disaster & Emergencies Preparedness Program
ELNHA	Empowering Local and National Humanitarian Actors
EOI	Expression of Interest
FGD	Focus Group Discussions
HCDF	Humanitarian Capacity Development Fund
HRGF	Humanitarian Response Grant Facility
HUCOCA	Humanitarian Country Capacity Analysis
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
JAP	Joint Action Planning
KII	Key Informant Interviews
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
LA	Lead Actors
LGI	Local Government Institutions
LNGO	Local Non-Governmental Organisation
LNNGO	Local and National Non-Governmental Organisation
LNHA	Local and National Humanitarian Actors
MEAL	Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning
NAHAB	National Alliance of Humanitarian Actors in Bangladesh
NNGO	National Non-Governmental Organisation
PARCEL	Partner Capacity Enhancement in Logistics
SP	Supporting Partners

I. Intervention and context

The Humanitarian Capacity Development Fund, also known as the HCDF, is one of several modalities under the project entitled Empowering Local and National Humanitarian Actors (ELNHA), which aims to reinforce the knowledge and skills of humanitarian actors at national and local levels to achieve a more equitable balance in the sharing of power and resources, in the humanitarian sector worldwide. The ELNHA is currently being implemented in [Bangladesh](#) and [Uganda](#).

I.1. The localisation agenda

In 2015, when the Grand Bargain took place, only 0.2% of direct funding was allocated to southern-based NGOs for humanitarian action.⁹ To increase funding to these actors who are the first responders during emergency response, the humanitarian community took commitments during the Grand Bargain to provide “More support and funding tools for local and national responders”.¹⁰ These commitments are summarized in the figure below:

Figure 1: Grand Bargain localisation commitments¹¹

1. **Increase and support multi-year investment in the institutional capacities of local and national responders**, including preparedness, response and coordination capacities, especially in fragile contexts and where communities are vulnerable to armed conflicts, disasters, recurrent outbreaks and the effects of climate change. We should achieve this through collaboration with development partners and **incorporate capacity strengthening in partnership agreements**.
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.
3. Support and complement national coordination mechanisms where they exist **and include local and national responders in international coordination mechanisms** as appropriate and in keeping with humanitarian principles.
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** to improve outcomes for affected people and reduce transactional costs.
5. Develop, with the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), **and apply a ‘localisation’ marker** to measure direct and indirect funding to local and national responders.
6. Make greater use of funding tools which increase and improve assistance delivered by local and national responders, such as **UN-led country-based pooled funds (CBPF), IFRC Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) and NGO-led and other pooled funds**.

⁹ Charter For Change, ‘Charter for Change: Localisation of Humanitarian Aid’, 2015.

¹⁰ ‘The Grand Bargain – A Shared Commitment to Better Serve People in Need’, 2016.

¹¹ ICVA, ‘THE GRAND BARGAIN EXPLAINED: An ICVA Briefing Paper’, March 2017.

While the ELNHA was designed before the Grand Bargain, it feeds into the localisation commitments taken during the Grand Bargain to increase support and funding to local and national responders.

I.2. ELNHA project description

The ELNHA is a 3-year capacity development and advocacy initiative that started in 2016 in [Bangladesh](#) and in [Uganda](#) and that will last until December 2018. The total budget for the ELNHA project is 7,343,603 euros and is funded by the IKEA foundation.

The objective of the ELNHA is to empower “Local and National Humanitarian Actors (LNHAs) in [Bangladesh](#) and [Uganda](#) to play a leading role in humanitarian work, putting the interests of women, men and children affected by disaster at the centre”,¹² by building LNHAs’ humanitarian capacity, by allowing them to influence the humanitarian sector locally, and by convincing donors and INGOs to give LNHAs space to implement responses. The ELNHA targets all the actors involved in the humanitarian response, and as such includes National NGOs (NNGOs), Local NGOs (LNGOs), Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), Faith-Based Organisations, the national government, district governments, the private sector, and the media. The theory of change in

Figure 1 captures these outcomes, respectively called Strength, Voice and Space, as well as the key outputs under each of these outcomes.

In both countries, the ELNHA has a project team that implements activities at both national and district levels with implementing partners. At national level, Oxfam works alongside national partners and networks on the Voice and Space pillars.

At district level, the ELNHA is implemented in respectively nine districts¹³ and six districts¹⁴ in [Bangladesh](#) and [Uganda](#). In each district/region,¹⁵ Oxfam implements the project through a national or local humanitarian organisation, referred to as a supporting partner, who acts as the project’s co-implementer. Supporting partners are responsible for organising and facilitating the project activities at district level, with the support of Oxfam, involving all relevant LNHAs, and for conducting a few capacity-building activities.

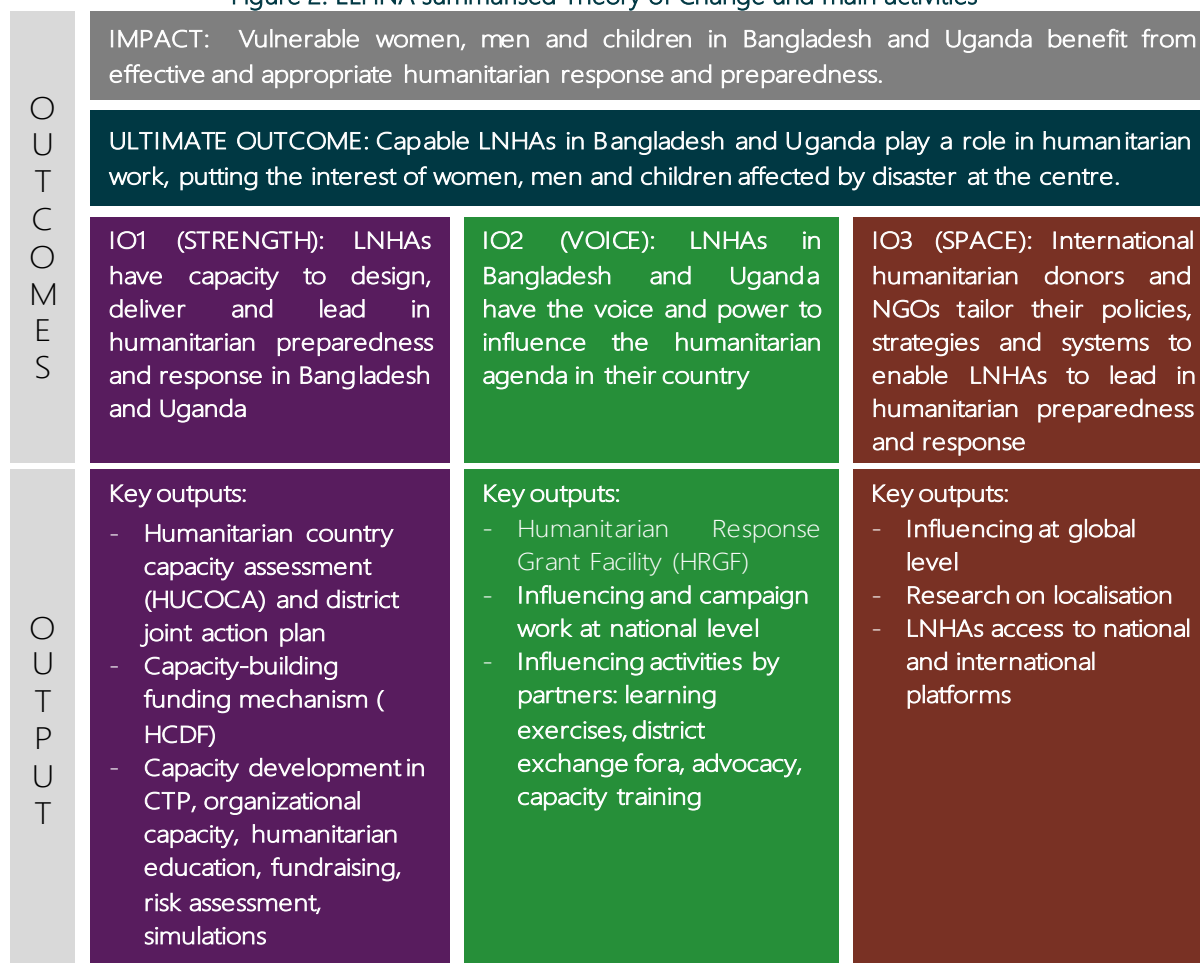
¹² Oxfam Novib, ‘Updated ToC and Assumptions ELNHA’, 19 September 2016.

¹³ In Bangladesh, the ELNHA takes place in the following nine districts: Shatkira, Barguna, Patuakhali, Dhaka, Kurigram, Sunamgangj, Kishoreganj, Gaibandha, Sirajganj.

¹⁴ In Uganda, ELNHA takes place in the Arua and Koboko districts in the West Nile region, Agago and Lamwo districts in the Acholi region, and in the Kotido and Kaabong districts in the Karamoja region.

¹⁵ In Bangladesh, there are six SPs for nine districts. The supporting partners are the Asroy Foundation (Shatkira), CODEC (Barguna, Patuakhali), DAM (Dhaka), MJSKS (Kurigram), POPI (Sunamgangj, Kishoreganj), SKS (Gaibandha, Sirajganj). In Uganda, the supporting partners are CEFORD (Arua, Koboko), VEDCO (Agago and Lamwo), Caritas Kotido (Kotido and Kaabong). In Uganda, there used to be three SPs for the six districts (one region is two districts). In 2017, the ELHA team in Uganda terminated a contract with one of the SPs and contracted two supporting partners to replace it. The supporting partners are CEFORD (Arua, Koboko), Caritas Kotido (Kotido and Kaabong), KIDIFA (Amgo), Friend of Orphans (Lamwo).

Figure 2: ELHNA summarised Theory of Change and main activities¹⁶



As detailed in the figure above, the ELNHA project comprises of two funding mechanisms specifically targeting LNHA:

1. The **Humanitarian Response Grant Facility (HRGF)**: it is designed to provide LNHA with an opportunity to respond to on-going humanitarian crises locally, thus demonstrating to the broader humanitarian community their capacity and leadership to carry out direct implementation, which meets international standards.
2. The **Humanitarian Capacity Development Fund (HCDF)**: a flexible and demand-driven funding mechanism that allows local organisations to fund collectively self-defined capacity needs gaps at district level, which have been collectively agreed upon at district level. In theory, the HCDF could also be used to fund joint actions / interventions that triggers systemic changes in the districts at organizational and individual level. This possibility was however not entirely known from local actors, and thus proposals did not incorporate such type of systematic changes interventions.

¹⁶ Oxfam Novib, 'Updated ToC and Assumptions ELNHA'.

I.3. The Humanitarian Capacity Development Fund

The Humanitarian Capacity Development Fund is a “temporary funding grant, which aims to enhance capacity and leadership of Local Humanitarian Organizations [...] to deliver and lead quality humanitarian response delivery, accountability and alliances/partnerships”.¹⁷ It works via two windows/channels:

1. District Window (80% of the fund):¹⁸ Funding at district level managed by the supporting partners, and which can fund the collectively prioritized capacity-building activities. Identified and involved LNHA working on humanitarian preparedness and response can apply for the fund.
2. Beyond District Window (20% of the fund):¹⁹ Funding at cross-district and national-levels managed by the ELNHA country team, such as the humanitarian capacity development officer, the influencing officer, the CTP officer, and according to the needs and capacity gaps identified by supporting partners and national actors.

The HCDF’s guidelines are summarised in the figure below:

Figure 3: Summary of the HCDF’s guidelines

Selection criteria	Timeline for proposal approval and revision process
1. Aligned to the capacity building plan and the humanitarian agenda 2. Have defined priority areas and concrete activities for capacity building and results; 3. Reflect the collective interests and needs of LNHA at the district level, benefiting the humanitarian sector in District and country; 4. Demonstrate that effective modalities for capacity development are adopted, such as opportunities available locally (e.g. peer to peer, secondment, on-the-job training, etc.); 5. Cost efficiency; 6. Demonstrate how the activities contribute to strengthening the role and leadership of actors in the area of humanitarian preparedness and response in the long term; 7. Clearly spell out the cooperation modality among actors and partners.	1. Call for proposals is twice per year. Duration of proposal activities is for a maximum of 1 year; 2. Once the proposals are received, they will be shared with the HCDF approval committee. The approval committee will have 5 working days to review and provide required revisions. 3. The partners will then have 5 working days to revise and resubmit the proposals; 4. The approval committee will then have 2 working days to review the revised proposals and approve; The total duration of the approval process is maximum 12 working days. The signing of contract between Oxfam and the supporting partners and allocation of funding will follow the regular time required by Oxfam finance and operations.
Amounts available	
• Bangladesh maximum amount per year: ○ Year 1: 200,000 ○ Year 2: 470,000 ○ Year 3: 80,000	• Uganda maximum amount per year± ○ Year 1: 165,000 ○ Year 2: 165,000 ○ Year 3: 165,000

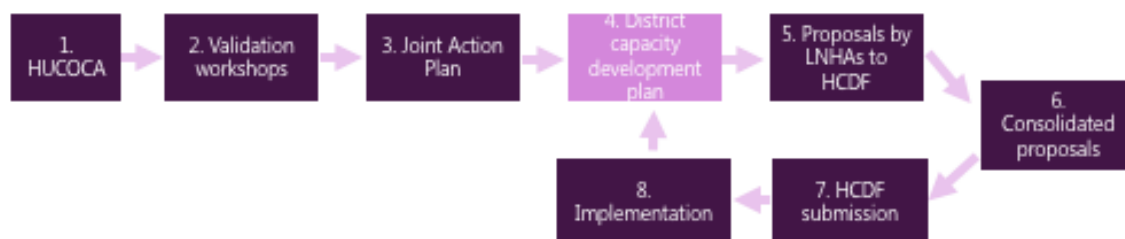
¹⁷ Oxfam Novib, ‘Guidelines ELNHA Humanitarian Capacity Development Fund (HCDF)’.

¹⁸ Oxfam Novib, ‘Guidelines ELNHA Humanitarian Capacity Development Fund (HCDF)’, n.d.

¹⁹ Ibid.

The district window has two calls for proposals per year and is only accessible to LNHAs after the latter have engaged in a collective process at district level, called the HCDF process. It comprises of concomitant steps as detailed in the figure below.

Figure 4: The HCDF process as designed by the ELNHA team²⁰



Oxfam implements the first two steps, with the assistance of the supporting partner for the second step, while the supporting partners oversee the remaining six:

1. The HUCOCA: Also known as the Humanitarian Country Capacity Analysis, it is undertaken by external consultants and aimed at providing a comprehensive analysis of the humanitarian capacity of government and NGOs – and how the context and international actors are impacting these – within countries. It includes a description of potential natural or man-made disasters, a mapping of the main humanitarian stakeholders, and an assessment of their humanitarian capacity. The HUCOCA report encompasses findings, recommendations per stakeholder groups, and indicative capacity development objectives for the sector as a whole.
2. The validation workshop: Oxfam organises workshops at national level, and, in some case, at the district level,²¹ to validate the HUCOCA (findings, recommendations, and indicative objectives) with national stakeholders (INGOs, the government, LNGOs, etc.), before the latter is disseminated at country level.
3. The Joint Action Plan (JAP): In each district, the supporting partner, with the support of Oxfam, organises a workshop with all the humanitarian actors to present the HUCOCA and to contextualise its recommendations at district level. The actors present collectively define capacity-building outcomes and corresponding activities at district level.
4. The District Capacity Development Plans: once local actors have finalised the JAP, they collectively prioritise a list of capacity building activities for the district for the year to come.

²⁰ Oxfam Novib, 'Presentation ELNHA for IKEA 29 Nov Final', n.d. This diagram was developed at the start of the project to guide the process. As observed in the field, the "district capacity plans" never really materialized; actors preferred to move from JAP to proposals, skipping the intermediary step.

²¹ In Bangladesh, Oxfam and the supporting partners organises two validation workshops in Kurigram and Barguna districts as part of the HUCOCA national validation process.

5. HCDF proposal: potential lead actors, i.e. LNHAs interested in implementing a capacity-building activity and with a sufficient organisational capacity to do so,²² produce a narrative and financial proposal to Oxfam via the supporting partner.
6. Consolidated proposal: the supporting partner, potential lead actors and other LNHAs meet and collectively produce a consolidated proposal, which is later submitted to Oxfam.
7. HCDF submission: once the proposals are submitted, in-country and global ELNHA teams review the proposal, select/reject activities, and provide feedback to LNHAs via the supporting partners.
8. Implementation: the lead actors in the district implement the capacity-building activities for the rest of the year, with the technical assistance of the SPs.

The ELNHA team has designed the HCDF process to be demand-driven. As such, in-country teams, the supporting partners and LNHAs at district level could adjust the process to adapt to country and district context specificities.

At the time of writing this review, the HCDF process had already been fully implemented once by the supporting partners and is now in the process of being implemented a second time. In both countries, the LNHAs and supporting partner are about to start the implementation of the second phase of HCDF proposal.

II. Scope & objectives of the learning review

This learning review focuses only on the Humanitarian Capacity Development Fund process and funding mechanism. The purpose of the learning review is to assess the relevance and appropriateness of the HCDF, i.e. the process and funding mechanism, and its perceived results for the Strength, Voice and Space pillars.

The proposed review conducted desk-based and field-level research to shed light on the following 3 main research questions, which are in line with the OECD-DAC evaluation criteria of appropriateness, effectiveness and efficiency:

More specifically, the objectives of this learning review are to determine:

1. If the HCDF's demand-driven approach and implementation process appropriately enabled the LNHAs to increase their humanitarian capacity.
2. The extent to which the HCDF activities were perceived to result in increased humanitarian capacity at individual, organisational and district/national levels.
3. The lessons that can be drawn from the HCDF process and funding mechanism, which can inform future attempts at reinforcing local and national humanitarian systems.

A detailed evaluation matrix is available in VII.2.

The focus of this learning review is solely on learning. As such, the consultants looked at deviations from the initial implementation plan not necessarily as mistakes or failures, but as

²² Supporting partners carry out a rapid organisational assessment of potential lead actors to determine their ability to manage the capacity-building activities.

adjustments made by Oxfam and the supporting partners to adapt the project to the context and as opportunities to better understand the mechanics of the project and adjust future policy and practice.

The lessons learnt and recommendations resulting from this learning review could be used by Oxfam country offices, or by any other actors, who are contemplating or implementing the HCDF process to empower LNHAAs.

III. Methodology

III.1. Approaches and tools used

The learning review used a participatory approach that included global and in-country project management to help increase buy-in. It implemented a mixed-methods approach that relied on a variety of secondary and primary sources. The steps of the proposed methodology are detailed below.

III.1.1. Desk review

The Desk Review consisted of a detailed examination of 83 ELNHA project documents and other available localisation-specific literature shared through the online file sharing system Box, or bilaterally via email. A detailed bibliography of documents consulted for this learning review is presented in VII.4.

III.1.2. Primary data collection

The learning review team consulted 67 project stakeholders via Key Informants Interviews (KII)s, Paired Interviews, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), and process mapping workshops in [Bangladesh](#) and [Uganda](#), and with the Global ELNHA project team.

The primary data collection covered two districts in depth in each country and included interviews with the ELNHA project team and national stakeholders in the Capital. In [Bangladesh](#), the consultant visited the Kurigram and Gaibandha districts; in [Uganda](#), he visited the Arua and Koboko districts in the West Nile region. As the supporting partner is the same in both Arua and Koboko, the consultant conducted phone interviews with the SPs of the Karamoja and Acholi regions.

The breakdown of project stakeholders per country and district can be found in the table below:

Table 1: Project stakeholders consulted at Global, [Bangladesh](#) and [Uganda](#) levels

Type of stakeholders	Global	Bangladesh	Uganda
Government	N/A	2	4
NNGOs/ LNGOs	N/A	6	9
NGO Network & National partner	N/A	1	5

Media	N/A	5	3
Oxfam	5	7	4
Supporting partner	N/A	9	7

For the complete list of stakeholders interviewed, as well as the data collection per district, please refer to VII.5.

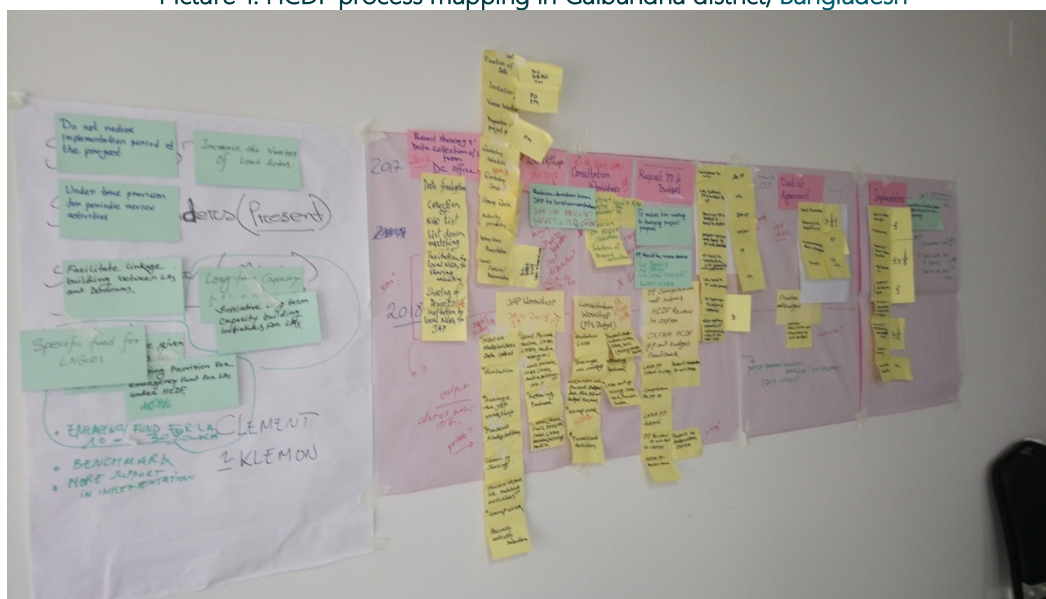
III.1.2.1. Process mapping

The fieldwork in each district started with a 3-hour participatory workshop with LNHA representatives (LNGOs, Media, Government) and the supporting partner. The consultant carried out a total of four process mapping workshops in [Bangladesh](#) and [Uganda](#).

The objective was to map the process of engaging LNHA in a participatory definition of collective capacity development priorities, as it took place in the district and to compare it with the process that should have occurred in theory. The mapping allowed to better understand how the process was implemented, to identify potential differences with the process as initially designed as well as differences across districts and countries and to collect participants' opinions on the process: areas for improvement, solutions identified, bottlenecks and recommendations.

The group included 5-8 people that got involved in the process at some point during the implementation. Mappings were done with post-its, markers and flip charts, and covered the following elements in the HCDF process: steps, output of the different steps, duration, sub-steps, stakeholders involved and those missing in each of the sub-steps, bottlenecks; strengths, weaknesses, area for improvement, recommendations. Please see example below:

Picture 1: HCDF process mapping in Gaibandha district, [Bangladesh](#)



III.1.2.2. Key informant interviews

The learning review team carried out a total of 27 KIIs remotely, via Skype, and face-to-face in country.

The data collection started with five remote interviews with the Global Team, and one interview with a staff member from [Bangladesh](#) leaving the ELNA team. The remaining 21 KIs were conducted in country with Global Staff, national partners, government officials and local NGOs, with 11 KIs in [Bangladesh](#) and 10 in [Uganda](#).

A detailed interview guide can be found in VII.7.

III.1.2.1. Paired interviews²³

The consultant carried out six paired interviews with supporting partners/lead partners, media representatives, and NNGOs/LNGOs. Respectively four and two paired interviews were conducted in [Bangladesh](#) and [Uganda](#). Participants were always from the same stakeholder group, e.g. LNHAs implementing capacity-building activities.

The team opted for paired interviews because it enabled accommodating more stakeholders in each district in the schedule while allowing the participants to share opinions and disagreements about the appropriateness and effectiveness of the HCDF.

The interview guide used for the paired interview is identical to the one used for the KIs and can be found in VII.7.

III.1.2.2. Focus Group Discussions

The consultant carried out five FGDs with supporting partners/lead partners, and NNGOs/LNGOs. Two and three FGDs were conducted in [Bangladesh](#) and [Uganda](#) respectively. Participants were always from the same stakeholder group, e.g. LNHAs implementing capacity-building activities.

The FGD included between three to five participants. The interview guide used for the FGDs is identical to the one used for the KIs and paired interviews and can be found in VII.7.

III.1.2.1. Data analysis

Qualitative disaggregated data (by organisation, district and country as appropriate) was recorded and coded to analyse emerging trends. The consultant analysed the data iteratively during the fieldwork to be able to adjust the data collection tools and explore emerging trends more in depth.

At the end of the fieldwork, the consultant conducted a presentation of the preliminary findings in each country. This presentation presented an opportunity to collectively discuss lessons learnt and share recommendations with the Oxfam country, thus building ownership.

The primary data was triangulated with the data yielded from the desk review. In addition to highlighting emerging trends, the findings will be used to verify and expand upon previous learning reviews' findings and recommendations.

²³ The objective of the paired interviews is to create a dynamic between the two interviewees and encourage them to share experiences and reflect on the similarities and differences across their experience.

III.2. Learning review team

The learning review team comprised two external consultants:

1. Clément Charlot led the data collection in **Bangladesh** and **Uganda** and produced the deliverables.
2. Hélène Juillard was responsible for the overall production of the deliverables. She also acted as the main point of contact with the consultancy manager.

A detailed description of the team can be found in VII.6.

The learning review lasted for 31 days from April to May 2018. The detailed planning can be found in VII.6.

III.3. Limitations

The following limitations should be kept in mind while reading this report:

- **Geographic scope**: Because of time constraints and distance between the different implementation districts, the consultant carried out data collection in respectively two districts out of nine in **Bangladesh** and two out of six in **Uganda**. As such, even though the primary data from each district was triangulated with primary data from the Oxfam team's interviews and the desk review, it is likely that some of the findings are not entirely representative of the specificities of each district in **Bangladesh** and **Uganda**.
- **Sampling bias**: The clear majority of LNHAs interviewed were involved in the HCDF process, and as such willingly participated in the process. However, in each country, a minority of LNHAs refused to take part in the process or pulled out during the implementation. Therefore, the overall positive findings of the appropriateness of the HCDF process may only be indicative and should be contemplated with care.
- **Private sector**: The consultant couldn't interview representatives from the private sector, despite their reportedly important role in the process.²⁴ As such, the findings presented below, including those from the private sector, may not be representative of their views.

²⁴ LNHA interviewees reported that the involvement of the private sector in the HCDF was important because of their role as potential servicer provider and donor

IV. Findings

IV.1. The appropriateness of the HCDF demand-driven process in enabling LNHAs to increase their capacity

This section assesses the relevance and appropriateness of the HCDF to increase the capacity of local actors. It looks at the process, the funding mechanism, and the process management structure, i.e. the supporting partner and lead actors.

The relevance and appropriateness are analysed from the perspectives of the various project stakeholders (the ELNHA team, the supporting partners, and the LNHAs). When required, the consultant disaggregated the data per country (subsequently colour-coded for the rest of the report in **green** for **Bangladesh**, and **red** for **Uganda**) and type of stakeholders.

IV.1.1. The implementation of the process in Bangladesh and Uganda

This section primarily describes how the process was implemented in **Bangladesh** and **Uganda** and aims to provide a contextual analysis to explain the countries' differences. It also addresses the differences in the implementation of the HCDF process at district level by the various supporting partners.

The ELHNA team designed the theoretical HCDF process to act as a general framework and provide a generic guidance for the supporting partners to implement a demand-driven and context-specific process in both **Bangladesh** and **Uganda**. As such, the ELHNA team welcomed and encouraged adjustments and adaption in the implementation at country-level and district-level.

IV.1.1.1. The HCDF process in Bangladesh

In **Bangladesh**, the supporting partners and LNHAs followed the same sequence as the theoretical process laid out in the project's document, but regrouped, renamed and added some steps in the process. The HCDF process for **Bangladesh** is detailed in Figure 3.

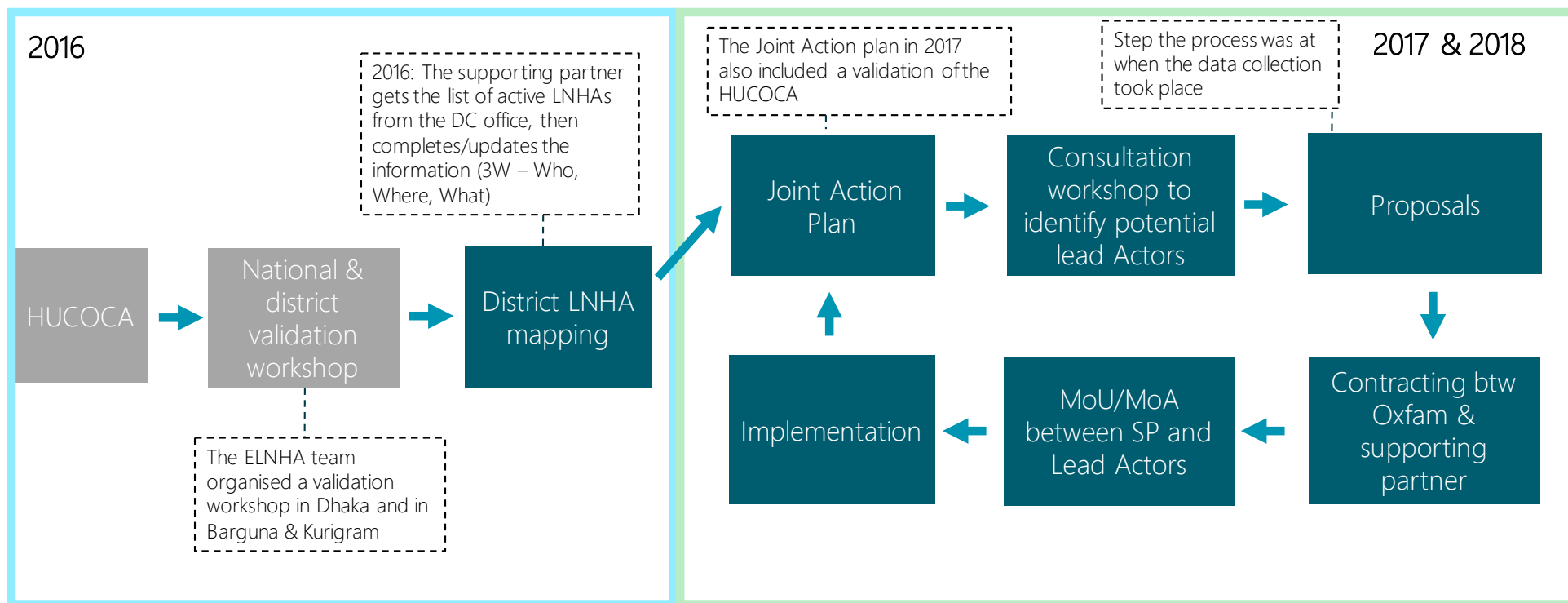
The **Bangladesh** HCDF process has **four main differences** with the process laid out in Figure 2 in I.3:

1. Before organising and facilitating the JAP, the supporting partner produces a **stakeholder mapping** whose objective is to map the LNHAs at district level to include them in the JAP. In the theoretical process, the mapping is a sub-step of the JAP; for supporting partners and LNHAs however, it is a stand-alone step that takes place before the JAP.

2. The Joint Action Planning takes place on a yearly basis²⁵ instead of taking place only once in the HCDF modality lifecycle, because the district capacity development plan, which is, in theory, the step that takes place on an annual basis, has been merged with the JAP. During the JAP, the supporting partners and LNHAs collectively review and validate the HUCOCA, prioritise three to four recommendations out of the seven recommendations listed in the HUCOCA, identify the gaps at the district-level and define the outcome and activities for the district
3. Following the JAP, the actors in the district gather for **a consultation workshop to pre-identify the lead actors and prioritise activities**, i.e. the LNHAs who are going to produce a proposal to the HCDF to lead activities for other LNHAs during the implementation phase. In parallel, or following this meeting, the supporting partner conducts a rapid organisational assessment to ensure that the potential lead partner meets minimum criteria to be a lead partner. For instance, it checks that the potential lead actors have an NGO Affair Bureau registration (which is a legal requirement in [Bangladesh](#) to get funding), a functioning accounting system, financial and procurement guidelines, etc.
4. LNHAs and supporting partners consider that **the Proposal and Consolidated Proposal steps can be grouped into a single step** that they referred to as the Proposal Step. This step also included submission to the HCDF and review phase at Oxfam level.

²⁵ As laid out in Figure 4: The HCDF process as designed by the ELNHA team supposedly included only one JAP in the HCDF process lifecycle while the other subsequent steps were taking place on an annual basis.

Figure 5: The HCDF process in Bangladesh



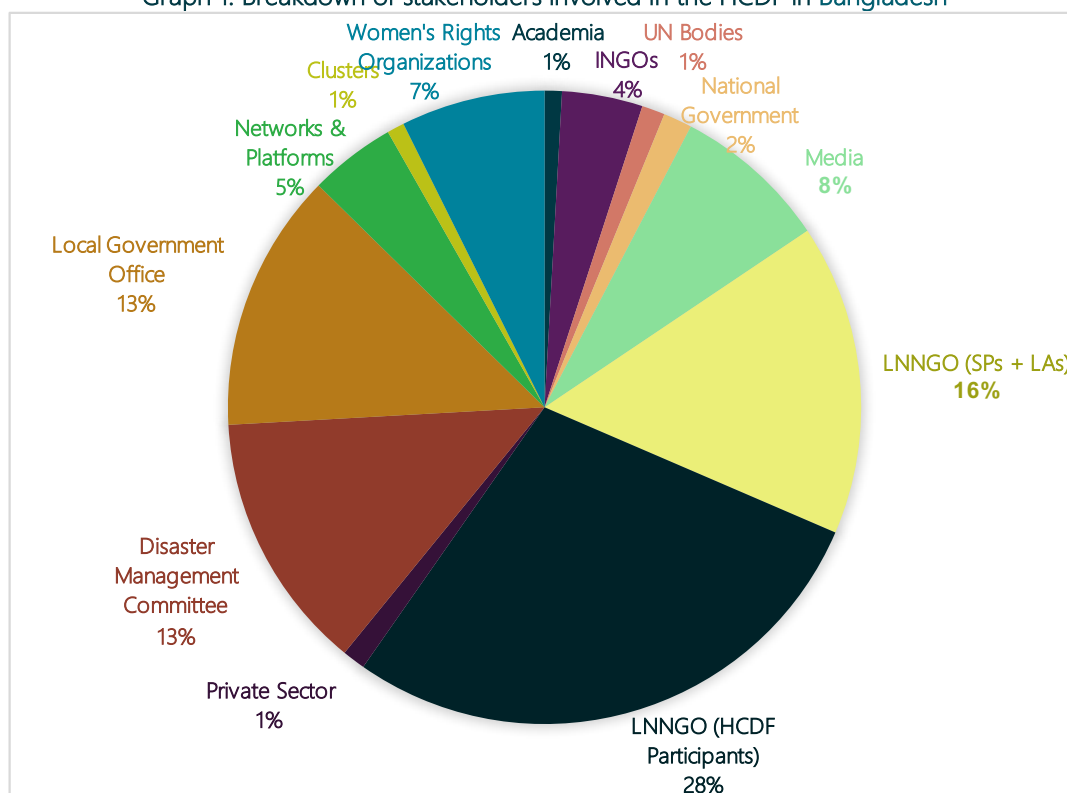
- Step carried out by the ELNHA team
- Step carried out by the supporting partner

Between 2017 and 2018, there were two differences in the HCDF process in [Bangladesh](#). Firstly, in 2017, the JAP lasted one day. In 2018, it lasted two days. Participants felt that one day was not sufficient to cover the entire agenda and to conduct collective discussions with 20 to 50 participants.²⁶

Secondly, in 2018 after the consultation workshop, the potential lead actors produced an HCDF proposal and submitted it the supporting partner. The LA and supporting partner then collectively met to produce a collective proposal. In 2017 however, these stakeholders directly met and produced the consolidated proposal. The ELNHA team suggested this change in the process because they thought that it would provide LNHAAs with the experience to produce a collective proposal and to learn by doing.

In 2017, the HCDF processes in the nine districts included 340 organisation representatives,²⁷ mainly present during the JAP. The composition of these stakeholders is detailed in the graph below.

Graph 1: Breakdown of stakeholders involved in the HCDF in Bangladesh



With 1% of the total participants, the chart corroborates the widespread impression from the process-mapping workshop participants that, although invited, the private sector representatives did not fully engage in the process. Similarly, it corroborates some of the interviewees' opinion that INGOs and the UN bodies, in other words, the international community, was not sufficiently involved in the key steps of the HCDF process at the district level, particularly in the JAP. In their opinion, a stronger involvement from the international

²⁶ According to Oxfam Bangladesh, 'Summary of HUCOCA Validation & Joint Action Planning (JAP) Workshop', n.d., the number of participants to the 2017 validation workshop and JAP ranged from 17 in Sirajganj to 53 in Dhaka.

²⁷ Oxfam Novib, 'DRAFT Reporting to IKEA Y2-27_March.Docx', n.d.

community would have meant a higher awareness and recognition about the capacity-building resulting from the HCDF process, and potentially more access to funding opportunities.

While the HCDF process was implemented in nine districts by six different partners, there are no significant differences in the process across districts. Some of the supporting partners included extra sub-steps, changed the order of the sub-steps, but this did not change the logic or outputs of the process.

The first notable difference is the fact that as part of the HUCOCA validation, the ELNHA team organised two workshops before the JAP in the Barguna and Kurigram Districts. In Kurigram (one of the districts visited by the consultant), Oxfam and the supporting partner organised a day-long workshop in October 2016 at the Deputy Commissioner's (DC) Office to validate the findings of the HUCOCA. Although the government appeared to have been more rapidly engaged in the process in Kurigram district than in Gaibandha, which could be the result of this extra step, there are too many factors that can account for the difference in the government's engagement, e.g. the involvement of the supporting partner. Therefore, there is no sufficient evidence to assess whether this extra step in the process' effectiveness resulted in a more efficient process.

The second difference is the organisational mapping carried out by the supporting partner to identify lead actors. In some districts, such as Barguna or Patuakhali, the mapping reportedly was much more thorough and comprehensive than in other districts,²⁸ where it mostly checked that the potential lead actors had a legal registration, an accounting system in place, as well as other policies/documents (mission statement, organigram, etc.).

IV.1.1.2. The HCDF process in Uganda

In **Uganda**, the 2018 HCDF process is relatively similar to the theoretical process. However, in 2017, it was relatively different, because it included two distinct phases of capacity-building implementation.

Firstly, after the JAP at the end of 2016, the ELNHA team requested that the supporting partner organise and deliver capacity-building initiatives for all LNHAs,²⁹ mainly workshops and training, on a range of topics such as Core Humanitarian Standards, humanitarian principles, proposal writing, etc. This implementation phase lasted from January to September 2017. The rationale for the ELNHA team to initiate this phase, and thus not to follow the steps laid out in the process, was twofold. First, there were LNHAs willing to participate in the process with little or no humanitarian experience. Therefore, the ELNHA team felt it was crucial to ensure that all LNHAs had a minimum core knowledge of the humanitarian sector. Second, the first steps of the HCDF process took longer than initially anticipated, because involving the various actors was time-consuming, and the ELNHA team wanted to secure the launch of activities.

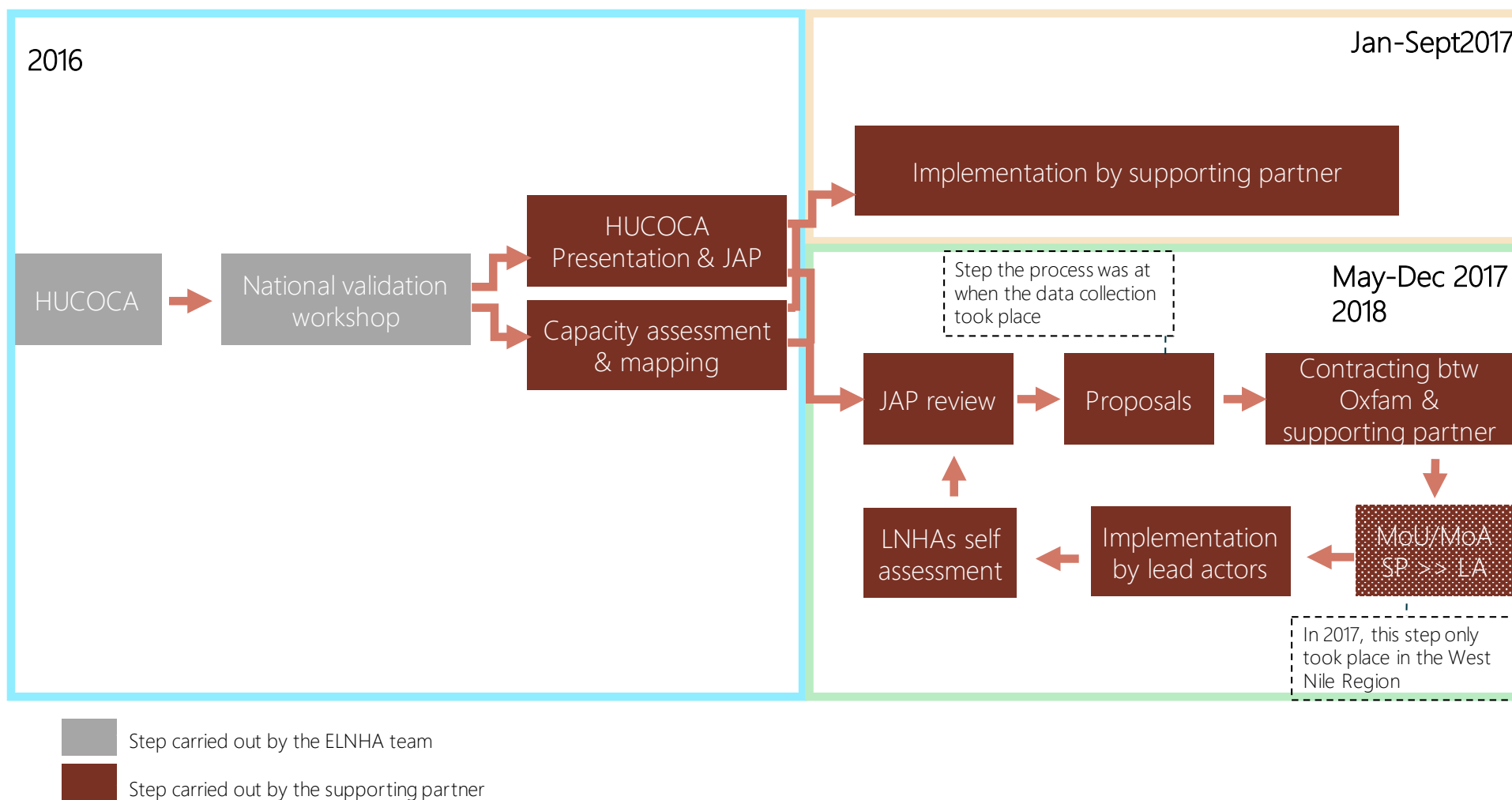
²⁸ The mapping in these districts is more similar to a capacity assessment with the supporting partner checking more thoroughly all documents, and assessing the quality of the documents.

²⁹ For these capacity-building initiatives, the supporting partners submitted a proposal and signed a contract with the HCDF.

As for the second phase of the capacity-building implementation, it took place from May to September 2017, and followed the steps laid out in the HCDF process. It started with a new JAP meeting (called JAP review in the process-mapping workshops), followed by interested LNHAs submitting a proposal to become a lead actor; proposals were reviewed by Oxfam (some of which got approved and others rejected) and to finish, lead actors implemented their activities. In 2018, there is only one phase of activity implementation, following these same steps.

The HCDF process in **Uganda** is detailed in **Erreur ! Source du renvoi introuvable.**

Figure 6: The HCDF process in Uganda

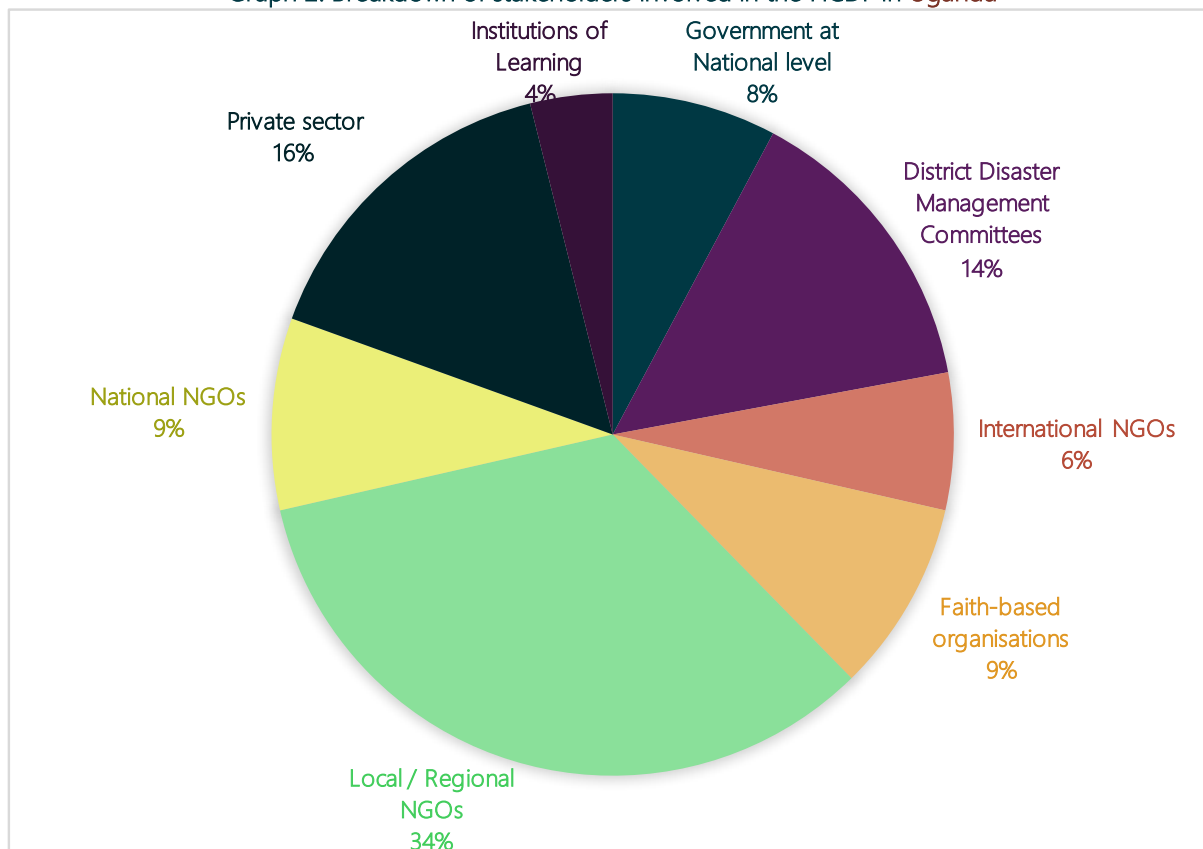


. There are four differences between the **Uganda** process and the theoretical process:

- The JAP review, which, except for its name, appears similar to the District capacity development plan. Yet, the JAP review looks at both the capacity-building outcomes and activities at district level, whereas the District Capacity Development Plan should in theory only focus on capacity-building activities, the outcomes having been agreed upon during the JAP. Therefore, **the Joint Action Planning takes place on a yearly basis instead of taking place only once.**
- In parallel to organising and facilitating the JAP, the supporting partner produces a **stakeholder mapping**, the objective of which is to map the LNHAs at district level to include them in the JAP. In 2016, the supporting partners mapped all the LNHAs active in the district, by collecting the list from the district representatives and cross-checking against LNHAs' actual operational presence. This mapping also included an **organisational capacity assessment** to assess the strengths and areas for improvements of the LNHAs in the districts. The SPs and LNHAs then used the assessment during the JAP review to prioritize which of the organisations would attend the various capacity-building initiatives. For instance, LNHAs with no or an incomplete procurement plan attended procurement training in priority. In the theoretical process, the mapping is a sub-step of the JAP; for supporting partners and LNHAs however, it is a stand-alone step that takes place before the JAP.
- Between the 2018 and 2017 HCDF processes, the SPs requested that LNHAs conduct a self-assessment to assess each organisation's newly-acquired skills, procedures and processes and define the gaps before the new HCDF process. This self-assessment echoes the stakeholder mapping undertaken by the supporting partner in parallel with/at the same time as that of the organisation and facilitation of the JAP workshop.
- For LNHAs and supporting partners, the Proposal and Consolidated Proposal steps can be grouped into one step that they referred to as the Proposal Step. This step also included submission to the HCDF and review phase at Oxfam level.

In 2017, the HCDF processes, particularly the JAP, included 77 organisation representatives. The composition of these stakeholders is detailed in the graph below.

Graph 2: Breakdown of stakeholders involved in the HCDF in Uganda



With 16% of the total stakeholders, this chart suggests that the private sector was included in the HCDF process. Yet, according to interviewees, private sector representatives were present, but often rapidly left because they reportedly were not interested in engaging further. In addition, it corroborates interviewees' opinion that INGOs (6%) and the UN bodies (0%), in other words the international community, were not sufficiently involved in the HCDF process key steps at district level, particularly in the JAP.

At district level, across the six districts where the process was implemented, there was only one notable difference between supporting partners. In the West Nile region, CEFORD sub-contracted the HCDF grants to lead actors, i.e. they entrusted them with the HCDF grant money to implement and report on capacity-building activities, which resulted in an extra step in the HCDF process. On the other hand, the other supporting partners did not sub-grant the lead actors and were instead designating one of their staff to support the lead actor in the implementation of the capacity-building activities.

IV.1.1.3. Country-level similarities and differences

In 2017, the **Uganda's** HCDF process was different from the one in **Bangladesh**, because the supporting partner conducted a first implementation phase of capacity-building activities, which was not the case in **Bangladesh**, before the lead actors submitted a proposal and implemented activities. In addition, it included an extra step after the implementation, the LNHA self-assessment,³⁰ before the launch of a new HCDF process.

³⁰ This self-assessment took place in the West Nile region. The consultant was not able to confirm/infirm it for the other regions, which were not visited as part of the data collection.

In 2018, however, there are few differences between **Bangladesh** and **Uganda** as regards the HCDF process, because the sequence of steps is relatively similar.

In both countries, the ELNHA teams and supporting partners aimed to be **as inclusive as possible of all relevant stakeholders**. The relative difference at country level, 340 stakeholders in **Bangladesh** vs. 77 in **Uganda**, is contextual. In **Bangladesh**, the humanitarian sector is denser than in **Uganda**, with a strong and vibrant civil society, and a lot of LNNGOs carrying out emergency response as part of their activity portfolio,³¹ whereas in **Uganda**, there are comparatively less LNNGOs involved in emergency response.³²

Within each of the steps, there are however a few differences across countries:

- The stakeholder mapping in **Uganda** includes a rapid organisational assessment of LNHAs, whereas in **Bangladesh** it consists of a mapping and a 3W analysis.³³ The supporting partner in West Nile³⁴ also requested that LNHAs complete a self-assessment after the first HCDF process.
- In **Bangladesh**, LNHAs willing to become lead actors undergo an informal selection, wherein the supporting partner looks at the organisational policies and procedures of the potential lead actors. This assessment reportedly helps SPs assess the capacity of LNHAs to manage the fund (e.g. the existence of an accounting system) but also appears to be used to check the organisation's compliance with specific standards (e.g. a gender policy). Non-compliance with specific standards was not reported to be a reason for non-selection. However, due diligence investigations by supporting partners³⁵ have been in some instances disproportional with the ultimate funding allocation. Supporting partners opted for such thorough assessment because it was the first time they were sub-contracting another LNHAs, and wanted reassurance.
- In **Bangladesh**, supporting partners systematically allocate the funding to lead actors and signed a MoU or MoA with them. In **Uganda**, only the West Nile supporting partner awarded funding to the lead actors. Other SPs managed the funding directly, although supporting partners in other regions reported they would also do it in 2018 to reduce the tensions with LNHAs and to increase their capacity.
- In **Uganda**, LNHAs produced proposals in 2017 before meeting with the supporting partner to form a collective proposal; whereas in **Bangladesh**, they produced a collective proposal after following an in-depth collaborative process. However, it was almost the opposite in 2018: in **Bangladesh**, potential LAs produced a proposal, then the SP convened a collective proposal meeting; In **Uganda**, in the West Nile region,

³¹ Fernando Almansa, 'Bangladesh Capacity to Manage Humanitarian Action "Humanitarianism beyond Disaster Management"', 2016.

³² Xavier Mir and Eric Awich Ochen, 'Fresh Analysis of the Humanitarian Capacity in Uganda' (Oxfam Uganda, 2016).

³³ A 3W analysis stands for Who, Where, What, and is a tool in the humanitarian sector to refer to outline the operational presence by sector and location

³⁴ The consultant was not able to confirm/infirm it for the other regions, which were not visited as part of the data collection.

³⁵ Reportedly specially in Barguna & Patuakhali Districts

the supporting partner decided to skip the proposal submission stage and directly move on to the collective proposal meeting.

While in [Bangladesh](#) and [Uganda](#) the ELNHA teams undeniably supported the various supporting partners, the nature of the support appeared different. In [Bangladesh](#), support to SPs was more structured by providing detailed documentation to the SPs, as shown by the relatively more important number of documents available, as well as informal and organic support (e.g. phone calls) when requested. In [Uganda](#), the nature of the support was mostly provided through phone calls and regular visits and was less formalised, i.e. with less or no written documentation. The support to SPs appeared to have been more intensive in [Uganda](#) than in [Bangladesh](#). It is the consultants' opinion that this difference is not specific to the ELNHA project and teams, but rather a contextual difference between the two countries, where LINGOs in [Bangladesh](#) are more used to managing funding, larger grant and projects, and where there is a strong culture to produce document processes.

Based on the interviews conducted with Oxfam's staff, there is an assumption that the supporting partners in [Bangladesh](#) are more autonomous in the implementation of the HCDF process than they are in [Uganda](#). Yet, the field visits carried out by the consultant in the four districts do not corroborate this belief,³⁶ i.e. supporting partners are just as autonomous as in Bangladesh. The difference is perhaps due to the limited geographical scope of the learning review, i.e. four districts visited vs. 15 districts of implementation

IV.1.2. The relevance and appropriateness of the HCDF process

This section looks at the relevance and appropriateness of the HCDF process, from the project stakeholders' perspectives. When required, findings are disaggregated by country and type of stakeholders.

IV.1.2.1. The HCDF process is considered relevant and mostly appropriate...

Almost all interviewees³⁷ at Global level in [Bangladesh](#) and [Uganda](#) found the HCDF process to be relevant and mostly appropriate because:

- It is **transparent and inclusive** of a wide range of actors (LNGOs, the district government, the media, the private sector, etc.) involved locally in the humanitarian responses;

³⁶ This was observed during the process mapping workshop, with the reported involvement of Oxfam and of the supporting partners in the different steps of the process, and latter triangulated during the interview with the supporting partners.

³⁷ Only one interview found the process to be irrelevant because in his (whose?) opinion, the international communities were not ready to fund local actors directly. As such, the process was a waste of time for LNHAAs with already limited resources.

- It builds **ownership** because the needs and capacity gaps are identified collectively as opposed to international actors traditionally following a top-down approach and choosing capacity-building activities;
- Its various steps allow representatives of LNHAs to **meet regularly and reflect** on the district capacity building needs;
- It makes LNHAs **accountable** to one another, as they are aware of the capacity-building activities that took place in the district and of who benefitted from them;
- It encourages **coordination and collaboration** among LNHAs first, and with the broader humanitarian community in the district second.

In both countries, interviewed government representatives particularly praised the HCDF process because it reportedly strengthened the linkages the district governments had with the local actors.

When asked if a step was redundant, all concurred **that the steps were all necessary and that none could be removed**.

In addition, most interviews concurred that **the JAP was an essential step** in the process because it ensures that district-specific perceived needs are consistent with the country overview and long-term vision, i.e. the HUCOCA. Similarly, most interviewees found the HUCOCA appropriate because it shed new light on both countries' capacity and was representative of the district's capacity and gaps. In **Uganda**, the ELNHA team is considering commissioning a HUCOCA review in 2018, with a specific focus on the six implementation districts.

Compared to 2017, **LNHAs' perception of the appropriateness of the process increased in 2018**, because the overall process and the link between each of the steps were better understood. In 2017, the process was new and supporting partners reportedly lacked clear guidelines from Oxfam to understand and implement the process.

However, when considering that almost all actors agree on the relevance and appropriateness of the process, the reader should keep in mind that there is **a sampling bias**. The data collected in both countries only included LNHAs taking part in the process. According to supporting partners and LNHAs (including one who disengaged from the process), there were a few actors who disengaged from the process along the way, because of a reported lack of time or interest, and because some doubt that the HCDF would lead to increase quality funding for LNHAs. While these actors appeared to be a minority, they often were prominent actors in the district,³⁸ and it would have been interesting to capture their point of views regarding the relevance and appropriateness of the process.

³⁸ For instance, in Gaibandha in Bangladesh, GUK and Friendship were reportedly not interested in engaging in the process for another year.

IV.1.2.2. ...but certain areas for improvement are necessary to make it fully appropriate

In [Bangladesh](#) and [Uganda](#), LNHAAs deemed that the process would be more appropriate if the ELNHA team addressed the following issues:

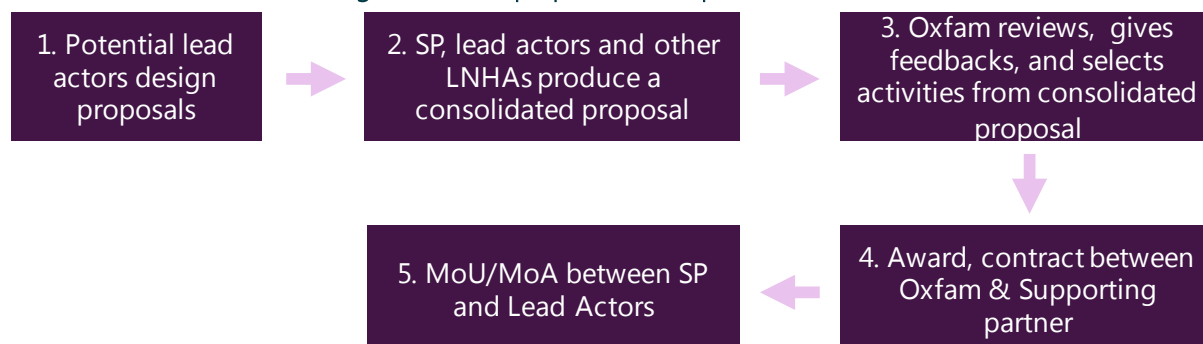
The length of the process:

LNHAAs deemed the overall HCDF process to be lengthy, leaving lead actors with limited time for the implementation of capacity-building activities. While most stakeholders acknowledge the fact that the HCDF is a new and inclusive process and inherently time consuming, **all of them identified the HCDF proposal as the bottleneck.**

Based on the four process mappings conducted in [Bangladesh](#) and [Uganda](#), participants reported that the proposal step (design, submission, award, etc.) took three to four months, even five months³⁹ in [Uganda](#) in some districts. As a result, **a lot of capacity-building initiatives were cramped into a short period**, with activities happening back to back and competing. While this mainly affected smaller organisations with limited human resources, because they could not always send the most appropriate staff to the capacity-building activities. Most LNHAAs, regardless of their size, complained about this issue. Similarly, the SPs raised the issue because it reportedly made it challenging for them to monitor the project activities.

The sub-steps for the HCDF proposal are detailed in the figure below:

Figure 7: HCDF proposal sub-steps at district level



In LNHAAs' and supporting partners' opinions, **the review and feedback stage represented the most time-consuming activities.** The three-layer review panel (ELNHA in-country team, in-country Oxfam staff and the ELNHA global team) meant that consolidated proposals were reviewed for one to 1.5 months to ensure alignment of the activities proposed with clear results and project outcomes, instead of 12 days as laid out in the project documentation.⁴⁰ The review process is detailed in Figure 8. This opinion was especially strong in [Uganda](#).

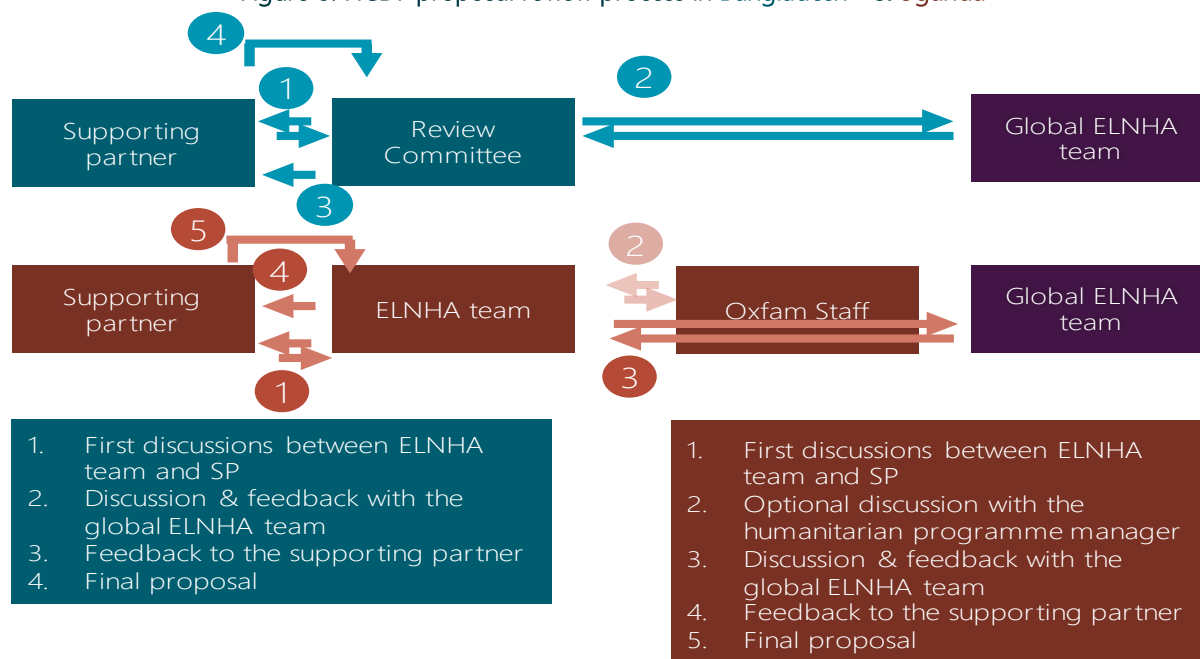
In both countries, about half of the LNHAAs and SPs interviewed and/or involved in the process mapping workshops suggested removing the review phase by the global ELNHA

³⁹ Lydia Tanner et al., 'ELNHA Mid-Term Evaluation' (The Research People, 2017).

⁴⁰ Oxfam Novib, 'Guidelines ELNHA Humanitarian Capacity Development Fund (HCDF)', n.d.

team because they assumed it was what caused a delay in the review process. This was also corroborated by about half of the Oxfam staff interviewed in two countries, who thought this would make the review and feedback process faster.

Figure 8: HCDF proposal review process in Bangladesh⁴¹ & Uganda



In **Uganda**, SPs identified another bottleneck in the proposal step, namely the contract between Oxfam and the Supporting partners. The ELNHA team in country opted for a yearly contract signed after the HCDF review process. In 2017, it reportedly led to an extra two weeks delay in the implementation. This was not reported to be an issue in **Bangladesh**, where Oxfam signed a contract with the SPs before the start of the HCDF process, and amended the contract if the HCDF grant total amount was different from the amount written in the contract.

In **Uganda**, perceptions that the process is taking a long time are more important than in **Bangladesh**. This is most likely because in 2017 the potential lead actors in **Uganda** submitted a proposal to the supporting partners, which added between two to four weeks to the overall process duration before the HCDF award. In **Bangladesh** instead, the SP, lead actors and LNHA sat together to design a collective proposal and submitted directly to Oxfam.⁴² In 2018, as an attempt to reduce the length of the proposal step, CEFORD, the supporting partner in the West Nile region and the LNHA skipped the proposal step and instead directly met to design the consolidated proposal together.

This difference of perceptions is also due to the 2017 HCDF process design in **Uganda** (see IV.1.1.2). By opting for two phases of implementation,⁴³ the ELNHA team shortened the second phase of implementation for lead actors from August to December 2017; whereas

⁴¹ In Bangladesh, the review committee is composed of the ELNHA PM, the Country Finance Officer, the ELNHA Humanitarian Capacity-Building Coordinator, and the Country Humanitarian Programme Manager.

⁴² In Bangladesh in 2017 the lead actors submitted proposals after the HCDF award decision made by Oxfam

⁴³ As a reminder: From January to September 2017, the supporting partner conducted a first capacity-building implementation phase, then after submitting proposals, lead actors conducted another phase of implementation from Sept to December 2017.

in [Bangladesh](#), lead actors had from May to December 2017. In 2018, some LNHAAs in Uganda feared it would be the same especially with the end of the activity scheduled for Nov. 2018

The complexity of the process:

Supporting partners and LNHAAs considered **the HCDF process to be somewhat complicated**, with a lack of clarity of the role and responsibility in the different steps. On the one hand, the ELNHA team designed the process to be demand-driven, and as such loose in design, with the assumption that the SPs would take the lead on implementing the various steps of the process. On the other hand, the ELNHA team set up a specific sequence of steps, with no written instructions on the steps' expected outputs.

While Oxfam chose this approach to give the supporting partners flexibility to implement a demand-driven process, the SPs would have liked Oxfam to provide them with more explicit instructions, especially on the JAP and the District Capacity Priority Plans' expected outputs. This may explain, at least partially, why the ELNHA team in both countries felt that they were too involved in the HCDF process, especially in the JAP, and that the first HCDF process was "Oxfam-led" and not "district-driven".

When the consultant conducted the four process-mapping workshops in [Bangladesh](#) and [Uganda](#), the supporting partners had just submitted their HCDF consolidated proposal to Oxfam. While the HCDF process was clear for the SPs, despite having been involved in two processes, **some LNHAAs still found it difficult to understand the link between the different steps and to describe how each step took place**. In [Bangladesh](#), this concerned about one-third of the participants. In [Uganda](#), about half. However, unlike in [Bangladesh](#) where it was mostly the LNHAAs' executive directors⁴⁴ who attended the HCDF process and funded activities, various representatives within an organisation took part in a limited number of steps of the process and activities in [Uganda](#), and not in the entire process, thus reducing the overall understanding of the process.

The absence of stakeholders:

While the inclusiveness of the process, i.e. including LNNGOs, the media, the private sector and government representatives amongst others, is one of the features that makes the process appropriate, LNHAAs in both countries considered that the HCDF process would be **more appropriate if the INGOs and UN agencies were more included in the JAP**. In interviewee's opinions, it would allow them to grasp the capacity-building gaps identified by LNHAAs, and how the latter were planning to bridge these gaps. Although not mentioned by interviewees, having the international community included in the HCDF is perhaps perceived as a method to engage faster in the localisation agenda and to increase quality funding⁴⁵ to LNHAAs.

⁴⁴ Or equivalent positions.

⁴⁵ While volume of funding received and directness of funding are important criteria, a number of research studies show that local NGOs considered more important better direct communication and access to international donors and decision-making spaces (both national and international) than increasing direct funding. Other features of "quality" funding are providing multi-year allocations, unearmarked, sufficient overheads, etc – from Money Talks, Oxfam, 2018

In **Uganda**, in retrospect, all the stakeholders involved in the HCDF process would have liked **LNHAs executive directors to be more involved**, because participants were not always decision-makers at the organisation-level. This reportedly slowed down the HCDF process.

LNHA mapping:

As part of the JAP, the supporting partners map all the potential stakeholders at district-level involved or interested in being involved in the humanitarian response(s). In retrospect, the ELNHA team in both countries thought that the mapping should have been more accurate (to map the actors involved in the response) and comprehensive (to assess their existing capacity).

IV.1.2.3. The process and funding are essential to one another

At global level, some ELNHA team members questioned the relevance of having a process tied to the Humanitarian Capacity Development Fund. They wondered whether the HCDF could function as a stand-alone mechanism, and whether the HCDF process without the funding mechanism would be sufficient to engage LNHAs.

Without the opportunity to access funding, LNHAs admittedly would not have engaged in the process at the start of the project, because the process was new and therefore hadn't demonstrated its added-value. After the first HCDF process, and despite witnessing its relevance/appropriateness, most LNHAs believed **they would not remain engaged in the process if it continued without the funding opportunities**. This is because they have limited resources and need to prioritise activities with a higher return on investment, and because the process needs a supporting partner, and a small budget, to coordinate LNHAs locally and conduct capacity-strengthening initiatives.

On the other hand, when asked if the funding mechanism could function without the process, all interviewees concurred that without the latter, the activities funded with the HCDF would not be as relevant to strengthen the collective capacity of the district's actors to bring LNHAs together, and to ensure mutual transparency and accountability. Therefore, **the HCDF process is required to make sure the funding mechanism is demand-driven** and strengthen the district's capacity as opposed to an individual organisation's capacity.

IV.1.3. The added-value of the HCDF funding mechanism

This section describes the perceived added-value of the HCDF funding by the various project stakeholders.

IV.1.3.1. A one-of-a-kind funding mechanism

As explained in I.3 The Humanitarian Capacity Development Fund, the HCDF comprises of two windows: the District window, which is designed to represent 80% of the fund, and the Beyond District Window, which amounts to 20% of the fund.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ In reality, the breakdown between the District Window and the Beyond District Window, i.e. 80:20, was not strictly followed during the project implementation.

All stakeholders interviewed acknowledged the added value of the District Window HCDF because it is the first and only funding mechanism accessible exclusively to LNHAs' to fund capacity building needs.

LNHAs have traditionally been accustomed to INGOs deciding on and organising capacity-building initiatives, either for their implementing partners or as part of capacity-building programmes targeting local actors. While the latter usually appreciated these programmes, they felt the activities were not sufficiently adapted to the needs and particularities of the districts, were only targeting a handful and were not inclusive of all relevant stakeholders. For instance, with the HCDF, LNHAs in [Bangladesh](#) and [Uganda](#) were able to train and activate local disaster management committees. With traditional top-down funding, they believed these actors would not have been included. With the HCDF, it is the opposite. **The initiatives are adapted to the needs and particularities of the district and are inclusive of more numerous and diversified stakeholders.**

This is possible because the HCDF's eligibility criteria are broad, thus allowing LNHAs to fund a wide range of activities on various topics and target many actors. The HCDF's criteria are detailed in the figure below:

Figure 9: HCDF's eligibility criteria⁴⁷

1	Aligned to the capacity building plan and the humanitarian agenda;
2	Have defined priority areas and concrete activities for capacity building and results;
3	Reflect the collective interests and needs of LNHA at the district level, benefiting the humanitarian sector in District and country;
4	Demonstrate that effective modalities for capacity-building are adopted, such as opportunities available locally (peer to peer, secondment, on-the-job training, etc.);
5	Cost efficiency;
6	Demonstrate how the activities contribute to strengthening the role and leadership of actors in humanitarian preparedness and response in the long term;
7	Clearly spell out the cooperation modality among actors and partners.

With these criteria, as long as the activities had been collectively decided and prioritised during the JAP, the ELNHA team, SPs and LNHAs felt in both countries that they had room to propose any activity that they deemed relevant. The HCDF was used to funding a wide range of activities. In [Bangladesh](#), it funded among others formal training activities (early warning, contingency planning, proposal writing, CHS, incorporating humanitarian aspects into an organisation's vision and mission, CTP, etc.), in-country humanitarian regulatory framework related workshops (Standing Order on Disasters 2012 (SOD), Disaster Management Act 2010 and National Disaster Management Plan (NDMP 2016-2010),⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Lindy Montgomery, 'Empowering Local and National Humanitarian Actors (ELNHA) Project Humanitarian Response Grant Facility Review' (Oxfam Novib, August 2017).

exchange visits during the Haor response, mock drills in schools, volunteer training, etc. In **Uganda**, it funded among others formal training activities (CHS, proposal writing, financial and procurement), training of the District Disaster Management Committee, a 3-month disaster training by **Uganda**Ba Christian University, a Humanitarian & Leadership course, exchange visits in Karamoja district, job placements, secondments, etc.

As far as the Beyond district window is concerned, this learning review collected limited data, because only two national partners were interviewed (one in **Bangladesh**, one in **Uganda**) and the topic rarely came out during the interviews. Yet, these interviewees, as well as the ELNHA team interviewees, considered that it funded activities that were needed to increase the Voice and Space of LNHAs. For instance, in **Bangladesh**, it funded the localisation advocacy activities of NAHAB⁴⁹, such as the organisation of a localisation conference with the national media. It also funded workshops on humanitarian influencing and conflict sensitivity and parts of the Cash-Transfer Programming programme. In **Uganda**, it also funded a humanitarian influencing training and a conflict sensitivity, as well as a PARCEL⁵⁰ training. On the other hand, during the interviews with SPs and LNHAs, interviewees did not spontaneously mention this window, and only did so when the consultant probed. LNHAs had no or limited information about it. All SPs knew about it. In **Bangladesh**, they felt positive about the window. In **Uganda**, one of the supporting partners thought the window was competing with activities at district-level, and preventing LNHAs from carrying out specific advocacy activities for the government, such as increasing the budget for emergency preparedness. However, the consultants were not able to ascertain whether this opinion was shared by other supporting partners.

IV.1.3.2. The looseness of the guidelines leads to misunderstandings and frustrations

The HCDF is meant to be “demand-driven” and “flexible” in design. As such, the ELNHA team designed very loose HCDF guidelines to provide LNHAs with the flexibility to come up with capacity-building initiatives that will be beneficial to the district.

While LNHAs understand that other criteria are taken into account, such as cost efficiency, this has led them to believe that any capacity-building activity, as long as it collectively identified by district LNHAs, is in theory eligible. Yet, LNHAs and SPs regularly reported that, in practice, **the ELNHA rejected some activities that in their opinion meet the HCDF criteria, for various reasons, some of which were not always understood.**

While the ELNHA team in countries strived to provide feedbacks to SPs and LNHAs, SPs felt these feedbacks did not correspond to the criteria stated in the guidelines or referred to criteria not stated in the guidelines. For instance, Oxfam reportedly came back to the supporting partners asking them to reduce the budget or to remove activities, arguing that the consolidated proposal's budget was superior to the budget available for the district; yet, in Uganda, Oxfam apparently never let SPs know beforehand what budget was available. Similarly, Oxfam turned down some activities because the budget included hardware costs

⁴⁹ National Alliance of Humanitarian Actors in Bangladesh

⁵⁰ PARCEL is a logistic training whose acronym stands for Partner Capacity Enhancement in Logistics

(laptops, software) whereas the guidelines do not stipulate that these costs are not eligible. In **Uganda**, Oxfam removed some activities from the consolidated proposal, because national partners were already undertaking these activities and because the ELNHA team felt the LNHAAs had neither the capacity nor the mandate to carry them out; yet, all LNHAAs concurred that these activities required a strong district understanding, which they thought the national partners did not have.

Compared to 2017, in 2018, the ELNHA global team tied the proposed capacity building activities to the broader HUCOCA objectives to prioritise the funded activities. In **Bangladesh**⁵¹, the ELNHA team presented this analysis to the supporting partner during a workshop in Dhaka, which reportedly helped the SPs understand the rationale behind the chosen activities as compared to 2017.

IV.1.3.3. LNHAAs suggested adjustments to the fund to increase its added-value

While all actors thought the HCDF had added value, most of them would have liked to put their learning in practice. Only a minority were able to do so thanks to HRGF funding. Others benefitted from secondment, placements and field visits, but these delivery mechanisms reportedly benefitted a handful, and were not practical enough. After having taken part in nearly two HCDF processes, a vast majority of LNNGOs felt that they had not had sufficient opportunities to put their theoretical learning into practice.

As a result, these interviewees suggested that the **HCDF should fund small-scale activities related to the training that was funded**. Within the ELNHA team, some interviewees concurred and believed the HCDF could fund small activities as well, such as small community-based disaster reduction activities.

In addition, LNNGOs (including the SP) and some of the ELNHA team members in both countries felt that the HCDF grant should include administrative fees for lead actors, as any other funding mechanism would normally do. In their opinion, this would allow the LNHAAs to invest in their organisation, e.g. buy computers or stationaries. As one ELNHA interviewee put it: “We expect LNNGOs to operate changes in their organisation, but they sometimes do not even have a computer to do so”.

IV.1.4. The ELNHA project management structure

This section assesses the relevance of the ELNHA project management structure at country-level, which comprises of the supporting partner and lead actors at district level.

IV.1.4.1. Selecting a supporting partner

In **Bangladesh** and **Uganda**, the criteria for selecting the supporting partner were relatively similar. A table detailing those criteria is available in Section VII.8.

For the ELNHA team in both countries, **the two main criteria for identifying a supporting partner are its legitimacy in the humanitarian sector** (both emergency response and

⁵¹ This could not be ascertained in Uganda during the data collection.

preparedness) with a few years of experience, and **its strong footprint in the district**. In addition, even if this is not one of the stated criteria, it would appear that the ELNHA team prioritised NGOs who had been previous implementing partners for Oxfam.

While the criteria for selecting the supporting partner were essentially the same, the selection process was different in both countries. In **Bangladesh**, the ELNHA project team opted for an open call in the newspaper wherein about 100 LNGOs submitted an expression of interest (EOI), 13 got shortlisted, and six got selected to cover the nine districts in **Bangladesh**.⁵² In **Uganda**, the ELNHA team conducted a stakeholder mapping and pre-selected 11 potential partners to cover the three regions. These pre-selected actors then submitted a proposal and Oxfam selected three partners.

In both cases, **the teams opted for their respective approach to manage expectations and reduce conflicts**. **Bangladesh** has a strong civil society with many potential supporting partners having the humanitarian capacity to take part in the ELNHA. Opting for an open call was deemed the best solution to find the most competent supporting partner, to ensure its legitimacy at district level and avoid the tensions arising from a closed call for proposals. On the other hand, even though there are many local actors in **Uganda**, many of them are development actors and only a few of them had significant experience in emergency response and preparedness. Therefore, the ELNHA team first had to map potential actors, then decided to go for a closed call so as not to not create expectations amongst actors who would not have been considered because of a lack of humanitarian capacity.

Within the Oxfam team in **Bangladesh** and at Global level, there are diverging opinions on the adequacy of the selection process in **Bangladesh**. For some, the selection process started too early, which meant the ELNHA team had not been recruited and was not involved in the process, and the project inception phase defining the activities had not yet taken place. As a result, it was reportedly more difficult for the supporting partners to understand the project compared to **Uganda**. For others, the selection process started early and did not impact the supporting partner's understanding. During his field visit, the consultant did not collect sufficient evidence to ascertain either point of view. Regardless of the selection process, the supporting partners acknowledged that they faced difficulties understanding the HCDF process in the first year.

Lastly, in retrospect, ELNHA teams in both countries thought that their selection criteria were missing a key criterion, i.e. **making sure that the supporting partner's executive director was involved in the critical steps of the HCDF process**. This would have helped the SP's project team engage district stakeholders more easily.

IV.1.4.2. Working with supporting partners

At the beginning of the project, the ELNHA team organised **orientation workshops with the supporting partners** to brief them on their roles and responsibilities. For instance, in **Bangladesh**, the workshop was held on May 2nd and 3rd 2016 in Dhaka. Regarding the HCDF process, the supporting partner is responsible for:

- Identifying LNHAs in the district;

⁵² Oxfam Bangladesh, 'ELNHA Partner Engagement Process - Bangladesh', n.d.

- Organising and leading the HCDF process in the district, and involving LNHAs in the process;
- Supporting LNHAs in identifying their capacity-building needs;
- Coordinating the HCDF submission process with LNHAs;
- Leading and supporting capacity-building activities for LNHAs;
- Participating in the MEAL at district level.

To carry out these activities, the ELNHA systematically funds three positions for each supporting partner (a Project Manager, a Project Officer – program, Project Officer – finance), and adds positions where required based on the district context and the volume of activities.⁵³

While the supporting partners understood their role and responsibilities, **they reportedly struggled to implement the HCDF process in 2017 and admittedly relied on Oxfam**. This was due to the process being new and SPs not understanding Oxfam's expectations. It was also because these supporting partners were accustomed to working under the supervision of INGOs, with limited oversight and influence on the project's design and implementation.

The ELNHA team initially expected that the supporting partners would take more initiatives in the implementation, because the process was demand-driven. However, the ELNHA team got more involved in the HCDF process, especially in specific steps such as the JAP, because the HCDF process was taking longer than anticipated in all districts as the time to engage stakeholders had been under-estimated. Furthermore, supporting partners were requesting support from Oxfam to implement the process.

In both countries, there was another reason why the ELNHA team got more engaged: it considered that **the supporting partners and the lead actors were not sufficiently integrating innovative delivery methods in their proposals**. As a result, in **Uganda**, the ELNHA team participated in the JAP to try to propose alternatives to the "classroom-style" workshops chosen by LNHAs. In **Bangladesh**, the ELNHA team provided a document summarizing existing innovative delivery methods⁵⁴ as part of the 2018 HCDF proposal package and explained it to the supporting partners.

It seems that SPs did not take the lead in the first HCDF process for a combination of two reasons. First, while the steps were clearly laid out, the link between each step and their expected output remained unclear for supporting partners. During the data collection, one supporting partner considered that "Oxfam did not know what they wanted for the HCDF process". Second, **the ELNHA team did not sufficiently involve the supporting partners in the design of the process**, which means they did not adequately take part in the collective discussion that led to the process, which is critical to understanding the rationale behind the process. Oxfam shared the process and guidelines with the supporting partners in the early

⁵³ In Uganda, an additional project officer was recruited for Yumbe because the road communication between districts is challenging. In addition, ELNHA recruited another supporting partner to cover the district of Agago. In Bangladesh, a technical partner position, shared by three supporting partners, was created to coordinate and follow-up on capacity and influencing activities.

⁵⁴ The name of the document is entitled Capacity Development methods. Docx.

stages of the project, but the latter did not understand then what demand-driven meant and therefore to what extent they could challenge the HCDF process and guidelines.

However, after having implemented the HCDF process once, supporting partners and Oxfam reported that for the second HCDF process SPs understood the process, their role and their responsibilities more clearly. They also reported a greater level of trust and collaboration between the supporting partner and Oxfam in both countries, resulting from this first experience and from having worked together successfully for already a year.

IV.1.4.3. The appropriateness of having a supporting partner to manage the HCDF process

All the stakeholders interviewed, i.e. Oxfam teams in country and LNHAs, concurred that **the HCDF process needs a local supporting partner** to ensure that the process is embedded locally, to engage all the relevant LNHAs, to facilitate and coordinate the process, to manage conflicts, to speak in one voice to the district government and to ensure transparency in the process.

However, within Oxfam, some fear that having a supporting partner to manage the HCDF process, if it is not properly selected, could negatively impact the power dynamics at district level by creating an “extra layer” or “a middle-man” between the INGOs and the other LNHAs.

In the four districts where the consultants did in-depth data collection, namely Gaibandha and Kurigram in [Bangladesh](#), and Arua and Koboko in [Uganda](#), the data suggests that the LNHAs thought the opposite, i.e. **the supporting partners were not an extra layer and that power dynamics had not been changed, at least negatively, because of the ELNHA project**. As detailed in the figure below, LNHAs acknowledge the need/relevance of having supporting partners, when the latter meet the following four criteria:

Figure 10: Minimum criteria SPs should meet to be well accepted by LNHAs



While the consultants did not visit the other districts, the data collected from interviews and from the desk review suggest that there were **sometimes tensions between the supporting partners and the LNHAs**. Without visiting these districts, it is not possible to understand in detail what factors caused these tensions. Yet, it seems that in the two examples listed below

the above-listed four criteria were not systematically respected, which may have caused or exacerbated existing tensions:

- In some districts, e.g. the Barguna and Patuakhali districts in [Bangladesh](#), there were reported unwillingness from LNHAs to cooperate with SPs during the first round of HCDF. First, LNHAs believed the supporting partner did not have a sufficient footprint in the district compared to other actors.⁵⁵ Second, potential lead actors were dissatisfied with the extent of the due diligence carried out by the supporting partner. They thought it did not have the legitimacy to check their organisations' policies and procedures.
- In the Acholi and Karamoja regions in [Uganda](#), lead actors complained about the role and responsibilities with the supporting partners during implementation because the supporting partners were managing the fund and not signing MoU/MoAs with the lead actors. This was not reported in the West Nile region, or in [Bangladesh](#), where the supporting partners signed a contract (MoU or MoA) with the lead actors, sent the funds and let them implement the capacity-building activities on their own.

For all LNHAs interviewed, **inclusivity was a cornerstone in the HCDF process**. Among other positive outcomes, it allowed for all actors to be involved. While supporting partners understand the added value of being inclusive after witnessing the positive outcomes of the HCDF process, it is unlikely that they would have been as inclusive had this not been a requirement from the ELNHA team. The latter required the supporting partner to get the list of all active LNHAs in the district from the government and planned a conflict analysis with the supporting partner to discuss the risks, power dynamics and tensions that characterize the context they work in and how these can be mitigated and monitored.⁵⁶

In [Bangladesh](#), supporting partners invited all relevant LNHAs but were sometimes reported to be less proactive in pursuing LNHAs for whom they had less sympathy, or who were perceived to be potentially more difficult to handle. While this was not reported during the data collection, it might have similarly happened in [Uganda](#).

Furthermore, in the countries, LNHAs generally expressed one criticism towards the supporting partner. During the proposal review phase, they thought that the supporting partner did not sufficiently explain to them why Oxfam had rejected/approved some of the activities.

IV.1.4.1. The appropriateness of selection lead actors

In both countries, **the supporting partners collectively with the LNHAs involved in the process, identified potential lead actors**, i.e. LNHAs that would organise capacity-building activities for other LNHAs in their districts. In most cases, the lead actors were then sub-contracting a third-party to deliver the capacity-building initiatives.

⁵⁵ The data collection did not point to one specific reason accounting for these tensions; rather it appeared to have been a combination of factors: the role and responsibilities were not clear, the SP's executive director was not based in the district, LNHAs sometimes perceived the lead actor to be

⁵⁶ Oxfam Novib, 'IKEAF Interim Report ELNHA', 2016.

To be selected as lead actors, LNHAs are expected to demonstrate experience in humanitarian response (e.g. in [Bangladesh](#), implementation of more than two humanitarian responses), to have legal recognition and to participate in the JAP. While the pre-selection process was more formalised in [Bangladesh](#) than it was in [Uganda](#), the largest NGOs (staff, budget, project) often ended up being selected. This led to some of the ELNHA team member fearing that it would create an extra layer of LNNGOs between the INGOs and other LNHAs in both countries. This fear was especially acute for [Bangladesh](#), because power dynamics at district level are believed to be complex.⁵⁷

As any other project involving local actors/implementing partners, there is a risk in changing power dynamics at district level, because a few LNNGOS get funding while others don't. This arguably happened with the ELNHA, both with the HRGF and HCDF.

However, because the HCDF process is inclusive, decisions are collective, and because all LNHAs can potentially become be lead actors, the HCDF process provides equal opportunity to all interested LNHAs to access the funding. As such it creates a fair and regulated competition and allows for the turnover of lead actors. For instance, in the Kurigram district in [Bangladesh](#), three LNHAs who benefitted from capacity-building initiatives in 2017 applied to become lead actors. Similar cases were reported in [Uganda](#).

Equal opportunities to become a lead actor are paramount to avoid creating this extra layer. **All LNHAs interviewed reported having the potential to become lead actors**, as long as they had a legal registration and were willing to carry out changes in their organisation's policies. As such, all deemed that having lead actors between the supporting partners and other LNHAs was not problematic. In [Bangladesh](#) however, a minority of interviewees raised concerns about the risks of a lack of transparency and exhaustiveness in the lead actor selection process, potentially leading to tensions and an "ego crisis". In their opinion, this risk was due to the fact that the LNHA mapping at district level only relied on information available at the DC office, and did not take into account the capacity of LNHAs.

IV.2. The perceived results of the HCDF demand-driven process and mechanism to build national and local humanitarian systems

This section presents the **perceived outcomes of the HCDF, whether negative or positive, intended or unintended, from the interviewed stakeholders' perspectives**. It disaggregates the results by pillars (i.e. Strength, Voice and Space) and by level (i.e. individual, organisational, district/national).

Unlike what was suggested in the research matrix, the consultant decided not to disaggregate the outcomes resulting from the engagement in the HCDF process and HCDF-funded capacity-building, because interviewees were often unable to attribute the outcomes of the project to one or the other type of activities.

⁵⁷ Oxfam Novib, '1. HCDF Modality SWOT - 01Dec2017 (002)', n.d.

Although the project's Theory of Change describes the HCDF as a component of the STRENGTH pillar for being a capacity-strengthening fund, it was found that the **HCDF also plays an essential role in building the VOICE and SPACE of LNHAs** as detailed in the section below.

IV.2.1. LNHAs can design, deliver and lead in humanitarian preparedness and response (STRENGTH)

All stakeholders interviewed reportedly witnessed **positive outcomes such as an increase in the capacity of individuals and organisations at district level** to deliver and lead humanitarian preparedness and response.

IV.2.1.1. At individual level

Based on the activities prioritised during the district joint action plans, the supporting partner and lead actors organised and conducted different types of capacity-building initiatives including, but not limited to, on Core Humanitarian Standards (CHS), humanitarian principles, contingency planning, financial management, procurement, governance, proposal writing, etc. For instance, in the Kurigram district in [Bangladesh](#), a lead actor organised a 2-day proposal writing workshop.

In [Bangladesh](#), while all interviewees referred to the trainings/workshops listed above as relevant and helpful, the CTP capacity-building training was referred to individually as one of the most useful by the participants. This can most likely be explained by a combination of two factors: Oxfam launched a 10-month CTP & Leadership training for 20 people, who were then able to build the capacity of other stakeholders at district level, and the increased uptake of CTP globally and at country level.

These capacity-building initiatives benefitted LNGOs, NNGOs, media organisations and government representatives who were usually sending one to three staff members per organisation to attend the trainings/workshops depending on the topic covered. The private sector was also meant to be included, but its representatives reportedly showed a limited interest in engaging in the process.

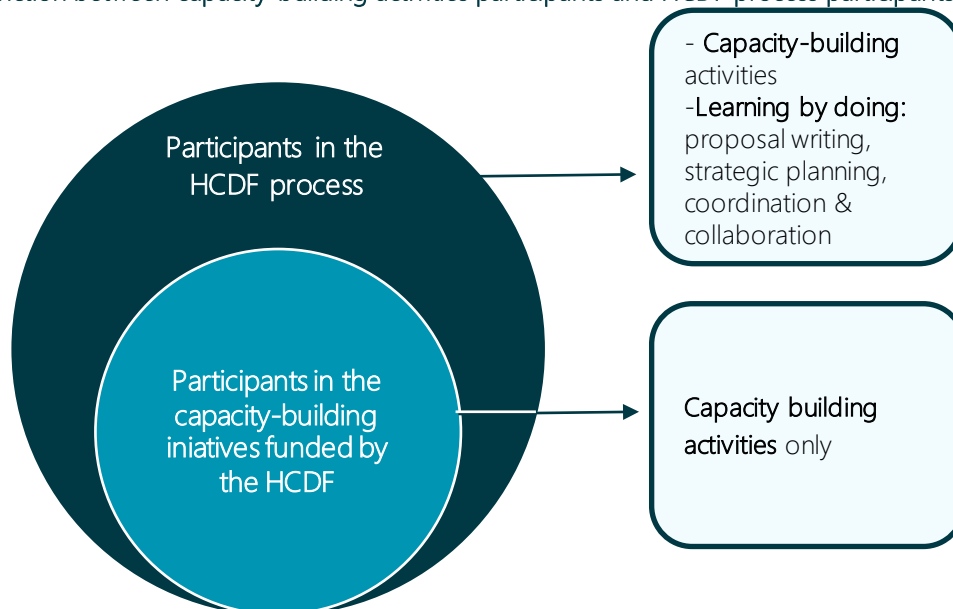
According to interviewees, the capacity-building activities efficiently undertaken increased the abilities of participants to prepare and respond to disasters potentially affecting their districts.

As further explained in section [IV.2.1.2](#), training participants were expected to be able to drive change in their organisation policy and spread their newly acquired knowledge to the organisation as a whole. While no examples of participants retraining their colleagues at organisation level were collected, **most of the participants effectively started or managed to implement changes in their organisation's policies.**

In addition to this acquisition of hard skills, trainees' participation in HCDF capacity-building activities resulted in an **increased confidence among participants** to lead an emergency response for an anticipated crisis. They reported feeling knowledgeable about the various roles and responsibilities during emergency responses and better equipped to implement humanitarian preparedness and response activities in [Bangladesh](#) and [Uganda](#).

Stakeholder representatives who not only took part in the capacity-building activities but also in the entire HCDF process noticed the greatest increase in their capacity and confidence, as shown in the figure below:

Figure 11: Distinction between capacity-building activities participants and HCDF process participants



Indeed, the HCDF process has proved an effective mechanism to reinforce the training content through a 'learning by doing' approach for three main reasons:

- First, being part of the full HCDF process was valuable because it required participants to think in an outcome-oriented way and then design an outcome-oriented strategy based on pre-existing and identified strengths and gaps. Staff from Oxfam in both countries witnessed significant improvements in their strategic thinking between the first and second year of implementation of the HCDF process.
- Second, the proposal-writing activity as part of the HCDF process was described by most interviewees as a useful exercise allowing to immediately put into practice the capacity building training, and to learn how to write a proposal collectively as a consortium would do. In [Bangladesh](#) however, some participants regretted that the training did not cover drafting of HCDF-specific proposals and was thus deemed less useful than anticipated.
- Third, the HCDF process was a live practice and demonstration of coordination and collective thinking that they will be able to reproduce and instil within their organisation, and at district level.

However, an unintended negative outcome arose during the implementation of the project. LNHA noticed **an increase in employee turnover**, especially in [Uganda](#), following the HCDF. Key LNNGOs staff members left their organisation to work for INGOs. For instance, during the Focus Group Discussion conducted in the Koboko district, the five LNNGOs consulted reported having lost six key staff members to the benefit of INGOs in the last year. This increased turnover is not specific to ELNHA and the HCDF but rather an unintended effect of most capacity-building initiatives. However, as ELNHA primarily targets small and local organisations, the deepening of this phenomenon could limit the effectiveness of the

project, as staff could be leaving their organisation before implementing changes in policies and procedures.

Some of the consulted LNHAs expressed their **desire for a stronger focus on the Trainings of Trainers** in the project or the delivery of specific training that would enhance the ability of trained staff to retrain key individuals within their organisation.

IV.2.1.2. At organisational level

According to the data collected during interviews and the desk review, **the HCDF process was an eye-opener for many organisations** as regards standards required for emergency response, and the remaining gaps faced by their respective organisations. The project allowed them to set a target, a direction to strive for, whether members of LNGOs, the Media or government representatives. Many organisations operated changes in their policies and procedures as it will be further described in section IV.3.1.

As each implementing country and organisation had different needs, **while overall high, the perceived effectiveness of the capacity building activities varied between each entity**. In **Bangladesh** for example, certain members of the Oxfam staff and LNHAs felt that the capacity building exercises were sometimes too generic and not tailored enough to the varying needs of organisations, whereas in **Uganda**, LNHAs considered that the trainings/workshops were sufficiently catered to their needs. This is perhaps due to the stakeholder mapping undertaken at the beginning of the project that included an organisational assessment in **Uganda**. In both countries, however, most of the consulted stakeholders expressed the need for further training in proposal writing and fundraising, as suggested by primary and secondary data.⁵⁸

It was also noted that **building capacities at organisational level was a long-term process**. Both one-year long HCDF processes are not sufficient for LNHAs to make the required changes to their policies and procedures or to train their staff to implement them. This was particularly the case for LNGOs, these actors having insufficient financial and human resources. As described by one LNHA in **Uganda**, LNHAs are "skeleton NGOs" that continuously need to overstretch their resources to carry out their activities. The overall ELNHA project duration was thus considered too short according to all Oxfam, SP and LNHAs staff interviewed; as a result, some interviewees felt it somewhat limited the benefits of their training for their organisation.

This feeling was reinforced by the delays in submitting and reviewing the HCDF proposal, as well as contracting the activities. In **Uganda** specifically, this resulted in an arbitration between activities and organisations who had to prioritise some trainings/workshops over others or send replacements when an individual who was meant to attend was not available.

Lastly, the smaller and more development-focused participating NGOs only had limited experience in emergency response. Selected actors were either not directly involved in emergency response even if they had the will to do so, or they had only acquired experience in implementing the soft components of emergency responses (i.e. they did not have any technical experience). As such, **the HCDF managed to increase their technical capacity but**

⁵⁸ Tanner et al., 'ELNHA Mid-Term Evaluation'; Lindy Montgomery, 'ELNHA HRGF Review Final Report', 2017.

did not provide them with sufficiently increased practical capacities or experience. The HRGF could have been the key to solve this challenge, but despite various attempts, these interviewees were unable to secure funding. Participants were then left with the feeling that they did not get enough of a chance to practice what they learnt, or to "learn by doing". In **Uganda**, Oxfam tried to encourage placement and secondment to solve this issue, but many of the LNHAs still considered this as insufficient, as only a handful of LNHA's staff members participated, and those who did only had limited leverage to influence the organisation afterwards. Some interviewees would have thus preferred the HCDF to fund practical activities, such as DRR activities, over capacity-building exercises, although all did not share this preference.

IV.2.1.3. At district & national levels

At district level, the HCDF allowed the various LNHAs to benefit from similar capacity-building activities on basic humanitarian principles for instance, as well as other trainings tailored to their needs. As such, by building the capacity of most of the organisations involved in responses in the different districts, the HCDF process **built the individual strengths of each actor for future emergency responses at district level, and thus the collective strength of each district.**

As seen in IV.2.2, the HCDF fostered **collaboration and coordination at district level**, which is essential to avoid duplication of efforts and to ensure efficiency and effectiveness of the response. As an example, the HCDF project activities enabled to strengthen the disaster management committees, to clearly define the role & responsibilities of each actor during the response, and to better articulate their actions with other actors.

An important outcome of the HCDF project is that LNNGOs, especially lead actors, in the 15 districts where the project was implemented, have **strengthened their linkages with the Local Governments Institutions (LGI)**. As a result, the local coordination between LNNGOs and LGIs has increased; and LNGOs will be able to support the LGIs that coordinate emergency responses during the initial days of a disaster,

In both countries, the ELNHA project team also included national actors responsible for conducting activities at national level. For instance, in **Bangladesh**, in 2017, Dhaka Ashania Mission (DAM) funded the government to set up a training for 24 government members on community risk assessment, whose role will henceforth be to retrain government staff at district level. In **Uganda**, Development Research & Training, a national NGO, is currently assisting four district local government in designing district-wise contingency plans.

IV.2.2. LNHAs have the voice to influence the humanitarian agenda in the country (VOICE)

IV.2.2.1. At individual & organisational levels

At both individual and organisational levels, the HCDF process and capacity-building initiatives resulted in **an increased level of confidence to undertake humanitarian response** for three main reasons:

- LNHAAs were made aware of the Grand Bargain commitments and considered it legitimate to expect more funding from donors and INGOs;
- They were also made aware of the standards and requirements needed to implement a response according to humanitarian standards;
- They were able or are now starting to implement the necessary changes in their organisational policies and procedures.

LNHAAs are now reportedly **more comfortable in raising their voices to INGOs and donors**. They feel confident enough to argue and negotiate with them on questions such as LNHAAs' accountability and transparency. It was for instance mentioned by ELNHA teams and the SPs in both countries that some of the LNHAAs who managed to get funding from the HRGF and HCDF were now discussing and bargaining the clauses of the contract, which was not the case before the launch of the project.

Some LNHAAs are also directly **engaging with other stakeholders such as the government and the media**. In **Bangladesh**, a local NGO, CDD was, for instance, successful in getting disability issues included in the Disaster Management Act.⁵⁹ According to Kurigram lead actors and LNHAAs, the government is now more aware of the challenges faced by LNHAAs and the needs of NGOs/CSOs to elaborate responses. For instance, the local government took a formal commitment to rethinking the irrigation investment strategy in the char.

IV.2.2.2. At district & national levels

Thanks to ELNHA, most LNNGOs and government members interviewed now reportedly understand the **added value of engaging more with the media** during humanitarian responses and were able to coordinate and collaborate with them. In their opinion, involving the media is essential to strengthen the district's capacity and effectiveness during emergency responses.

Similarly, while always playing an informative role during emergency responses and especially natural disasters, **the media is now more aware of humanitarian principles**. In **Uganda**, Radio Pacis was for instance involved in the capacity-building training (advocacy, early warning signs, contingency planning, MEAL and conflict resolution among others). Two representatives also followed a course on Humanitarian Disaster and Leadership at Mercury University.

The greater engagement of media led to some positive outcomes. For instance, in **Bangladesh**, Radio Sarabela (98.8 FM) started broadcasting mega time programmes (Kotika, PSA, panel discussion) and reporting on the flood happening in the Gaibandha district in June 2017.⁶⁰ It broadcasted 24/7 for two days at the beginning of the emergency.

In **Uganda**, in West Nile, local NGOs partnered with Radio Pacis to capture the voices of the refugee and host communities, thus providing information on the gaps and challenges in the camps or the communities. The programme, called *Issues at Hand*, focuses on early

⁵⁹ Tanner et al., 'ELNHA Mid-Term Evaluation'.

⁶⁰ Oxfam Bangladesh, 'Outcome Harvesting Writeshop ELNHA Bangladesh', 2017.

warning sign and disasters and has led to community dialogues in three communities. Talk shows were also organised with the DDMC.

Overall, all interviewees felt their voice was heard at district level, and to some extent at national level too. This was due to the direct impact of ELNHA, but also to some indirect effects of the HCDF process.

Thanks to various advocacy activities, ELNHA lobbied the government, the INGOs and donors for greater inclusion of the LNHAs. This resulted in a direct increase in collaboration between those entities. But the HCDF process and activities also indirectly allowed LNHAs to think strategically collectively, which led to further cooperation and expression of a collective voice at district level. The following table presents examples of collaboration arising from these two approaches in both countries

Table 2: Examples of increased collaboration arising from the project

	Bangladesh	Uganda
Examples of collaboration arising directly from ELNHA activities	▪ LNHA from five districts were included in the revision process of the Standing Orders on Disaster (SOD), the Bangladeshi national policy defining roles and responsibilities during emergency responses.⁶¹ ▪ ELNHA advocacy initiatives resulted in one supporting partner participating in a panel during the National Convention on Disaster Management, and another joining the National Haor Advocacy Platform.⁶² ▪ MJSKS (a local actor and supporting partner of ELNHA) secured membership within the START Bangladesh pool fund management decision-making platform.	▪ In June 2017, the Government gave more than 50 LNHA the space to present the Gulu Communique during a side event of the UN Solidarity Summit. Some of the asks and commitments from the LNHA were included in the final resolution of the Solidarity Summit.⁶³ ▪ Some local actors and organisations were requested by DFID to join the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF); a national humanitarian platform was established, and the Government committed to a Framework for the Localization of Humanitarian Assistance.⁶⁴ ▪ A new national platform for LNHA is being formed through the Uganda National NGO Forum, and stronger relationships have been established between local government and CBOs. LNHA have been able to identify and influence essential issues at local and national levels.⁶⁵ ▪ LNHA have advocated for the establishment of the Pakabeek refugee settlement in Lamwo.⁶⁶ ▪ Since April 2017, the national WASH coordination committee has included VEDCO, a national NGO, as a member of the WASH coordination meetings.⁶⁷

⁶¹ Oxfam Novib, 'IKEAF Interim Report ELNHA'.

⁶² Tanner et al., 'ELNHA Mid-Term Evaluation'.

⁶³ Oxfam Novib, 'IKEAF Interim Report ELNHA'. Oxfam Novib, 'DRAFT Reporting to IKEA Y2-27_March.Docx'.

⁶⁴ Ibid

⁶⁵ Tanner et al., 'ELNHA Mid-Term Evaluation'.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Oxfam Novib, 'Draft Titles Outcomes Harvested in December 2017 for the Elnha Project in Uganda', 2017.

Examples of collaboration arising indirectly from ELNHA activities	▪ In January 2017, 45 LNHAs formed the National Alliance of Humanitarian Actors in Bangladesh (NAHAB), with a national organisation (DAM) leading the platform at national level⁶⁸ ▪ Set-up of district platforms including a wide range of actors (LNNGOs, the Government, media, the private sector), such as the Humanitarian Actor Platform (HAP) in Kurigram district. ▪ Consortia between LNHAs are being established to increase scale and reach in Bangladesh. ▪ In April & May 2017, 15 LNHAs took the lead in the coordinated need assessment in the flash flood affected Upazilas of Khaliyazuri and Mohangonj in Netrokona District, done by NAHAB) and triggered by the Humanitarian coordination task team.⁶⁹ ▪ In May 2017, 7 LNHAs in Barguna and Patuakhali formed for the first time disaster standing teams at their organization headquarter level.⁷⁰ ▪ Formation of the Bangladesh Women Right Organisation Humanitarian Platform, for a greater engagement of WRO and mainstreaming of the gender in Humanitarian Responses ▪ Gender task force at Potuakhali, Kishoreganj, Sunamganj, Gaibandha, Sirajganj, Kurigram, Satkhira and Barguna	▪ There were a lot of attempts, successful and unsuccessful, to form LNHAs consortia (VEDCO, AYAWAD & SORUDA in Lamwo for instance) where they better learnt how to collaborate, write proposals collectively and negotiate. ▪ Larger organisations are welcoming placements of staff from smaller organisations to increase capacity.⁷¹ ▪ In June 2017, 25 Local and National Humanitarian Actors in Karamoja formed an Alliance aimed at empowering local and national humanitarian actors to advocate on preparedness: review of the districts disaster related policies, advocacy to the local authorities, etc. .⁷² ▪ In November 2017, 18 LNHAs in 10 target districts developed district budget issue papers used to influence the District budgeting process for financial year 2018/2019 National budget.⁷³
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⁶⁸ Oxfam Novib, 'DRAFT Reporting to IKEA Y2-27_March.Docx'.

⁶⁹ Oxfam Novib, 'Titles Outcomes Harvested in 2017 for the ELNHA Project'.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Oxfam Novib, 'DRAFT Reporting to IKEA Y2-27_March.Docx'.

⁷³ Oxfam Novib, 'Draft Titles Outcomes Harvested in December 2017 for the Elnha Project in Uganda'.

Furthermore, the HCDF process, particularly the JAP, resulted in **new and increased horizontal collaboration and coordination** among actors in both countries. This was reported by the local NGOs themselves, but also by the district governments, who recognised knowing more about NGOs' activities in their district, compared to before the project. They learnt for the first time to collaborate on specific issues and to agree on their needs and on an appropriate roadmap for all at district level. The project also allowed the successful integration of the media and, though to a lesser extent, the private sector during those coordination meetings, which was unprecedented.

By acting now as a network, as a collective of actors as opposed to individual stakeholders, their voice has been massively amplified. They can be heard as a single, united voice, which is way more powerful than a multitude of uncoordinated voices. This voice was further amplified by the increase of confidence for each actor.

In **Uganda**, even if the examples of **increased coordination and collaboration** are numerous, stakeholders also reported increased competition for two main reasons:

- Development actors who were initially not involved in emergency response but included in the ELNHA are now also willing to access humanitarian funding;
- Most actors now know what the requirements are to obtain INGO/donor funding and feel confident enough to handle them.

This increased competition was however not reported in **Bangladesh**, most likely as competition for funding was already sharp between a lot of different actors before the project.

Lastly, some stakeholders from Oxfam in country and LNHAs regretted the fact that the INGO/UN sector was not sufficiently included in the HCDF process, and that, as a result, the voice of LNHAs was not heard as much as it could have been.

IV.2.3. LNHAs are enabled to lead in humanitarian preparedness and response (SPACE)

The HCDF process helps LNHAs to obtain funding as it requires NGOs to build their capacities and internal policies beforehand. It also creates a switch in their mind-set to search for more funding.

This increase in funding obtained by NGOs during the project lifetime in both countries is noticeable from the examples below.

Table 2: Illustrations of funding obtained due to the project

Funding obtained at district level	▪ During the 2017 flood, HRGF, MMS, SUK, SHARP, NSKF, Dip Shetu delivered the response in 45 days as a Consortium by mobilising 15 lacks. ▪ Local NGOs developed a joint influencing plan that led to the mobilisation of BDT 20million (approx.	▪ A response took place across April-September, with interventions in WASH, Protection, ESVL to support refugees from South Sudan and host communities in West Nile and Lamwo, and drought-affected communities in Karamoja. Almost 22,000 people benefitted from the

	20,000 Euro) to respond to the floods in the Kurigram district.⁷⁴ ▪ The NGO SMS managed to obtain funding from the Netherlands following the proposal training to implement their solar home system and home cooking project.	response. Some actors are now receiving direct funding from donors.⁷⁵ ▪ Local actors' response through the HRGF evidenced their capacity to implement with quality. As a result, TEAR Fund gave a grant of 187,929 pounds to PAG – SD to implement WASH activities in West Nile, while UNHCR has given funds to Rural Community Empowerment Initiative (RICE – West Nile) to implement an Environment and Energy Project in the Rhino Camp and Imvepi Settlements in Arua District. ▪ In November 2017, URDMC, a local humanitarian actor operating in Northern Uganda, secured for the first time direct funding from an international donor. In June 2017, Lamwo local government secured funds from UNHCR to finance its contingency plan for an amount of UGX 1,6 billion.⁷⁶ URDMC is now an implementing partner for Oxfam.
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Despite successes, the funding obtained only benefitted a minority of the LNHAs who took part in the HCDF process. In both countries, primary and secondary data⁷⁷ suggest that the HCDF process created expectations that LNHAs would access more funding due to international commitments and provided evidence at country level that this was possible.

The ELNHA managed to convince local actors to undertake significant changes in their organisation for the prospect of accessing more funding and improving humanitarian response. But organisations who failed to obtain funding felt disappointed, and it is **possible they may lose interest in the HCDF process**, which is considered as time-consuming, especially by organisations with lesser means.

In both countries, **LNHAs and national actors in particular are increasingly advocating for more space for LNHAs**. For instance, in **Bangladesh**, NAHAB applied to be a lead actor in 2018 to implement activities aiming to **promote** the localisation agenda in the country. Amongst others, these activities include a country-wide mapping of district-level of LNHAs, workshops with the media to promote localisation, and advocacy to set up a pool fund for LNHAs in **Bangladesh**.

While the mindset of LNHAs effectively switched and the localisation agenda benefitted from a momentum, this switch did not appear to have reached the donors and NGO community as much as the LNHAs, as reported by a few LNHAs interviewed and as witnessed during the recent emergency responses. For instance, during the 2017 Rohingya crisis in **Bangladesh**, few LNHAs were included in the response. Donors and INGOs reverted to traditional modalities of response and started recruiting staff from local organisations.

⁷⁴ Oxfam Novib, 'DRAFT Reporting to IKEA Y2-27_March.Docx'.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Oxfam Novib, 'Draft Titles Outcomes Harvested in December 2017 for the Elnha Project in Uganda'.

⁷⁷ Oxfam Novib, '1. HCDF Modality SWOT - 01Dec2017 (002)'.

Lastly, after two rounds of HCDF, LNHAs would like the HCDF to allow for more practical learning and implementation of the learnings acquired during the capacity building activities, as mentioned previously.

IV.3. Lessons learnt of the HCDF process and funding mechanism at reinforcing local and national humanitarian systems

This section identifies the lessons learnt of both the HCDF process and funding mechanism with the aim to inform future attempts to reinforce local and national humanitarian systems. It looks at the changes implemented by the LNHAs to increase the humanitarian capacity and meet humanitarian requirements, but also at the main individual takeaways for each project stakeholders and at the learnings collected by the programme team throughout its implementation.

IV.3.1. Changes carried out by LNHAs to increase their humanitarian capacity

The capacity-building initiatives led to changes in the policies and procedures of the organisations, thus increasing their ability to design and implement emergency response activities. Indeed, LNHAs all reported having made the necessary changes or being in the process of making changes as a result of attending the capacity-building initiatives. Some LNHAs, whose representatives stated that their organisation was involved in an emergency response, also reported having benefitted from these changes in policies and procedures.

These changes fall into three different categories:

- Review of their vision / mission statements and objectives to suit CHS & Humanitarian Principles;
- Creation or review of their policies and procedures: financial management, procurement, accounting, HR, governance;
- Integration of new humanitarian practices such as cash transfer programming, contingency planning, gender, etc.

Some examples of the changes implemented in the policies and procedures are documented in the table below:

Table 3: Examples of changes in the policies and procedures of participating organisations in both countries

	Bangladesh	Uganda
CHS & Humanitarian Principles	- 18 LNHAs in Kurigram updated their mission statements to integrate emergency preparedness and response. - From July to December 2017, eight LNHAs have finalized and institutionalised their humanitarian mission and vision at organizational level in Kurigram district.⁷⁸	- CAPDA, a local NGO, realigned their Board of Governors. - By July 2017, four LNHAs (Caritas Kotido, Manna Development Agency, Karamoja Peace and Development Agency and Glory-Uganda) reviewed their missions and strategic plans to integrate emergency preparedness and response in the Kotido and Kaabong districts.⁷⁹ - In July 2017, SORUDA, a local humanitarian actor in Northern Uganda, finalized the updating of its strategic plan, including adding a humanitarian component.⁸⁰
Cash Transfer Programming	- In December 2017, SKS, a Bangladeshi national humanitarian actor, implemented mobile money transfers to support rehabilitation activities for the 150 households affected by early monsoon floods in the Gaibandha district.⁸¹	- In October 2017, SORUDA, VEDCO and AWYAD integrated unconditional cash into their humanitarian programs for the first time.⁸²
Contingency Planning	- Six lead actors, 12 non-lead actors,⁸³ three UDMC and one UzDMC set up a contingency plan. - 10 LNGOs, five schools and five Government institutions in Gaibandha and Sirajganj districts received awareness raising training on fire extinguishing and earthquakes in July 2017.⁸⁴	- Six DDMCs in ELNHA districts are now all functional and coordinating.⁸⁶

⁷⁸ Oxfam Bangladesh, 'Draft Titles Harvested Outcomes 2nd round OH Bangladesh (Jan. 2018)'.

⁷⁹ Oxfam Novib, 'Draft Titles Outcomes Harvested in December 2017 for the Eluha Project in Uganda', 2017.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Oxfam Novib, 'DRAFT Reporting to IKEA Y2-27_March.Docx'.

⁸² Oxfam Novib, 'DRAFT Reporting to IKEA Y2-27_March.Docx'.

⁸³ eight lead actors according to Oxfam Bangladesh, 'Outcome Harvesting Writeshop ELNHA Bangladesh'.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Oxfam Novib, 'DRAFT Reporting to IKEA Y2-27_March.Docx'.

	- In June 2017, the Union Disaster Management Committees (UDMCs) of three unions in Tala Upazila, Satkhira district, agreed to incorporate humanitarian aspects into their yearly budget. ⁸⁵	- In November 2017, 10 LNHAs in the Agago district collected and analysed data on disaster occurrence, which has informed planning and coordination amongst key stakeholders in the district. ⁸⁷ - In July 2017, the Kaabong district's local government updated its contingency plan to reflect the current situations/hazards. ⁸⁸
Financial Management & Procurement	- In June 2017, 2 local NGOs in the Satkhira district reviewed their financial policy to incorporate humanitarian aspects. ⁸⁹ - In November 2017, 9 lead actors developed emergency logistic and financial policy. ⁹⁰	- In May 2017, GLORY Uganda in the Kaabong district designed and adopted new financial and procurement policies and systems in their organisation that suit humanitarian intervention. Uganda now has a procurement plan to guide their procurement processes and has also created a Procurement Committee comprising of five members. ⁹¹
Proposal Development	- A lead actor developed a proposal for the first time. They used to hire a local consultant to do so. - A lead actor used the proposal format from the training he attended and got funding from a donor	- Gains in the ability to write a proposal and secure funds. - HRGF capacity building: Out of 22 submitted, 12 were invited to attend a workshop in Kampala and present their proposal to other LNHAs.
Human Resources	In August 2017, three local NGOs in Satkhira district reviewed their HR policy incorporating humanitarian aspects. ⁹²	

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Oxfam Novib, 'Draft Titles Outcomes Harvested in December 2017 for the Elnha Project in Uganda'.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Oxfam Bangladesh, 'Outcome Harvesting Writeshop ELNHA Bangladesh'.

⁹⁰ Oxfam Bangladesh, 'Draft Titles Harvested Outcomes 2nd round OH Bangladesh (Jan. 2018)'.

⁹¹ Oxfam Novib, 'Draft Titles Outcomes Harvested in December 2017 for the Elnha Project in Uganda'.

⁹² Oxfam Bangladesh, 'Draft Titles Harvested Outcomes 2nd round OH Bangladesh (Jan. 2018)'.

The changes noticed by the consultant are non-exhaustive as only four out of 15 implementation districts were visited but are however deemed representative of all the changes carried out by LNHAs as part of the project

IV.3.2. Learning done by the Oxfam/project team that can be used to reinforce local and national humanitarian systems

The HCDF process has been implemented both as a pilot process and a funding mechanism. **Its implementation has been relatively iterative**, with tests and adjustments along the way, and freedom given to supporting partners to make changes to the process where they believed necessary and appropriate for the district(s)⁹³ in which they implemented said process.

To capture the diversity in the implementation of ELNHA project activities in [Bangladesh](#) and [Uganda](#), including the HCDF process, **the ELNHA team has instilled a strong learning culture within the project**. Firstly, Oxfam teams in [Bangladesh](#), [Uganda](#) and Netherlands organise monthly learning sessions via skype as well as regular thematic workshops⁹⁴ with the all the ELNHA teams and some of the supporting partners.

Secondly, the supporting partners and LNHAs collect and share the lessons learnt through different mechanisms, such as:

- The collection of perceived outcomes from LNHAs by the supporting partners during **Outcome Harvesting sessions**. Those collected outcomes were then linked to the outcomes presented in the project's theory of change by Oxfam;
- The ELNHA team and project stakeholders collected baseline and midline Key Performance Indicators (KPI) at outcome level, which were then disaggregated at country and district levels. The ELNHA team conducted **sense-making workshops** with LNHAs to collectively analyse the differences between the baseline and midline values. Those workshops were organised in May 2018 in both countries and did not place when the review was conducted;
- A **Project mid-term learning review** was organized in 2017 in The Hague, bringing together ELNHA team members, staff from supporting partner organisations and lead actors;
- The ELNHA in-country team then organised regular meetings with different project stakeholders.

Thirdly, the ELNHA commissioned a mid-term evaluation and will also have a final evaluation. It also commissioned two internal and external real-time learning reviews: the present learning review that focuses on the HCDF process, and the HRGF learning review conducted by an Oxfam team September 2017.

⁹³ In Bangladesh and Uganda, supporting partners are sometimes managing two districts.

⁹⁴ For instance, a MEAL workshop for some of the staff involved in the project.

As a result, and partly because this process is demand-driven and encourages stakeholders to raise their voice, the HCDF process generated considerable learnings and key take-aways for the project stakeholders, summarised in the table below.

Positive lessons learnt, i.e. good practices that could be replicated, are colour-coded in green, negative lessons-learnt, i.e. suggested changes in the implementation, in red, and lessons learnt that are neither positive nor negative, in blue. The key takeaways were regrouped under three themes: project design and monitoring, partnership, capacity-building delivery mechanisms). Finally, as some of the lessons-learnt were specific to one/some type of stakeholders (Oxfam, SP, LNHA), the table below specifies which stakeholders referred to the take-aways (Yes or No)

Table 4: HCDF process learning/key take-away for the project's stakeholders

Topic	Stakeholders			Learning/Key take-aways
	Oxfam	SP	LNHA	
Project design & monitoring				
Length of the process	Yes	Yes	Yes	The process is demand-driven to increase ownership. It took more time to engage and have stakeholders participate in the process than initially anticipated, especially at the beginning when it was necessary to explain the process to LNHAs and to ensure buy-in. When designing the project, the ELNHA team underestimated the time required to get the relevant actors on board, and to impulse a change in the mind-sets from a top-down approach (implemented by INGO) to a bottom-up approach (locally driven and owned). Indeed, LNHAs had reportedly never been involved in such a locally-owned and driven initiative. Consulted stakeholders felt that the project should be extended by two years.
Coordination and collaboration	Yes	Yes	Yes	The HCDF process fosters collaboration at district level, which ensures transparency and mutual accountability and encourages synergies. It allows LNNGOs to work with a great variety of stakeholders and lead to the set-up and strengthening of informal and formal partnerships and networks, e.g. consortium between LNNGOs, local NGO networks, etc.
Inclusivity vs. impact	Yes	Yes	No	The inclusivity of all stakeholders, i.e. given a chance to participate in the process; is fundamental to reduce tensions and not to harm power dynamics at district level. Within Oxfam, mixed opinions between inclusivity because it is perceived to reduce effectiveness, as development actors are also included.
Tracking the project outcome	Yes	Yes	No	While a demand-driven process increases the relevance and appropriateness of the project, it makes the assessment of effectiveness and result-tracking more difficult than for a more typical top-down capacity-building initiative.
Partnership				
Local SPs	Yes	Yes	Yes	SPs are key in ensuring the local uptake of the HCDF process

ELNHA team structure	Yes	No	No	Within the ELNHA team, current team members believe that adding a partnership expert to the ELNHA team would have been enriching. He/she could have helped setting up the partnership agreement between Oxfam & SP and SP & LA for instance.
Appropriate mind-set for equal partnerships	Yes	No	No	While the localisation agenda is gaining momentum, the SPs and LNHAs are increasingly willing to establish equal partnerships. But many LNHAs are not ready for this yet. They were still expecting Oxfam to take the lead on design, implementation and partnership agreement. Most LNHAs, even the biggest, are used to being implementing partners, with limited involvement in the design. Changing those habits and mind-set will take time.
Involving SP earlier in the process	Yes	Yes	No	Involving SP earlier in the process would limit the misunderstandings at the beginning of the process and increase ownership.
Capacity-building delivery mechanisms				
Perceived-needs vs. real-needs for innovative delivery mechanisms	Yes	Yes	No	When exposed to innovative delivery mechanisms, LNHAs understand their added value. Yet, SPs and LNHAs were not proposing innovative delivery mechanisms on their own (e.g. placement, secondment, drills), without suggestions and support from Oxfam, not being aware of said innovative mechanisms. As a result, SPs and lead actors mostly proposed classroom trainings. There is thus a difference between their perceived capacity-building needs, i.e. what they think they need to build their capacity, and their real capacity-build needs, i.e. what delivery-methods they actually need to build their capacity. As such, a complete demand-driven process, wherein only perceived needs are prioritised, is not always the most effective solution. For the first HCDF process at district level, it may be necessary to mix demand-driven with need-driven elements, i.e. deciding for them on the type and modality of training. This was what Oxfam tried to do in both countries, balancing between perceived and real needs. As an ELNHA team member put it, there is a "conflict between supporting the LNHAs and letting go" activities that are requested by LNHAs but that the ELNHA team considered as less/not relevant.
Coaching & Mentoring	Yes	Yes	Yes	Stakeholders considered that adding a coaching and mentoring component to the project would have helped catering the capacity-building of organisations, because, following a training, LNHAS would have been coached on how to apply the content of the training to their organisation. Coaching & mentoring was provided by Oxfam (e.g. secondment) and was reportedly proven to be successful and a real added-value.

HRGF HCDF	vs.	Mixed views	Yes	Yes	While all stakeholders considered that the two funding mechanisms should remain separated, they advocated for greater inclusion of the HRGF in the HCDF process. HRGF is indeed a unique opportunity for LNHAs to put their learning into practice. Proposed measures were: - To put aside a percentage of the fund for LNHAs engaged in the process in Bangladesh and Uganda, - To start the implementation of the HRGF after the HCDF process (and its capacity-building initiatives) fully takes place to increase the chances that LNHAs participating in the process obtain a grant
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Based on the experience of both countries, all **Oxfam interviewees considered the HCDF process applicable and relevant to most contexts**, considering that:

- The HCDF process only acts as a general framework and can be adapted to the country and district specificities, as suggested in IV.1.1.;
- The HCDF process, at least in first stage, is inclusive of all relevant district stakeholders. This a positive outcome of the project and limits the risk of potential tensions at district level. In later stages, the implementer can focus on the actors that are actually involved in emergency response. The ELNHA team expects it to be a natural selection process as the partners that are least interested in the process are likely to disengage early.

This finding is corroborated by the interest demonstrated by other actors. Within Oxfam for instance, other country offices are contemplating the HCDF process for proposals on localization for countries such as Niger, Mali, Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Mauritania, and Chad.⁹⁵ Outside of Oxfam, other actors are interested in the process, like the Start Fund in **Bangladesh**, which is taking forward the principle of quality funding to local actors and supporting independent design and implementation of humanitarian responses.⁹⁶

At country-level, SPs and LNHAAs from the 15 districts of implementation expressed the opinion that the HCDF process could be applicable to the rest of their respective districts.

The ELNHA team has prepared **generic guidelines on the ELNHA project, and the HCDF process specifically**, in order for other Oxfam offices and interested actors to implement or adapt the HCDF process if required. According to one Oxfam interviewee, the HCDF and HRGF guidelines are designed to be shared with members of the Charter for Change.

The pilot phase in **Bangladesh** and **Uganda** allowed willing actors to pilot the process in other countries or to implement another demand-driven process to learn from this first experiment. Learnings and lessons include:

- Going directly for a fully demand-driven process is not necessarily the most efficient, effective and relevant solution. Changing the mind-set of local actors takes time. These actors had never or rarely been exposed to innovative delivery mechanisms, requiring a deeper involvement from Oxfam in some of the steps and in the proposal review process. An alternative would be to involve Oxfam with the supporting partners for the first HCDF process for supporting partners and lead actors to understand how the process works. This involvement could then be scaled back in the second HCDF process.
- It is important to involve supporting partners from the earlier phase of the design as it increases the likelihood for the project to be further localised, and for the supporting partners to be able to manage the process with lighter support from Oxfam.
- The time required for a project aiming at fostering a systemic change was underestimated. It takes time to get the ball rolling and this should be accounted for

⁹⁵ Oxfam Novib, 'IKEAF Interim Report ELNHA'.

⁹⁶ Oxfam Novib.

when designing the project. It is the project stakeholder's opinion in both countries that the HCDF implementation phase should last for an extra one to two years, so five years in total, to have a sustainable impact at district and national levels.

- The HCDF process should be implemented alongside other activities such as an equivalent to the HRGF and advocacy activities to the INGOs and government to provide space to LNHAs; and not as a standalone mechanism. The prospect of funding is a strong motivational factor for LNHAs to engage in the process and welcome the capacity-building exercises needed to improve humanitarian response. The HCDF mechanism could be implemented as a stand-alone only in countries where LNHAs already have access to more funding opportunities.

According to the ELNHA team, a pre-requisite for the implementation of process is that international actors willing to support the HCDF process support the charter for change and their preference for equal partnerships.

V. Conclusions

The implementation of the HCDF process in both [Bangladesh](#) and [Uganda](#) has demonstrated that, from project stakeholders' perspectives, the HCDF is an effective tool to build individual and organisational capacities, due to the mix of capacity-building initiatives and "learning by doing" that the process provides to participating LNHAs. Compared to a more traditional top-down capacity-building programme, its inclusiveness of all relevant and interested actors, demand-driven approach, and adaptation to the varying needs of the districts/areas of implementation, allow the programme to bring a systematic change at a district and national levels.

However, the HCDF process is a lengthy and resource-intensive process, requiring at least a year of implementation, and the implication of both an in-country team and supporting partners. Experience in the two countries highlighted that a one-year implementation process is barely sufficient, especially as it takes approximately a year for relevant stakeholders to fully understand the process and ensure buy-in.

While the HCDF process is meant to be exclusively demand-driven with LNHAs identifying their own needs, the two pilots highlighted the difficulty to keep it fully demand-driven as supporting partners struggled to implement the process on their own. Furthermore, even if the process was to be executed exclusively by the supporting partners, the demand-driven activities suggested by LNHAs do not always appear as the most effective, because their perceived needs may be different from their real needs when it comes to capacity building. Should the HCDF process be implemented in others districts in [Bangladesh](#) or [Uganda](#), or in other countries, the balance between a perceived-needs and an actual needs process would require to be thought-through and contextualised.

Based on these two pilots, the HCDF, as both a process and a funding mechanism, appears to have the potential to be an appropriate tool to increase the Strength, Voice and Space of Local and National Humanitarian Actors, thus help meeting the Grand Bargain localisation

commitments. As such, it could be implemented by other international actors contemplating programmes aiming to strengthen and raise the voice of local actors.

VI. Learning and Recommendations

The HCDF process as implemented in [Bangladesh](#) and [Uganda](#) has generated significant learnings and good practices that Oxfam, or any other implementer, interested in implementing the process should replicate:

- The SP should be as inclusive as possible at the first stage of the process when mapping potential partners. It should at first include all relevant and interested LNHAs, even if this means proposing development actors and actors that have never been involved in humanitarian responses to join in the HCDF process. Not only it would limit tensions between actors at the district level but may lead to some of the most positive project outcomes, i.e. informal and formal collaboration and coordination within the same district. There would then be a “natural selection” with the least interested actors pulling out of the process. Depending on the context, the SP could also then choose to select the most experienced partners, whose skills, knowledge and practices have the most potential to increase during the short project time frame.
- The HCDF process is an excellent tool to sensitise LNHAs on the localisation commitments taken by the international community at the Grand Bargain.
- The implementer should let the supporting partner and LNHAs manage the process as much as possible to foster ‘learning by doing’ and to encourage coordination and collaboration.

On the other hand, some areas for improvement regarding the HCDF include:

- The HCDF process can be a lengthy process, especially the first time, because it takes time to engage with actors and build momentum. Any organisation willing to implement it should factor this time in the planning and design, as it can otherwise reduce the duration of capacity-building activities.
- While this is a demand-driven process, wherein LNHAs prioritise their needs collectively on the basis of the HUCOCA and without external interference, supporting partners are likely to need support in implementing the HCDF process, especially if they are not included in the HCDF process design.
- LNHAs will not come up with innovative capacity-building delivery mechanisms by themselves and are most likely going to opt for delivery mechanisms they have been exposed to in the past such as workshops or trainings, which are reportedly not the most effective instruments for adult learning.

The recommendations below are suggested to benefit the ongoing and future HCDF processes, implemented in [Bangladesh](#) and [Uganda](#), as well as in other countries. These recommendations fall into five categories: selection of supporting partners, process design, process implementation, MEAL

Selection of supporting partners

- In their call for EOI to recruit supporting partners, Oxfam, or any NGO implemented the HCDF process, should put in writing that the executive director should be involved in the HCDF process. EOI clearly stating how he/she should be involved should be prioritised.

Process design:

- Starting with a fully-fledged demand-driven process for the HCDF process may cause delays and loss of effectiveness as supporting partners and LNHAs stumble around the process at the beginning. Instead, for the first phase of implementation, the implementer could opt for a similar process enforced in **Uganda** in 2017. First, after doing a first JAP, the supporting partner would conduct innovative delivery mechanisms and cover a core humanitarian curriculum. Second, let the supporting partner apply a demand-driven HCDF process. Should this design be selected, the full HCDF process should then last for 1.5 years instead of 1 year.
- The supporting partners should be selected before the design of the process, in order for them to input on the design and better understand it during the implementation phase. This would also reduce the support needed from Oxfam/the process implementer.
- The stakeholder mapping should include a humanitarian capacity assessment. It would help selecting lead actors, and would allow prioritizing which INGOs should attend the various capacity-building initiatives.
- The HCDF guidelines should be formalised and list the total budget available per district, and the list eligible expenses.
- The HCDF should put aside a small percentage of the amount available to fund practical activities, giving the opportunity to participants to learn by doing. For instance, these activities could include community-based disaster risk reduction.

Process implementation:

- The supporting partner should systematically sign a MoU with the lead actors permitting them to autonomously implement their HCDF-funded activities, manage their budget, and report on their activities. Not only, this would reduce tensions, but also deepen learning by doing of lead actors.
- Oxfam and the supporting partners should put a stronger emphasis in involving the INGOs and UN agencies in the HCDF process. It could for instance help the supporting partner and the ELNHA team increase the placement/visit and secondment opportunities, and therefore increase the learning by doing.
- Oxfam, or any other implementer, should strengthen the capacity of SPs to manage partnerships as SPs have never or rarely been in charge of a funding agreement with other LINGOs.
- Similarly, to take the varying needs of LNHAs into account, the ELNHA team, and interested implementers, should set coaching and mentoring networks. These networks could include staff members from INGOs and UN agencies, but also representatives of LNHAs, who successfully attended capacity-building initiatives and subsequently implemented the training content.

- The lead actor selection process should be accessible to all, transparent with a clear set of criteria shared by all, but should also give priority to actors with a strong humanitarian capacity.

MEAL:

- As part of its MEAL framework, ELNHA should collect data from stakeholders not involved or who disengaged from the process. It would allow them to monitor the inclusiveness of the process, as well as its perceived lack of relevance and effectiveness.

VII. Appendices

VII.1. Terms of reference

Terms of Reference

Humanitarian Capacity Development Review - ELNHA Project

February 2018

Background ELNHA project

The Empowering Local and National Humanitarian Actors (ELNHA) project is a three-year initiative ending in December 2018, funded by the Ikea Foundation for a total amount of €7,343,603.

The ELNHA project aims at a better sharing of power and resources in the humanitarian sector between international humanitarian actors and local and national ones. The underlying assumption is that having local and national humanitarian actors (LNHA) in the driving seat for emergency preparedness and response shall allow vulnerable people in disaster prone areas to benefit from better humanitarian response.

To achieve the envisioned systemic change in the humanitarian sector, the ELNHA project is pursuing three main strategies in parallel. First of all, the capacity of LNHA is strengthened so that they can lead humanitarian action (STRENGTH). Secondly, the project promotes LNHA voice through facilitating the creation of a strong locally-led domestic humanitarian agenda in their countries (VOICE). Thirdly, international NGOs and donors are influenced, based on solid evidence, so that they provide more space and means to LNHA to lead humanitarian action (SPACE). See the project ToC in Annex 1.

ELNHA focuses on two countries, Bangladesh and Uganda, which are both acutely at risk from humanitarian crises. In both countries, activities are undertaken at national level and in selected districts (6 in Uganda and 9 in Bangladesh). Direct beneficiaries of ELNHA are LNHA who get capacity and support to play a leading role in humanitarian response now and in the future. Indirect beneficiaries are the vulnerable men, women and children who will benefit from more effective and appropriate humanitarian response. The range of direct beneficiaries in both country, at national and sub-national levels, is fairly broad and includes government institutions, civil society organizations and private sector operating in the country contributing to preparedness and response.

The ELNHA project is implemented by dedicated project teams in Bangladesh, Uganda and at Global level, composed of Oxfam staff. In addition, in both countries, supporting partners were selected among local LNHA to co-implement the project; there are 6 supporting partners in Bangladesh and 3 in Uganda.

The project follows a **process** to engage and convene LNHA, and to facilitate participatory definition of collective capacity development priorities. One **mechanism** used is ELNHA's Humanitarian Capacity Development Fund (HCDF), to which local actors can submit proposals to fund capacity development activities.

Coordination and collaboration amongst LNHA also foster collective influence (Voice); at the same time, the Humanitarian Response Grant Facility (HRGF) set up by ELNHA provides the opportunity for individual LNHA to demonstrate their ability to design and implement quality humanitarian projects, hence enhancing their individual strength and voice.

Introduction Humanitarian Capacity Development Process and Fund

The ELNHA project promotes Local and National Humanitarian actors to take a leadership role – both in humanitarian response as well as in defining a capacity development road-map in the districts it operates in. The ELNHA Humanitarian Capacity Development **strategy** outlines a *demand-driven* process for capacity development, with Oxfam and Oxfam’s ELNHA team playing a catalyzing role. The strategy takes a *system perspective* and identifies capacity and leadership at three levels: the District (and national) humanitarian system; the LNHA (organizational level); the individual humanitarian workers (staff, volunteers).

To stimulate the development of the collective LNHA agenda/priorities in capacity development **two processes** were set in motion by the project in the project districts:

- Convene LNHA to reflect on current capacity for response (through discussion and validation of a Humanitarian Country Capacity Assessment and proposed capacity objectives (**HUCOCA**) and to define a longer-term humanitarian agenda and Joint Action Plan (**JAP**) and shorter-term priorities and activities;
- Allocate funding to capacity development activities/results prioritized and proposed by the District. The Humanitarian Capacity Development Fund (**HCDF**) is an opportunity to fund proposals/actions defined by the Districts (80%) as well as from national level (20%).

ELNHA’s Humanitarian Capacity Development Fund (HCDF) is designed as a funding grant under the ELNHA project, established to support local and national humanitarian actors to achieve *their* (collective) agenda and action plans towards strengthened capacity of the ‘humanitarian system’ to lead and deliver humanitarian preparedness and response.

To support the process of self-determined capacity development, ‘Supporting Partners’, with the ELNHA team, coordinate the above-mentioned process as well as the development of HCDF proposals from the Districts to address the selected priority capacity gaps. This set-up is so designed to promote local ownership of the capacity development activities.

In addition to the District-level process, the ELNHA team identifies and offers additional capacity development opportunities from national level if these are not available at the district level (offers from national organisations/institutes or from Oxfam; opportunities for exchanges). This includes training/learning (trajectories) as well as real-time accompaniment (e.g. during responses, influencing processes, etc.).

The Guidelines for the HCDF include a.o. principles, description of the fund, who can apply, how it will work, criteria for selection. The guidelines were revised early 2018, based on the lessons from 2016-2017.

The demand-driven and flexible nature of the Humanitarian Capacity Development strategy provided opportunity to LNHA to identify their capacity development needs and activities (as organizations as well at district/country-wide levels). This means that both the process as well as the choice of capacity development activities and resources are different per context – building on the preference and availability defined in the District with support of the ELNHA teams.

During the external **Mid-Term Evaluation** and during the **Mid-Term Review** meeting in 2017 various lessons were captured on the HCDF modality and the dynamics it stimulated. Some of the identified changes include increased horizontal collaboration between LNHA, stronger engagement between Local and national non-governmental organizations (LNGOs) and government bodies, more knowledge and confidence on a variety of humanitarian topics, and the engagement of a large number of LNHA around humanitarian work. Some challenges were also

identified, such as tensions around the structure for implementation of HCDF activities (e.g. role and position of Support Partners, and Lead actors; division of responsibilities and participation), assuring the quality of activities (content, modalities/methods – choice for workshop/training.), managing the large diversity in capacity and interest between LNHA (balance between ‘joint activities’ and more tailored organizational development, managing expectations (diverse motivations to join the HCDF process,) and balancing the Districts-level processes and timelines with the project targets and schedule.

Building on the learning already captured, this review plans to dig deeper into *the value added of the support received through the ELNHA demand-driven process of capacity development*.

The review will take place in **March-April 2018**. This is after the second round JAP/District Priority Plans and at the start of the implementation of the second round of HCDF proposals for 2018 in both Uganda and Bangladesh.

Purpose

From the perspective of LNHA, Oxfam teams and other stakeholders: *What was the value of the support received through the ELNHA demand-driven process for capacity development?*

Objectives

1. To assess the effectiveness, appropriateness and efficiency of the ELNHA humanitarian capacity development **approach and implementation model** towards increased (and sustainable) humanitarian capacity, looking at each step of the process::
 - the HUCOCA and validation process;
 - the Joint Action Plan (JAP) process;
 - HCDF proposal development;
 - HCDF funding allocation;
 - the structure of activity management and implementation (ELNHA team, Supporting partners, local actors);
 - the demand-driven approach for identification and sourcing of capacity;
 - the engagement of local government, private sector and non-governmental organizations in the process;
2. To assess the effectiveness, appropriateness and efficiency of the identified **capacity development activities and results** towards increased (and sustainable) humanitarian capacity in terms of:
 - the District (and national) humanitarian system;
 - the LNHA (organizational level);
 - individual humanitarian workers (staff, volunteers)
3. To provide a comparative analysis of **how the contexts have influenced** the design and implementation of the modalities in Bangladesh and Uganda; Related to:
 - The steps in the process
 - The capacity development investments
 - The role of the local NGOs and of local government
4. To provide **recommendations** for the improvement in the remaining project period and to inform future uses of similar modalities in other contexts.
5. To identify **lessons learned** which can contribute to the evidence base on how humanitarian capacity development (approaches, funding mechanisms) aiming for capacity and leadership of LNHAs are effectively

designed and implemented, how local actors perceive them and how they evaluate the effects on their humanitarian capacity.

Modality of work

The assignment will combine a desk review of the ELNHA project and HCDF documentation (e.g. guidelines, proposals, evaluations, workshop materials, etc.) and field interviews in Uganda and Bangladesh of selected Oxfam office staff, the ELNHA team, the Support partners, LNHA as well as other stakeholders as relevant.

The assignment will produce an action-oriented report (25-30pp) for policy makers and program staff in country and internationally to improve the design and implementation of capacity development approaches and mechanisms promoting LNHAs humanitarian capacity.

The assignment will contribute to the global humanitarian community's knowledge and understanding of humanitarian capacity development approaches and methods used which promote and develop capacity of local and national humanitarian actors (LNHAs) for emergency responses.

The consultant will be under the general oversight of ELNHA Global Program Manager, with communication with the Project Managers from Uganda and Bangladesh.

Budget

The consultant will be remunerated based on days worked, as per an agreed daily rate. Travel costs will be reimbursed by the Project based on actuals invoiced; the expenditure needs to be in line with the Guidance on travel expenses for international consultants (attach guideline) and previously approved by Oxfam. The fees, travel and accommodation will be covered from the global ELNHA budget: A-04725-04; budget line 137.

Tentative Timeline

The consultancy will start mid-March 2018 for a duration of **30 days**.

- 3 days: development of questions, methodology for review and approval by the ELNHA team + start desk review;
- 4days: desk review and interviews of global staff;
- travel to Uganda
- 8 days: Uganda field interviews
- travel to Bangladesh
- 8 days: Bangladesh field interviews
- travel home
- 5 days: write report
- (2 days travel)

Application

For application, please provide CV, references and quotation to Petra Righetti, ELNHA Program manager at: petra.righetti@oxfamnovib.nl, by 9 March, 2018.

VII.2. Learning review matrix

Learning questions	Working questions	How judgment will be formed	Sources	Pre-conditions
1/ To what extent did the HCDF's demand-driven approach and implementation process appropriately enable LNHA to increase their humanitarian capacity?	- How were the different project stakeholders (Oxfam, supporting partners, LNHAs, local governments, the private sector, the media, etc.) involved in the different steps of the project? - To what extent are the different steps in the process to engage LNHAs deemed appropriate by project stakeholders? How does each step contribute to the process? - What is the perceived added-value of the HCDF mechanism to increase humanitarian capacity? - How useful was ELHNA's project management structure (Oxfam, supporting partners, LNHAs) in	- Comparison of the theoretical process vs. implemented process in both countries. Perceptions of the different stakeholders (Oxfam, supporting partners, LNHAs, government, etc.) disaggregated by country - Interviewees' level of satisfaction with the different steps in the implementation process disaggregated by country - Review of the funding mechanism. Perceptions of Oxfam staff, LNHAs and supporting partners - Perceptions of the different stakeholders (Oxfam, supporting partners, LNHAs)	- Secondary data review - Process Mapping (Value Stream Mapping) - Interviews and FGDs with a sample of LNHA representatives in Bangladesh and Uganda - Interviews and FGDs with lead actors in Bangladesh and Uganda - Interviews with the project implementation team at global and country levels - Interviews with supporting partners: - Interviews with other project stakeholders: INGOs, UNs, local governments, the	Oxfam team in country successfully schedule interviews with all project stakeholders

	achieving increased capacity building?		private sector, the media
2/ To what extent did the HCDF activities were perceived to result in increased humanitarian capacity at individual, organisation and district/national levels?	- Which activities were deemed by project stakeholders to have resulted in the increase in capacity of individuals? Of organisations? At district/systemic level? - What have been the effects of the HCDF activities in increasing the capacity of individuals? Of organisations? At district/systemic level?	- Self-reported effects on one's capacity, his/her organisation's capacity, on actor actor's capacity at district level. - Self-reported examples of the effects on LNHA representatives' daily work, employing organisations, on the district's humanitarian context.	- Secondary data review - Interviews and FGDs with a sample LNHA representatives in Bangladesh and Uganda - Interviews and FGDs with lead actors in Bangladesh and Uganda - Interviews with the project implementation team at global and country levels - Interviews with supporting partners: - Interviews with other project stakeholders: INGOs, UNs, local governments, the private sector, the media
3/ What can be learnt from the HCDF process and funding mechanism who can inform future attempts	What changes did the LNHA bring about to increase their humanitarian response capacity?	Self-reported changes and examples from different stakeholders.	- Secondary data review - Interviews and FGDs with a sample LNHA representatives in

at reinforcing local and national humanitarian systems?	• What are the main individual takeaways for each project stakeholder? • Did the Oxfam/programme team learn from the process in a way that will affect future programming aiming at reinforcing local and national humanitarian systems?	• Perceptions of the different stakeholders (Oxfam, supporting partners, LNHAs, government, etc.) • Analysis of the project documentation. Perceptions from Oxfam and the supporting partners.	Bangladesh and Uganda • Interviews with the project implementation team at global and country levels • Interviews with supporting partners: • Interviews with other project stakeholders: local governments, the private sector, the media with all project stakeholders
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VII.3. Learning review program

Timeline	March	April				May				# days	# days
	W5	W1	W2	W3	W4	W1	W2	W3	W4	HJ	CC
Contract signature											
Inception Phase											
Inception call	26th									0,25	0,25
Desk Review for inception report										1	2
Inception report		6th								1	2
Integrate feedback into Inception report			9th							0,5	
Data Collection											
Desk review (data collection)											0
Data collection organisation (Uganda, Bangladesh)											
Remote interviews with global staff										1	0
Travel to Bangladesh			13th							0	1
Data collection Bangladesh			15th	20th						0	7
Travel to Uganda				21st						0	1
Data collection Uganda				22nd	26th					0	6
Travel from Uganda					27th					0	1
Prepare Final Report											
Data Analysis											3
Draft of the evaluation report										1	2
Integrate feedback into Final Report								23rd		0,5	0,5
Total # of days										5,25	25,75
										31	

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VII.5. List of interviewees

During the fieldwork, the learning review team interviewed the following stakeholders:

Type of stakeholder	Position	Data collection method
Global		
Oxfam global team	Humanitarian Policy Adviser	KII
Oxfam global team	Global Program manager	KII
Oxfam global team	Finance Officer	KII
Oxfam global team	Humanitarian Capacity Development Advisor	KII
Oxfam global team	MEAL Officer	KII
Bangladesh		
Government - Gaibandha	Chairman Belka U.P	Process mapping
Government - Kurigram	DDLC	KII
LNGO (Lead Actor) - Kurigram	Executive Director	FGD & process mapping
LNGO (Lead Actor) - Kurigram	Director	FGD & process mapping
LNGO (Lead Actor) - Kurigram	Project Director	FGD & process mapping
LNGO (Lead Actor) - Gaibandha	Assistant Director	Paired interview & process mapping
National partner & Supporting Partner	Executive Director	KII
LNGO (Lead Actor) - Gaibandha	Executive Director	Paired interview & process mapping
LNGO (non-lead actor) - Kurigram	Executive Director	Paired interview & process mapping
LNGO (non-lead actor) - Kurigram	Director	KII
LNGO (non-lead actor) - Kurigram	Executive Director	Paired interview & process mapping
LNGO (non-lead actor) - Gaibandha	Director	Paired interview & process mapping

LNGO (non-lead actor) - Gaibandha	Executive Director	Paired interview & process mapping
Media- Kurigram	Kurigram Correspondent	Process mapping
Media- Gaibandha	Senior Station Manager	KII & Process Mapping
Oxfam Bangladesh	Humanitarian Finance Officer	KII
Oxfam Bangladesh	Senior Cash Transfer Officer	KII
Oxfam Bangladesh	Senior MEAL Officer	KII
Oxfam Bangladesh	Humanitarian Programme Manager	KII
Oxfam Bangladesh	Humanitarian Capacity Building Coordinator	KII
Oxfam Bangladesh	Senior Influence Officer	KII
Oxfam Bangladesh	Project Manager	KII
Supporting Partner - Dhaka	Technical Coordinator	Paired Interview
Supporting Partner - Dhaka	Paired Interviews	Paired Interview
Supporting Partner- Kurigram	Project manager	FGD & Process mapping
Supporting Partner- Kurigram	Project Officer – Capacity building	FGD
Supporting Partner- Kurigram	Central monitoring officer	FGD & Process mapping
Supporting Partner- Kurigram	Director	Process mapping
Supporting Partner - Gaibandha	Assistant Director – Focal point ELNHA	FGD & Process mapping
Supporting Partner - Gaibandha		FGD & Process mapping
Supporting Partner - Gaibandha	PM/SP	FGD & Process mapping
Uganda		
Government - Arua	Government Representative	KII & Process mapping
Government - Koboko	Vermin Control Officer	Process mapping
Government - Koboko	District environment Officer	Process mapping
Government - Koboko	District local representative	Process mapping
LNGO- Arua	Project officer	FGD & Process mapping

LNGO- Koboko	MEAL Officer	FGD & Process mapping
LNGO- Koboko	Assistant Executive Director	FGD & Process mapping
LNGO-Arua	Chief Executive Officer	FGD & Process mapping
LNGO- Arua	Director	KII
LNGO- Koboko	Project Officer	FGD & Process mapping
LNGO- Arua	Project officer	FGD
LNGO- Arua	Executive Director	FGD & Process mapping
LNGO- Koboko	Field Coordinator	Process mapping
National partner	Deputy Executive Director	Paired Interview
National partner	Assistant Deputy Executive Director	Paired Interview
Network of NGOs– Arua	Chief Executive Officer	FGD & Process mapping
Network of NGOs– Koboko	Board Secretary	Process mapping
Media– Arua	Station Manager	Paired Interview & Process mapping
Media– Arua	Radio Manager	Paired Interview & Process mapping
Media – Koboko	Station Manager	Process mapping
Oxfam Uganda	Programme Manager	KII
Oxfam Uganda	Resilience Program Officer	KII
Oxfam Uganda	CTP Officer	KII
Oxfam Uganda	Humanitarian Capacity Development	KII
Supporting Partner – Karamoja	Project Officer	KII
Supporting Partner - Koboko	Project Officer	Process mapping
Supporting Partner – Acholi	Project manager	KII
Supporting Partner – Arua & Koboko	Program Coordinator	KII & Process mapping
Supporting Partner – Arua & Koboko	Program Manager	KII

Supporting Partner – Arua & Koboko	Program Coordinator	KII & Process mapping
Supporting Partner – Arua & Koboko	MEAL Officer	KII & Process mapping
University	Academic Registrar	KII

VII.6. Details on composition of learning review team

Hélène Juillard is a co-founder of Key Aid Consulting. She has over a decade of experience evaluating, researching and managing emergency and early recovery responses. She is a learning and development, and evaluation expert and has undertaken numerous evaluations across sectors, including for Concern Worldwide, UNHCR, Terre des Hommes, Oxfam, ACAPS, and MSF. She is part of the technical reference group to develop ALNAP guidelines “Evaluating Humanitarian Action” and for the past 2 years, she has been building UNICEF Senior Manager capacity in Humanitarian Evaluation. Helene has strong records of developing and delivering training with various audiences (from field team to senior OCHA managers) on topics such as evaluation, protection, humanitarianism or cash and market-based programming. She is a certified RedR trainer and a lecturer at Paris Institut de Science Politique (SciencePo). In addition to content expertise, Helene has context knowledge as she worked in [Bangladesh](#) and East Africa.

Clément Charlot is a co-founder of Key Aid Consulting. He has over seven years of experience in the humanitarian sector, managing and evaluating projects. He has a strong qualitative and quantitative background and has conducted research and evaluations for clients such as NRC, MSF, World Vision, STC, HelpAge, and the World Bank. He has a good understanding of capacity building initiatives and partnerships in the humanitarian sector. He recently conducted two evaluations of the Disaster Emergency and Preparedness Program, The Talent Development Project and the ALERT project. Both project aimed to strengthen the capacity of local organisations. Clément worked for several years as head of partnerships for an INGO. Clément has worked several years in [Bangladesh](#), one of the country of focus of the ELNHA. Clément is a graduate of ESSEC business school, where he obtained an MSc in Management and Corporate Finance. Clement is fluent in both English and French, and has a basic command of Bangla.

Clément and Hélène have successfully worked on several occasions together.

VII.7. Data Collection Tools

Background

The project entitled *Empowering Local and National Humanitarian Actors (ELNHA)* is a 3-year capacity development initiative that aims to reinforce the knowledge and skills of humanitarian actors at national and local levels to achieve a more equitable balance, and sharing of power and resources, in the humanitarian sector worldwide. It started in 2015 in [Bangladesh](#) and [Uganda](#) through partnerships between Oxfam Novib and several national humanitarian organisations, called supporting partners, who act as the project's co-implementers.

The ELNHA project covers aspects of humanitarian preparedness and response through the Humanitarian Capacity Development Fund (HCDF) and the Humanitarian Response Grant Facility (HRGF). **This learning review focuses on the Humanitarian Capacity Development Fund.**

This learning review aims to take stock of the project to provide feedback on the HCDF process, mechanism and outcomes, with the aim of highlighting strengths, weaknesses and best practices. It focuses on answering the following questions:

- To what extent did the HCDF's demand-driven approach and implementation process appropriately enable LNHA to increase their humanitarian capacity?
- To what extent did the HCDF activities were perceived to result in increased humanitarian capacity at district, organisational and individual levels?
- What did the organisation/programme team learn from the process/mechanism in a way that will affect future programming or attempts at capacity strengthening in the localisation debate?

This piece of research is **NOT** an evaluation. It is a learning review that focuses on learning. The lessons learnt and recommendations at both the global and country level will help assist Oxfam in the current ELNHA project and in designing future localisation projects "...and other organizations in improving their support to strengthening locally-led humanitarian response"

To capture the various stakeholders' perspectives, the learning review team is collecting primary data at the global and country levels (in [Bangladesh](#) and [Uganda](#)).

The interview will last about 60 minutes. Everything we say will be used to inform the learning review but no one will be quoted individually. Personal data collected will be used by Key Aid Consulting only for the sole purpose of the review and will not be forwarded to third parties.

Ask for interviewee's consent.

Tell interviewee if and how he/she will see the results of this learning review. (Oxfam team in country will organize at a later stage a session to review/discuss the findings and share the report with the stakeholders)

Instructions

This structured interview guide provides an overview of all the topics and corresponding questions; however, each interview will be tailored to focus on the set of questions that are most directly relevant to the interviewee's expertise and interest.

General information

Name:

Position:

Organisation:

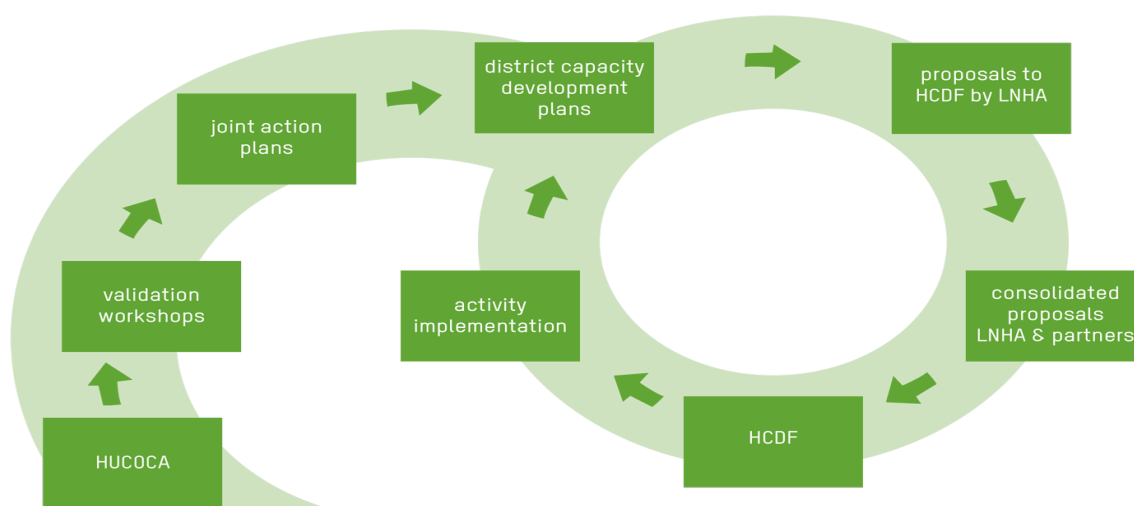
Email address:

Country:

Introductory questions (for all interviewees)

1. How have you been involved with the ELHNA project?
2. What are your expectations with this learning review?

VII.7.1. Oxfam staff and supporting partners⁹⁷



Appropriateness

⁹⁷ In Uganda, supporting partners are sometimes referred to as lead Partners.

1. How did the process take place in **Bangladesh/Uganda**/both countries? *Different project stakeholders include Oxfam, supporting partners, LNHAs, government, the private sector, media, other.*
2. At country-level, has there been differences across districts? Why?
3. Which type of stakeholders were involved in the different steps of the process? Do you feel that some stakeholders were missing in some of the steps?
4. If it were in your hands, would you adjust the HCDF process? If yes, how and why?
5. In retrospect, are there steps in the process do you deem NOT appropriate? Why?
6. In your opinion, what is the added-value of the HCDF mechanism to increase humanitarian capacity? Why?
7. In your opinion, could the HCDF fund/mechanism work without the process that leads to submitting the project proposal collectively? *In other words*. can the fund still be useful if we skip the process? Can the process be useful if we skip the fund?
8. How are the roles and responsibilities defined for the process and mechanism between Oxfam and the supporting partners? Is there any difference at the country/district level?
9. In your opinion, how appropriate is the split in the roles and responsibilities between Oxfam and the supporting partners?

Effectiveness

10. In your opinion, which ELNHA HCDF project activities have built the capacity of LNHA? Why?
11. In your opinion, which ELNHA HCDF project activities have built the capacity of actors in the districts to respond to humanitarian disasters? Which actors? How? Why?
12. Looking at the activities financed by the HCDF mechanism in the different districts, what have been the effects of the activities to increase the capacity of individuals?

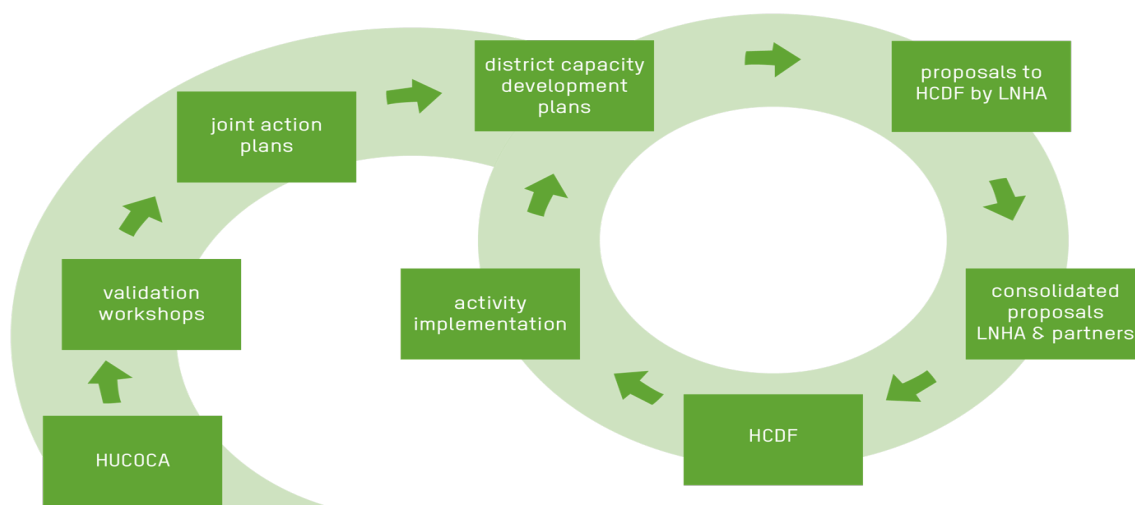
Lessons learnt

13. What lessons have you learned during the design and the implementation phases?
14. What recommendations would you like to make? What would you do differently?
15. Do you think this process is replicable within Oxfam in other countries? Why or why not?
16. In your opinion, to what extent does the HCDF represent a good solution to build the humanitarian capacity of LNHA? Why?

Wrap up questions

17. Is there anything we have not discussed and you feel is important to highlight?

VII.7.2. LNHAs, lead actors,⁹⁸ other stakeholders



Appropriateness

1. In which steps of the HCDF process have you/your organisation been involved? *If the interviewee can't answer, probe with **Erreur ! Source du renvoi introuvable.***
2. Which types of stakeholders were involved in the different steps of the process that you were involved in? Do you feel that some stakeholders were missing at some of the steps? *Different project stakeholders include Oxfam, supporting partners, LNHAs, government, the private sector, media, other.*
3. How did the process take place in your district?
4. If it were in your hands, would you adjust the process? If yes, how and why?
5. Which steps of the process do you deem NOT appropriate? Why?
6. In your opinion, what is the added-value of the HCDF mechanism to increase humanitarian capacity? Why?
7. In your opinion, could the HCDF work without the process that leads to submitting the project proposal collectively? *In other words:* can the fund still be useful if we skip the process? Can the process be useful if we skip the fund?

Effectiveness

8. In your opinion, which ELNHA HCDF project activities have built your capacity? How? Why?
9. In your opinion, which ELNHA HCDF project activities have built the capacity of your organisation? How? Why?

⁹⁸ In Bangladesh, lead actors are LNHAs who get a proposal approved through the HCDF mechanism.

10. In your opinion, which ELNHA HCDF project activities have built the capacity of organisations in your district to respond to humanitarian disasters? Which actors? How? Why?
11. Looking at the activities financed by the HCDF mechanism in your district, what have been the effects of the activities to increase the capacity of organisations and individuals in the district? What type of organisations were involved?

Lessons learnt

12. In your opinion, what are the lessons learnt for this project? What recommendations would you like to make?
13. In your opinion, to what extent does the HCDF represent a good solution to build the humanitarian capacity of LNHA in your district? Why?

Wrap up questions

14. Is there anything we have not discussed that you feel is important to highlight?

VII.8. Supporting partners selection criteria

Criteria	Shared by both countries	99	100
Experience	NGO should have proven extensive experience in disaster management (humanitarian preparedness and response) including development program	NGO has experience in Food security, Livelihood, WASH program implementation, in the use of technology (software based) as well as in advocacy and influencing activities	
Presence and activities in the district	NGO must have key program presence / headquarter in the project district(s)	NGO actively involves local level (District, Upazila and UP) GOB coordination mechanism	
Relations with local stakeholders	NGO has good relationship and credibility with local administration, govt departments		NGO has good connections and working relationships with other NGOs in the sub-region;
Mandate	NGO must have a mandate in line with the target		

⁹⁹ Oxfam Bangladesh, 'EOI for Partnership to Implement "Empowering Local and National Humanitarian Actors" Project in Bangladesh', n.d.

¹⁰⁰ Oxfam Uganda, 'Call for Expressions of Interest (Eoi) for Lead Partners for the Implementation of the Project "Empowering Local and National Humanitarian Actors" (ELNHA)', n.d.

Capacities/abilities		NGO has capacity building activities experience on disaster management and development program	- NGO has the ability to bring actors and people together, build alignment and solve problems - Best placed to provide the capacity development support resulting from HuCoCa process
Administrative and financial requirements		- NGO must have NGO Affair's Bureau active registration - NGO must have last three years external audit report (except microcredit) - NGO has written policy and strategic documents (Gender, HR, Finance, Logistic, Procurement etc.)	
Infrastructures			NGO must have adequate, reliable and or functioning infrastructures (office space, cars or any means of transport, human resources etc.);
Approach/vision			- NGO has a vision with regard to the humanitarian system, acknowledges the need for change and is willing to play a key role in this; - Applies a gender-sensitive approach and supporting women leadership - Addresses feedback and concerns of the LNHAs and accounts for the choices made; treating different positions and interests respectfully and looks for compromises.
Willingness			NGO is willing to take the lead in the humanitarian responses and or ELNHA objectives

