**EVALUATION OF THE DISASTERS AND EMERGENCIES PREPAREDNESS (DEPP) PROGRAMME**

**FORMATIVE PHASE REPORT**

May 3, 2017

HARVARD
HUMANITARIAN
INITIATIVE

Vandana Sharma, MD, MPH
Rebecca Stein-Lobovits, MPH
Jennifer Scott, MD, MPH
Kelsey Gleason, MS,
Niamh Gibbons, BA,
Nina Yang, BA
Miriam Haviland, MSPH
Phuong Pham, PhD, MPH

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

# ACRONYMS

| | |
|---|---|
| **ADCAP** | Age and Disability Capacity Programme |
| **CDAC-N** | Communicating with Disaster Affected Communities Network |
| **CHASE** | Conflict, Humanitarian and Security Department (DFID) |
| **DAC** | Development Assistance Committee |
| **DEPP** | Disasters and Emergency Preparedness Programme |
| **DFID** | Department for International Development |
| **DMP** | Disaster Management Plan |
| **DRR** | Disaster Risk Reduction |
| **EWEA** | Early Warning Early Action |
| **HERR** | Humanitarian Emergency Response Review |
| **HHI** | Harvard Humanitarian Initiative |
| **HIEP** | Humanitarian Innovation and Evidence programme |
| **IDI** | In-depth Interview |
| **INGO** | International Non Governmental Organisation |
| **KAP** | Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices |
| **L/NNGO** | Local/National Non Governmental Organisation |
| **LPRR** | Linking Preparedness Resilience and Response |
| **M&E** | Monitoring and Evaluation |
| **MEL** | Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning |
| **MEL Project** | DEPP MEL project (now referred to as Learning Project) |
| **MT** | Management Team |
| **NGO** | Non Governmental Organisation |
| **NICRA** | Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement |
| **NPAC** | Non Project Attributable Costs |
| **PB** | Programme Board |
| **PMU** | Project Management Unit |
| **RLA** | Regional Learning Adviser |
| **SAS** | Statistical Analysis System |
| **SEPS** | Strengthening Emergency Preparedness Systems in Myanmar |
| **ToR** | Terms of Reference |
| **UEWEA** | Urban Early Warning Early Action |
| **UN** | United Nations |
| **VAWG** | Violence Against Women and Girls |
| **VFM** | Value for Money |
| **WaSH** | Water, Sanitation and Hygiene |

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The HHI evaluation team extends thanks to the many participants in this evaluation, including country-based DEPP project teams, headquarters-based DEPP stakeholders, those involved in DEPP's leadership and governance. We are also grateful to community members in Myanmar who took the time to respond to household and community surveys.

Particular thanks are due to our research partners who implement data collection and contribute their expertise and knowledge in specific countries and elements of the evaluation: the Busara Center for Behavioral Economics (Kenya), The Ethiopian Public Health Association (Ethiopia), Innovations for Poverty Action (Myanmar, Philippines), Root Change (Network Analysis), and Valsa Shah (Value for Money). We thank T-Cons in South Sudan for their willingness to partner with us. Lastly, we are appreciative of the time and effort put in by the leadership and research administration teams at the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative, Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center and the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, whose support was crucial to this evaluation.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**INTRODUCTION:**

This report provides baseline results from the formative phase of the three-year external evaluation, conducted by a team at the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative (HHI), of the Disasters and Emergencies Preparedness Programme (DEPP). The DEPP is a £40 million humanitarian capacity development programme funded by the Department for International Development (DFID) and being implemented in 10 countries considered to be at high risk for disasters and emergencies. The countries include: Kenya, Ethiopia, South Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo, Mozambique, Jordan, Myanmar, Philippines, Bangladesh, Pakistan.

The DEPP was developed in response to the 2011 release of the Humanitarian Emergency Response Review (HERR), which identified gaps in humanitarian capacity to prepare and respond to disasters and included a call to action for the British Government to substantially modify its way of responding to humanitarian crises. The three-year DEPP aims to strengthen skills and capacity to improve the quality and speed of humanitarian response and is being delivered by two NGO consortia, the START Network and the Communicating with Disaster Affected Communities (CDAC) Network. The 14 projects being implemented under the DEPP are detailed in Annex 1.

The three-year external evaluation comprises four phases, and this report describes the approach and findings from the 14-month formative phase conducted from February 2016 – March 2017. The primary objectives of the formative phase of the evaluation are:

1) **To assess the relevance of programme outputs**

2) **To assess the efficiency and effectiveness of programme delivery**

The report also aims to identify current gaps and emerging best practices and to provide guidance to DEPP stakeholders about how to improve the potential effectiveness of the DEPP as well as evidence to inform future similar programs.

The evaluation design is a mixed methods design with range of data collection activities. The methodology includes literature and document review, 111 in-depth interviews with key DEPP stakeholders, 19 focus group discussions, as well as 1735 quantitative surveys at the organisational as well as the community level. It also includes an economic analysis, assessment of organisational networks in 3 countries and a case study to explore decision-making processes and challenges faced by DEPP project teams as they encountered an outbreak of violence in South Sudan in July 2016. Further details on the methodology are provided in the evaluation design section of this report.

From the research conducted in this phase of the evaluation, several overarching findings have been identified and are explored in depth in this report. These findings correspond to the key evaluation questions in the following five areas: 1) Relevance and Validity of Design; 2) Relevance and Effectiveness of the Interventions; 3) Effectiveness of Management Arrangements (in relation to collaboration); 4) Efficiency and Value for Money (VFM); 5) Sustainability of the Intervention and Likelihood of Impact of the Programme. The key findings are presented below.

## MAIN FINDINGS:

### 1. Relevance and Validity of Design

The targets of the DEPP are appropriate, and the right people in the right places are being targeted. The focus on building national capacity, improving preparedness and targeting prioritised groups to ensure their inclusion during humanitarian response activities is consistent with needs identified during literature and evidence reviews. At a high level, the programme's objectives are clear, relevant, aligned with DFID's humanitarian priorities and aim to fill a clear gap in humanitarian capacity. However, the programme's 3-year time frame is unrealistic to meet these objectives.

The country selection process was not optimal, due to a lack of strategic direction and objectives at the portfolio level and ultimately some key countries at risk of humanitarian crises may not have been included. The portfolio of interventions in each country varied which could have led to lost opportunities to maximize impact and efficiencies within each setting.

The design process, at least in the initial phase, was not logical and coherent. These issues led to the design and selection of many projects that were retrofitted to the business case or selection criteria. Local involvement was not adequately considered, leading to challenges with respect to local ownership and stakeholder buy-in and potentially reducing wider impact of the DEPP. The design process was participatory however beneficiaries were not adequately involved.

Adequate time was not allocated during the design phase to ensure consortia had the necessary time and space to grow, and that key stakeholders, especially at the local level, could be involved in a participatory way. Individuals and agencies did not always have the capacity to collaborate, and facilitation and capacity building around collaboration could have contributed to healthier and more effective collaborations. The design phase related to the second round of START Network projects

addressed many of these weaknesses and was led by in-country teams ensuring local buy-in, and eventually smoother and timelier project implementation.

Resourcing for the DEPP is considered sufficient, but project budgets are tight, with insufficient NPACs, inadequate allocation of funds for collaborative activities and variable allocation for M&E. Resources were also needed during the design phase to ensure that smaller agencies and in-country staff could participate and contribute in a meaningful way.

Design at the programme level was not adequately considered and projects were developed in isolation. The objectives, systems and processes, the programme theory of change, definition of key terms, and expectations about how projects are intended to interlink and interact were not developed and articulated at the outset. Gender inclusion aspects of the projects were not clearly articulated during the project design stage.

## 2. Relevance and Effectiveness of the Interventions

Implementation start up was slow across the board. Delays in project implementation were due to 3 main factors: 1) inadequate involvement of in-country teams and stakeholders and contextualisation during the design phase, 2) underestimation of the time required for collaborations, and 3) lengthy administrative and contractual processes. Key activities related to the five DEPP results areas are being implemented, though projects have staggered timelines. Fewer activities related to result area five on evidence generation have been conducted thus far, but this is expected to increase later in the project cycles. Quality of the activities implemented appears to be high. Additionally, there appears to be good penetration of the DEPP interventions within organisations, which increases the likelihood of significant and sustainable change.

Notable successes thus far include securing government buy-in, developing the minimum standards for disability inclusion, increasing the voice of and involvement of L/NNGOs, creating early warning systems where none currently exist, participation in individual trainings leading to increased responsibilities / higher positions for trainees, and increased individual level networks. These successes were described by respondents and where possible, have been triangulated with existing documents. Evidence of concrete changes in knowledge and behaviours related to preparedness and response requires the second phase of data collection and will be assessed in the next report.

The Learning Project is unique in its scope. However, perspectives around activities and outputs have been mixed. Evidence generation and sharing of learning has not been as strong as it could be and DEPP-wide systems are not in place to capture learning. Much sharing of learning has been concentrated at the UK level and has been slow to trickle down to country level. Regional Learning Advisors (RLAs) in some countries have acted as catalysts for bringing projects together with success, however many countries have not benefited from this. The DEPP Learning Conference in Nairobi was very successful and stimulated learning, sharing and collaboration across in-country staff.

Human resources challenges including high staff turnover have been felt widely at the programme and project level. Other implementation challenges have been linked to security and violence, as well as other contextual factors that have not been adequately addressed.

Monitoring and evaluation activities are mixed and vary by project in terms of the approach and rigor. There is no programme level monitoring and evaluation system to systematically collect data on key outputs and outcomes uniformly across all projects.

## 3. Effectiveness of Management Arrangements

In general, nearly all DEPP and non-DEPP organisations value or see the value of collaboration and have demonstrated efforts to collaborate. Findings suggest that DEPP stakeholders believe that the collaborative approach of the DEPP is the appropriate approach to building capacity on disaster and emergency preparedness and response. There is evidence of increased collaboration, but this varies depending on the country and may be dependent on the existing structure of networks. Further evidence of the effect of increased collaboration will be generated in the next round of data collection in the subsequent phases.

The Philippines analyses of collaboration areas and network structure showed almost *no preferential attachment*[1] to international actors with notable exceptions in the project cycle area which is to be expected: funding, project design, MEL and management. Advocacy, community capacity building, project planning, and community-based risk analysis were all highly distributed, locally directed collaboration areas. Networking around early warning systems, WaSH, livelihoods and emergency response was, however, limited and isolated (though locally led). When examining the top ranked 50 organisations by the total degree centrality[2] in the Philippines, overall, 70% were found to be national organisations, 18% are DEPP national organisations and 10% DEPP international organisations. Thus overall, DEPP organisations represent about 28% of the top 50 organisations. It is interesting to note that in the Philippines, there are almost twice as many DEPP national organisations found in top 50 than DEPP international organisations.

In Kenya, the structure of the networks and role of international versus national organisations differ from the Philippines. Collaboration networks in Kenya were moderately dominated by international actors. The dependence on international actors was notable in WaSH, disaster risk reduction (DRR) and community resilience, three critical areas for DEPP. In contrast, collaboration around advocacy for DRR and emergency response is locally led and follows a highly distributed network structure. The advocacy collaboration network has a diverse set of key actors (resource hubs, networkers, brokers, and influencers) who are predominately local Kenyan entities.

In Myanmar, collaboration areas were generally dominated by international actors (52% of the top 50 ranked organisation by the central measures are international) and highly isolated in structure. In a nascent ecosystem like Myanmar, funding and support from international donors and INGOs is still emerging.

The Philippines presents an early example where the network is more greatly influenced by national organisations. The evidence suggests that the Philippines network is the most evolved, decentralised and locally led network. This may be due to the nature of the NGO landscape in the country or may also potentially be partially attributable to collaboration within DEPP. The Kenyan network is less evolved than the Philippines, but Myanmar's network is the most nascent during this formative stage. In terms of DEPP's focus on "shifting the power" towards local leaders and organisations, understanding the network structure and contributions of national versus international organisations is important to ensure that efforts are appropriate and targeted to relevant key

[1] With **preferential attachments**, new actors are much more likely to associate with organisations with the *most links and connections (and of course opportunities for funding)*. Preferential attachment to centralised actors reinforces the hegemony of a few key actors, with negative consequences for sustainability.

[2] A measure of influence represented by how many links a node has to other nodes.

influencers. DEPP could have been more strategic in which members of the network it targets for capacity building and evidence sharing

4. **Efficiency and Value for Money (VFM)**

The early findings on the value for money (VFM) of the DEPP focus on economy and efficiency and show some good potential for the programme, with areas for improvement.

These early findings suggest that there are good indicators of cost economy, though some budgets have been lean, with insufficient resources for portfolio management and collaboration activities. There are some shortfalls in terms of systems and resources set up for efficiency in governance and strategy, portfolio management, decision making and consortium arrangements; but also positive findings regarding VFM reporting and adaptive management, and collaborative ways of working. The Learning Project in particular shows strong potential for achieving learning and adaptive management if steered in the right direction by DEPP management.

Effectiveness and equity will be reported in the next evaluation report, which will build on these initial findings with a deeper analysis and evidence base. Further analysis will bring together the findings on DEPP outcomes from the wider evaluation to provide a more rounded picture of VFM.

**5. Sustainability of the Intervention and Likelihood of Impact of the Programme**

With regards to sustainability of the DEPP and likelihood of impact, the three areas of inquiry include contributions towards strengthening national disaster preparedness plans, inclusion of prioritised target groups and gender, as well as degree of influence on institutional and policy environments. The evidence at this phase of the evaluation is rather limited for the first and third areas, but will be expanded in the next report. With respect to gender and inclusion of target groups, our findings indicate that gender was an important consideration during the design phase of the DEPP. However, while the DEPP Programme Board criteria for project selection required inclusion of a gender statement, it did not provide further guidelines with respect to gender inclusion. As such all DEPP projects considered gender in their proposals and outlined their planned approach for gender inclusions in their concept notes but the level of detail provided and the proposed level of inclusion varied substantially across projects. With respect to implementation, the degree to which gender has been emphasised remains dependent on project leadership and differs across projects. Many projects have not provided a specific, detailed gender inclusion plan. Current evidence suggests that implementation of the proposed gender considerations has been inconsistent. Inclusion of prioritised target groups was not a requirement during the design phase, but has been considered by most projects. The ADCAP project is considered a leader in this area and has positively influenced the inclusion efforts of other DEPP projects.

## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS:

Based on the key findings of the evaluation team, a number of targeted recommendations have been developed with the specific aim to improve programme effectiveness and enhance learning, and to inform future similar programmes. The key recommendations have been grouped according to the specific DEPP stakeholders they target and are presented below.

***For all DEPP actors***

1. There is preliminary evidence that collaboration is contributing to learning, innovation, and creativity among DEPP organisations. To maximize this effect, the programme should focus on building both bonding and bridging social capital. This means finding a balance between developing deeper bonds of trust with a set of peer organisations who are coordinating programmatically (bonding), while also looking outward and seeking out new ideas, relationships, and information from a diverse set of actors (bridging – would include national and international, DEPP and non-DEPP). The latter is usually harder to do, but is critical to innovation and to problem solving. Concretely, all actors involved in DEPP should encourage organisations to seek out and participate in relevant, novel conversations wherever they are happening (both inside and outside their sector). DEPP organisations can then bring back new ideas, case studies, and approaches to their core partners and adapt them to communities and context. This again returns to bonding capital.

2. Give further consideration to the role of preparedness projects in settings with ongoing humanitarian crises. Many DEPP focus countries have a mix of natural and manmade, and complex and acute crises. All projects therefore grapple with how to best position themselves within the context of competing priorities. Future DEPP programming could benefit from more structured analysis of how disaster preparedness is prioritised in different contexts.

***For the Department for International Development (DFID)***

3. For any future programme on the scale of DEPP (including any further phases of DEPP), the business case should be finalised and published at the earliest opportunity. To facilitate project design, the business case should include the focus countries, the criteria for country selection, a set of definitions of key concepts (such as collaboration, institutional arrangements, and preparedness systems), and a concise summary of DFID policy on inclusion of prioritised target groups in programme and project design.

4. A reasonable programme design period should be allowed between publication of the business case and the issuance of a call for proposals for individual projects, to allow the Programme Board to refine the portfolio-level strategy before requesting project proposals.

5. During the programme design period, DFID should work with others on the Programme Board to develop a programme-level log frame to be in place before projects are awarded. Alternatively, the log frame could be developed in collaboration with the projects during the project-level inception phase. This would ensure buy-in from projects and benefit from their perspective on measurable outcome and impact indicators. A third option could be an iterative process, with a log frame drafted during the programme design and refined once projects are awarded.

6. Consider creating programmes with a commitment to at least a 5-6 year timeline, since building systems and capacity takes time. Two stages of funding may still be beneficial to allow for gathering evidence of programme effectiveness and programme adaptation at the mid-point. But an assurance of longer-term funding would help programme and project staff

to plan activities aimed at longer-term impact in improving humanitarian preparedness and response.

***For the DEPP Programme Board***

7. If networks are pre-selected to deliver an intervention, the onus then falls on the network to manage the project-development process. The process should be undertaken through an open call for proposals, but guided by a set of Board-approved criteria – such as the "Programme Criteria for the designed programme element" in the case of DEPP – that are designed to ensure that projects are put forward which advance the overall programmatic goals. The criteria should be transparent, for example, they should be published as part of any call for proposals under the programme.

8. The Board should allow sufficient time after issuing the call for proposals for network members to develop proposals that meet the "Governance Criteria", and to build a consortium around a project. The Board should consider adding an in-country needs assessment (consultation with in-country staff and potential consortium members) as one of the Governance Criteria. Consultation with beneficiaries - to assess needs – should be strongly encouraged where possible when specific projects are being designed by consortia.

9. The Board should take steps to operationalize the learning from the first START Network design phases to the second wave of proposal development: encouraging national project staff to take the lead, involving local stakeholders, focusing on the overall goals of the DEPP portfolio, and allowing consortia to develop naturally around shared interests. These points should be spelled out in the call for proposals. In order to encourage locally-led proposals, the Board and/or programme management might need to provide support to local organisations so that they can meet the governance and selection criteria.

10. The Board should recognize that projects need to plan and budget for the time needed to set up and manage collaborations. This would include a reasonable duration for an inception phase and approving higher non-project attributable cost levels (project management costs) to account for ongoing staff time spent managing collaborations, participating in network activities, and managing relationships and decision-making within consortia.

11. Given DEPP's focus on disaster preparedness, all selected countries have a high risk of a pending disaster, whether natural or manmade. Given this default vulnerability, all DEPP projects should have a contingency plan in place in case of disruption to the program. For example, the Programme Criteria could specify that contingency planning must be an element of the Governance criteria "Analysis of risk and risk management".

12. Consider streamlining management decisions and flow of funds so that the global grant holder and the in country host are the same organisation when possible.

13. While recognizing the importance of subcontracting processes and organisations' internal procedures, the Board could take steps to minimize and streamline contractual processes in future phases of the DEPP or similar programmes. For example, pre-agreement letters of commitment could help clarify some contractual issues prior to projects kicking off. The Board or programme management could also provide a template for sub-contracts and consider setting a standard timeline for contract turnaround.

14. In the governance criteria, consider broadening the gender statement to a statement on inclusion of prioritised target groups. Develop guidelines for DEPP projects on requirements for this statement. This could include links to key documents on best practices and the law and policies governing inclusion of prioritised target groups in development programming and project design.

15. There is evidence that the Learning Project is worthwhile in stimulating both collaboration and learning. For any future DEPP phase or similar programme with a Learning pPoject, launching the Learning Project before other projects would help to streamline M&E processes throughout projects.

***For DEPP Projects***

16. Reflecting the recommendations for the DEPP Board, those designing projects for any future phase of DEPP should take steps to ensure relevance of design: an in-country needs assessment that includes consultation with beneficiaries at the inception phase if not before, proactively establishing consortia around shared interests and complementary areas of competency, and planning and budgeting for the time needed to set up and manage collaborations. International NGOs should encourage national project staff and organisations to take the lead and support them in doing so.

17. Develop a detailed gender statement (or statement on inclusion of prioritised target groups) for all new projects, adhering to best practices and the law and policies governing inclusion of prioritised target groups in development programming.

18. Ensure that all risk assessments and risk management plans specifically address the possibility of an outbreak of violence and of a sudden-onset natural disaster, and include contingency plans for such events. This should include budget contingency planning on where resources would be re-allocated.

19. Establish clear roles among consortium partners, including outlining which partners hold the duty of care for specific project staff members, among other responsibilities. This should include a set of agreed guidelines for how management decisions will be undertaken, in crisis settings. Issues to address include whether decisions should be by consensus among all consortium partners, whether the global grant holder and/or donor have specific roles, how to incorporate national and local partners in to the decision-making processes, who makes decisions on re-allocation of resources, and a mechanism for who can arbitrate when needed to advance difficult decisions.

20. Within multi-stakeholder platforms, implement a mechanism for regular feedback on risks to the project and personnel, and risk mitigation strategies, among consortium members (for example, as a standing agenda item at consortium meetings). This could allow for proactively heading-off difficult decisions.

21. For international DEPP actors, continue the trend toward fostering collaboration at the national and local levels as much as in the UK. Adopt a brokering mindset focused on how to facilitate and weave connections for national organisations and emerging leaders in the system at the national level. There is evidence of a risk (more so in Kenya and Myanmar) of preferential attachment towards international actors. One way this can be combated is for

international actors to primarily aim to bridge new relationships for national organisations. This helps to increase their reputation and social capital as vital local resource hubs. A more nuanced strategy would take into account the country level networks in specific contexts. For example, an approach aimed at involving more national NGOs is not appropriate for the Philippines where the national NGOs are already very strongly involved. These recommendations on strengthening networks are applicable to the implementation of the current DEPP and future programming.

22. The demographics of evaluation respondents indicate that over 90% of respondents at the organisational leadership and staff levels had been at their organisation 5-10 years. Yet staff turnover was frequently mentioned as hindering capacity development. Even in small numbers, key staff members departing frequently may be problematic. Projects should take steps to understand the drivers of staff turnover, for example, whether certain positions are turning over more frequently than others.

***For the Learning Project***

23. The Learning Project is mostly considered a useful element of DEPP. However, it could work more closely with DEPP project staff to strengthen their M&E systems, ensure consistent approaches across projects, and thereby expand learning. Project staff expressed to the evaluation that they lack the capacity to design and implement M&E systems. While it is likely too late to set up such systems for the current DEPP, incremental improvements may be possible and it is strongly recommended for any future phase of DEPP. A unified approach should include a core set of output and outcome indicators across projects (including value for money), derived from the overall theory of change, but also allow projects to add additional indicators as relevant for their projects. The Learning Project should consider adopting an online platform where indicator data can be captured and quarterly reporting analysed and easily visualised.

24. The Learning Project has made progress in articulating its strategy and activities to DEPP projects since its early days, but could take further steps to communicate its role to DEPP projects. For example, it could develop concise introductory materials for new DEPP project staff and/or disseminate an annual or bi-annual strategic plan or activity summaries, centralising information about capacity building and training events.

25. The RLA's have been very well-received by DEPP projects. Their role could be improved by communicating their mandate more clearly to projects, and the Learning Project should explore ways to alleviate the challenges faced by the RLAs in promoting collaboration particularly in Kenya. Learning Events would benefit from going beyond showcasing by specific projects, and provide more time and space for active collaboration and strategic thinking.

26. The Learning Project should think creatively about new ways to improve evidence-sharing across DEPP projects, across different DEPP countries, and with stakeholders outside DEPP. Documenting lessons-learned on contextual factors, including strategies that mitigate negative factors, would also be helpful for future programme design.

27. The Learning Project should undertake further analysis to understand the constraints behind why, in some of the major collaboration areas like early warning systems, WaSH, livelihoods

and emergency response – the emerging networks are isolated rather than connected. In Myanmar, all networks around all collaboration types are isolated.

***For further research, using existing data collected***

28. Data collected as part of the network analysis are extremely rich and can provide additional unique insights and learning beyond what was originally planed. First, deeper exploration of the level of influence, and role of DEPP organizations (i.e. as resource hubs, knowledge brokers etc.) within the network in each intensive set country would be extremely valuable to understand whether the right organisations have been engaged in the DEPP. Further to this, linking this data with individual and organisational capacity as well as preparedness levels and other programmatic measures could help test the hypothesis that networking leads to greater impact.

29. Data collected at the organisational level could be further explored to assess the delivery of early warning system development at different levels and compare implementation in urban vs. rural settings. Further analysis could help shed light on the effectiveness of different policy arrangements and institutional environments that facilitate or impede early warning system development.

30. Organisational, community and household level data could also be further examined to compare perceived effectiveness of collaboration and consortia among projects that used participatory processes or involved local organisations in the design with projects that did not use these methods. Through isolating these stakeholders, differences relating to collaboration and capacity building could be measured. Furthermore, looking deeper at these differences could lead to a better understanding of how the design impacts delivery and retain lessons learned on effective institutional arrangements.

***For further research, but requiring new data collection***

31. Building on the framework and tools developed for the network data collection, there could be scope to expand this to include additional data collection at second and third degree organisations to assess their capacity and preparedness levels. This would help answer questions related to how organisations that are positioned several degrees away from the DEPP organisations are affected by the intervention, and thus to assess how intervention effects have diffused through the network.

32. In addition to further network data collection, organisational level data collection could be extended to include a larger sample of government and UN agencies. The formative phase data collection included a sample of government and UN officials for in-depth interviews, however collecting quantitative data among a larger sample would allow sub-group analyses and triangulation of findings relating to humanitarian capacity. Furthermore, additional data collection among this sample would provide more insight to the institutional and policy environments in each intensive set country and would facilitate network data collection, as the network surveys are embedded within the organisational and KAP surveys administered at the organisational level.

33. Further sub-group analyses could also be done through additional focus group discussions. These discussions could be held with 1) consortium members to better understand the advantages, disadvantages and perceived effectiveness of working in consortia; 2) individual staff receiving training from DEPP projects to explore the longer-term implications of staff vs. organisational level capacity building activities and 3) prioritised groups involved in DEPP activities to assess levels of accessibility and inclusion and understand barriers to participation. These focus group discussions help understand the "why" behind the quantitative data and could elicit immediate changes in project activities within the timeline of the DEPP to better fit the needs of beneficiaries and improve the design of future programmes.

.

# INTRODUCTION

This report provides baseline results from the formative phase of the three-year external evaluation, conducted by the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative (HHI), of the Disasters and Emergencies Preparedness Programme (DEPP), a £40 million capacity development programme funded by the Department for International Development (DFID). More detail on the DEPP can be found in Annex 1. Of the £40 million, £10 million is reserved for a separate innovation programme, which is not part of this evaluation.

The three year external, independent evaluation has two objectives: **1) to improve programme effectiveness and enhance learning; and 2) to assess the extent to which the DEPP overall has provided an efficient and effective approach to strengthening response capacity**. The evaluation comprises four phases, and this report describes the approach and findings from the 14-month formative phase conducted from February 2016 – March 2017. The inception phase was completed in January 2016[3]. The DEPP timeframe covered can be divided in two overlapping stages: a programme design stage (2011 to early 2015); and the programme implementation stage (October 2014 to March 2017).

The primary objectives of the formative phase of the evaluation are: **1. To assess the relevance of programme outputs; and 2) to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of programme delivery**[4]. The research design was guided by a set of evaluation questions outlined in the Terms of Reference for the evaluation, outlined in full in the Evaluation Design section below. The questions addressed in this report relate to whether the programme's projected outputs are likely to fulfil DEPP objectives, to the programme's relevance to end-users, and to assessing effectiveness and efficiency of delivery thus far. This report also includes a case study related to the DEPP in South Sudan, where violence in July 2016 disrupted project activities. This report will not report on changes in outcomes, which will be presented during the next phase report once the second round of data collection is complete and change can be observed. Due to constraints in implementing the evaluation in Ethiopia, data from there will be presented in a separate report during the next phase.

This formative phase report is organised in five main sections that correspond to the key evaluation questions: 1) Relevance and Validity of Design; 2) Relevance and Effectiveness of the interventions; 3) Effectiveness of Management Arrangements (in relation to collaboration); 4) Efficiency and Value for Money (VFM); 5) Sustainability of the Intervention and Likelihood of Impact of the Programme. In March 2017, the evaluation team proposed revisions to the evaluation's sub-questions in order to streamline data analysis and reporting and minimize duplications. Note that the proposed changes are minor and that the main evaluation questions have not been altered. While these changes have not yet been formally approved, the revised sub-questions provide the internal structure for each section of the report. This report covers evaluation questions 1 to 4. We will provide some data, mainly qualitative data and baseline quantitative indicators, related to question 5, that contribute to understanding the likelihood of sustainability and impact. However deeper assessment of this question will occur in the next phase. We have identified actionable recommendations where possible, however, due to the structure of the evaluation, many final evidence-based recommendations will require data from the second round of data collection in order to assess

[3] Evaluation of the Disasters and Emergencies Preparedness (DEPP) Programme: Inception Phase Report, Feb 18 2016. Pham P, Sharma V, Scott, J, Gleason, K, Gibbons, N.

[4] Terms of Reference for the Independent Evaluation of the Disasters and Emergency Preparedness Programme

change in the quantitative indicators and differences in outcomes between organisations participating in DEPP and those in the control group.

# EVALUATION DESIGN

## A. Evaluation Timeline

The external evaluation has four phases: an inception phase (November 2015 to February 2016), during which the evaluation framework and methodology were designed; a formative phase (originally planned for February 2016 to October 2016) to evaluate the implementation of the DEPP by assessing the relevance of outputs and the efficiency and effectiveness of program delivery; an interim phase (originally planned for October 2016 to October 2017) to assess short-term outcomes; and finally, a summative phase (originally planned for October 2017 to May 2018) where we will assess intermediate outcomes and preliminary indicators of likelihood of impact. Due to delays in contracting partner organisations, securing local approvals and challenges with local security, a modified timeline has been proposed. This includes completing the Interim phase by April 2017, providing a short Interim phase report in September 2017 and a final evaluation report in May 2018.

## B. Evaluation Criteria and Questions

The evaluation has been designed based on five criteria which have been adapted from the Development Assistance Committee's (DAC) principles for Evaluating Development Assistance: relevance and fulfilment of objectives, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability (more detailed DEPP-specific evaluation criteria are in Annex 2)[5]. The evaluation gathers data in order to answer the following key evaluation questions. This report focuses on evaluation questions 1 to 4, but the full list is below in order to show the full scope of the evaluation.

***Evaluation Question #1: Relevance and Validity of Design***

***1. To what extent are the objectives of the programme intervention consistent with stakeholders' requirements and the programme design logical and coherent?***

a) Has the programme targeted the right people in the right places?
b) To what extent does the programme design (theory of change) support the projects' design (log frame)?
c) In what ways was the programme design process participatory? Were project beneficiaries adequately engaged before, during and after?
d) To what extent was the programme design logical and coherent?
    a. Were the objectives of the programme clear, realistic and likely to be achieved within the established time schedule and with the allocated resources (including human resources)?
e) Have prioritised target groups (people with disabilities, older people) and gender aspects been taken into consideration in the program design?

[5] The *DAC Principles for the Evaluation of Development Assistance*, OECD (1991), Glossary of Terms Used in Evaluation, in 'Methods and Procedures in Aid Evaluation', OECD (1986), and the *Glossary of Evaluation and Results Based Management (RBM) Terms*, OECD (2000).

***Evaluation Question #2: Relevance and Effectiveness of the Interventions***

***2. In what ways have DEPP capacity building programmes strengthened preparedness and response capacity amongst participants?***

a) What delivery mechanisms are working effectively and why?
b) To what extent is DEPP contributing to greater preparedness and response among local organisations and communities?
    a. Has local capacity to respond to disasters changed since the start of DEPP? If yes, how has it changed? If not, why not.
    b. Has DEPP led to improved knowledge and understanding of best practices relating to disaster and emergency preparedness and response? If yes, in what ways?

***Evaluation Question #3: Effectiveness of Management Arrangements***

***3. To what extent was the programme's theory that capacity development is more effective when undertaken as a multi-agency collaborative approach proven?***

a) Is the 'collaborative' approach of multi-stakeholder platforms an effective delivery mechanism?
b) Focusing on coalitions, partnerships and connectedness – what can be said about the effects of strengthened networks?
c) What have been the main patterns of collaboration, and the benefits and disadvantages of informal vs. formal collaboration?
d) What unique contribution did collaborative relationships and 'multi-stakeholder platforms' make toward deepening cross-programme learning?

***Evaluation Question #4: Efficiency and Value for Money (VFM)***

***4. How economically have resources/ inputs (funds, expertise, time etc.) been converted to results? To what extent does preparedness improve the efficiency of humanitarian response?***

a) Have resources (funds, human resources, time, expertise, etc.) been allocated strategically to achieve the programme objectives?
b) Have resources been used efficiently? In general, do the results achieved justify the costs? Could the same results be attained with fewer resources?
c) Have programme funds and activities been delivered in a timely manner?

***Evaluation Question #5: Sustainability of the Intervention and Likelihood of Impact of the Programme***

***5. To what extent and in what ways have the benefits of the programme become embedded?***

a) What contribution has the programme made in strengthening national preparedness systems?
b) Has the programme taken into consideration prioritised target groups (people with disabilities, older people, women, children and youth)? What contribution has the programme made in strengthening inclusion of target groups and gender aspects at the level of national and local institutions?
c) In what ways has DEPP influenced institutional and policy environments?
d) What is perceived (qualitative analysis) to be the most significant change attributed to DEPP, and why?

## C. Theory of Change

As part of the Inception phase, the evaluation team adapted the DEPP theory of change presented in the business case to create a simplified diagram (See Figure 1) which illustrates the causal chain between the DEPP projects, DEPP's major intervention activities, expected outcomes in both the short and long term. The evaluation focuses on assessing outputs during the formative phase as well as short to long-term outcomes in the interim and summative phases. Assessment of impact as per the causal chain is outside of the scope of this evaluation.

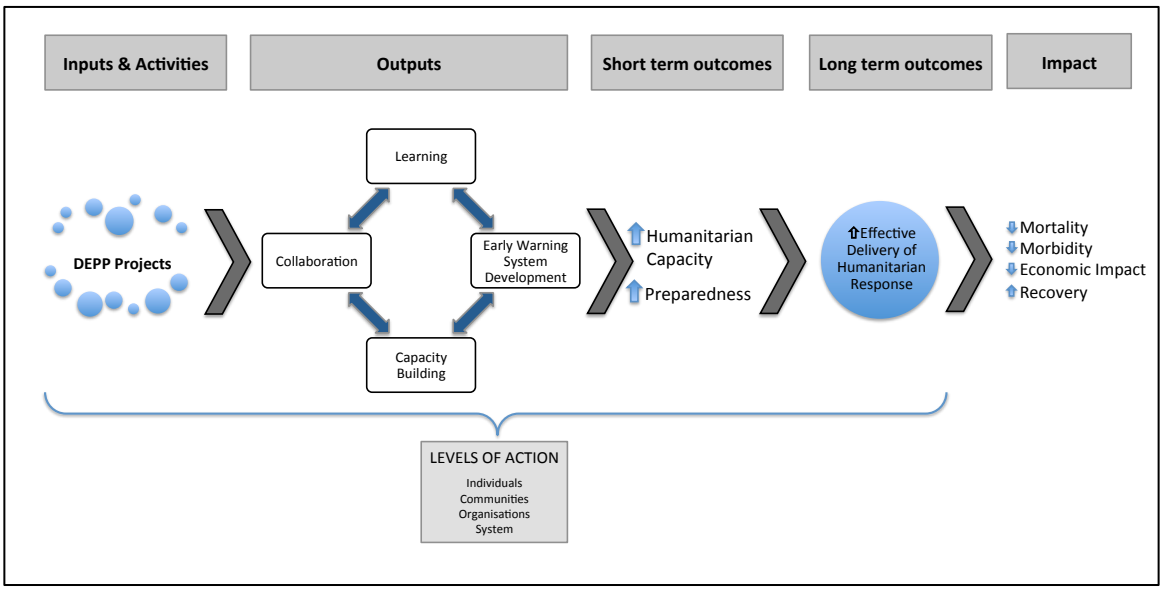


Figure 1: Simplified DEPP Programme Causal Change

## D. Evaluation methodology

The evaluation uses a mixed methods design with quantitative and qualitative data collection, a network analysis and a Value for Money (VFM) assessment. Data are being collected at two time points – a "baseline" in the formative phase, and a second round in the interim phase, in order to assess changes over time. Data from relevant comparison groups are being collected where possible. In both phases, a minimum set of data collection (comprised of in-depth interviews, quantitative surveys and document review) will occur across all countries, and an intensive set of data collection (comprised of more in-depth data collection) will be conducted in Kenya, Ethiopia, Myanmar and the Philippines. The full details of the evaluation methodology are described in the Inception phase report.

### *i. Formative phase approach*

Prior to data collection, the evaluation team conducted induction workshops in each country selected for the intensive evaluation activities, to introduce the external evaluation to DEPP project leadership and staff, and gather feedback on the proposed plan for that country. These sessions also provided an opportunity to engage in dialogue with project leadership and staff, which contributed to the refinement of the methodology, study protocol and data collection instruments.

Ethical approval for the evaluation was sought and obtained from Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health as well as from relevant bodies in each of the intensive set countries. The local partners in each country hired the study staff and, in Kenya, Myanmar and the Philippines, the evaluation team participated in the enumerator training, piloting of instruments and protocols, and several days of data collection to ensure data quality. Questionnaires were piloted and programmed into KoBo Toolbox, an electronic data collection software. Formative phase data collection in Ethiopia has been delayed due to unexpected difficulties in contracting with local partners.

In South Sudan, increased violence starting in July 2016 significantly affected the DEPP projects operating in that country and required evacuation of staff members. After on-going discussions with the CDAC and Protection in Practice projects, and monitoring of the security situation, the evaluation team decided in October 2016 to revise the methodology for data collection in South Sudan. Instead of onsite data collection, we developed a case study (pg.85) to explore how these projects were affected by the violence and the lessons that can be extracted from this experience. Security-permitting, we will conduct intensive evaluation activities in South Sudan in the Interim Phase.

Evaluation team members also participated in a number of learning and collaboration meetings, including: The START Network Members' Day in London (May 2016), the DEPP collaboration day workshop in London (November 2016), and the DEPP Learning Conference in Nairobi (November-December 2016). The meetings permitted engagement with DEPP projects and stakeholders, and also more structured focus on aspects of the evaluation such as the differences in perspectives of DEPP leadership and staff at the United Kingdom (UK) level and at the country level, contextual factors that impact project implementation; and the value of evidence and different research methodologies in the humanitarian field.

### *ii. Data collection methods*

The external evaluation uses a mixed method design to capture a comprehensive picture of the DEPP's effectiveness and impact. It includes a minimum set of evaluation activities taking place across all ten DEPP focus countries and an intensive set of data collection in Ethiopia, Kenya, Myanmar and the Philippines. The minimum set includes 1) Secondary Data Analysis and Document Review, 2) Qualitative Data Collection (In-depth Interviews) and 3) Online Questionnaires (Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices surveys and Organisational Level Data Collection).

The intensive set of evaluation activities involves more exhaustive and on-site data collection including: 1) Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices Surveys, 2) Organisation Level Data Collection, 3) Community Level Data Collection, 4) Household Level Data Collection, 5) Humanitarian Simulations, 6) Network Data Collection, and 7) Value for Money Data Collection. The various elements of the evaluation data collection are presented in Table 1. We consider simulations to be an important approach to assessing the impact of the DEPP in improving humanitarian response capacity, and intend to implement them in 1-2 DEPP countries in the Summative Phase, if it is possible to coordinate with an existing DEPP simulation.

The data collection for the intensive and minimum set of evaluation activities began in October and November 2016, respectively. This staggered approach allowed for the simultaneous conclusion of the formative phase intensive and minimum set data collection.

| Method | Level of Action | Geographic scope | Data Collection Timeframe | Source/ Population | Type of Data | Sampling Method | Control Group |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Minimum Set of Evaluation Activities** | | | | | | | |
| Secondary Data Analysis and Document Review | Project, individual, organisation as relevant | All DEPP Countries | Quarterly | Project M&E data, Project reports and documents | Quantitative & Qualitative | Non-random | No |
| Qualitative Data (in-depth interviews via Skype) | Project, individual, organisation as relevant | All DEPP Countries | Formative & Interim | In-country project leadership, UK-based project leadership, DEPP Programme Leadership | Qualitative | Non-random | No |
| Quantitative Data (online questionnaire) | Project, individual, organisation as relevant | DEPP Countries except South Sudan, Kenya, Ethiopia, Myanmar, Philippines | Formative & Interim | Organisational leadership and humanitarian staff at DEPP implementing and beneficiary organisations | Quantitative | Non-random | No |
| **Intensive Evaluation Activities** | | | | | | | |
| KAP survey | Individual | Kenya, Ethiopia, Myanmar, Philippines | Formative & Interim | Humanitarian programming staff at DEPP implementing and beneficiary organisations and control organisations | Quantitative | Random | Non-beneficiaries |
| Organisation Survey / In-Depth Interviews | Organisation | Kenya, Ethiopia, Myanmar, Philippines | Formative & Interim | Organisational leadership at DEPP implementing and beneficiary organisations and control organisations | Quantitative & Qualitative | Census or Random | Non-beneficiaries |
| Community level Survey / Community Checklist / Focus Group Discussions | Community | Ethiopia, Kenya | Formative & Interim | Community leaders in DEPP intervention communities and control communities | Quantitative & Qualitative | Random | Non-intervention communities |
| Household Survey | Community | Ethiopia, Kenya | Formative & Interim | Households in DEPP intervention communities and control communities | Quantitative | Random | Non-intervention communities |
| Simulations | Individual, Organisation, System | TBD | Interim | DEPP implementing organisations and beneficiaries | Quantitative & Qualitative | Non-random | Non-beneficiaries |
| Network Analysis | System | Kenya, Ethiopia, Myanmar, Philippines | Formative & Interim | DEPP implementing and beneficiary organisations and control organisations | Quantitative | Census | No |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Value for Money Economic Analysis | Programme | Portfolio level | Formative & Interim | Project cost data & interviews with stakeholders | Quantitative & Qualitative | Census | No |
| South Sudan Case Study | Individual, Organisation, System | South Sudan | Formative | South Sudan project stakeholders | Qualitative | Non-random | No |

**Table 1: Summary of Data Methodologies for External Evaluation**[6]

### *iii.* Methods for the *Intensive Set of Evaluation Activities:*

Quantitative surveys were administered and in-depth interviews and focus group discussions were conducted from October 2016 – January 2017. Data collection in Ethiopia is ongoing.

Sampling

The study population for the intensive set of data collection comprised: 1) organisational leadership and 2) humanitarian programming staff from organisations implementing DEPP projects and organisations receiving resources from or participating in DEPP project activities [beneficiary organisations]; 3) communities receiving resources from or participating in DEPP project activities; 4) households receiving resources from or participating in DEPP project activities. A list of organisations and communities associated with the projects was finalised and participants were recruited by the respective in-country research partners through email and phone invitations, and in-person site visits. For organisational leadership and communities, purpose sampling was applied. For humanitarian programming staff and households, random sampling was applied. The number of organisations varied per country as it was based on the number of DEPP implementing partners and beneficiaries in each country, and this was dependent on the projects themselves. In general, this did not exceed 50 DEPP organisations and 400 humanitarian staff working at DEPP organisations per country. An equal number of comparison organisations, humanitarian staff, communities and households which were similar in size and location or other factors to the DEPP study population were also selected using the same sampling approach.

The study population for economic data collection (VFM) included DEPP portfolio management team members, DEPP board members and project staff.

Procedure

Verbal informed consent was obtained. Questionnaires, in-depth interview and focus group discussion guides, included in Annex 3-8 of this report, were administered by local, trained enumerators using Kobo Toolbox on Android tablets. In-depth interviews lasted approximately one hour and audio was recorded on Android tablets. Interviews for the VFM analysis were conducted in person and on Skype by an economist/VFM adviser. Quantitative and qualitative data were uploaded to a secure server, which is only accessible by key evaluation staff that have ethical clearance. Copies of the audio recording on the tablets were deleted to protect privacy and confidentiality.

[6] Note that there is no data collection planned for the summative phase which was planned to include further analysis of data collected during prior phases

Network survey

The network survey was carried out in two phases. The first phase was embedded within the quantitative surveys, which included a section on networks and collaborations. In this section, organisational leadership and humanitarian staff were asked to identify which organisations they collaborated with over the last 6 months, and to describe the nature or purpose of the collaboration. They selected from a list of 32 collaboration areas in which humanitarian actors are likely to engage. Respondents could also name their own areas of collaboration. Respondents then identified their main contact at each collaborating organisation. The actors that were named by first phase survey participants are considered to be 1st degree actors; they are one degree of separation away from the survey informant. The in-country research partners then called each of the 1st degree actors and the network survey was conducted with that individual over the phone. They were asked to identify their main contact at each collaborating organisation, and those contacts are considered 2nd degree actors, as they are two degrees of separation from the survey informant. The network survey was conducted with the 2nd degree actors in a standalone format; the phone call only included questions from the network and collaboration section of the quantitative surveys. Due to limited resources, we were unable to survey 3rd degree actors.

Analysis

Quantitative data were analysed using SAS statistical analysis software. In-depth interviews were coded and analysed using Dedoose qualitative coding software and main themes were extracted. VFM documents were reviewed and interview data were coded by an economist/VFM adviser. Network data were analysed by Root Change, an institution specialised in network mapping and network visualisations.

### *iv. Methods for the Minimum Set of Evaluation Activities*

In-depth interviews (IDIs) were conducted during a three-month period from November 2016 – January 2017, and online questionnaires were distributed in March and April 2017. This staggered approach allowed the timeframe for the quantitative minimum set data to align with the intensive set data. Document review has been ongoing throughout the evaluation.

Sampling

The study population for the minimum set comprised project leadership (UK-based), project leadership in DEPP countries, DEPP programme-level leadership and targeted stakeholders. A list of project and programme leadership was finalised and participants were recruited through person-to-person contact at a DEPP learning event and through email invitations. For each DEPP project, the evaluation team aimed to sample both the UK-based leadership and the in-country leadership. If a project did not have a UK-based leadership, the in-country leadership were invited to participate. In total, 61 individuals were sampled for inclusion in the study.

For the DEPP targeted stakeholders, purposive sampling was applied. Using a list of contacts from the inception and formative phases, targeted stakeholders were invited to participate. There were several participants who are involved at the project level and programme level; in this case, those participants were interviewed only once. Some of the key stakeholders who took part were individuals who had previously worked on the DEPP but are no longer formally engaged with the programme. Additional effort was made to locate and invite these individuals for participation in the interviews.

Procedure

For IDIs, verbal informed consent was obtained and for online questionnaires, participants provided consent prior to beginning the survey. Interviews were conducted by one of three evaluation team members, in English, in person or by Skype, and lasted approximately 45-75 minutes. The interviews were recorded using CallNote software for Skype interviews and a stock audio recording software on Android tablets for in-person interviews. Quantitative questionnaires were emailed to DEPP implementing and beneficiary organisations and completed through Enketo on the Kobo Toolbox website. Quantitative and qualitative data were uploaded to a secure server, which can only be accessed by key evaluation staff that have ethical clearance. Copies of the audio recording on the tablets and other devices were deleted to protect privacy and confidentiality.

Analysis

Evaluation team members listened to audio recordings of qualitative data. Main themes, concepts, and quotes were extracted and categorised in an electronic spreadsheet in a detailed matrix. The data were verified by a team member who listened to selected interviews to ensure that the appropriate data were being extracted, and to ensure quality and accuracy. Discrepancies or ambiguities were resolved through repeated listening, discussion and consultation of project documents that could support or disprove interpretations. Quantitative data were analysed using SAS statistical analysis software. Secondary review of existing documents involved assessments of project reports, documents, case studies, presentations, log frames and other available materials. A list of documents reviewed is provided in Annex 9.

## E. General Characteristics of the Study Population

### Formative Phase Evaluation Activities

Table 2 presents the total number of each type of interview or survey completed as part of the minimum and intensive set of evaluation activities conducted during the formative phase of the evaluation. In total, 2,315 interviews or surveys were conducted during the formative phase, of which 347 were related to the minimum set activities and 1968 were part of the intensive set. Overall, 111 qualitative interviews, 19 focus group discussions and 1,735 quantitative surveys were conducted. These numbers highlight the large number of individuals who were included, and the diverse range of approaches to capture respondent perspectives.

| **Minimum Set** | | | | **Intensive Set** | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| IDIs | Organisation surveys | KAP Surveys | **Total** | IDIs | Organisation Surveys | KAP surveys | VFM interviews | Network survey interviews | Household Surveys | Village Surveys | Community FGDs | **Total** |
| 51 | 76 | 220 | **347** | 47 | 141 | 236 | 13 | 453 | 1023 | 39 | 19 | **1968** |

Table 2: Number of surveys and interviews conducted

Annex 10 presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents interviewed as part of the evaluation's quantitative methods: 1) organisational survey, 2) KAP survey, 3) household survey, 4) community survey and 5) minimum set qualitative interviews, respectively.

### Characteristics of Organisational survey respondents

The response rate for the organisational survey was 62.6%. Overall, DEPP study participants of the organisational survey are 30.9% female and 69.1% male and averaged 42.6 years of age (Annex 10: Table 1). Most participants hold a university degree (36.2%) or master's degree (49.3%) and work at international NGOs (36.2%), national NGOs (25.7%) and local NGOs (32.2%). The majority of participants are in senior level positions (88.8%), have been working at their current organisation between 5 and 10 years (89.4%) and have been working in the humanitarian field for 5 to 10 years (90.1%).

**Characteristics of Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices (KAP) survey respondents**

The response rate for the intensive and minimum set KAP survey was 79.8%. Overall, DEPP study participants of the KAP survey (see Annex 10: Table 2) are 38% female and 52% male and averaged 35.6 years of age. Most participants hold a university degree (46.4%) or master's degree (27.4%) and work at international NGOs (38.5%), national NGOs (18.2%) and local NGOs (28.2%). The majority of participants are in mid-level (36.4%) or senior positions (38.5%) and have been working at their current organisation between 5-10 years (67.3%) and have been working in the humanitarian field between 5-10 years (65.7%).

**Characteristics of Household Survey Respondents**

The response rate for the household survey was 98.1%. Demographic characteristics of the 1,023 respondents who participated in the household survey in Myanmar are presented in Annex 10: Table 3. The average age of respondents was 44.2 years and the sample was roughly half male (49.2%) and half female (50.8%). The majority of respondents had attended some schooling (75.5%) and were literate (71.9%). The average household size was 5.2 individuals per dwelling, and approximately 64% of the sample was Christian. The majority of respondents depend on farming for their livelihood: almost 20% cultivate their own land, while 41% are migrant farmers.

**Characteristics of Community Survey Respondents**

The response rate for the community survey was 100%. The community survey demographic characteristics are presented in Annex 10: Table 4. This survey was completed with community leaders within 39 villages. The average age of respondents was 41.8 years. 94.9% of this sample were male, while only 5.1% of respondents were female.

**Network Survey**

Table 3 below provides the overall number of organisations who responded to the network survey, the total number of organisations they identified as collaborating with them, and the total number of links between organisations identified in each country. Links correspond to different forms of collaboration and are described in more detail in the section on evaluation question 3 below. The total number of organisations who responded to the survey was nearly the same in the Philippines and Kenya (72 and 73 respectively) yet the number of links identified was more than double in the Philippines. In Myanmar, overall fewer organisations participated in the first round of the network survey because there are significantly fewer DEPP projects active there relative to the other countries. In addition, fewer collaborating organisations were identified (75 compared to 401 in the Philippines and 161 in Kenya), which in turn resulted in the identification of fewer links. This is described in further detail in the section 3.

| | No. of Orgs who took Network Survey | Total No. of Orgs Identified | Total No. of Links | No. of DEPP Orgs (% of total orgs identified) | No. of Non-DEPP Orgs (% of total orgs identified) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Philippines | 72 | 401 | 5519 | 36 (9%) | 365 (91%) |
| Kenya | 73 | 161 | 2109 | 30 (19%) | 131 (81%) |
| Myanmar | 33 | 75 | 203 | 17 (23%) | 58 (77%) |

Table 3: Network Survey Participating Organisations, Identified Organisations and Links by Country

**Qualitative Interviews – Minimum set of evaluation activities**

The response rate for the qualitative minimum set interviews was 83.6%. Of the 51 study participants interviewed, 6 were DEPP stakeholders, 28 country-level project leadership, and 17 UK-based project leadership (See Annex 10: Table 5). There were a total of 10 non-responders, totalling a sample of 61. Overall, study participants were 37.3% female and 62.7% male. They averaged 39.8 years of age. Most study participants have been working at their current organisation between 1-3 years (49%) and 3-5 years (19.6%), and have been working in the humanitarian field between 1-3 years (15.7%), 3-5 years (21.6%), 5-10 years (23.5%), 10-15 years (13.7%) and <15 years (19.6%).

## F. Limitations

There are notable strengths to the evaluation activities presented, including a wide range of study instruments and a diverse sample of DEPP project implementing and beneficiary organisations, programme leadership, and leadership across DEPP countries and projects who were interviewed and surveyed; however, it is important to consider the study's limitations.

The response rate for the intensive set of evaluation activities was, in general, high (79.8% for the KAP, 98.1% for the household survey, 100% for the community survey and 83.6% for the qualitative minimum set) and within an expected range given the evaluation targeted sample. It was lower for the organisational survey (62.6%) but this was anticipated. The organisational survey was administered to Directors of organisations, who were often difficult to involve because of busy schedules and travel. Despite multiple attempts for each sampled Director, it remained a challenge to engage them in the data collection. For the other types of surveys and interviews, non-responders were primarily organisational leadership and humanitarian programming staff from implementing and beneficiary organisations that were unavailable to participate due to scheduling conflicts. There was no systematic difference between responders and non-responders across intensive set countries.

The majority of non-responders (N=10) for the minimum set qualitative evaluation activities were primarily project leadership, and on subset analysis, they were relatively evenly distributed among countries and projects indicating that there was no systematic difference between responders and non-responders. Compared to the overall sample, there were fewer interviews conducted among programme leadership. This was partly due to turnover in these positions since the beginning of the evaluation and also because the programme leadership historically constitutes a much smaller group of staff members than the combined project leadership. The views of the respondents may not be

representative of all of the programme staff, field staff and others; however, there were common themes among the people interviewed.

It is important to consider the potential sources of bias for the aforementioned surveys and interviews. The interviewers assured respondents that privacy and confidentiality would be respected at all times, however social desirability bias could have affected responses. Since many respondents are aware of the expectations of the DEPP and the evaluation, they may have limited their responses to what they thought DEPP management or the enumerator would want to hear. Recall bias may also have been an issue, as respondents may not always be able to provide an accurate account of past activities or experiences dating from the beginning of DEPP. Exclusion bias may also have affected the study since in some settings such as Kenya and Myanmar, security related challenges limited access to certain organisations.

Furthermore, interviews for the minimum set of evaluation activities were conducted via Skype and in English; therefore, we may have not incorporated the perspectives of individuals who may have limited Internet connectivity and/or who did not speak English. Interviews were conducted by the same three individuals. Notes were compared and the same three interviewers extracted data from the interviews. It is possible that there was interviewer bias as each individual had varying amounts of exposure to and knowledge of DEPP. With that said, the interviewers followed a semi-structured interview guide and asked similar questions with similar probes.

Another notable limitation is the high turnover of DEPP programme and project leadership. A number of respondents interviewed during the formative phase were unable to speak directly about the design process – both related to the DEPP itself and of individual projects, as they were hired more recently to replace staff who may have been engaged in the design process. High staff turnover is a recurring theme that has emerged both with respect to the design and implementation of the DEPP that has had notable effects. One consequence with respect to this evaluation has been the loss of internal knowledge about topics such as the design process and relevant lessons learned.

During the data extraction, there were minor technical issues with the clarity and completeness of the audio files due to the programme platform used to record the Skype interviews. However, the interviewers took notes and the majority of files did not have any technical issues.

The document review and secondary analysis was also dependent on what was shared by project and programme leadership. Every effort was made to locate certain documents if they could not be located in the shared folders.

Finally, there were unanticipated delays during the in-country field-level data collection for the intensive set of evaluation activities which necessitated additional time to maintain the integrity and completeness of these data collection methods. In some cases this was due to delays in setting up contractual agreements, obtaining respondent lists and contacts, challenges with security as well as limited access to areas where conflict or violence was occurring. For example, access to DEPP communities and households in Myanmar was limited due to insecurity and data collection was delayed until safe access could be guaranteed. In South Sudan, planned intensive evaluation activities were not conducted due to an outbreak of violence that halted DEPP activities in country and instead the methodology revised to permit generation of a case study. Contractual delays have been a substantial issue in Ethiopia, where an agreement was not reached between the selected local research partner and HHI, and a new local partner was identified and contracted. Data collection in Ethiopia will begin shortly. Overall, these various delays have led to the suggested revised timeline described on page 15.

# PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

## 1. Evaluation Question 1: Relevance and validity of design

### Overview of the DEPP Design Process

The design process for the DEPP as well as the individual projects within the DEPP portfolio is summarised here. These findings were integrated with and build on results from interviews conducted during the inception phase of the evaluation. Figure 2, shows the sequence of steps in the design process.

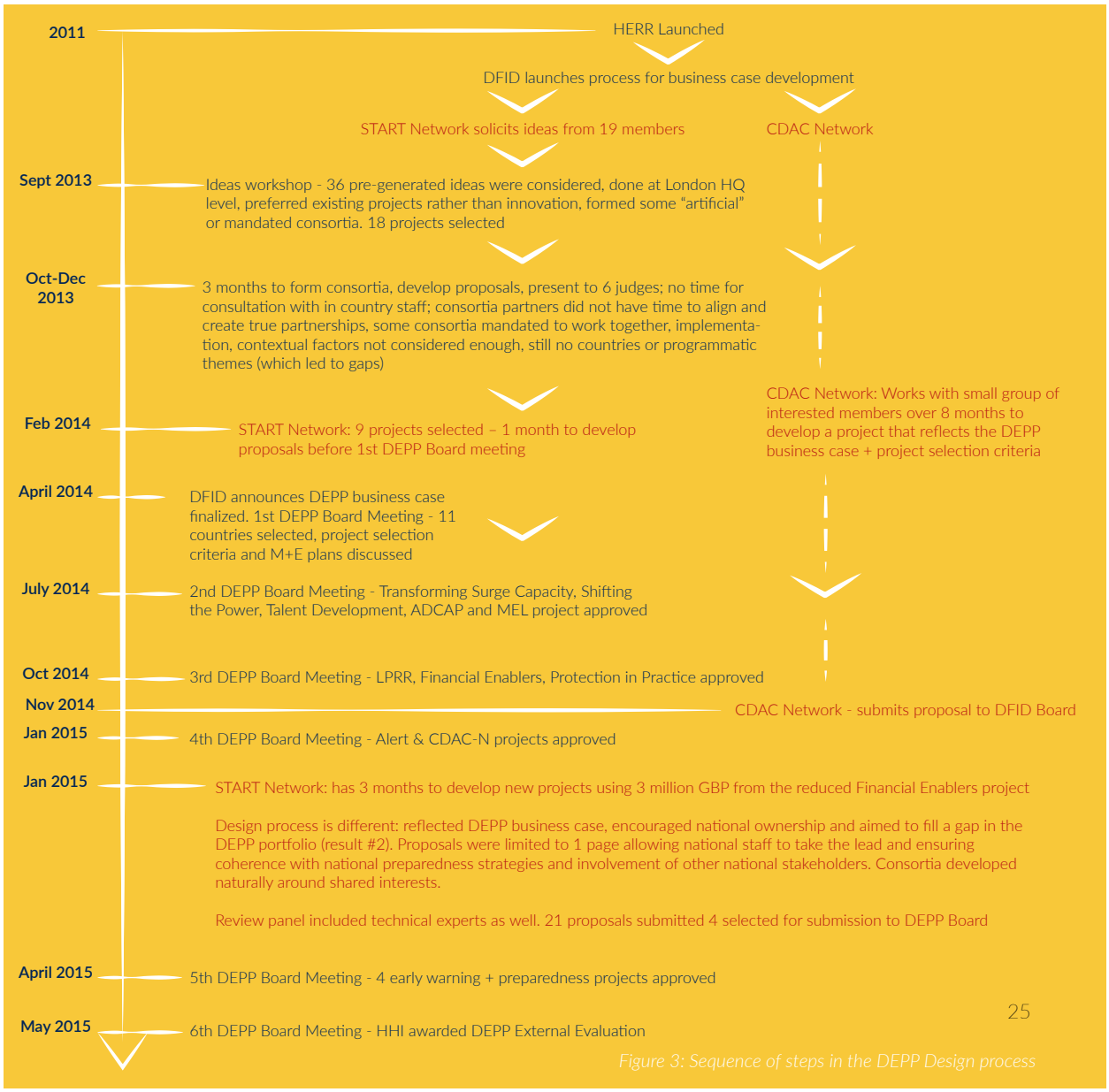


**Figure 2: Sequence of steps in the DEPP Design process**

In response to the Humanitarian Emergency Response Review (HERR) launched in 2011, which included a call to action for the British Government to substantially modify its way of responding to humanitarian crises, DFID launched the business case development process. Evidence suggests that early in the business development process DFID had already identified the Consortium of British Humanitarian Agencies (which would later become the START network) and the CDAC Network as potential partners. Once the business case development was underway, the START Network and the CDAC network, therefore, undertook their own, separate design processes related to the DEPP. The START Network secretariat solicited project ideas from its (then) 19 members in 2013 through a general call that was circulated internally. In total, over fifty pre-generated ideas were put forward by START Network members. All fifty were considered at an Ideas Workshop held in September 2013, which involved primarily London-based, headquarters staff who came together to discuss and consolidate the ideas. The ideas were narrowed down to 18 by the end of the day, but the process was difficult and involved merging some projects together, leading to the formation of artificial or mandated consortia.

> "The mashing workshop put together four streams of individual projects, projects that build individual's capacity, and mashed them into something that perhaps if you had a blank sheet of paper shouldn't have lived together… We were perhaps forcing people to collaborate who shouldn't have been... this then affected the quality of the collaboration between the members." (Programme Leadership)

The process of consolidating and merging projects was not based on any particular strategy or defined criteria, and lacked involvement from in-country staff. There was a preference for projects that were already being implemented or that agencies were hoping to implement rather than new, innovative ideas. The creation of artificial consortia had long reaching impacts. The DEPP design case study[7] provides one example: "Three agencies brought ideas for humanitarian training schemes that they were already running with great success. These three agencies were brought together and tasked with creating one consortium project out of the three. At face value, this seemed to make sense in the name of collaboration and efficiency; however, the high transaction costs of working in the consortium may arguably initially have outweighed any perceived advantage of working together."

The case study also discusses some of the consequences of these mandated collaborations: "Some consortia that were mandated to work together struggled to reconcile differing interests and opinions. Partners reported that these frustrations undermined the collaboration, and which required sustained effort to disentangle later in the project's life-cycle, affecting efficiency and effectiveness during delivery"

Following the Ideas Workshop, teams, which again were primarily UK based staff, were given three months by the START secretariat to form their consortia, including generating detailed budgets and proposals before presenting them to a panel of 6 judges as part of an internal peer review process. However, at this time, the DFID business case had not yet been finalised, nor had the specific DEPP target countries been selected, which meant that projects could not be developed with those in mind. In addition, there was not enough time to involve country offices, and London-based staff did not feel it was justified to use the time and resources of these country staff when there was no guarantee of funding. There was insufficient time to set up consortia or fully consider

[7] *Lessons from Designing and Setting-up the Disasters and Emergencies Preparedness Programme* document

implementation details or appropriate resourcing. At the end of this three-month period, submissions were peer-reviewed and nine were selected to go forward and be presented to DFID. Note that the peer review process had a low threshold for risk. All of this work was conducted without a business case, defined countries or a guarantee of available funding. This had several effects which are described later in this section.

In April 2014, the business case was finalised and DFID announced £40 million of funding for the DEPP, of which £10 million would be allocated toward an "innovation window"; thus, leaving £30 million for DEPP projects. This was allocated to the two pre-selected networks, with the START Network receiving £27 million and CDAC receiving £3 million.

According to the DEPP design case study: "the decision-making on DFID's investment included extremely limited consultation with NGOs and other experts to develop the business case, which meant that relevant lessons from the humanitarian sector's broader experience of implementing preparedness projects was not systematically included in the evolving business case for the DEPP." In addition, evidence suggests that the DFID country offices did not feed into the decision-making process, and that there was also a lack of broader consultation. The final business case did not contain basic design details such as focus countries, project selection criteria, and there was only one month before the first board meeting to develop these substantial areas.

The first DEPP board meeting was held during that same month in April 2014. Eleven countries – Kenya, Ethiopia, Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan, Mozambique, Jordan, Myanmar, Philippines, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Indonesia – were selected, and DEPP project selection criteria and monitoring and evaluation plans were discussed.

The second Board meeting, in July 2014, led to the approval of the first 5 DEPP projects: Transforming Surge Capacity, Shifting the Power, Talent Development, Age and Disability Capacity Building (ADCAP) project and the MEL project (which has later been rebranded as the Learning Project). Three more projects were approved during the 3rd DEPP Board meeting in October 2014: LPRR, Financial Enablers, and Protection in Practice. The ALERT project was approved in January 2015 during the 4th Board Meeting.

In comparison to the START Network, the CDAC network instituted a different design process. Once the business case was finalised in April 2014, a small group of interested members of the CDAC network worked over 8 months to develop a project that specifically fit the DEPP business case and selection criteria. This project was submitted in November 2014 and approved during the 4$^{th}$ DEPP Board Meeting in January 2015.

After the 4$^{th}$ DEPP Board Meeting, the START Network had funds remaining and decided to launch a second wave of proposal development, building on lessons learned during the initial project design phase. Contrary to the first round of project design, and in an effort to improve the process, it significantly encouraged and incentivized national project staff to take the lead, and to involve local stakeholders. One-page proposals were sought on projects that focused on early warning systems in order to fill a noticeable gap in the DEPP portfolio. The shift to very short proposals was done to enable national project staff to be significantly involved. Consortia were permitted to develop naturally around shared interests, and local ownership was encouraged. A committee of technical experts conducted a review of proposals, and significant involvement of in-country teams was a selection criteria. Four projects selected through this process were submitted to the DEPP Board and were ultimately approved in April 2015. The external evaluation was approved in May 2015.

The following sections present evaluation findings related to the relevance and validity of the design process, as well as its successes and limitations.

### Question 1.A: Has the programme targeted the right people in the right places?

The evaluation assessed this question from 3 main lenses: first, whether the right countries were chosen and whether the country-selection criteria were clear; second, how decisions were made about the number of DEPP projects per country; and third, whether the DEPP design is consistent with beneficiary needs and requirements within countries.

**DEPP targets and country selection criteria**

In general, the targets of the DEPP are appropriate, and the right people in the right places are being targeted. The focus on building national capacity, improving preparedness and targeting vulnerable groups to ensure their inclusion during humanitarian response activities are consistent with needs identified during literature and evidence reviews.

The country selection process was iterative and based on several criteria – humanitarian need and likelihood of natural disasters using the INFORM Index[8], followed by feasibility and opportunity to make the greatest impact. These are appropriate criteria. However, according to the DEPP design case study[9], agencies perceived that DFID preferred countries where they already directly worked in, implementation in fewer countries to maximize impact and to work in settings at risk of natural disasters rather than manmade as it would be less risky. In addition, since the two networks had already been selected, the DEPP could only operate in countries where those networks had an existing presence. Ultimately, however, some respondents felt that key countries and priority geographic areas with strong humanitarian need were not included and attributed this mainly to the limitations of operating only in countries where the START Network and the CDAC Network members had a presence. By operating through pre-selected networks, there is a possibility that stronger organisations and interventions were not included. Minimum set interviewees also described a lack of strategic direction and objectives at the portfolio level, which hindered optimal country and project choices. Another interviewee stated that the selection of DEPP countries by the DEPP Board had been a convoluted process with too much input from the START Network, and emphasis placed on existing member coverage within the network.

**Coverage of DEPP interventions across target countries**

Of the 11 target countries that were finally selected, projects were implemented in only 10 countries (Indonesia ultimately was not targeted by any DEPP projects). Despite the commitment towards the five result areas, the portfolio of interventions in each country also varied greatly, with some countries receiving very few projects and others many more. This seemed to be due to minimal consideration at the portfolio level about coverage of the DEPP interventions across countries and the optimal level of exposure. This varied coverage could have dampened the potential effectiveness of the programme in some of the DEPP focus countries. One respondent felt that there is a higher level of learning in countries with more projects due to a greater critical mass. For example, Pakistan has 7 projects, and this has led to a lot of organic activities and cost efficiencies, with people sharing

[8] http://www.inform-index.org

[9] Preparing for Preparedness: Lessons from Designing and Setting-up the Disasters and Emergencies Preparedness Programme

resources and opening up new projects. The findings on programme implementation later in this report support the idea that there is more collaboration in settings where there are more DEPP projects. In some cases this was enhanced by the presence of a Regional Learning Advisor (RLA).

The findings are further supported by the *Lessons from Designing and Setting-up the Disasters and Emergencies Preparedness Programme* document. The report cites several challenges with the country selection process, indicating that this was neither efficient nor effective in terms of meeting needs identified upfront. The report states:

> *"As a result of setting geographical criteria both after the business case and after most of the projects had been designed, humanitarian need for preparedness was not the primary incentive. Some projects sought approval to implement in countries not on the list, and one of the official countries received no investment at all. And although the DEPP was designed with the aim of achieving five results, the focus of interventions varied between countries."*

The pre-selection of the START and CDAC networks to deliver the DEPP meant that the project selection process had two-stages – initial approval by the network followed by final approval by the DEPP Board. Especially for the first 9 START Network projects, this was found to be highly cost and resource intensive:

1. It was time consuming and there was no planned inception phase.
2. The process strained relationships with country offices because of local partners' limited capacity to absorb costs associated with the delays of a second approval process.
3. In an effort to begin implementation as soon as possible, some projects reported rushing through details rather than collaborating effectively with their consortium.
4. More 'risky' projects that had been selected by the START Network's process found the DEPP Board's process challenging.
5. More detailed project proposals were required by the DEPP Board which limited the adjustments that could be made by implementing teams in country.

**Beneficiary needs in DEPP target countries and relevance**

At the project level, many projects did not conduct needs assessments during the design process, which calls into question whether the appropriate individuals are being targeted and whether their needs and requirements are adequately being addressed within each country. The process of retro-fitting pre-designed projects to specific contexts once the geographic locations were selected by the DEPP board and lack of involvement of the in-country stakeholders, likely affected the initial relevance of the projects. However, most projects spent a substantial amount of time contextualising their projects to each country or site once they were approved. While this led to delays, it was aimed at ensuring relevance of the design. However, this process still often did not include consultations with beneficiaries such as communities, households, local / national NGOs, which remains a significant weakness of the approach.

As part of the quantitative minimum and intensive set surveys, a large number of respondents (n=204) across all 10 DEPP focus countries were asked about the relevance of the DEPP interventions in the country of the survey (see Table 4). The majority of respondents stated they felt the interventions to be either relevant or extremely relevant (57.8% overall). The highest reported relevance was in the Philippines where 83.3% of interviewees felt the DEPP is relevant or extremely relevant.

| On a scale of 1-5, how relevant are the DEPP interventions for the country in which you are working? | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | All N=204 | Kenya N=98 | Myanmar N=78 | Philippines N=18 |
| Not at all relevant | 1 (0.5) | 0 (0.0) | 1 (1.3) | 0 (0.0) |
| Irrelevant | 2 (1.0) | 1 (1.0) | 1 (1.3) | 0 (0.0) |
| Somewhat relevant | 25 (12.3) | 18 (18.4) | 6 (7.7) | 1 (5.6) |
| Relevant | 90 (44.1) | 41 (41.8) | 28 (35.9) | 11 (61.1) |
| Extremely relevant | 28 (13.7) | 15 (15.3) | 3 (3.8) | 4 (22.2) |
| I don't know | 58 (28.4) | 23 (23.5) | 30 (38.5) | 2 (11.1) |

Table 4: Relevance of the DEPP interventions

### Question 1.B: To what extent does the programme design (theory of change) support the projects' design (log frame)?

The DEPP business case includes a theory of change for the DEPP and focuses on five key results areas as described earlier. This theory of change was presumably utilised during the design of some of the projects. However, evidence on the extent to which the programme theory of change was used is limited. Interview data and document review support the fact that individual projects in the first START Network design phase were not developed specifically to fit the business case or programme theory of change. However, despite this, there is fairly good alignment between the projects' designs and the overall programme theory of change. This could have been stronger had the design process unfolded in a logical sequence. One other significant weakness has been the lack of an overall DEPP programme level log frame, and guidance for individual projects in terms of developing log frames and M&E systems that align together and with the programme. A programme level log frame was recently developed based on the existing individual project log frames – this process should have been reversed.

### Question 1.C: In what ways was the programme design process participatory? Were project beneficiaries adequately engaged before, during and after?

Overall, the design process for the DEPP was participatory in that it involved consultation with various stakeholders throughout most of its course. However, many beneficiaries were not adequately involved in the process, and local stakeholders within the selected target countries were not engaged, especially with respect to the START Network projects developed during the first phase (See Table 5). The consultations that did occur tended to be primarily at the UK-level only and were led by large International NGOs (INGOs) and London-based staff. Given the lack of involvement of in-country partners and smaller agencies, the design process did not follow current best practices related to participatory design approaches. Furthermore, the DEPP design process focused mainly on developing individual projects in isolation, with limited consideration about systems at the portfolio level, and about how projects might align together.

Furthermore, there was limited involvement of local stakeholders in the design of the individual DEPP projects, as well as a lack of needs assessments within the target countries. This led to inadequate contextualisation and understanding of the projects at the country level, which in turn contributed to delays in project implementation.

These issues in the design of both the DEPP and the individual projects were due to key flaws in the design process – an unfavourable sequence of steps in the process, the selection of projects in tranches, and inadequate time and resources to engage smaller organisations with limited resources. As illustrated in Figure 2 and described earlier, most of the DEPP projects and proposals were designed before the business case was finalised, and country selection occurred even later in the process leaving little room for engagement of local stakeholders. One respondent stated:

> "The first round of the DEPP projects were a bit too London centric…I think also it has to do with the fact that the business case came very late from DFID and that also the country focus came very late. We didn't know until the very last minute which country was going to be the focus. So it was very difficult to engage with our country teams on one side and also local partners, because you create a very high expectation and you're not even sure that that country is even eligible. " (Project Leadership)

Several exceptions exist; respondents interviewed confirmed that the four projects that were funded during the last tranche (UEWEA, SEPS, Ethiopia EWEA, and Public Health Preparedness) were designed through a more participatory process and did involve consultation with approved local stakeholders. This was linked to smoother and timelier project implementation.

> "For the second round of projects that were the early warning projects, there was a clear directive that they had to be developed with the country office directing them, and I think that is possibly one of the reasons why these projects have managed to catch up so quickly even though they started almost a year later than some of the other projects. It's because they've been developed in collaboration with the country offices so the country office already had the buy-in and the drive to get going" (Project Leadership)

As these four projects underwent a more streamlined design process that took into account some of the shortfalls of the first phase, this finding is not surprising.

| | All<br><br>N= 51 | UK-based project leadership<br>N = 17 | In-country project leadership<br>N = 28 | Programme leadership<br>N = 6 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| The design process was participatory | ✔ | ✔ | ✖/✔ | ✔ |
| The design process involved local stakeholders | ✖ | ✖ | ✖/✔ | ✖ |
| There was sufficient time for collaborations during design process | ✖ | ✖ | ✖ | ✖ |

Table 5: Perceptions of DEPP design process

✔ - Most respondents agree with statement
✖ - Most respondents disagree with statement
✖/✔ - Responses were mixed

### Question 1.D: To what extent was the programme design logical and coherent? Were the objectives of the programme clear, realistic and likely to be achieved within the established time schedule and with the allocated resources (including human resources)?

To a large extent, the DEPP programme design process did not follow a logical and coherent approach. As described earlier, most projects under the START network were designed prior to the finalisation of the DFID business case and the selection of target countries. Upon finalisation of the business case, nine of these pre-designed projects were retrofitted to align with the business case, presented to DFID and approved in tranches. The CDAC network adopted a different, more logical approach with respect to the design process. Projects were developed over a longer period of time and were designed to fit the business case and selection criteria. National project staff and local stakeholders took a larger role in the design of the 2nd round of START Network projects and consortia were developed based on shared areas of focus. Thus, the evidence supports that the sequence of steps in the design process, particularly those designed during the first START Network phase, were not taken in a logical and strategic order.

**Were objectives clear and achievable within the timeframe?**

The evaluation team reviewed the objectives of the DEPP as a whole and of the individual projects. At a high level, the objectives are clear, relevant, aligned with DFID's humanitarian priorities[10,11] and aim to fill a clear gap in humanitarian capacity to prepare for and respond to disasters. As described in the literature, increased funding is needed for preparedness activities and for strengthening capacity of national level actors rather than international actors[12]. There is a shortage of people and systems with sufficient capacity to prepare for and respond to disasters in countries at high risk for disasters, particularly at the national level[13]. The DEPP objectives to strengthen national capacity to respond to disasters and increase preparedness levels in countries at risk for disasters are relevant for the 10 DEPP focus countries. However, the 3-year time frame to achieve the objectives is unrealistic. A 5-year timeframe would have been more appropriate for these specific objectives[14].

These findings are supported by respondent interviews and other data collected during the formative phase. Interviewees were asked about the validity of the DEPP design in order to understand how specific activities related to DEPP objectives. Overall, most agreed that the DEPP objectives are clear or mostly clear (See Table 6). However, some individuals felt that the objectives and five results areas that project activities target are too broad and would have benefited from increased specificity and refinement. However, the broadness of the results areas was also

[10] https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/uk-aid-in-2015-the-progress-so-far-and-the-priorities-ahead
[11] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dfid-single-departmental-plan-2015-to-2020/single-departmental-plan-2015-to-2020
[12] HOLMES, JOHN. "Humanitarian Response in the 21st Century." *The Brown Journal of World Affairs*, vol. 17, no. 2, 2011, pp. 113–121., www.jstor.org/stable/24590801.
[13] Humanitarian Response Review. An independent report commissioned by the United Nations Emergency Relief Coordinator & Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). Adinolfi et al, August 2005.
[14] Based on interviewee responses and evaluation team expert opinion

considered a positive point as it permitted the diversity of different projects that exist within the DEPP portfolio. There may have been some ambiguity around the precise meaning of different results areas, such as results area four (Improved institutional arrangements and policy environments so that national systems for humanitarian response and preparedness are better supported and more suitable), and different agencies may have interpreted key terms and phrases differently. The programme would have benefitted from clearly defining key concepts such as collaboration and institutional arrangements early on. This in turn would have enabled projects to use standardised measurements and develop standardized indicators.

When mapping how the objectives and planned activities of each project feed into each of the five results areas, as illustrated on page 16 of the DEPP Learning Report 2015[15], it is clear that while some projects are only targeting a few of the five results areas, as a group of projects, all five results areas are being adequately addressed. This is, in part, due to the addition of the four early warning projects which, as described earlier, were developed through a second design process that was initiated when stakeholders identified a large gap in projects targeting result area two (improve preparedness systems for early action with communities at risk of disasters) after the first ten projects had been approved. While most respondents considered the objectives to be clear, the majority felt they were not likely to be achieved within the established time frame.

**Were resources (both human and financial) adequate?**

DEPP stakeholder and respondent perspectives on this issue were also captured, and five VFM project case studies were reviewed. Overall, respondents felt that resourcing for the DEPP portfolio was sufficient (see Table 6). However, in general, most interviewees felt that project budgets were stretched and resources were insufficient to undertake activities to their full potential. There is more of a need for in-country resources rather than for UK staff. Non-project attributable costs (NPAC) (ranging from 7% to 12% of total programme budget) were considered insufficient by almost all interviewees. There were also discussions about insufficient allocation of funds for collaborative activities. Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) budget allocations varied, as did the quality of individual M&E plans. There may be a need to increase M&E resources for certain projects. In many cases, respondents reported financial challenges were also linked to implementation delays. As will be discussed in more depth in a separate section, the implementation delays were primarily due to underestimating the time required for collaboration and setting up the consortia, as well as the additional time required to contextualize projects within the countries.

| | All<br><br>N=51 | UK-based project leadership<br>N=17 | In-country project leadership<br>N=28 | Programme leadership<br><br>N=6 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Objectives are clear | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ |
| Objectives feasible within the timeframe | ✖ | ✖ | ✖ | ✖ |
| Collaboration adequately included in project design | ✖ | ✖ | ✖ | ✖ |
| Resources (human and | ✖/✔ | ✔ | ✖/✔ | ✖ |

[15] DEPP 2015 Learning Report. Accessed on 13 January 2017 at https://startnetwork.org/resource/depp-2015-learning-report

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| financial) were adequate | | | | |

Table 6: Design validity of DEPP

✔ - Most respondents agree with statement
✖ - Most respondents disagree with statement
✖/✔ - Responses were mixed

**Do the projects align as a portfolio?**
The individual projects were designed in isolation and were not designed to complement each other. For this reason, the DEPP's design is limited in terms of its ability to function as a portfolio. One stakeholder stated:

> "We were under a lot of pressure from DFID to basically jigsaw together the projects to each other…They [DEPP projects] weren't designed to sit alongside each other and compliment each other. So there is a bit of a design flaw in that sense as we were under a lot of pressure to make the projects interoperable, more interlinked when actually they were designed to be individual projects. They just happened to sit in the same pot. " (Programme Leadership)

Portfolio level systems should have been developed early on, potentially through a separate inception phase, to ensure that the DEPP could function well as a programme. For example, the lack of an overarching DEPP log frame at the programme level was a substantial weakness. Had such a log frame been developed early on together with other systems and processes, it might have led to more cohesion and more alignment across the projects and perhaps greater validity of DEPP as a whole.

**Was collaboration at the programme level addressed during the design phase?**
DEPP emphasis on collaboration emerged relatively late during the design process and expectations and objectives related to collaboration, especially inter-project collaboration, were unclear for many stakeholders. There was an assumption that collaboration would occur organically, however, there was an under-estimation of the general knowledge and skills among members on how to collaborate effectively. Further, collaboration was interpreted differently by different agencies, and there was insufficient time and resources to effectively engage in collaborative processes during the design phase. In the case of the projects developed during START Network's first design phase, some collaborations were mandated and this led to tensions and lower quality collaborations where substantial time was spent in trying reconcile differing opinions, undermining the efficiency of delivery.

### Question 1.E: Have prioritised target groups (people with disabilities, older people) and gender aspects been taken into consideration in the programme design?

The DEPP Programme Board criteria for project selection required inclusion of a gender statement, but did not provide further guidelines with respect to gender inclusion. As such, all DEPP projects considered gender in their proposals and outlined their planned gender approach in the concept notes submitted to START and CDAC. However, since the requirement was only to include a gender statement, the level of detail provided and the proposed level of inclusion varied substantially across projects. Some project proposals described disaggregating data by gender, others proposed ensuring

gender equality in participation, and others described incorporating a strong focus on gender within the content of training materials and curricula. Others were more vague and indicated that gender dimensions would be considered without any specifics about how, or stated that the approach to gender would be further developed in the project inception phase.

Prioritised target groups were also not explicitly included as a requirement in the design of the projects and were not targeted in most projects' activities. However while not a project requirement, prioritised groups were considered and included in many projects across DEPP. For example, the ADCAP project's inclusion efforts are described later in this report to be leading the field and extremely influential amongst other DEPP projects.

**Summary: Key findings**

In summary, the targets of the DEPP are appropriate, and the right people in the right places are being targeted. The focus on building national capacity, improving preparedness and targeting vulnerable groups to ensure their inclusion during humanitarian response activities are consistent with needs identified during literature and evidence reviews. At a high level, the programme's objectives are clear, relevant, aligned with DFID's humanitarian priorities and aim to fill a clear gap in humanitarian capacity. However, the programme's 3-year time frame is unrealistic.

The country selection process was not optimal, due to lack of strategic direction and objectives at the portfolio level and ultimately some key countries at risk of humanitarian crises may not have been included. The portfolio of interventions in each country varied which could have led to lost opportunities to maximize impact and efficiencies within each setting.

The design process at least in the initial phase was not logical and coherent and these issues led to the design and selection of many projects that were retrofitted to the business case or selection criteria. Local involvement is a critical step within the design process that was not adequately considered, leading to challenges with respect to local ownership and stakeholder buy-in and potentially reducing wider impact of the DEPP. The design process was participatory but beneficiaries were not adequately involved.

Adequate time was not allocated during the design phase to ensure consortia had the necessary time and space to grow, and that key stakeholders, especially at the local level, could be involved in a participatory way. Individuals and agencies did not always have the capacity to collaborate and facilitation and capacity building around collaboration could have contributed to healthier more effective collaborations. The design phase related to the second round of START Network projects addressed many of these weaknesses and was led by in-country teams ensuring local buy-in, and eventually smoother and timelier project implementation.

Resourcing for the DEPP is considered sufficient, but project budgets are tight, with insufficient NPACs, inadequate allocation of funds for collaborative activities and variable allocation for M&E. Resources were also needed during the design phase to ensure that smaller agencies and in-country staff could participate in a meaningful way.

Design at the programme level was not adequately considered and projects were developed in isolation. The objectives, systems and processes, the programme theory of change, definition of key terms, and expectations about how projects are intended to interlink and interact were not developed and articulated at the outset. Gender inclusion aspects of the projects were not clearly articulated during the project design stage.

## 2. Evaluation Question 2: Relevance and Effectiveness of the interventions

### Question 2.A: What delivery mechanisms are working effectively and why?

**Implementation timelines and delays**

Given that projects were officially approved at different points in time, the timelines for the different projects are staggered. At the time of this report, projects were at various points in their respective implementation processes. Universally, delays in getting the projects up and running have been a major challenge. The implications of these have included higher costs during the start up phase than anticipated, reduced time period for activities and thus less time for the DEPP interventions to potentially lead to an impact. This reduces efficiency, and could potentially reduce effectiveness of the programme.

These delays in starting field activities were linked to the deficiencies in the design process that were discussed previously. First, the lack of in-country involvement during the design process meant that once projects were approved and contracted, time had to be taken for in-country teams to understand the project activities, contextualize them for the specific setting and target audience and ensure buy-in of key local stakeholders. The time required for these processes was underestimated and led to delays in many projects. This was compounded by the fact that many projects had not included an inception phase in their projects, which would have reserved time specifically for some of these processes. Those that had included an inception phase stated that the amount of time was insufficient.

The collaboration process was vastly underestimated in the implementation phase as well and difficulties in developing strong, functioning consortia that can effectively work together were experienced by many projects. It is not sufficient for consortia to be functioning only at the UK-level; in the countries of implementation as well, partners needed to have the time and space for collaboration. There were lengthy administrative processes required to set up the projects including policies around subcontracting and the internal policies and procedures of each organisation, which also need to be respected. However, once most of these issues were dealt with in the first phases of the implementation, delivery became more streamlined and most felt that implementation was becoming more efficient over time. In general, there is confidence that key project activities would be delivered albeit on a modified schedule than initially planned. Some projects are anticipating the need for extensions beyond the end of the DEPP programme period.

**What has been implemented thus far?**

To explore intervention delivery thus far, key activities that have been conducted by the DEPP projects have been grouped together by each of the five DEPP results areas (Table 7).

| Result Area | Examples of key activities implemented thus far |
|---|---|
| 1 – Improve knowledge and understanding of individuals by sharing best practice of humanitarian preparedness and response | • Targeted capacity strengthening plans<br>• Training schemes for all levels of humanitarian aid workers through job placements and extended courses<br>• Sharing of good practices and learning on surge mechanisms across humanitarian actors and DEPP projects<br>• Trainings and workshops to increase multi-sector knowledge and barriers to disability inclusion in preparing and responding to |

| | |
|---|---|
| | disasters<br>• Between and within sector consultations to improve knowledge and best practices<br>• Trainings to improve the capacity of health care workers to detect and respond to emergencies<br>• Communication and trainings targeted at non-specialist and non-humanitarians to inform a broader understanding of humanitarian systems |
| 2 – Improve preparedness systems for early action with communities at risk for disasters | • Toolkit developed with guidelines for setting up an urban early warning system in other settings<br>• Participatory approaches are being used to develop new preparedness and response systems at the organisational level utilizing feedback from users<br>• Improved early warning and preparedness efforts targeted at health care facilities to ensure adequate response during an outbreak<br>• Pursuit of community-led and owned preparedness and response activities through identification of community specific risks and vulnerabilities<br>• Use of a bottom-up approach to ensure successful adoption of EWS |
| 3 – Increased number of coalitions, partnerships and networks which, working together, are able to address humanitarian needs in a wide range of emergency situations. | • Initiation of disaster response and management trainings at the government level in collaboration with organisations<br>• Sharing of rosters and evaluation of satisfaction for surge practices at national, regional and international levels<br>• Encouragement of thematic programming outside of the DEPP through networks formed at conferences and other non-DEPP events<br>• Cross-project and cross-agency collaboration to improve and enhance project prototypes, goals and objectives for maximum success<br>• Transfer of project ownership to the local level across different sectors using a flexible funding mechanism<br>• Creation of local consortia to improve ownership, sustainability, and capacity at the national level through locally distributed grants |
| 4 – Improved institutional arrangements and policy environments so that national systems for humanitarian response are better supported and more suitable | • Supporting local and underrepresented actors to be better represented and heard in their relevant platforms and networks<br>• Organisational creation and adaptation of tools and policies for disability inclusion<br>• Utilization of a participatory approach to transfer ownership of health centre preparedness and response plans to the government<br>• Direct advocacy at the local and national level for adoption of an urban early warning mechanism at the government level |
| 5 – Strengthened evidence base for what works to help build humanitarian capacity at | • Assessment of baseline and end line capacity of individuals participating in humanitarian response rosters and trainings<br>• DEPP/non-DEPP workshops, conferences and learning events<br>• Evidence sharing and dissemination |

| | |
|---|---|
| scale | • Individual assessments and trainings catered toward gaps in capacity<br>• Utilization of case studies and community member's feedback and perspectives for informing programmatic preparedness and response recommendations<br>• Creation of a DEPP learning platform (https://disasterpreparedness.ngo/ ) |

Table 7: Key DEPP activities implemented by DEPP result area

From information extracted from in-depth interviews, secondary review of existing DEPP documents, and intensive set data collection, it is evident that a range of diverse activities targeting each of the five results areas have been implemented thus far. Examples of these activities includes in-person trainings, development of training packages and guidelines, development of early warning systems, collaboration activities such as learning events and conferences, development of case studies and evidence sharing and dissemination. Fewer activities have been implemented around result 5, likely because it takes time to generate evidence and many projects are still in the initial phases of the project implementation. It is anticipated that a strengthened evidence base will emerge later in the project cycles. Figure 3 below supports this finding. Of the 336 respondents across 10 countries that responded, almost half reported that DEPP related trainings had been conducted by their organisation and close to 38% reported implementation of capacity development programs. In addition, 28.8% reported implementing preparedness training, and 22.6% drills and simulations.

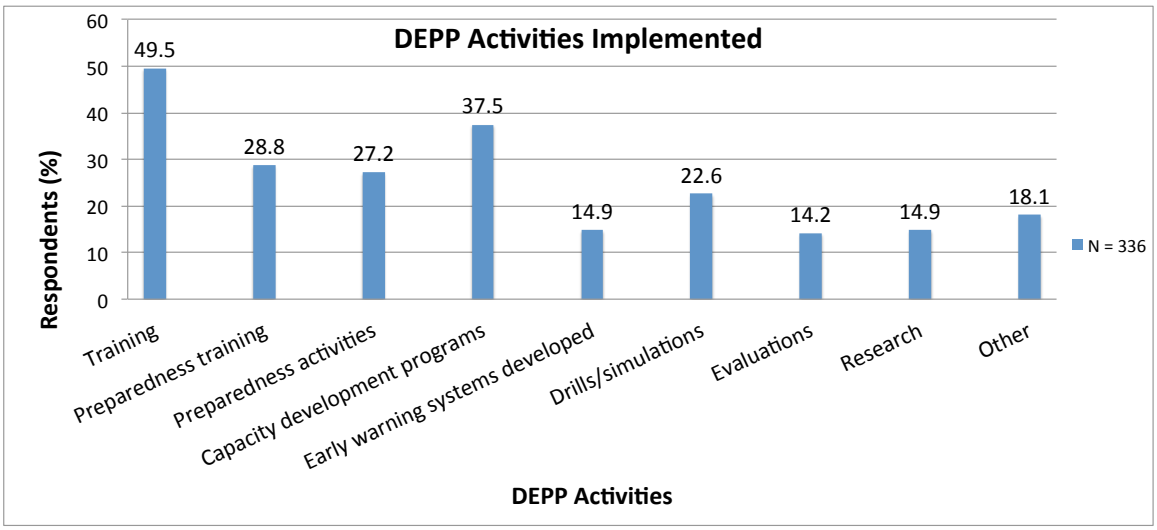


Figure 3: Key DEPP activities implemented by organisations surveyed during intensive and minimum set

In terms of exposure to capacity building activities, 83.8% of DEPP respondents surveyed had participated in a capacity building activity in the last 12 months and 51.3% had participated in a disaster drill or simulation within the same time period (Figures 4-5). At the organisational level an average of 9.5 classroom based capacity building sessions related to disaster and emergency preparedness and response per organisation were implemented in the last 12 months, 8.5 hands-on trainings and 4.2 disaster drills. Note that the standard deviation for these values is very large suggesting very wide variation in the number of activities implemented by organisations (Table 8). When asked specifically about DEPP capacity building activities, overall 29.1% of DEPP respondents

had personally participated in the DEPP trainings, 20.9% had participated in DEPP related working groups and 31% had participated in DEPP learning events. Finally, over 30% of respondents surveyed in the DEPP intervention group had participated in at least 1 DEPP learning event (Figure 6).

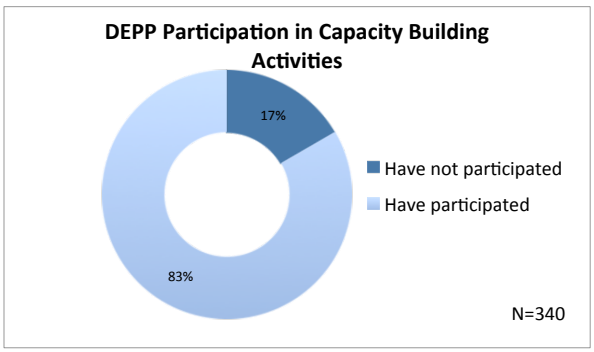


Figure 4: DEPP participation in capacity building activities over past 6 months

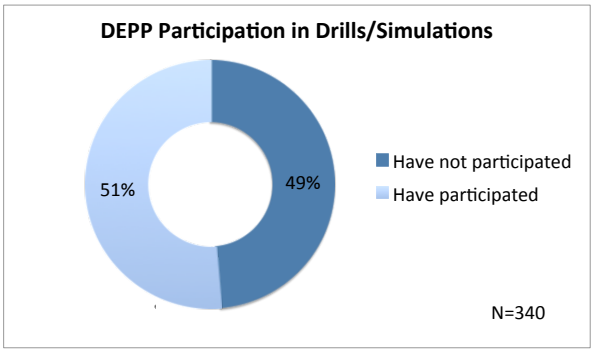


Figure 5: DEPP Participation in Drills/Simulations over past 6 months

| Have you participated in any of the following activities related to disaster preparedness over the last 12 months? | | |
|---|---|---|
| | DEPP<br>N=340 | Control<br>N=77 |
| How many capacity building activities were conducted for your in-country organisational staff in the past 1 year? | | |
| Classroom based lecture | 9.54 ± 20.62 | 8.53 ± 22.12 |
| Online Learning and online simulation | 5 ± 5.24 | 3.25 ± 4.57 |
| Hands-on training | 8.5± 19.13 | 5.57 ± 16.39 |
| Disaster Drill | 4.23 ± 7.24 | 13.89 ± 32.11 |
| Longer in-person training | 5.1 ± 6.21 | 25.75 ± 48.84 |
| Combination in-person and online training | 6.44± 6.95 | 1.33 ± 1.15 |
| Job placement / internship | 2.14 ± 2.19 | 2.75 ± 2.36 |
| Written materials | 5.42 ± 5.14 | 24.89 ± 42.21 |
| Other | 1.8 ± 1.92 | 51.5 ± 67.18 |

Table 8: Activities related to general disaster preparedness

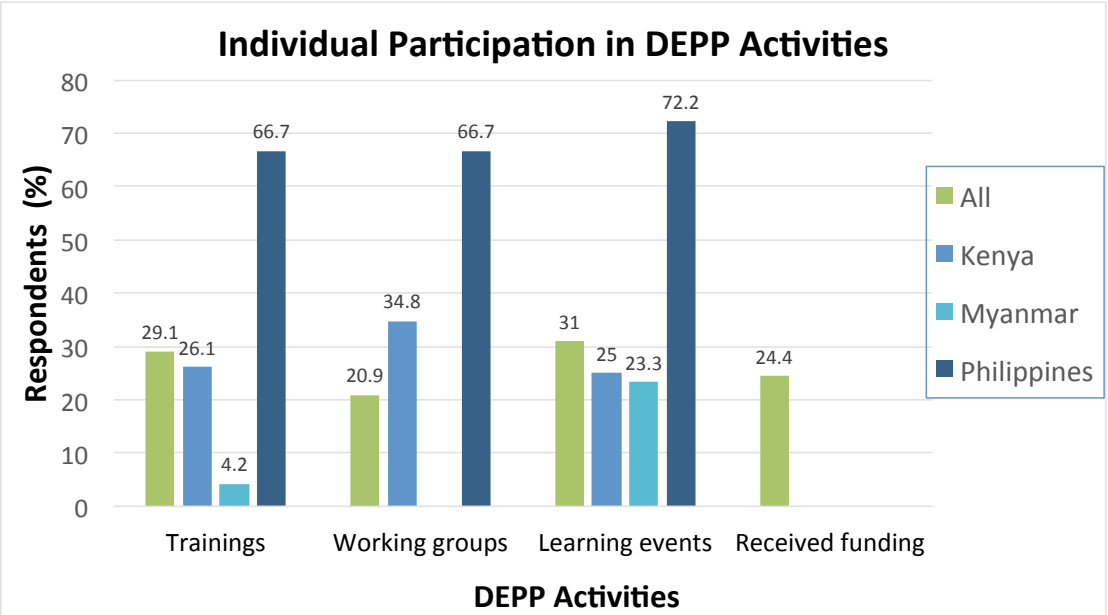


Figure 6: Individual participation in DEPP project activities

**Emerging successes with respect to DEPP intervention delivery**

Given the staggered timelines, it is somewhat challenging to assess implementation delivery at the portfolio level at this stage in time. Given where projects are currently within their respective implementation timelines, it is too early to make conclusions about the effectiveness of intervention implementation and it is most certainly premature to assess outcome level changes which require data collected at two time points. However, there are emerging trends or themes related to intervention delivery and lessons can be shared at this stage to inform future projects and influence the remainder of the current project implementation periods.

To ensure a systematic approach to this assessment, it is helpful to refer to the simplified DEPP causal chain that was developed in the inception phase of the evaluation (Figure 1). As illustrated in the figure, each of the 14 projects under the DEPP conduct activities that feed into this causal chain and yield a diverse range of outputs that can grouped together in four key output areas: 1) Collaboration; 2) Capacity building; 3) Learning; and 4) Early Warning System Development. The outputs are hypothesized in this diagram, to be linked together in a bi-directional, circular pattern because they presumably influence each other rather than function as independent outputs. The outputs generated in these four categories are then expected to improve humanitarian capacity as well as preparedness and ultimately in the longer term, improve effective delivery of the humanitarian response. This causal chain also describes four different levels of action through which the DEPP projects' activities operate. These include the individual, the community, the organisation and the systems levels.

**Output Area 1: Collaboration**

The activities conducted by DEPP projects are expected to, if the theory of change holds, lead to enhanced collaboration, and ultimately strengthen networks, coalitions and partnerships. As described later in this report, most interview respondents agreed that a collaborative, multi-stakeholder approach was the right approach to build humanitarian capacity around preparedness (Table 22), but cautioned that collaborative approaches require substantial time to set up. From the

donor perspective, working via consortia was said to be easier and more streamlined. From the project and programme level perspective, respondents felt that organisations could not work effectively in isolation.

There has been a geographic imbalance between the UK and the target countries in terms of where collaboration has been primarily occurring. While collaboration at the London level can be eventually felt at other levels of the project, it would be more fruitful to directly target the country level. Some of the observed imbalances, however, have been shifting in the right direction, as more collaboration is occurring in the countries. This has especially been enhanced in areas where a Regional Learning Advisor (RLA) has been embedded to stimulate inter-project learning and collaboration. Regional Learning Advisors are staff members of the Learning Project and have been described to be very effective in some countries such as Ethiopia and Pakistan.

There are positive perceptions among DEPP project staff, including project heads that the programme is leading to increased collaboration, strengthened organisational and individual networks and partnerships. Informal collaborations, or those collaborations that are more spontaneous and do not involve contractual agreements defining roles and responsibilities, were noted to have unintended but positive consequence leading to more innovation and creativity. The evaluation team is mapping and measuring collaboration and how it has evolved over the course of the programme. Further details on collaboration can be found under Evaluation question 3 below, and in upcoming reports in the next evaluation phases.

**Output Area 2: Capacity building**

All of the projects aim to build humanitarian capacity, though the approaches taken vary. Some projects such as Talent Development take a more traditional approach to capacity building and focus on strengthening individual capacity around preparedness and response. Other projects, such as Shifting the Power focus on building organisational level capacity, particularly of national and local agencies. Several projects target community level capacity and / or government capacity.

An on-going capacity building mapping exercise[16] led by the Learning Project categorises activities to build individual capacity as structured training (including in-person training, training of trainers, e-learning modules, webinars and post-training action plans) or skill sharing activities (including mentoring and coaching, peer learning, and secondments). The same exercise lists activities to build organisational capacity in three distinct categories. These include activities aimed at institutional change (such as organisational action plans, supporting local and national NGO's access to the wider humanitarian system and strengthening networks), development of support materials (including training packages and guidelines, tools and resources) as well as activities to improve systems (including material resource strengthening, early warning systems, simulations preparedness plans and systems and communication and information sharing). Table 8 presented earlier in this section also supports the variety and range of DEPP related capacity building efforts being implemented. In addition, Figure 6 also shows that a relatively high proportion of randomly selected respondents from DEPP organisations have also been directly exposed to DEPP capacity building activities. The fact that such a high proportion of a representative sample have been exposed suggests that the

[16] DEPP Capacity Strengthening Approaches: reflections on best practice and measuring effectiveness, DEPP Learning Project Nov 2016

DEPP has good penetration at the organisational level and increases the likelihood of significant and sustainable change.

While it is too early to assess long-term changes related to capacity building, there are some emerging findings related to the implementation of capacity building efforts and what could potentially be effective in the future. Respondents frequently described the distinction between individual and organisational level capacity building. It was noted by several respondents that their project's individual level capacity building efforts were perceived as being successful, at least in terms of knowledge transfer, but that this was not necessarily translating to behaviour change or change at the organisational level. There was also discussion around contextualisation of capacity building efforts and avoiding a one-size fits all approach. Respondents described trainees as being a mixed group with different levels of knowledge and experience, and recommended that needs assessments could enhance effectiveness of capacity building efforts.

In several projects, there have been barriers to accessing capacity building efforts by prioritised groups, which could limit potential effectiveness of the interventions. There were examples of trainings being conducted in English in South Sudan and in Jordan, which left out a large pool of individuals who were not native English speakers but who could have benefited from the training. In Bangladesh, access for women to attend mid or senior level trainings seemed to be a challenge as well, partially because of the design of the training.

In terms of positive findings, there are perceptions that knowledge at the level of humanitarian staff, communities and also governments is improving, but that organisational change requires more work. However, organisational self-assessments conducted as part of the Shifting the Power project were considered very useful as they help prioritise issues. One respondent singled out the Talent Development project, which builds individual level core humanitarian knowledge and skills:

> "Talent Development is a success for me. I have no interaction with this project, but if you ask me why, it builds the capacity because we have around 7 or 8 professionals who have been assigned to Talent Development from our organisation. Out of 8 of them now 5 of them are now running big programs. I think that is an advantage because that [project] is building the capacity in the country." (Project Leadership)

Further discussion on capacity building efforts and their effects can be found under Evaluation question 2.C below.

**Output Area 3: Generating and sharing learning**

There are positive perceptions among project and programme stakeholders pertaining to evidence generation and sharing. Substantial information sharing is occurring between projects, however this may not yet be translating into actual learning or behaviour change. At this stage, systems must be put in place to document evidence systematically and share learning.

DEPP is unique in that one of the projects in the portfolio, the Learning Project, is devoted entirely to the generation of learning and evidence. Many individuals were enthusiastic about this project as a concept and felt it was particularly innovative. In general, there was very positive feedback about the recent Learning Conference in Nairobi that was implemented by the Learning Project. Stakeholders, especially in-country project staff, described the conference as a success, which had allowed them for the first time to understand DEPP at the programme level. They also emphasised

categorically, the new connections and opportunities for cross-project and cross-country learning and sharing that had been stimulated by this event.

Others were more critical of the Learning Project's approach thus far. Some discussed the limited penetration of Learning Project activities, with its effectiveness concentrated at the London level or in countries where an effective RLA had been embedded. Developing a more defined methodology would enhance the impact of the Learning Project.

In summary, the following **strengths** of the Learning Project have been raised by interviewees:

- The Regional Learning Advisers (RLAs) have been very useful in countries where they have had presence, and especially in those where they have been physically based. An effective RLA helps foster exchange between the projects which does not otherwise occur. When there is systematic engagement with the RLAs, as well as resources available at the project level to enable engagement, they have been successful in facilitating collaboration and evidence sharing.
- The Learning Project has the potential to be very useful and Learning Project team engagement has been useful, regionally and nationally. The Learning Conference in Nairobi in November 2016 was a good step in this direction. It brought together many country level staff from different projects and helped to stimulate cross-DEPP learning. For many country-level staff it was the first time they were able to see the full DEPP and link up with projects in other countries.
- In Pakistan, the Learning Project team is working well with the RLA coordinating initiatives. Being based in Islamabad is useful and suggests that being based in capitals or other large cities may be helpful for coordination.

The following **weaknesses** of the Learning Project have been highlighted by interviewees:

- The genesis of the DEPP has undermined the Learning Project's ability to function efficiently. A lack of portfolio level strategy may have hampered what the Learning Project team could do.
- Their role is sometimes unclear and confusing to project teams, and there is duplication and overlap, which adds to teams' workload. They would benefit from a sharper focus and strategy.
- The timing of the Learning Project activities has been problematic; the team was in place a bit too late – it began in October 2015, after the DEPP was underway for a year. They were too ambitious, and could have been more focussed. They came on board when projects were looking inwards, and the collaboration component was not built in at the beginning.
- RLA's roles could be more useful if they had a clearer mandate, and if they had been on board earlier. Collaboration in Kenya has not happened much and the Learning Project team have not been successful in changing this. But this could be because of the context, as people are quite scattered, and personal relationships are less strong, than, for example, Pakistan. RLA's need to be more systematically engaged with projects, and embedded in each DEPP country in order to increase their effectiveness. Lack of funds to participate in events and engage with RLAs has been a concern, and making some resources available for this purpose could enhance their impact.

- Anecdote tracking – one of the Learning Project's tools – was seen as coming too late in project implementation.

These views are underpinned by those within the Preparing for Preparedness: Lessons from Designing and Setting-up the Disasters and Emergencies Preparedness Programme*:*

> "The DEPP would therefore have benefitted immensely from launching the MEL project [now known as the Learning Project] first as this would have supported greater buy-in and clearer expectations from other projects, and enabled project leads to build consistent, programme level MEL activities into their plans and budgets. As a result, it has taken time to embed the infrastructure within the programme."

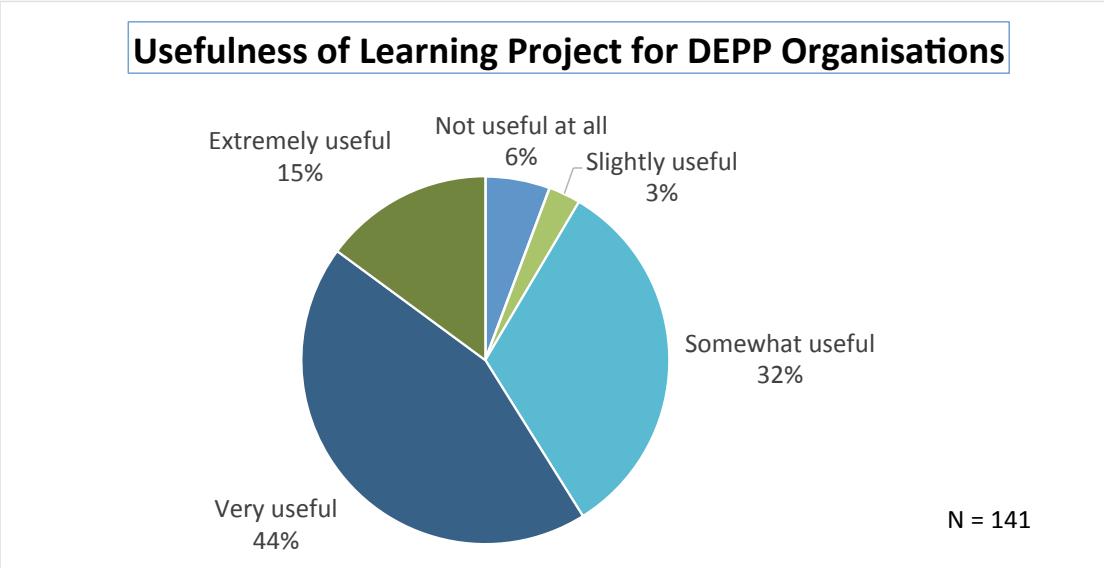


**Figure 7: Perceptions of usefulness of Learning Project for DEPP organisations**

Across quantitative surveys in the 10 countries, 94.3% of respondents reported the Learning Project's work to be somewhat useful, very useful or extremely useful (see Figure 7). Still, a fairly high proportion felt that the Learning Project is only somewhat useful (32.6% overall) which indicates scope for improvement. The Learning Project could reach out to projects to understand how they could better target their work to be of use to in-country projects.

In terms of exposure to the Learning Project, 24.8 % of DEPP respondents have ever interacted with staff from the Learning Project, and for those that had, the average number of interactions in the last 6 months was 3 (see Figure 8). Overall, this is a fairly low number, and exposure to the Learning Project could be increased significantly at the country level. For example, while almost 78% of individuals surveyed in the Philippines had interacted with the Learning Project, only 20% of respondents in Myanmar, and 22% in Kenya reported any contact with them.

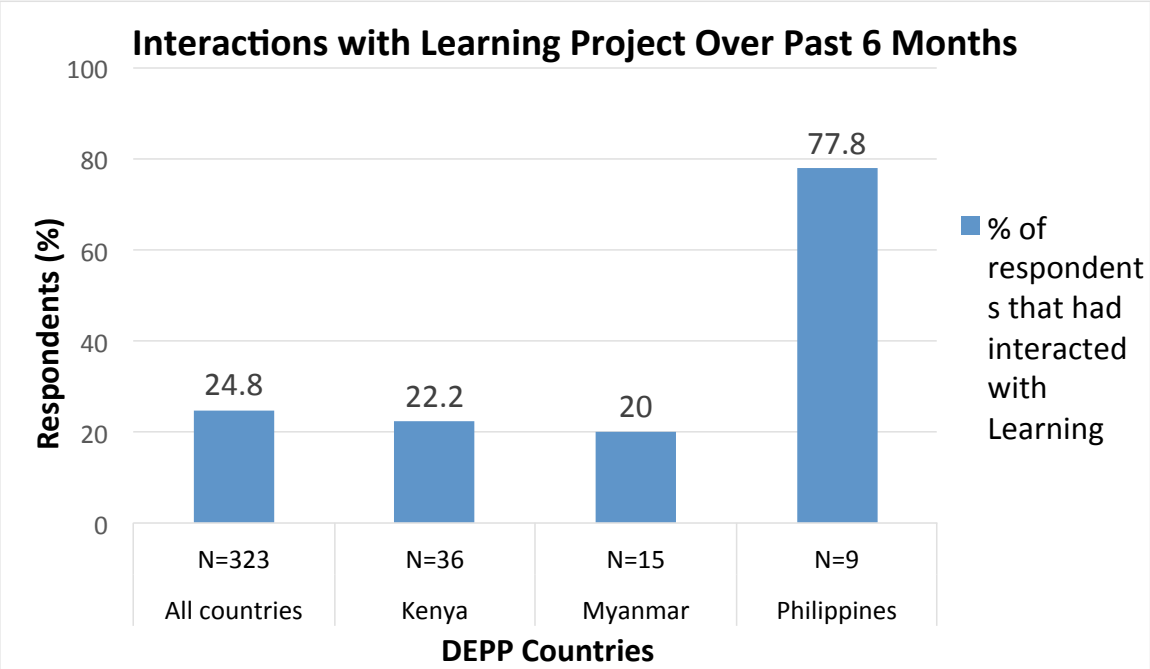


Figure 8: Interactions with Learning Project over the past 6 months

Perceived sharing of learning and evidence was also explored through quantitative surveys (See Table 9). Overall, 34.5% of respondents reported sharing of evidence within the DEPP project, 21.6% reported sharing across projects within the country, 17.2% reported sharing across different DEPP countries, and 12.9% reported sharing with stakeholders outside of the DEPP. There is substantial scope to increase sharing across these different categories, and the Learning Project should focus on doing so.

| Are you aware of any sharing of evidence from the DEPP? | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | DEPP | | | |
| | All N=116 | Kenya N=50 | Myanmar N=27 | Philippines N=9 |
| Within the project you are involved with | 40 (34.5) | 17 (34.0) | 6 (22.2) | 7 (77.8) |
| Across projects in your country | 25 (21.6) | 12 (24.0) | 4 (14.8) | 6 (66.7) |
| Across different DEPP countries | 20 (17.2) | 12 (24.0) | 2 (7.4) | 6 (66.7) |
| With stakeholders outside of the DEPP | 15 (12.9) | 11 (22.0) | 2 (7.4) | 2 (22.2) |

Table 9: Evidence sharing within DEPP

**Output Area 4: Early Warning System Development**

The fourth output of the DEPP centres on the development of early warning systems to enhance preparedness and early response. Several projects are focusing on this particular output and have already described some successes towards this output. For example, one respondent described how much progress their project has made in terms of setting up an early warning system:

> "Now we have clearly defined indicators, we have clearly defined thresholds, which is a success by itself because the early warning system is defined. The project has two components. First, the early warning component that has indicators, surveillance and also thresholds. The second one is the coordinating mechanism, response package and response activation. The early warning [system] is more or less completed during the DEPP - so that is one of the big achievements." (Project Leadership)

Figure 3 on page 39 shows that approximately 15% of surveyed respondents across the 10 countries reported that their organisations are implementing early warning systems as part of the DEPP. This is roughly consistent with the proportion of early warning projects within the portfolio.

In Myanmar communities where DEPP early warning systems are to be implemented, 21% of respondents surveyed stated that their area had an early warning system, but more than 90% said this early warning system was not currently functional. This is consistent with DEPP project timelines in Myanmar, where implementation of the early warning systems has not yet occurred. We anticipate the number of respondents who report that their area has a functioning early warning system to increase at the next data collection point.

Based on the document review and interviews, progress towards achieving the four output areas in the simplified causal chain is being made. Most respondents felt that this progress would accelerate in the future.

**Overall effectiveness of intervention delivery and key successes thus far**

Overall, Table 10 shows that the majority of respondents surveyed during the minimum set quantitative surveys, as well as the intensive set data collection (N=392) felt that intervention delivery was either effective or very effective (56.6%). However, note that close to 30% of respondents stated they did not know whether the DEPP intervention delivery has been effective thus far. In some cases these individuals stated that it was too early to tell if the DEPP intervention delivery has been effective, and in other cases, the respondents felt that they did not have enough information to make a statement on the effectiveness.

| On a scale of 1-5, how effective has DEPP intervention delivery been in your country? | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | DEPP | | | |
| | All<br>N=392 | Kenya<br>N=68 | Myanmar<br>N=43 | Philippines<br>N=18 |
| Very ineffective | 1<br>(0.3) | 0<br>(0.0) | 0<br>(0.0) | 0<br>(0.0) |
| Ineffective | 2<br>(0.5) | 2<br>(2.9) | 0<br>(0.0) | 0<br>(0.0) |
| Somewhat Effective | 54 | 16 | 7 | 4 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | (13.8) | (23.5) | (16.3) | (22.2) |
| Effective | 158 (40.3) | 25 (36.8) | 8 (18.6) | 11 (61.1) |
| Very Effective | 64 (16.3) | 8 (11.8) | 2 (4.7) | 0 (0.0) |
| I don't know | 113 (27.9) | 17 (25.0) | 26 (60.5) | 3 (16.7) |

Table 10: Effectiveness of DEPP intervention delivery

Quantitative data from the formative phase also demonstrates the key successes of the DEPP so far in the implementation process (see Table 11). Across all 10 countries, increased collaboration was reported by 20.3% of respondents, and improved disaster preparedness by 11.9%. There was some variation by country. In Kenya for example, the main successes were increased collaboration and increased staff capacity, while in Myanmar, improved disaster preparedness and improved learning were cited as being the chief successes related to the DEPP. In the Philippines, increased collaboration was reported by close to half of respondents as the key success of the DEPP thus far.

| Describe one key success of the DEPP in your country so far | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | All 10 countries n=59 | Kenya n=17 | Myanmar n=6 | Philippines n=13 |
| Increased collaboration | 12 (20.3) | 5 (29.4) | 1 (16.7) | 6 (46.2) |
| Increased organisational capacity | 3 (5.1) | 1 (5.9) | 0 (0.0) | 2 (15.4) |
| Increased staff capacity | 3 (5.1) | 5 (29.4) | 0 (0.0) | 2 (15.4) |
| Improved disaster preparedness | 7 (11.9) | 1 (5.9) | 2 (33.3) | 1 (7.7) |
| Improved disaster response | 2 (3.4) | 0 (0.0) | 1 (16.7) | 0 (0.0) |
| Improved learning | 5 (8.5) | 3 (17.6) | 2 (33.3) | 0 (0.0) |
| Improved policy environment | 2 (3.4) | 1 (5.9) | 0 (0.0) | 0 (0.0) |
| Improved evidence sharing | 1 (1.7) | 0 (0.0) | 0 (0.0) | 1 (7.7) |
| Other, specify | 24 (40.7) | 1 (5.9) | 0 (0.0) | 2 (15.4) |

Table 11: Key successes of DEPP project implementation

**Challenges or constraints with respect to DEPP intervention delivery**

There have been a number of challenges with respect to delivery of the DEPP at both the portfolio level and the project level. At the portfolio level there was a lack of systems and procedures early

on, both in terms of a clear approach to collaboration within projects and across projects, and also an inadequately developed approach to monitoring, evaluation and learning at the project and programme level. However, the DEPP Learning Conference in Nairobi was described as a positive first step to enhancing inter-project collaboration, especially at the country level.

High staff turnover has been a consistent issue affecting both the DEPP programme and project levels, as well the UK and in-country levels. This also applies to project beneficiaries, posing a serious challenge to building organisational capacity. Some projects noted how individuals who were trained as part of their project at beneficiary organisations were no longer employed there during follow up visits. It is also unknown whether these individuals remained employed within the humanitarian sector. Substantial staff turnover has led to reduced momentum and has hindered the ability to build institutional history. There have been other human resource challenges, including difficulty recruiting staff with the appropriate skills, both because of lack of individuals with the necessary skills, as well as because of mismatches between perceived necessary staff profiles compared to what was actually needed on the ground.

Insecurity and violence in many contexts, including in South Sudan and in Myanmar, has impeded project delivery and led to changes in design. The South Sudan case study (pg. 85) presents learning from such contexts and describes how INGOs and national or local NGOs working together in consortia are affected when a crisis occurs and when some partners are forced to evacuate the country. In addition to conflict, natural disasters, especially in the Philippines and Ethiopia, have interrupted or delayed implementation because individuals who were important to projects were away and participating in response efforts.

At the project level, monitoring and evaluation activities vary by project in terms of the approach and rigor. For example, some projects are not currently planning to conduct formal evaluations. Nevertheless, some project staff have indicated a desire to strengthen their monitoring and evaluation approaches but expressed a lack of capacity to design and implement such a system. This is a significant weakness because as there is no consistent monitoring and evaluation framework across the projects, effectiveness of the individual projects will be measured mainly by the project-level assessments. The observed weaknesses in some of these systems will undoubtedly diminish proper assessment of project effectiveness and limit broader learning.

In general, most interview respondents viewed implementation challenges not as failures, but rather as opportunities for learning and ameliorating their projects. Changes in project design, implementation plans, and scope of work have occurred both as a result of some of these challenges but also in order to capitalise on new opportunities or ideas. For example, given the recent violence in South Sudan, decisions were made by CDAC project's leadership to reallocate funds to initiate activities in the Philippines, a country which was not initially prioritised for the project. As another example, the ALERT project was initially planning to develop an application for tracking organisational preparedness of six agencies, but identified several key opportunities to expand their scope of activities. The project is now planning to deliver in addition a donor portal, an inter-agency platform for coordination, collaboration and learning, and a mobile application for crowdfunding anticipatory response, among others.

When asked about the main challenge experienced in terms of DEPP implementation across the 10 DEPP focus countries (see Table 12), the most frequently cited challenges were that goals were too optimistic (15.2%), the DEPP activities are not relevant here (10.7%), unclear objectives (7.1%), retention of skills (7%) followed by lack of beneficiary interest (3.6%), lack of resources (3.6%), slow and cumbersome decision-making process (3.6%), and lack of government buy in (3.6%).

| Describe one key challenge with the DEPP in your country so far. | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | DEPP | | | |
| | All N=33 | Kenya N=13 | Myanmar N=8 | Philippines N=12 |
| Retention of skills | 3 (9.1) | 2 (15.4) | 0 (0.0) | 1 (8.3) |
| Beneficiary interest | 1 (3.0) | 0 (0.0) | 1 (12.5) | 0 (0.0) |
| The DEPP activities are not relevant here | 0 (0.0) | 0 (0.0) | 0 (0.0) | 0 (0.0) |
| Lack of resources to make the DEPP successful | 5 (15.2) | 3 (28.1) | 1 (12.5) | 1 (8.3) |
| The DEPP lacks contextual understanding | 1 (3.0) | 0 (0.0) | 0 (0.0) | 1 (8.30 |
| Lack of project leadership | 0 (0.0) | 0 (0.0) | 0 (0.0) | 0 (0.0) |
| Lack of end-user participation | 1 (3.0) | 0 (0.0) | 0 (0.0) | 1 (8.3) |
| Too optimistic goals | 5 (15.2) | 2 (15.4) | 1 (12.5) | 2 (16.7) |
| Unclear objectives | 2 (6.1) | 2 (15.4) | 0 (0.0) | 0 (0.0) |
| Slow and cumbersome decision-making process | 2 (6.1) | 1 (7.8) | 0 (0.0) | 1 (8.3) |
| Resistance of beneficiaries | 0 (0.0) | 0 (0.0) | 0 (0.0) | 0 (0.0) |
| Lack of government buy-in | 1 (3.0) | 1 (7.8) | 0 (0.0) | 0 (0.0) |
| Other | 7 (21.2) | 1 (7.8) | 2 (25.0) | 4 (33.3) |
| I don't know | 5 (15.2) | 1 (7.8) | 3 (37.5) | 1 (8.3) |

**Table 12: Key challenges of DEPP project implementation**

**Summary: Key findings**

In summary, implementation start up was slow across the board. Delays in implementations were due to 3 main factors: 1) inadequate involvement of in-country teams and stakeholders and contextualisation during the design phase, 2) underestimation of the time required for collaborations, and 3) lengthy administrative and contractual processes. Key activities related to the five DEPP results areas are being implemented, though projects have staggered timelines. Fewer activities related to result area five on evidence generation have been conducted thus far, but this is expected to increase later in the project cycles. Quality of the activities implemented appears to be high. Additionally, there appears to be good penetration of the DEPP interventions within organisations, which increases the likelihood of significant and sustainable change.

Notable successes thus far include securing government buy-in, developing the minimum standards for disability inclusion, increasing the voice of and involvement of L/NNGOs, creating early warning systems where none currently exist, participation in individual trainings leading to increased responsibilities/higher positions for trainees, and increased individual level networks. These successes were described by respondents and, where possible, have been triangulated with existing documents.

The Learning Project is unique in its scope. However, perspectives around activities and outputs have been mixed. Evidence generation and sharing of learning has not been as strong as it could be and DEPP-wide systems are not in place to capture learning. Much sharing of learning has been concentrated at the UK level and has been slow to trickle down to country level. Regional Learning Advisors (RLAs) in some countries have acted as catalysts for bringing projects together with success, however many countries have not benefited from this. The DEPP Learning Conference in Nairobi was very successful and stimulated learning, sharing and collaboration across in-country staff.

Human resources challenges including high staff turnover have been felt widely at the programme and project level. Other implementation challenges have been linked to security and violence, as well as other contextual factors that had not been adequately addressed.

Monitoring and evaluation activities are mixed and vary by project in terms of the approach and rigor. There is no programme level monitoring and evaluation system to systematically collect data on key outputs and outcomes uniformly across all projects.

### Question 2.B: To what extent is DEPP contributing to greater preparedness and response among local organisations and communities?

Evaluation question 2.B is divided into two sub questions, which are presented below. These questions focus on how local capacity to respond to disasters has changed since the start of the DEPP, and whether DEPP has led to improved knowledge and understanding of best practices related to disaster and emergency preparedness and response. The design of the evaluation is such that these questions will be concretely answered in the next phase of the evaluation. At that time, we will have completed the second round of data collection, and thus will be able to clearly assess changes over time in key indicators related to capacity to respond, and knowledge and understanding of best practices. At this stage, there is some preliminary evidence that there have been some changes in these indicators. For example, exposure to DEPP capacity building efforts has been high, and respondents have been reporting increased staff and organisational capacity, as well as improved disaster preparedness as a key success of the DEPP (Table 11). As described on page 61 qualitative data demonstrates that DEPP organisations perceive improved contingency planning and improved response time.

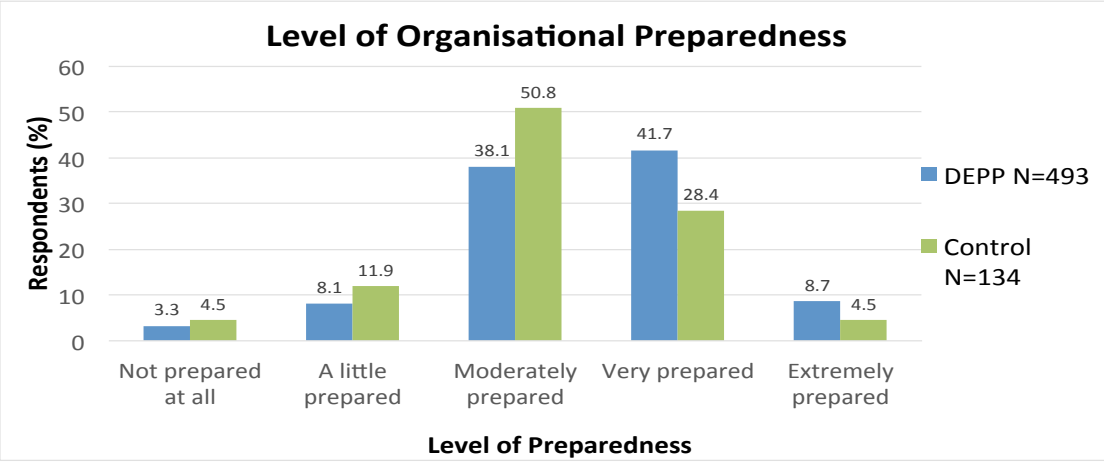


Figure 9: Perceptions of organisational preparedness levels

DEPP and non-DEPP actors (both INGOs and L/N NGOS) reported similar levels of preparedness to respond to disasters and emergencies (see Figure 9). There was a slight difference with 41.8% of DEPP actors reporting that they felt very prepared, compared with 28.4% of non-DEPP actors, but this was not statistically significant. A more in-depth analysis of changes in preparedness levels will be reported in the subsequent phases of the evaluation.

### Question 2.C: Has local capacity to respond to disasters changed since the start of DEPP? If yes, how has it changed? If not, why not.

It is too early to determine if local capacity has changed since the start of DEPP and whether that change can be attributed to the DEPP. At this stage, there is no significant difference between DEPP and non-DEPP actors in terms of their approach to working with local or national NGOs for disaster preparedness and response. Table 13 shows that overall 25.0% of respondents in the DEPP sample reported their organisations have become more inclusive towards local or national NGOs, and this is similar to respondents in the control organisations (21.1%).

| Has there been any change in your organisation's policy/approach to working with local or national NGOs in the last 1 year? | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | DEPP | | | | Control | | | |
| | All n=84 | Kenya n=27 | Myanmar n=32 | Philippines n=35 | All n=57 | Kenya n=30 | Myanmar n=12 | Philippines n=15 |
| More Inclusive | 21 (25.0) | 8 (29.6) | 7 (21.9) | 6 (24.0) | 12 (21.1) | 8 (26.7) | 2 (16.7) | 2 (13.3) |
| Less Inclusive | 4 (4.8) | 2 (7.4) | 2 (6.3) | 0 (0.0) | 2 (3.5) | 1 (3.3) | 1 (8.3) | 0 (0.0) |
| No change | 10 (11.9) | 5 (18.5) | 2 (6.3) | 3 (12.0) | 12 (21.1) | 8 (26.7) | 1 (8.3) | 3 (20.0) |
| I don't know | 1 (1.2) | 0 (0.0) | 1 (1.2) | 0 (0.0) | 2 (3.5) | 2 (6.7) | 0 (0.0) | 0 (0.0) |

Table 13: Change in organisational approach to working with local/national NGOs over the past year

### Question 2.D: Has DEPP led to improved knowledge and understanding of best practices relating to disaster and emergency preparedness and response? If yes, in what ways?

Randomly selected humanitarian programming staff in both DEPP and non-DEPP organisations were asked a series of questions relating to the core humanitarian competencies framework in order to understand their level of humanitarian knowledge and best practices. Responses were totalled and scored from 0-6, with 0 representing very low levels of knowledge and 6 representing very high levels of knowledge (see Figure 10). Scores were relatively consistent across DEPP and non-DEPP organisations, however more than 25% of DEPP organisational staff scored 4 (high levels of knowledge), compared to only 14.3% of control organisational staff. Knowledge scores will also be calculated during the next round of data collection to measure whether this can be attributed to DEPP.

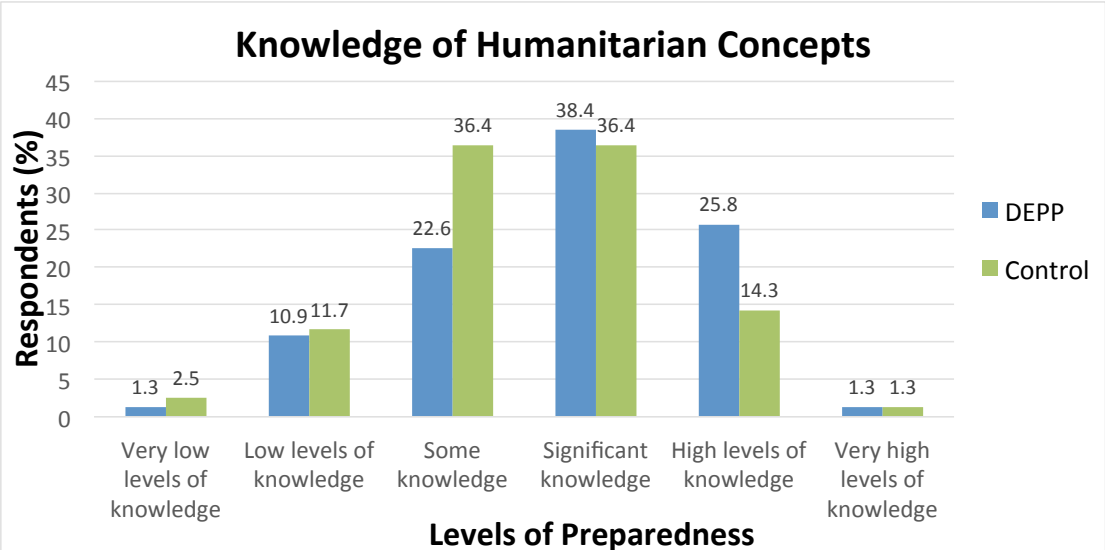


Figure 10: Composite knowledge score related to core humanitarian competencies framework

## 3. Evaluation Question 3: Effectiveness of Management Arrangements

### Question 3.A: What have been the main patterns of collaboration? What have been the benefits and disadvantages of informal vs. formal collaboration?

Data collected among DEPP organisations suggests that the consortia approach is appropriate in the country contexts and the consortia are functioning relatively well, despite the challenges addressed below in this section. The appropriateness of the collaborative approach and degree of functionality of DEPP consortia are explored further in the next section. This section will focus primarily on whether collaboration is occurring, the main patterns of collaboration and understanding informal and formal collaboration challenges and benefits.

**Is collaboration occurring and what types of organisations are involved?**

Evidence suggests that organisations in both the DEPP and control groups are collaborating with one another during humanitarian preparedness and response activities. Furthermore, both DEPP and

control group organisations and staff strongly value the approach of working in consortia and through networks. For example, nine out of ten respondents in both DEPP and control group intensive set surveys state that they would look to collaborate with other organisations during humanitarian response activities (Table 14).

| In the event of a disaster, are there other organisations you will look to collaborate with in regard to humanitarian response? | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | DEPP | | | | Control | | | |
| | All n=84 | Kenya n=27 | Myanmar n=32 | Philippines n=35 | All n=57 | Kenya n=30 | Myanmar n=12 | Philippines n=15 |
| Yes | 76 (90.5) | 23 (85.2) | 28 (87.5) | 25 (100.0) | 52 (91.2) | 29 (96.7) | 8 (66.7) | 15 (100.0) |
| No | 5 (6.0) | 3 (11.1) | 2 (6.3) | 0 (0.0) | 5 (8.8) | 1 (3.3) | 4 (33.3) | 0 (0.0) |
| I don't know | 3 (3.6) | 1 (3.7) | 2 (6.3) | 0 (0.0) | 0 (0.0) | 0 (0.0) | 0 (0.0) | 0 (0.0) |

Table 14: Organisations seeking to collaborate during humanitarian response

Most DEPP respondents stated they would collaborate with International NGOS (82.4%), National NGOs (70.9%) or local NGOs (71.9%) in a future response (See Figure 11). This is similar in the control respondents. The country level data shows similar patterns except for Myanmar where significantly fewer respondents look to collaborate with INGOs (51.4%) and National NGOs (43.2%).

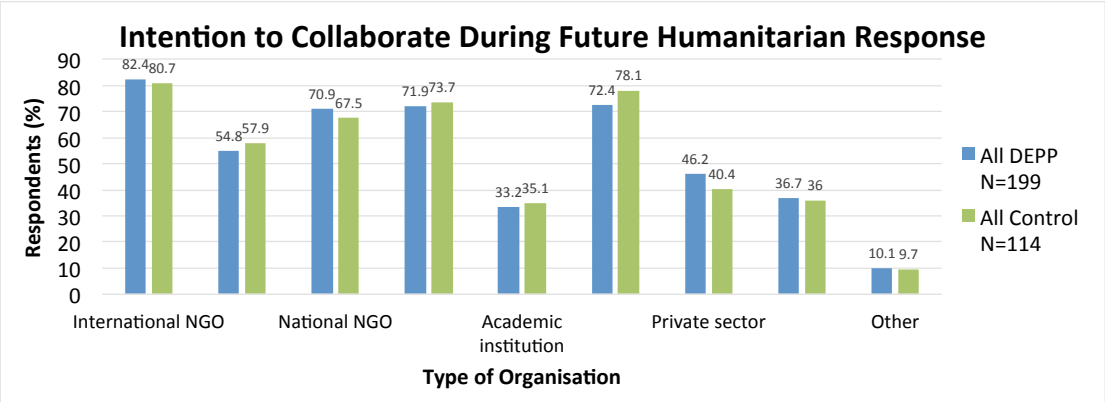


Figure 11: Types of institutions that organisations would seek to collaborate with during a future humanitarian response

**Formal versus informal collaboration**

Both formal collaborations and informal collaborations are occurring within DEPP projects, and informal collaborations are occurring across DEPP projects. Formal collaboration was defined as any collaboration involving a signed contractual agreement defining roles and responsibilities of collaborating entities. Across all countries, humanitarian staff from DEPP organisations identified ***advantages*** of collaborating formally through networks and consortia. The top five advantages of formal collaborations selected were:

1. **Sharing of resources (52.4%)**
2. **Improved networking (51.2%)**
3. **Exchange of ideas (48.8%)**
4. **Ability to access other sources of funding when applying as a consortium (40.5%)**
5. **Programme delivery and design is more effective (40.5%)**

Respondents from DEPP organisations also identified ***challenges*** of working through formal collaborations such as networks and consortia. The top five challenges identified were:

1. **Difficult to collaborate effectively when organisations have different policies and processes (29.8%)**
2. **Slow and cumbersome decision-making process (28.6%)**
3. **Setting up a formal collaboration is extremely time consuming (20.2%)**
4. **Difficult to manage disagreements (20.2%)**
5. **Unclear objectives (13.1%)**

Most felt that despite these challenges, formal collaborations are extremely valuable, and that the advantages including opportunities for networking, exchange of ideas and increased effectiveness of programme design and delivery significantly outweigh the difficulties. Several respondents also described how formal collaboration adds clarity of roles and ensures responsibility and accountability.

Data were also collected about informal collaborations, those collaborations that occur more spontaneously and without formal agreements in place. Across all countries, DEPP organisations identified ***advantages*** of collaborating informally. The top five advantages of informal collaborations selected were:

1. **Exchange of ideas (48.8%)**
2. **Improved networking (46.4%)**
3. **Sharing of resources (41.7%)**
4. **Informal collaborations lead to formal collaborations (25.0%)**
5. **Learning from the collaboration (21.4%)**

Respondents also described the ***challenges*** of collaborating informally. The top five challenges of informal collaborations identified were:

1. **Difficult to collaborate effectively when organisations have different policies and processes (28.8%)**
2. **Difficult to manage disagreements (18.9%)**
3. **Slow and cumbersome decision-making process (18.9%)**
4. **Unclear Objectives (16.4%)**
5. **May take up a lot of time without yielding any concrete outputs (9.4%)**

In general, many respondents expressed how useful informal collaborations are, and how these types of collaborations can stimulate new ideas and projects, which ultimately can turn into formal collaborations. For example, one respondent stated:

> "We had lots of formal collaboration and they were good and did the job, but I think the informal stuff was more interesting and much more exciting and a bit more dynamic." (Programme Leadership)

DEPP respondents expressed that more opportunities for informal collaboration would be of benefit to the project staff and programme as a whole.

**Collaboration during preparedness and response activities**

Respondents were also asked how collaborative they feel decision-making processes are during preparedness and response activities in the country of the survey. 52.4% of respondents stated that there is moderate or very strong collaboration during preparedness activities, and 41.9% stated moderate or very strong collaboration during humanitarian response (See Table 15). Less than one-quarter of the respondents state that there is little or no collaboration. Nearly all respondents state that they have attended at least one humanitarian working group, network or coordination meetings; about one-third attended every meeting (except for non-DEPP actors in Myanmar).

| In general, how collaborative do you feel the decision-making process is during **preparedness** activities in the country in of the survey? | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | DEPP | | | | Control | | | |
| | All n=84 | Kenya n=27 | Myanmar n=32 | Philippines n=35 | All n=57 | Kenya n=30 | Myanmar n=12 | Philippines n=15 |
| No collaboration | 7 (8.3) | 0 (0.0) | 7 (21.9) | 0 (0.0) | 1 (1.8) | 1 (3.3) | 0 (0.0) | 0 (0.0) |
| A little collaboration | 13 (15.5) | 2 (7.4) | 3 (9.4) | 8 (32.0) | 12 (21.1) | 7 (23.3) | 1 (8.3) | 4 (26.7) |
| Neither collaborative nor not collaborative | 20 (23.8) | 9 (33.3) | 5 (15.6) | 6 (24.0) | 18 (31.6) | 9 (30.0) | 3 (25.0) | 6 (40.0) |
| Moderate collaboration | 33 (39.3) | 11 (40.7) | 15 (46.9) | 7 (28.0) | 20 (35.1) | 10 (33.3) | 5 (41.7) | 5 (33.3) |
| Very strong collaboration | 11 (13.1) | 5 (18.5) | 2 (6.3) | 4 (16.0) | 6 (10.5) | 3 (10.0) | 3 (25.0) | 0 (0.0) |
| In general, how collaborative do you feel the decision-making process is during **response activities** in the country of the survey? | | | | | | | | |
| No collaboration | 5 (6.0) | 0 (0.0) | 5 (15.6) | 0 (0.0) | 1 (1.8) | 1 (3.3) | 0 (0.0) | 0 (0.0) |
| A little collaboration | 13 (15.5) | 4 (14.8) | 4 (12.5) | 5 (20.0) | 9 (15.8) | 3 (10.0) | 1 (8.3) | 5 (33.3) |
| Neither collaborative nor not collaborative | 31 (36.9) | 6 (22.2) | 12 (37.5) | 13 (52.0) | 18 (31.6) | 10 (33.3) | 5 (41.7) | 3 (20.0) |
| Moderate collaboration | 25 (30.0) | 10 (37.0) | 10 (31.3) | 5 (20.0) | 24 (42.1) | 14 (46.7) | 3 (25.0) | 7 (46.7) |
| Very strong collaboration | 10 (11.9) | 7 (25.9) | 1 (3.1) | 2 (8.0) | 5 (8.8) | 2 (6.7) | 3 (25.0) | 0 (0.0) |

Table 15: Collaboration during preparedness and response activities

### Question 3.B: Is the 'collaborative' approach of multi-stakeholder platforms an effective delivery mechanism?

Overall, nearly 60% of DEPP respondents surveyed during the intensive set of evaluation activities and the minimum quantitative surveys believed the DEPP approach to working through consortia is appropriate or very appropriate in their context (See Figure 12). However, 67.3% of respondents in Myanmar responded "I don't know". This could be linked to the fact that the one DEPP project that is active in Myanmar is less far in its implementation than other projects and perhaps it is too early for respondents to judge the appropriateness of the approach in that context. Despite this, across all three countries, less than 5% of respondents felt that consortia are inappropriate or very inappropriate for their context. Thus, at this stage of DEPP implementation, most respondents do believe consortia to be a relatively appropriate approach to deliver their activities.

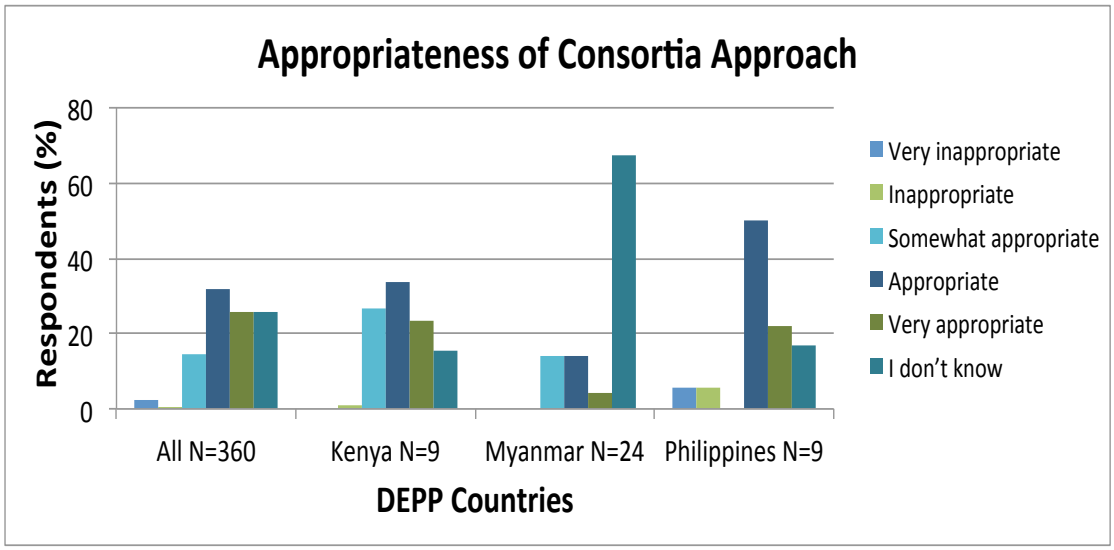


Figure 12: Perceptions of appropriateness of DEPP consortia approach in country context

When looking at how well the consortia are functioning, 20% of DEPP respondents across all 10 countries felt their consortium is working very well, while 32.8% responded well (see Figure 13). Approximately 29.1% responded that they did not know how well their consortium is functioning. Qualitative data collected during the VFM interviews and the minimum set IDIs, were more mixed in terms of views on the effectiveness of the consortia approach. Some respondents discussed the difficulties in engagement, communication and coordination within their consortia, while others expressed that streamlining of the consortium approach would enhance effectiveness. Multiple individuals identified enhanced networking, increased opportunities to access resources and increased opportunity for collaboration as some of the positive outcomes from their consortia.

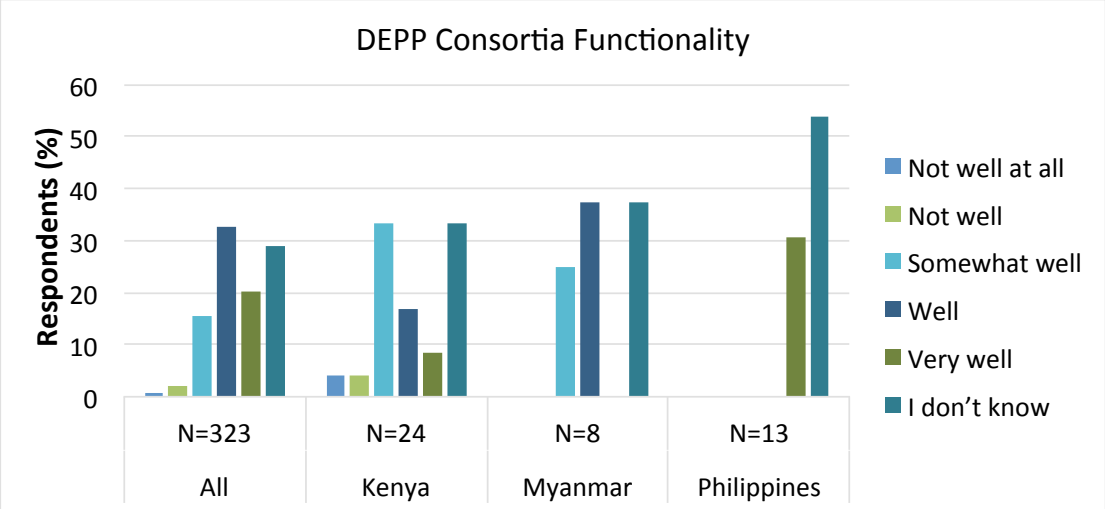


Figure 13: Perceptions of how DEPP consortia are functioning

Taken together with the data on challenges of working in formal consortia, these findings suggest that while a consortia approach is considered to be the right approach, that certain elements should shift in the way that the consortia were formed or currently function to increase effectiveness. These include improved communication, opportunities for better coordinating activities, and provision of sufficient resources for strategic and organised collaborations.

### Question 3.C: Focusing on coalitions, partnerships and connectedness – what can be said about the effects of strengthened networks? Question 3.D: What unique contribution did collaborative relationships and 'multi-stakeholder platforms' make toward deepening cross-programme learning?

It is too early in the evaluation to determine the effects of strengthened networks and understand the unique contributions that collaborative relationships and 'multi-stakeholder platforms' make toward deepening cross-programme learning. These will be assessed in the next report when the second phase data is available. Our preliminary findings, however, do indicate signs for optimism. When asked about the one key success of DEPP so far, approximately one-third (30.5%) stated increased collaboration and learning were the most important result achieved thus far (Table 24). Approximately 25.7% of respondents reported increased disaster preparedness and response as a key success, while 17.1% identified improved organisational or staff capacity as the major success of the DEPP thus far (Figure 14). As projects have indicated that they expect their activities to accelerate in the coming months, we do anticipate that the proportion identifying improved disaster preparedness and response during the next phase will increase.

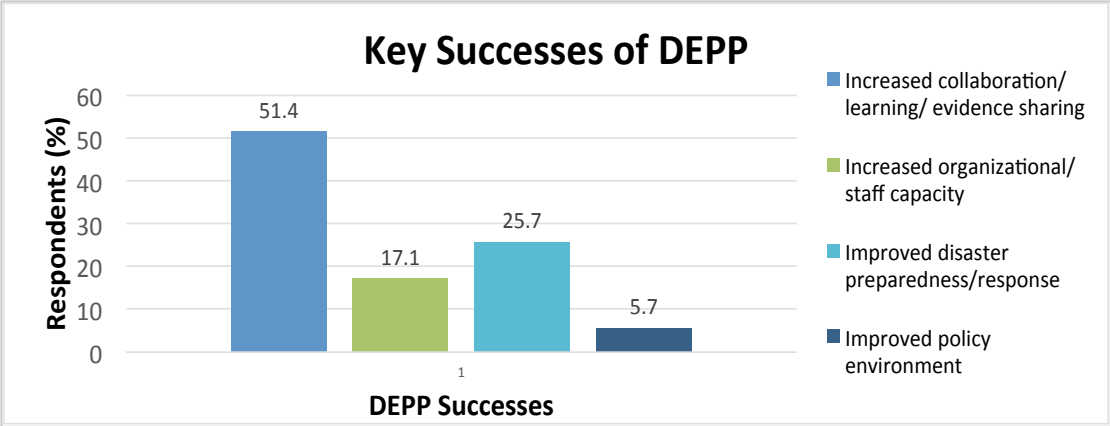


Figure 14: Perceptions of key successes of DEPP during project delivery

40.7% of respondents selected "other" and these responses varied widely. For example, a respondent from a local DEPP organisation in Kenya shared a key element of success, noting the networks created through DEPP:

> "I think we have now responded to humanitarian emergencies faster – that's the main thing [that DEPP has accomplished]. The other thing is that we've been able to move the government through networks because of the critical mass you reach. You are able to push agenda without fear because we have people behind you."

Another local organisation shared the following success of the DEPP:

> "The global thinking is up to us networks and consortiums, people who are like-minded working together…sharing common platforms and common agendas. By doing that, we are able to address issues more seriously and with less cost because we share information, [are] able to know what others are doing and are able to communicate easier, learn from one another."

**Network Analysis: Understanding network structures and top collaboration areas**

To further explore patterns of collaboration, and networks within the intensive set countries a specific set of tools were applied to capture data on size and strength of networks (see intensive set methodology section on page 20). Full details of the network analysis and findings are described in the report in Annex 12.

This first round of data collected as part of the network analysis allows us to compare networks related to humanitarian preparedness and response in Myanmar, the Philippines and Kenya. Overall, 32 collaboration areas, or potential areas where organisations might work together within the humanitarian preparedness and response sector, in each country were assessed in order to determine network structures. The relative dominance of international actors compared to national and local actors in each network was also assessed.

The data show that advocacy, community capacity building and project implementation were consistently among the most active collaboration areas in all three countries. Table 16 lists the top 10 most active collaboration networks. The link count refers to the number of connections between organisations related to a specific collaboration area, and common areas across countries are highlighted in bold.

| PHILIPPINES | Link Count | KENYA | Link Count | MYANMAR | Link Count |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1. Advocacy** | **418** | **1. Advocacy** | **179** | **1. Community Capacity Building** | **29** |
| **2. Community Capacity Building** | **341** | **2. Community Capacity Building** | **151** | 2. Funding | 20 |
| **3. Project Implementation** | **283** | **3. Project Implementation** | 123 | **3. Advocacy** | **14** |
| 4. Community Connections | 270 | 4. Facilitation | 118 | **4. Project Implementation** | **14** |
| 5. Community Planning | 255 | 5. Community Planning | 101 | 5. Information Sharing | 11 |
| 6. Facilitation | 249 | 6. Project Design | 96 | 6. WaSH | 10 |
| 7. Community-Based Risk Analysis | 234 | 7. Community Connections | 95 | 7. Education | 10 |
| 8. Data resources | 223 | 8. Conflict Mitigation Expertise | 94 | 8. Community Planning | 9 |
| 9. Education | 220 | 9. Climate Change and Adaptation | 90 | 9. Early Warning Systems Expertise | 7 |
| 10. Climate Change and Adaptation | 208 | 10. Community-Based Risk Analysis | 90 | 10. Climate Change and Adaptation | 7 |

Table 16: Top 10 Collaboration Areas across Countries

Patterns of collaboration vary when examined separately by collaboration areas, by countries, and therefore by context. Figure 15 compares the network structure related to three different collaboration areas in the Philippines, Kenya, and Myanmar. In these figures, each organisation is represented by a node (triangles represent DEPP organisations, and circles represent non-DEPP organisations), while active collaborations[17] between organisations are represented by the lines connecting the nodes (or links). Arrows represent the direction of the collaboration. The size of the node is a key element of these figures as it represents the *total-degree centrality,* or the number of links a node has to other nodes, which is a measure of influence. The more links or connections an organisation has, the larger the size of the node in the network. Given the DEPP theory of change, a distributed network where there is greater cohesion and links between multiple actors in the network, more equal flow of information to all actors in the network, and minimal bottlenecks, promotes sustainability and is more desirable than a centralised and isolated network.

[17] Active collaborations are those that have involved interaction within the last 6 months.

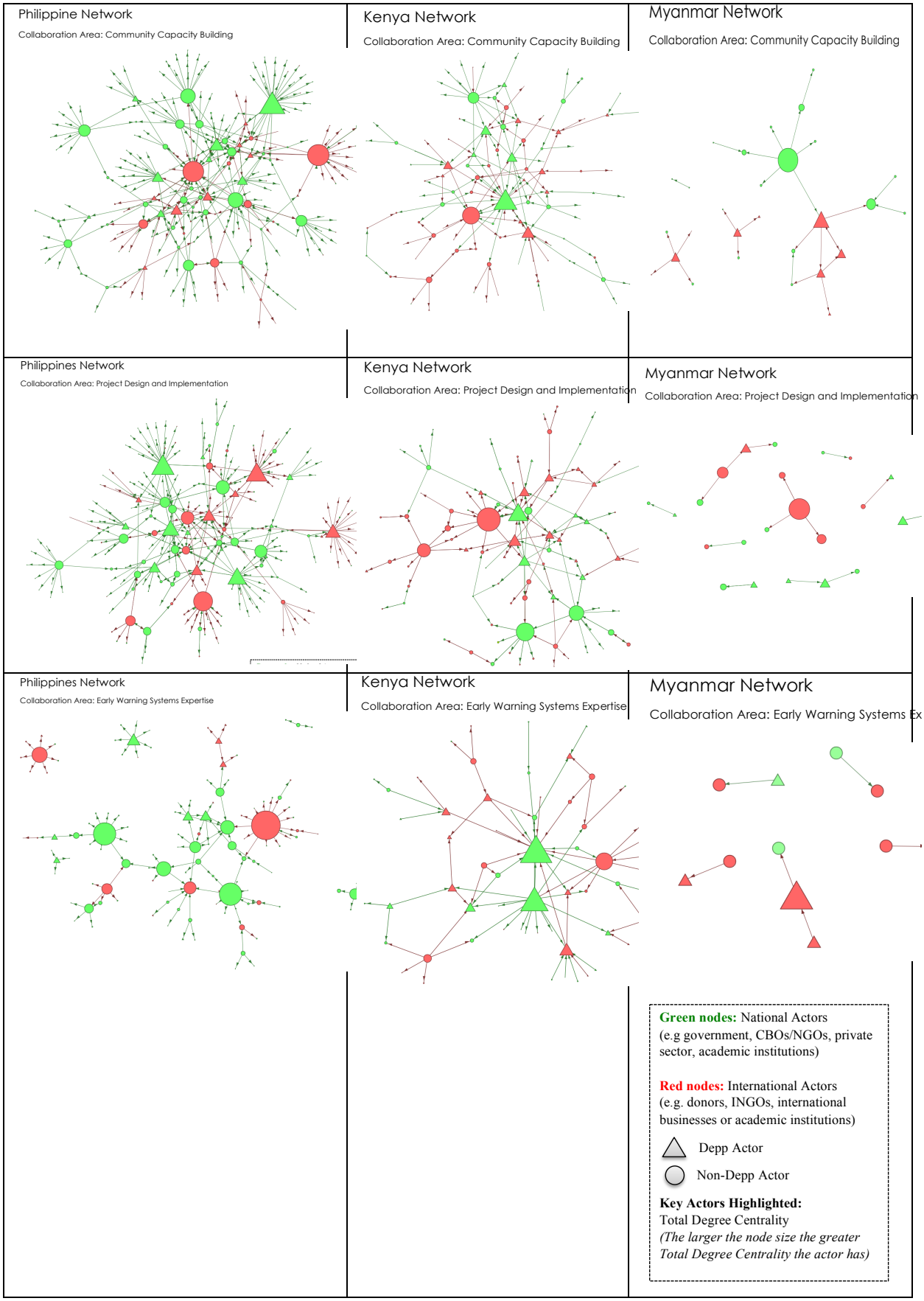


Figure 15: Examples of network structure of three collaboration areas in Philippines, Kenya, and Myanmar

Figure 15 shows significant differences in the structure and size of networks in the three countries. This evidence suggests that the Philippines network is the most evolved, decentralised and locally led network. The Kenyan network is less evolved than the Philippines, but Myanmar's network is the most nascent during this formative stage. It is worth noting that the network structure aligns with the evaluation assumptions in selecting countries for the intensive data collection. These are described in the inception phase report, but briefly involved selecting countries with (assumed) differing types and strengths of networks. The network structures in various collaboration areas will be reassessed during the next round of data collection to determine how the size and strength of the networks changes with DEPP intervention exposure.

A summary of the top 50 Organisations ranked by *total-degree centrality* in each country, and separated by International versus National organisations, is presented in Figure 17. The top 50 organisations in each country are those that have the most links to other organisations within the network, and thus have the most access to the ideas, thoughts, beliefs and practices of many others.

**Network Analysis: Understanding the role of National and International organisations**

Philippines data presented in Figure 3 and Table 17 shows almost no *preferential attachment* to international actors. In other words, the organisations in the Philippines were overall equally likely to collaborate with international actors compared to national actors. However, they did tend to be more likely to collaborate with international actors around funding, project design, MEL and management. Local actors were directing initiatives on wide range of topics relating to emergency response, including advocacy, community capacity building, project planning, and community-based risk analysis. Collaboration around early warning systems, WaSH, livelihoods and emergency response was locally led, however it was limited and isolated to a small number of actors working in these domains.

When examining the top ranked 50 organisations in the Philippines by the total degree centrality, 70% of the organisations with the most links were found to be national organisations. This demonstrates that **local, rather than international** *resource hubs*[18] and *active networkers*[19] are leading coordination within the humanitarian ecosystem in the country. In addition, 28% of the top 50 organisations in the Philippines were DEPP organisations (18% national level DEPP organisations, 10% are international DEPP organisations). This is important as it shows that DEPP organisations are influential within the Philippines network, but we do expect this proportion to increase over time as the DEPP's shifting the power approach, if effective, should lead to national organisations taking on more leadership roles and being increasingly considered as resource hubs and thought leaders.

In Kenya and Myanmar, the number of DEPP national and DEPP international organisations in the top 50 was closer to an even split. The Philippines presents an early example where the network is more greatly influenced by national organisations. This may be due to the nature of the NGO landscape in the country or may also potentially be attributable to collaboration within DEPP. We will explore this further in the next report where a second round of network data will be assessed.

[18] **Resource hubs** are organisations in the network which are considered to be opinion leaders and sources of subject matter expertise.

[19] **Active networkers** are promoters and distributors of information throughout the network. They often initiate partnerships as they seek new knowledge and other types of resources.

We will also potentially further explore how influential DEPP organisations in the networks are and whether this has changed over time.

| Country | Philippines | | | Kenya | | | Myanmar | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sample | DEPP | Non-DEPP | Total Philippines | DEPP | Non-DEPP | Total Kenya | DEPP | Non-DEPP | Total Myanmar |
| National | 9 (18%) | 26 (52%) | 35 (70%) | 8 (16%) | 12 (24%) | 20 (40%) | 8 (16%) | 16 (32%) | 24 (48%) |
| International | 5 (10%) | 10 (20%) | 15 (30%) | 11 (22%) | 19 (38%) | 30 (60%) | 8 (16%) | 16 (34%) | 26 (52%) |
| **Total** | **14 (28%)** | **36 (72%)** | **100%** | **19 (38%)** | **31 (62%)** | **100%** | **16 (32%)** | **34 (68%)** | **100%** |

Table 17: Organisations ranked by total degree centrality

In Kenya, the structure of the networks and role of international versus national organisations differs from the Philippines. Collaboration networks in Kenya are moderately dominated by international actors. The dependence on international actors is particularly notable in WaSH, disaster risk reduction and community resilience, three critical areas for DEPP. These same three collaboration areas were also among the most isolated[20] network structures in Kenya. In contrast, collaboration around advocacy for DRR and emergency response is locally-led and follows a *highly distributed*[21] network structure. The advocacy collaboration network has a diverse set of key actors (*resource hubs, networkers, brokers*[22]*, and influencers*[23]*)* who are predominately local Kenyan actors. This collaboration network also has very few signs of *behavioural roadblocks* such as domination by specific actors, or insularity where organisations are primarily affiliated with those that are similar to them. These types of behavioural roadblocks can impede information flow and functionality of the network.

Further examination of the Kenya data shows that INGOs have become attractive *resource hubs* and are sought after by local actors. These INGOs are attractive as a result of the financial resources and the technical assistance they offer. The evidence shows that in some collaboration areas, as much as 60-70% of all ties across the network may involve international actors. This finding is reinforced when examining the top 50 ranked organisations by total-degree centrality. Unlike the Philippines, in Kenya, 60% of the top 50 ranked organisations are international. Table 27 demonstrates that 38% of the organisations ranked in the top 50 ranked organisations by total degree centrality are DEPP actors. As with the Philippines, we expect this proportion to increase over time.

[20] An **isolated network** is one where organisations are disconnected leading to lack of information flow and coordination between actors working in similar areas.

[21] A **distributed network** is one with many links between multiple actors in the network, allowing for more equal flow of information to all actors within the network.

[22] **Brokers** introduce people and institutions across an array of social, cultural, professional and economic circles. They often have exclusive ties to unique actors and smaller sub-groups, as well as direct ties to central core agencies such as funders and international agencies.

[23] **Influencers** are connected to other well-connected actors and therefore spread information quickly through the system. They can help get the message out when rapid communication is needed.

This type of network, which is evident in Kenya and where INGOs act as resource hubs, can have the positive effect of increasing connectivity, integration, and the density of ties when compared to isolated structures. However, at the same time, *preferential attachment*[24] to central actors begins to constrain the participation of new or previously excluded local organisations. There is a danger that national or local partners collaborating with INGOs begin to feel the pull towards donors at the expense of their local constituents. Simultaneously, they begin to dominate over other local actors and, in the absence of incentives to serve as local *resource hubs*, see more to be gained through connections with funders than from connections with local actors and their own constituents.

Myanmar data were most notably differentiated by the limited number of organisations participating in the survey (less than half the number participating in the Kenya and Philippines surveys). Myanmar had almost 80% fewer organisations identified and only a fraction of the links of either Kenya or Philippines. This is likely due to the small number of organisations working in Disaster Risk Reduction. Many of the organisations working in this domain were informally formed after Cyclone Nargis and have disbanded afterward. However, collaboration may also be affected by the challenging political context.

Collaboration areas in Myanmar were generally dominated by international actors. Table 28 shows that 52% of the top 50 ranked organisations by the central measures are international and are highly isolated in structure. In a nascent ecosystem like Myanmar, funding and support from international donors and INGOs is still emergent. Pilot projects are scaling up and multiplying rapidly as INGOs begin to establish (or re-establish) a local team or office, and build relationships with local partners. This is privately called "perching", a process where international agencies invest in getting to know the local context and potential partners and wait for donor funding to flow. During this time agencies build their ties with their preferred local actors to prove their bona fides or sincere intentions. International donors quickly attract their own national surrogates (US-based INGOs, EU and European-based INGOs; Embassies and their national INGOs). This creates disparate islands or clusters of local organisation activity. Each clique or "island" tends to have one international donor or "patron" who is providing financial resources, training, and other capacity development services to support the local CSO with their programme implementation. In this nascent stage, fragmentation of the ecosystem is the biggest challenge. With few ties and sparse connectivity, the diffusion of knowledge and ideas is limited.

**Summary: Key findings**

In summary, findings from the network analysis and quantitative surveys suggest that DEPP stakeholders believe that the collaborative approach of the DEPP is the appropriate approach to building capacity on disaster and emergency preparedness. There is evidence of increased collaboration, but this varies depending on country and may be dependent on the existing structure of networks. Further evidence of the effect of increased collaboration will be generated in the next round of data collection in the subsequent phases.

The key finding from the network analysis is the significant differences in network size, structure and composition across the Philippines, Kenya and Myanmar. In terms of DEPP's focus on "shifting the power" towards national level organisations and staff, understanding the network structure and

[24] With **preferential attachments**, new actors are much more likely to associate with organisations with the *most links and connections (and of course opportunities for funding)*. Preferential attachment to centralised actors reinforces the hegemony of a few key actors, with negative consequences for sustainability.

contribution of national versus international organisations is important to ensure that efforts are appropriate and targeted to relevant key influencers. DEPP could have been more strategic in which members of the network it targets for capacity building and evidence sharing. Measures of influence and network connectivity or clique activity could be used to help DEPP determine who to partner with. Organisations that are well networked have greater capacity and ability to influence others and lead DEPP initiatives.

## 4. Evaluation Question 4: Efficiency and Value for Money (VFM)

***How economically have resources/ inputs (funds, expertise, time etc.) been converted to results? To what extent does preparedness improve the efficiency of humanitarian response?***

This section of the report presents findings from the VFM analysis which aims to assess the efficiency and value for money of the DEPP. The full report is included in Annex 11.

### Question 4.A: Have resources (funds, human resources, time, expertise, etc.) been allocated strategically to achieve the programme objectives?

**Economy – budgets and staff time**

Table 18 summarises the overall DEPP budget at the programme level. It is based on actual spend data up to September 2016 and forecasts thereafter.

| Cost categories for DEPP Portfolio in total | Budget estimate for programme duration | % total |
|---|---|---|
| Indirect overheads: CDAC and START Network this refers to HQ functions, HR time, other back office functions | £71,858 | 0.24% |
| Staff management time and cost for portfolio level fund management (CDAC and START Networks): main activities being portfolio management, contributing to DFID annual reviews, travel, supervision of projects, portfolio level M&E | £632,656 | 2.12% |
| Programme Board staff time and evaluation steering committee staff time | £42,013 | 0.14% |
| Learning Project: includes £0.8m for the independent evaluation | £3,343,375 | 11.19% |
| Projects fund | £25,720,403 | 86.07% |
| Travel, conferences, workshops | £71,858 | 0.24% |
| Other | | 0.00% |
| **Total** | **£29,882,162** | **100%** |

Table 18: Overall DEPP budget

The DEPP has good provision for MEL (via the Learning Project): this comprises roughly 10% of the budget (excluding the HHI evaluation costs). The standard convention is to allocate 5-10% to a programme of this size[25], so a 10% allocation is generous. Assuming that the Learning Project directs its resources to an over-arching M&E function with effective learning, this should provide good value in terms of ensuring good results management, learning and VFM.

The governance of the DEPP consists of three groups: a Programme Board (PB) to guide its strategy, a Management Team (MT) to administer its implementation, and an Evaluation Steering Committee to oversee this independent evaluation. Each is comprised of different individuals from the three partners (DFID, START Network and CDAC Network). Independent experts also joined the PB and make up a third (including the Chair) of the Evaluation Steering Committee. As can be seen, the staff Programme Management costs (including overheads and PB costs) are just over 2% of the total, which is very lean relative to general development programming.[26] In the absence of actual cost data, the costs were estimated for the PB staff based on 8 people attending 4 meetings a year with an average annual salary of £70,000. The cost also includes 2 person week international trips for advocacy purposes.

The MT has significant responsibilities. While this is a low cost to DFID and can be viewed as very favourable VFM, there is a case to be made to increase management time for better governance, productivity and ultimately better scrutiny, results and VFM. This is discussed in more detail below. Given the continual cuts in DFID's administration budget, DFID has devolved significant responsibility for management and governance to the START Network and CDAC, so DFID management inputs are limited, which limits the overall management time in its entirety.

| **Projects** | **2014/15** (£) | **2016** (£) | **2017** (£) | **2018** (£) | **Total Budget** (£) | **% of Total** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Age and Disability | 244,009 | 441,335 | 345,557 | 14,260 | 1,045,160 | 4% |
| Alert | 137,210 | 439,824 | 1,169,668 | 240,298 | 1,987,000 | 7% |
| Financial Enablers | 22,370 | 452,384 | 1,181,166 | - | 1,655,920 | 6% |
| LPRR | 137,603 | 422,326 | 294,975 | 123,283 | 978,187 | 3% |
| Protection in Practice | 159,875 | 278,628 | 354,802 | 11,330 | 804,634 | 3% |
| Shifting the Power | 629,234 | 1,493,485 | 2,151,809 | 602,109 | 4,876,637 | 17% |
| Transforming Surge Capacity | 420,684 | 927,629 | 898,393 | 236,118 | 2,482,824 | 9% |
| Talent Development | 1,529,435 | 2,057,991 | 2,093,626 | 304,036 | 5,985,088 | 21% |
| DEPP MEL (Learning Project) | 560,020 | 901,606 | 1,274,889 | 606,860 | 3,343,375 | 12% |
| Public Health Systems Ethiopia | 25,085 | 204,151 | 257,533 | 13,321 | 500,000 | 2% |
| Improving EWEA Ethiopia | 45,500 | 240,692 | 288,655 | 209,408 | 784,255 | 3% |
| Strengthening Disaster systems Myanmar | 37,008 | 470,938 | 254,371 | 183,380 | 945,698 | 3% |
| Urban Early Action | - | 247,905 | 276,849 | 150,245 | 675,000 | 2% |
| CDAC-N | 70,460 | 889,235 | 1,475,251 | 565,055 | 3,000,000 | 10% |

[25] This is based on the author's own anecdotal evidence
[26] Based on VFM consultant's knowledge of budgets from other programmes in DFID

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 4,018,493 | 9,468,129 | 12,317,544 | 3,259,703 | 29,063,778 | 100% |
| % | 14% | 33% | 42% | 11% | 100% | |

Table 19: Programme budget by project and year (Actuals up to Sept 2016, forecasts thereafter)

Table 19 breaks down the budget further by projects. As can be seen, the Talent Development project comprises almost a quarter of the entire budget, followed by Shifting the Power, followed by CDAC-N. The top three projects (excluding the Learning Project) comprise almost half the total project budget. The remainder of the portfolio consists of smaller projects, ranging from 2% to 10% of the budget. Whether this breakdown of the projects is a good use of funds, reflecting needs outlined upfront and ultimately whether it offers good VFM, depends on various issues. For example, the following questions need to be answered:

- Are the big projects – Talent Development, Shifting the Power, and CDAC-N – offering the greatest impacts?
- Is a portfolio with a 3 to 4 big projects and a tail of smaller projects a good way to ensure a diversified portfolio, in terms of depth vs. breadth?
- What are our views on the portfolio in terms of risk? Do we want a mixture of high and low risk projects?

These questions are beyond the scope of this formative phase, and will be answered in the next report, when we have data on outcomes, and ultimately the cost effectiveness of projects and the portfolio as a whole.

**Project- Level Findings**

Findings from a series of interviews of project staff and documentation reviews for the following five DEPP case studies are presented in this section:

1. Age and disability capacity programme (ADCAP)
2. Better dialogue, better information, better action (CDAC-N)
3. Linking preparedness resilience and early response (LPRR)
4. Shifting the Power through developing the capacity of local organisations (STP)
5. Strengthening emergency preparedness Myanmar (SEP)

These case studies were chosen because they provided a good representation of the countries within the DEPP portfolio, and also a good variety of different project types and lead NGOs.

The budgets for each of the case studies were reviewed. As expected for projects such as these, key cost categories are typically salaries, platforms, training and other equipment and services related to the activities. There was a general perception of a lack of resources for budget planning – staff have felt that that the budget process was rushed and budgets were not planned thoroughly enough. The country mix had not been decided as the business case was being developed.

| NPAC | % of total project costs |
|---|---|
| STP | 10.3 |
| ADCAP | 10.3 |
| CDAC | 7 |
| LPRR | 12 |
| SEP | 12 |

Table 20: NPAC rates for selected case study projects

NPAC rates do not cover costs associated with collaboration activities, e.g. vehicles for visits and meetings. Interviewees stated that these collaboration costs were not covered in other programme cost categories either. This is a gap in the budget for some projects. The NPAC rates vary from 7% to 12% of total programme budget. These were negotiated upfront during the DEPP START Up. The evaluation team has not received documentation of the negotiation process, so it is not possible to comment on this. However, interviewees suggested that this was long, convoluted and inefficient.

All interviewed project staff stated that the NPAC rate was under-budgeted and not sufficient to cover country-related staff and back office costs. Three projects said that they or their consortium partners had contributed extra time and resources from their own internal funds (ADCAP, CDAC-N, LPRR). The NPAC rate can be compared or benchmarked to the USAID Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement ("NICRA") rate, which is often up to 20%, and sometimes as high as 25%.[27] This provides a benchmark showing the NPAC rates are on the low side.

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) budget allocations varied from 1.2% to 9%. The ballpark figure is usually around 5% for projects of this size. STP interestingly has the lowest allocation for M&E, but has some of the strongest and most effective M&E systems in place despite this. In general, the M&E strengths of projects vary, as do their evaluation plans. There is a case to strengthen M&E capacities in some projects, and this could have budget implications.

In terms of the governance and management of projects, there were mixed reviews on the consortium approach. The findings suggest that projects could be more efficiently managed with a streamlining of the consortium approach. Some projects highlighted the challenges around engagement, communication and coordination, while others highlighted the benefits in terms of shared approaches, standards, ways of working, and consensus building. There were concerns raised about lost learning between projects.

Regarding VFM reporting, all projects within the START Network have reported on Economy and Efficiency within their template, but this was absent from the CDAC network. Projects gave some good examples of VFM Economy and Efficiency savings, but the lack of VFM quantitative indicators is likely symptomatic of a lack of deep understanding of VFM monitoring and reporting, due to the absence of guidance from DFID in this regard.

All projects have evidence of systems in place for adaptive management and course correction, although the formality of the system in place varies from project to project (some have formal systems and some use less formal systems). Projects' approach, capacity and plans for adaptive management have been mixed. There is a case to standardise this, or at least share ideas on good practise and ways to improve adaptive management.

In terms of routine monitoring and reporting, there is virtually no systematic use of VFM indicators. Such indicators can be standardised, and data collected for internal project purposes, cross project comparisons and general learning for better VFM results. In addition, it is recommended that the logframe is a requirement for use at the project level as a reporting tool.

[27] Source – Evidence from VFM consultant's other evaluations. NICRA rates are generally considered to be on the high side.

### Question 4.B: Have resources been used efficiently? In general, do the results achieved justify the costs? Could the same results be attained with fewer resources?

**Efficiency – inception phase and start up**

To optimise the use of resources within the DEPP, it is relevant to examine the governance arrangements at the portfolio level from the inception phase, in terms of speed, quality and cost.[28] Firstly in terms of speed, all interviewees strongly stated that the start up was not efficient – it was too long, and it was fraught with delays of approvals, defining the project details and contracting issues. Project set up spanned from October 2014 to November 2015. Inception phases on average should not be greater than six months for a project of this scale and type.[29] Nine months is considered exceptional.

Some project interviewees indicated weak foundations of set up – that consortium partners were brought in too late during the inception phase, thus undermining the ability to secure ownership and buy in.

Another two interviewees indicated that the inception phase was extremely costly in time and resources because of the risk aversion shown by DFID in terms of contractual issues involving local NGOs handling funds and delegated authority. Interviewees stated that there were long gaps in-between board level approvals, which created delays. Once projects were approved, the risk aversion shown toward delegating financial authority to local NGOs hampered speed and efficiency: there were lengthy contractual and legal procedures, chains of contracts between lead and sub-contractors and bureaucracy. The lack of trust in terms of delegating financial authority to local partners was considered to be in direct contradiction to the objectives of the DEPP of local NGO capacity building and using a collaborative approach for building effectiveness. Instead, there was a significant cost of collaboration in terms of time, money and capacity in setting up the DEPP. And there was insufficient planning in terms of staff recruitment and due diligence. The lack of a quick and efficient inception period explains why projects have generally underspent according to original timescales. (The projects surveyed in this report have revised timelines and budgets to accommodate this).

These views are all backed up by findings in the Preparing for Preparedness: Lessons from Designing and Setting-up the Disasters and Emergencies Preparedness Programme, which discusses at length the inefficiencies associated with the set up. It states:

"...managing the DEPP appeared to have become inefficient, and despite positive working relationships, there was tension between a government institution as donor and two highly ambitious networks of NGOs being involved in decision making. For example, while the START Network was looking to innovate, DFID requirements regarding due diligence and risk limited what freedom was possible."

It also discusses the on-going inefficiencies with project implementation:

[28] This is how DFID defines VFM in humanitarian contexts (although this definition is being revised and their new guidance is expected to be released in the near future).

[29] Based on VFM consultant's knowledge of DFID programming

"Once approved, beginning project implementation was a time-consuming process. One member said, 'The logframe went through 15 iterations: I was so exasperated I said, [Just tell us what to write and we'll do it].' In addition, contracting took up a large amount of time, with lengthy legal documents shared with numerous agencies and local partners. One agency lead noted that 'A six-page MoU [turned] into a 40-page contract.'"

**Efficiency – on-going governance arrangements**

There were mixed reviews on the organisational and governance arrangements of the DEPP. On the plus side, it was felt that the governance is generally working well, with a unique situation of DFID and implementing partners working at the same level. The PB discussions are considered to be very collaborative and open and the board is generally considered to be well functioning. However, three interviewees stated that they felt the system had elements of hierarchy and bureaucracy. They also felt that the management was rigid, with lengthy approval processes.

For example, the Talent Development project wanted to make some modifications to the project, but approval was quite a lengthy process. Another example is the Board's lengthy deliberations around the Innovation Fund. The question is, how could this have been undertaken more quickly and more efficiently? The innovation fund options needed to be presented better to the Board, but equally, it was argued that the Board decision making needed to be better – both in that example and more generally. The DEPP case study 'Lessons from Designing and Setting-up the Disasters and Emergencies Preparedness Programme', also supports these findings about long approval processes:

"The DEPP Board's approval process involved representatives from both networks who scrutinised both their own and other projects in detail with many projects asked to attend several meetings, and it took five meetings over 12 months for the entire portfolio of projects to be approved."

An interviewee explained that there has never been contentious discussion within the PB, this could be because capacity building projects take a long time to get started. Also an interviewee said that no one on the board has the time, space, political capital or resources to address the complexity of the projects. This is because of the very limited amount of staff management time within the governance for the DEPP.

In terms of a DEPP portfolio-wide strategy, two interviewees suggested that this was missing. It was not clear to them what exactly DEPP is driving towards. There do not appear to be clear objectives in place, and this was exacerbated by a lack of overall logframe (until July 2016) and a clear theory of change. They said that it is necessary to have a strategy on both people and systems capacity building. At the board level, there do not appear to be lessons learnt and understood, but this could in part be because project implementation is still in its relatively early stages. Respondents expressed the feeling that there is a lack of big picture understanding, and that the DEPP remains more so a cluster of projects rather than a well-functioning and strategic portfolio. The way the DEPP is set up makes it difficult for the board to provide direction, and the objectives appear to be getting lost in the drive for exhaustive collaboration. In terms of the management arrangements within DFID, the DEPP reports to CHASE (Conflict Humanitarian and Security Department) and one interviewee indicated that DEPP is peripheral to DFID core business, compared to other programmes such as the Humanitarian Innovation and Evidence programme (HIEP), which is fully embedded across DFID country offices, and thus much more influential and useful in terms of DFID business.

**Portfolio Flexibility**

There were mixed views on whether the portfolio allows flexibility for strategic programming and innovation. It was agreed generally that the system is flexible enough for small changes, especially through informal mechanisms. One interviewee felt that a big hindrance to flexibility was not the management arrangements, but a culture of fear of change due to the in-built risk aversion that DFID has in working with local NGOs. That interviewee stated that project staff perceive that donors and the MT are preventing change, however this is more accurately characterised as a self-imposed disposition among project staff toward preventing change. Project staff do not make decisions despite the system being there, because they feel that they will be stopped in making changes by the MT. In other words they believe that the MT is risk averse and inflexible. There are downsides to the collaborative model: individuals can think very strongly and differently and are often unable to reach a consensus. Collaboration can also lead to a collective action problem, in which individuals do not have an incentive to make changes.

The key VFM issue here is about whether DEPP management is willing to invest the time and resources to shift project staff's ways of working to remove those beliefs that they hold about the MT. It is useful to qualitatively assess the costs and benefits of such mindset changes.

### Question 4.C: Have programme funds and activities been delivered in a timely manner?

As of February 2017, all the projects have reported underspend on programme budget[30] due to delays in implementation and set up, but also external contextual factors, for example for STP reported:

"Delays incurred by context specific issues, in particular in Ethiopia the drought and the 70/30 regulation, in Bangladesh the time to secure approval from authorities and security situation."

For CDAC-N, the violence that began in July 2016 in South Sudan suspended contracting. All the projects appear to have mitigation measures in place for budget deviations. E.g. STP proposed measures such as management meetings, course correction and budget reallocations between sub grantees.

Evidence of adaptive management and course correction

There is evidence of adaptive management across all projects, but much variation in terms of approach by project.

The STP, CDAC-N and LPRR seemed to adopt more formalised systems for adaptive management. LPRR has a learning framework. The interviewed STP project staff indicated that they have strong processes in place for strategy and course correction including strategy and Project Management Unit (PMU) meetings, as well as a process of continuous reflection by the MEL working group. The CDAC-N project also utilised similarly formal processes of knowledge and learning reviews, including external and end of project evaluations. Finally, the LPRR programme appears to hold adaptive management at the core of its M&E framework. The programme itself uses an *Outcome Harvesting* approach, as opposed to a traditional logframe. This offers more of a learning piece than a prescriptive set of plans, allowing for a dynamic approach, providing real time feedback.

[30] Funds are not fungible between activity costs and indirect overheads.

The SEP and ADCAP projects on the other hand, appeared to utilise more informal approaches for adaptive management. The interviewees for the SEP project indicated that the flexibility of the DEPP programme has enabled regular updating of the project's plans (and the associated budget) to reflect the changing context of insecurity and access. The ADCAP project has no formal systems in place for adaptive management, with project-staff interviewees stating instead an informal process exists, of continuous informal real time learning on the job.

**Summary: Key findings**

In summary, the early findings on the value for money (VFM) of the DEPP show some good potential for the programme, with areas for improvement. These early findings focus on economy and efficiency, while effectiveness and equity will be reported in the next evaluation report. The findings suggest that there are good indicators of cost economy, though some budgets have been lean, with insufficient resources for portfolio management and collaboration activities. There are some shortfalls in terms of systems and resources set up for efficiency in governance and strategy, portfolio management, decision making and consortium arrangements; but also positive findings regarding VFM reporting and adaptive management, and collaborative ways of working. The Learning Project in particular shows strong potential for achieving learning and adaptive management if steered in the right direction by DEPP management.

## 5. Evaluation Question 5: Sustainability of the Intervention and Likelihood of Impact of the Programme

***To what extent and in what ways have the benefits of the program become embedded?***

With regards to sustainability of the DEPP and likelihood of impact, the three areas of inquiry include contributions towards strengthening national disaster preparedness plans, inclusion of prioritised target groups and gender, as well as degree of influence of institutional and policy environments. The evidence at this phase of the evaluation is rather limited for the first and third areas, but will be expanded in the next report. Nevertheless, we will present data for a number of key indicators, which will ultimately serve as a baseline data point against which we will measure progress in the next phase.

### Question 5.A: What contribution has the programme made in strengthening national preparedness systems?

Figure 16 and Tables 21 below present "baseline" data for key indicators related to question 5.A, which focuses on contributions towards strengthening national preparedness systems. The evaluation team will assess changes related to national preparedness systems upon analysis of data from the second phase of data collection. The next report will describe these changes and will examine whether any measured changes can be attributed to DEPP.

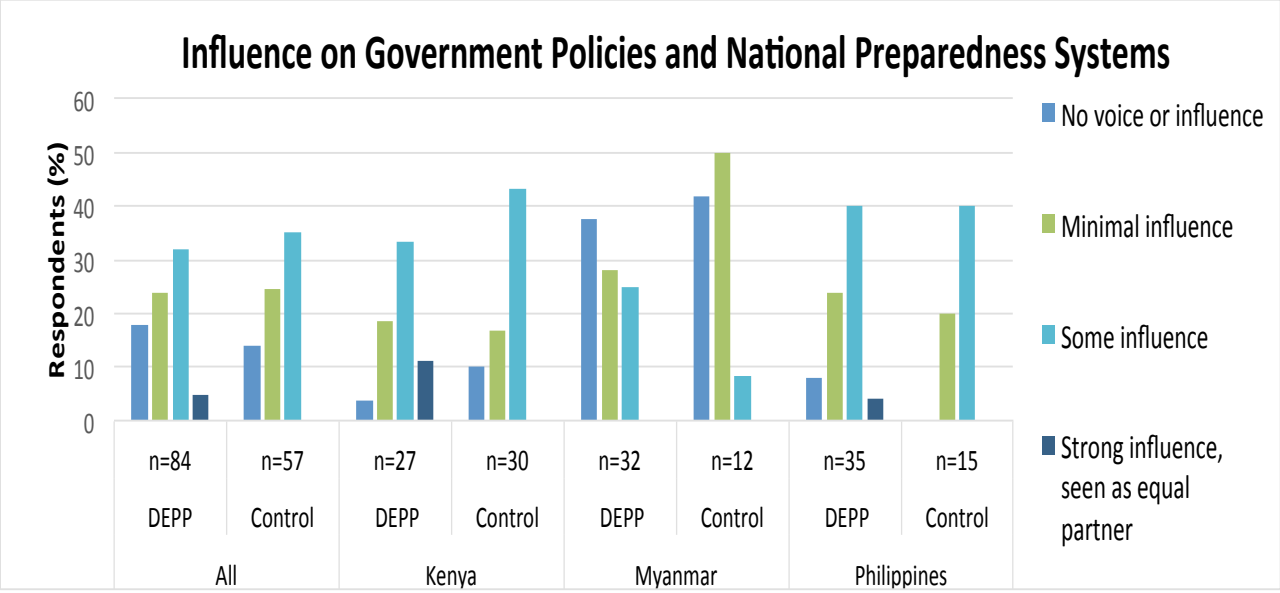


Figure 16: Baseline indicators on organisational influence over government preparedness systems

As presented in Figure 16, when asked about influence over government policies related to national preparedness systems, 23.8% of DEPP respondents across all countries reported "minimal influence", 32.1% reported, "some influence" and 21.4% reported "significant influence". These results are comparable with non-DEPP organisations surveyed.

When asked about current practices relating to government disaster management plans, 46.4% of DEPP organisations surveyed reported that the staff design programmes to support disaster management plans, and 29.8% reported that staff work to influence and/or revise disaster management plans (Table 21). These results are comparable with non-DEPP organisations surveyed.

| Which of the following best describes your organisation's current practice with respect to government disaster management plans? | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | DEPP | | | | Control | | | |
| | All n=84 | Kenya n=27 | Myanmar n=32 | Philippines n=35 | All n=57 | Kenya n=30 | Myanmar n=12 | Philippines n=15 |
| Staff not aware of DMP (where plan exists) | 11 (13.1) | 5 (18.5) | 5 (15.6) | 1 (4.0) | 4 (7.0) | 2 (6.7) | 2 (16.7) | 0 (0.0) |
| Staff design programmes to support DMP (where a plan exists) | 39 (46.4) | 11 (40.7) | 17 (53.3) | 11 (44.0) | 30 (52.6) | 14 (16.7) | 7 (58.3) | 9 (60.0) |
| Staff work to influence/revise DMP | 25 (29.8) | 11 (40.7) | 1 (3.1) | 13 (52.0) | 17 (29.8) | 11 (36.7) | 1 (8.3) | 5 (33.3) |
| Don't know | 8 (9.5) | 0 (0.0) | 8 (25.0) | 0 (0.0) | 5 (8.8) | 3 (10.0) | 1 (8.3) | 1 (6.7) |
| No government DMP exists | 1 (1.2) | 0 (0.0) | 1 (3.1) | 0 (0.0) | 1 (1.8) | 0 (0.0) | 1 (8.3) | 0 (0.0) |

Table 21: Baseline indicators on organisational practices related to government disaster preparedness plans

### Question 5.B: Has the programme taken into consideration prioritised target groups (people with disabilities, older people, women, children and youth)? What contribution has the programme made in strengthening inclusion of target groups and gender aspects at the level of national and local institutions?

With respect to implementation, the degree to which gender has been emphasised remains dependent on project leadership and differs across projects. Most projects have not provided a specific, detailed gender inclusion plan and until recently, there have been no formal reporting requirements on this issue. Some projects have included information about gender considerations either in the quarterly reports or in other documents, but often it has been sporadic and inconsistent. For those that have included gender information, implementation of the proposed gender considerations has also been inconsistent. For example, one project stated in their proposal that all data captured through the programme would be disaggregated by gender and age. Assessment of that project's baseline reports and needs assessments shows that some of the reports have presented disaggregated data and others have not. Another project, which is providing grants through a flexible funding mechanism, did not include a gender section in the sample proposal template for applicants. A different project stated that a gender analysis would be conducted during the project's inception phase and that this would guide implementation, but such a report was not found in available documents.

Other projects such as the Talent Development project are more consistently reporting on gender considerations including the gender balance of their training cohorts and strategies they have implemented to prioritise women applicants. However, the project has experienced some challenges. Participant feedback from Bangladesh suggests that women feel the trainings are too male focused and some trainings, such as the residential programme, do not suit the needs of women. It was also shown that the gender imbalance becomes more heavily male-skewed as the training becomes more advanced. Women in Bangladesh also noted that all of the training materials included photos of males only. This example emphasises that even in cases where gender considerations have been substantial, there are still major challenges around gender inclusion. It is important to continuously track gender inclusion to identify such problems and ensure corrective measures are undertaken.

An assessment of projects' monitoring and evaluation systems and log frames suggests that most projects describe disaggregating monitoring and evaluation data, however, in many cases the project log-frames do not include this or state which indicators will be disaggregated.

With respect to vulnerable groups, the ADCAP is a leader in inclusion efforts, as ADCAP has raised awareness of the importance of inclusion among many DEPP projects. Most notably, ADCAP developed the Minimum Standards for Age and Disability Inclusion in Humanitarian Action, encouraging and enabling other DEPP projects to increase inclusion of vulnerable groups in their activities. Many projects are now incorporating the Minimum Standards into their work:

> "We've had huge value added by their project. We use their age and disability guidelines in our trainings. It's one of the key texts that we share with partners and use it as a source of backbone as the inclusion focus of the training. And that only came about because they are a DEPP project." (Project Leadership)

Humanitarian staff at both DEPP and control organisations were asked about inclusion of various target groups (including children, people with disabilities, the elderly, and women) in the design and implementation of preparedness activities (Table 22), as well as response activities (Table 23).

| Were members of any of the following groups involved in **the design and implementation of the preparedness activities/programming**? | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | DEPP | | | | Control | | | |
| | All n=84 | Kenya n=27 | Myanmar n=32 | Philippines n=35 | All n=57 | Kenya n=30 | Myanmar n=12 | Philippines n=15 |
| Children | 65 (77.4) | 19 (70.4) | 28 (87.5) | 18 (72.0) | 33 (57.9) | 16 (53.3) | 9 (75.0) | 8 (53.3) |
| People with Disabilities | 60 (71.4) | 20 (74.1) | 21 (65.6) | 19 (76.0) | 37 (64.9) | 21 (70.0) | 8 (66.7) | 8 (53.3) |
| Elderly | 63 (75.0) | 19 (70.4) | 23 (71.9) | 21 (84.0) | 41 (71.9) | 20 (66.7) | 10 (83.3) | 11 (73.3) |
| Women | 76 (90.5) | 23 (85.2) | 29 (90.6) | 24 (96.0) | 47 (82.5) | 23 (76.7) | 10 (83.3) | 14 (93.3) |
| Other | 17 (20.2) | 7 (25.9) | 5 (15.6) | 5 (20.0) | 16 (28.1) | 5 (16.7) | 2 (16.7) | 9 (60.0) |

**Table 22: Inclusion during design and implementation of preparedness activities**

In general, inclusion during preparedness activities is higher than response activities, and appears to be similar between DEPP and control organisations. For example, 75 % of respondents from DEPP organisations stated that the elderly were involved in design and implementation of preparedness programs compared with 71.9% in the control respondents. This was slightly lower for response activities (67.9% for DEPP respondents, 61.4% for control respondents).

| Were members of any of the following groups involved **in the design and implementation of response activities/programming?** | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | DEPP | | | | Control | | | |
| | All n=84 | Kenya n=27 | Myanmar n=32 | Philippines n=35 | All n=57 | Kenya n=30 | Myanmar n=12 | Philippines n=15 |
| Children | 56 (66.7) | 19 (70.4) | 24 (75.0) | 13 (52.0) | 29 (50.9) | 16 (53.3) | 6 (50.0) | 7 (46.7) |
| People with Disabilities | 54 (64.3) | 20 (74.1) | 17 (53.1) | 17 (68.0) | 33 (57.9) | 19 (63.3) | 6 (50.0) | 8 (53.3) |
| Elderly | 57 (67.9) | 19 (70.4) | 19 (59.4) | 19 (76.0) | 35 (61.4) | 18 (60.0) | 7 (58.3) | 10 (66.7) |
| Women | 69 (82.1) | 22 (81.5) | 24 (75.0) | 23 (92.0) | 41 (71.9) | 21 (70.0) | 7 (58.3) | 13 (86.7) |
| Other | 15 (17.9) | 7 (25.9) | 3 (9.4) | 5 (20.0) | 9 (15.8) | 4 (13.3) | 0 (0.0) | 5 (33.3) |

**Table 23: Inclusion during design and implementation of response activities**

### Question 5.C: In what ways has DEPP influenced institutional and policy environments?

Looking across all DEPP countries, 47.6% of organisations reported that the institutional and policy environments for building humanitarian capacity to prepare for and/or respond to a disaster and

emergency had been slightly strengthened over the past year, compared with 33.3% of non-DEPP organisations (See Figure 17). Less than half of respondents responded that that there was no change or that it had become worse over the past year. More than 10% of DEPP organisations responded that the institutional and policy environment had been strengthened significantly.

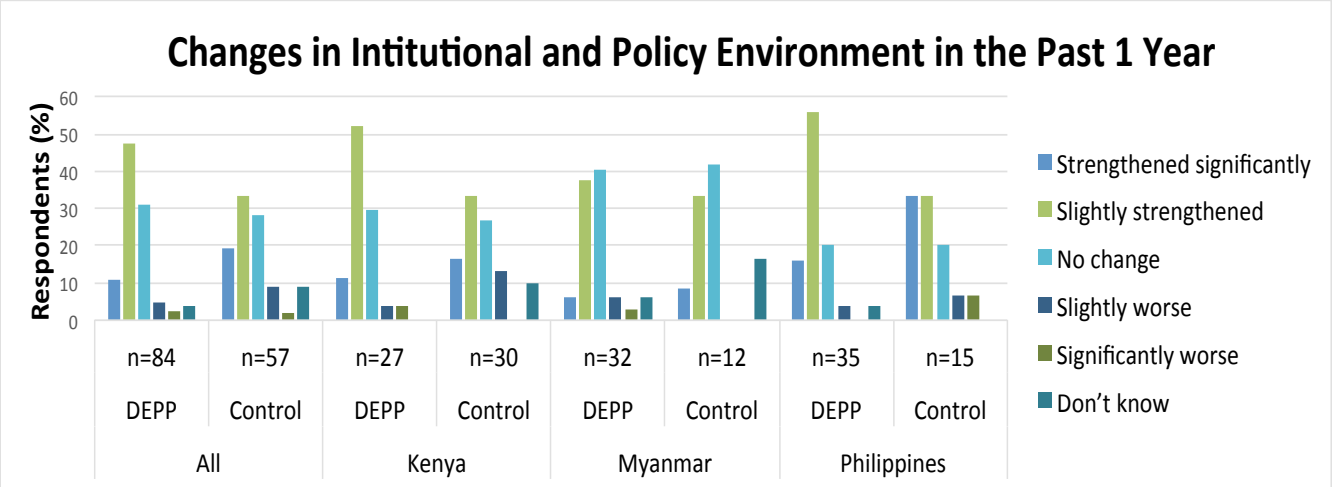


**Figure 17: Perceptions of changes in institutional and policy environment for building humanitarian capacity over the past year**

Qualitative data from in-depth interviews demonstrates that perceptions of DEPP on improving institutional environments are favourable. Specifically, respondents noted policies and strategic plans were being developed around disaster preparedness, response and inclusion. Respondents also noted that DEPP has improved the ability to identify gaps and develop policies to address existing gaps. One key example of this is in Kenya, where a respondent discussed how they are now participating in the process of establishing county disaster management plans due to their involvement in DEPP.

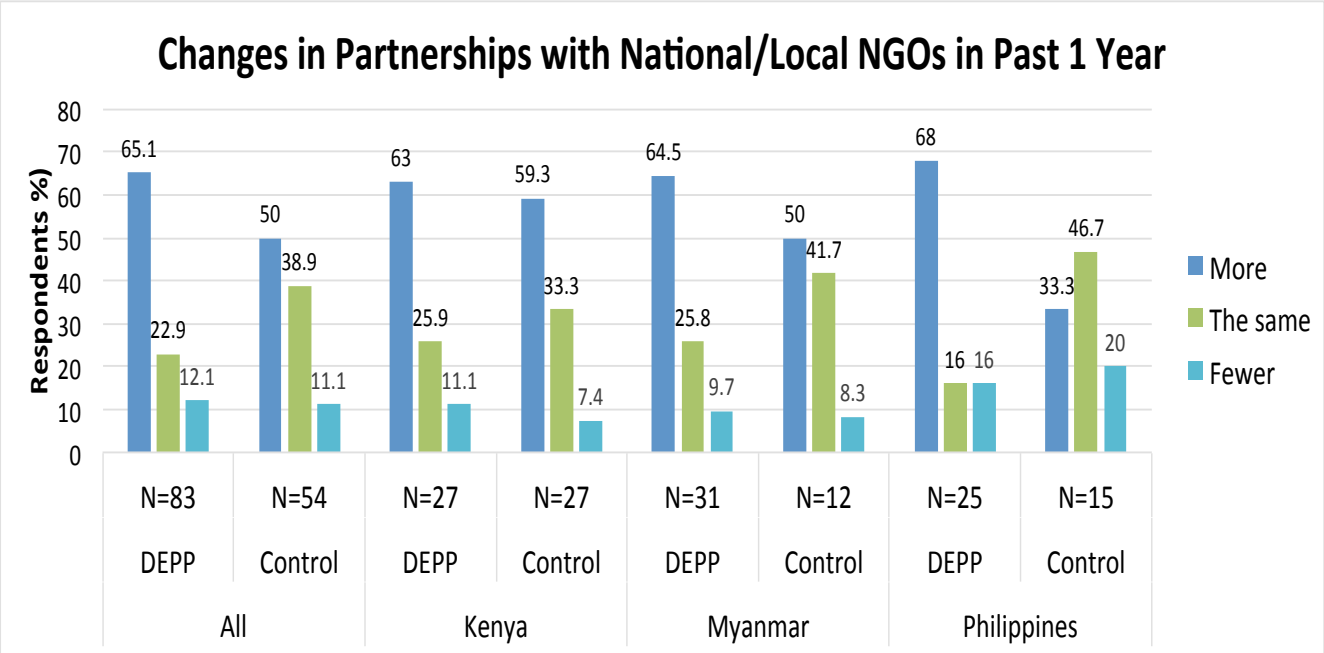


**Figure 18: Changes in number of partnerships with local and national organisations over the past year**

When looking at the number of partnerships with local and national organisations, 65.1% of organisations expressed that they had more partnerships with L/NNGOs compared to one year ago (See Figure 18). This demonstrates the trend towards localisation and inclusion of local and national partners in humanitarian programming. Partnerships with local organisations will be measured during the next round of data collection to further assess change attributable to DEPP.

### Question 5.D: What is perceived to be the most significant change attributed to DEPP, and why?

Organisational leadership staff were interviewed to triangulate data from quantitative surveys and develop a more nuanced understanding of DEPP effectiveness at this stage of implementation. During the interviews, individuals were asked to share their perceptions of the most significant change attributable to DEPP at this point of project delivery. Across countries, four reoccurring themes were highlighted: 1) Increased staff capacity to prepare for and respond to disasters; 2) Improved organisational capacity to plan for disaster; 3) Increased opportunities for networking and collaboration for local organisations; and 4) Collaboration with government.

One local organisation in Kenya explained the change they observed in staff capacity:

> "We are able to respond faster because of the training we received…we are able to respond better, faster, more efficiently now... The other change is that we have a number of staff that have been trained in humanitarian preparedness and response… we are [now] a more organised organisation in terms of humanitarian response."

Another local organisation in Kenya responded, "[DEPP has led to] having the right policies in place, training our people, doing mapping and assessment of hazards and shocks that are there within the county."

In Myanmar, a local organisation focused on collaboration with government:

> "We have much advocacy process with government sector and they are [more] interested to collaborate [with NGOS] than before because of DEPP pushing them to move the progress."

Another organisation in Myanmar explained how capacity building led to increased planning and preparedness:

> "I would say this capacity building of DEPP helped the organisations to enhance our preparedness plan and become more knowledgeable... we really improved on our disaster preparedness plan."

Some respondents felt it is too early to see any concrete change due to the DEPP, but were optimistic that change would be observed after longer implementation of the interventions.

**Summary: Key findings**

In summary, the evidence around sustainability of the intervention and likelihood of impact of the DEPP at this phase of the evaluation is rather limited but will be expanded in the next report. With respect to gender and inclusion of target groups, our findings indicate that gender was an important consideration during the design phase of the DEPP. However, while the DEPP Programme Board

criteria for project selection required inclusion of a gender statement, it did not provide further guidelines with respect to gender inclusion. As such all DEPP projects considered gender in their proposals and outlined their planned approach for gender inclusions in their concept notes but the level of detail provided and the proposed level of inclusion varied substantially across projects. With respect to implementation, the degree to which gender has been emphasised remains dependent on project leadership and differs across projects. Many projects have not provided a specific, detailed gender inclusion plan. Current evidence suggests that implementation of the proposed gender considerations has been inconsistent. Inclusion of prioritised target groups was not a requirement during the design phase, but has been considered by most projects. The ADCAP project is considered a leader in this area and has positively influenced the inclusion efforts of other DEPP projects.

## 6. Cross-Cutting Issue 1: Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG)

Gender equality was mentioned throughout the business case as a key DEPP focus. The business case specified that DEPP would contribute to DFID's work on violence against women and girls (VAWG) and the evaluation team was asked to prioritise the collection of evidence on this topic. However, VAWG was not included in the design of most projects and therefore activities are not targeting this area of work. While certain projects, such as Protection in Practice include a focus on VAWG, it is not integrated into most other DEPP projects. Whether or not a project addresses VAWG has primarily been dependent on project staff and project priorities. Evidence from in-depth interviews suggests that many projects identified VAWG as a DFID focus but did not feel that this was an issue covered by DEPP and as an area of work outside the scope of DEPP at this stage. Overall, if the intention was for VAWG to be focus are of the DEPP, then it can be concluded that this issue was not sufficiently emphasised during the design stage.

## 7. Cross-Cutting issue 2: Contextual Factors

The DEPP portfolio operates both at the UK level and in ten distinct countries across three regions. These countries have different political contexts, as well as unique socio-cultural and geographic factors and differing disaster and emergency profiles. To understand better how context has influenced both the design and implementation of projects, respondents were asked during interviews to identify contextual factors that influenced the design and implementation of the DEPP portfolio and the individual projects. Specifically, respondents were asked to reflect on any internal and external contextual factors that affected the programme and projects. Contextual factors were also assessed during the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative session at the DEPP collaboration retreat in London in November 2016 and are presented in this section. That session involved a group free listing and ranking activity where participants were asked to list contextual factors that were considered in the design of their projects as well as the implementation, and then discuss them in their groups. Table 24 summarises the key contextual factors that were identified during in-depth interviews as well as the DEPP collaboration retreat.

| **Factors affecting design** | | **Factors affecting delivery** | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Internal** | **External** | **Internal** | **External** |
| Pre-existing collaborations/relationships | Political environment | Human resources | Political environment |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Organisational capacity | Culture | Staff turnover | United Kingdom's withdrawal from the European Union |
| Organisational culture | Stakeholder engagement/buy-in | Organisational culture | Exchange rate fluctuations |
| Proposal requirements/incentives | NGO landscape | Language barriers | Humanitarian emergencies |
| Administrative processes | Administrative processes | Pre-existing collaborations/relationships | Culture |
| Organisational buy-in | Gender | Organisational capacity | Security |
| | | Organisational buy-in | Access/geography |
| | | | Infrastructure |
| | | | Stakeholder engagement/buy-in |
| | | | NGO landscape |
| | | | Gender |

Table 24: Contextual factors affecting DEPP

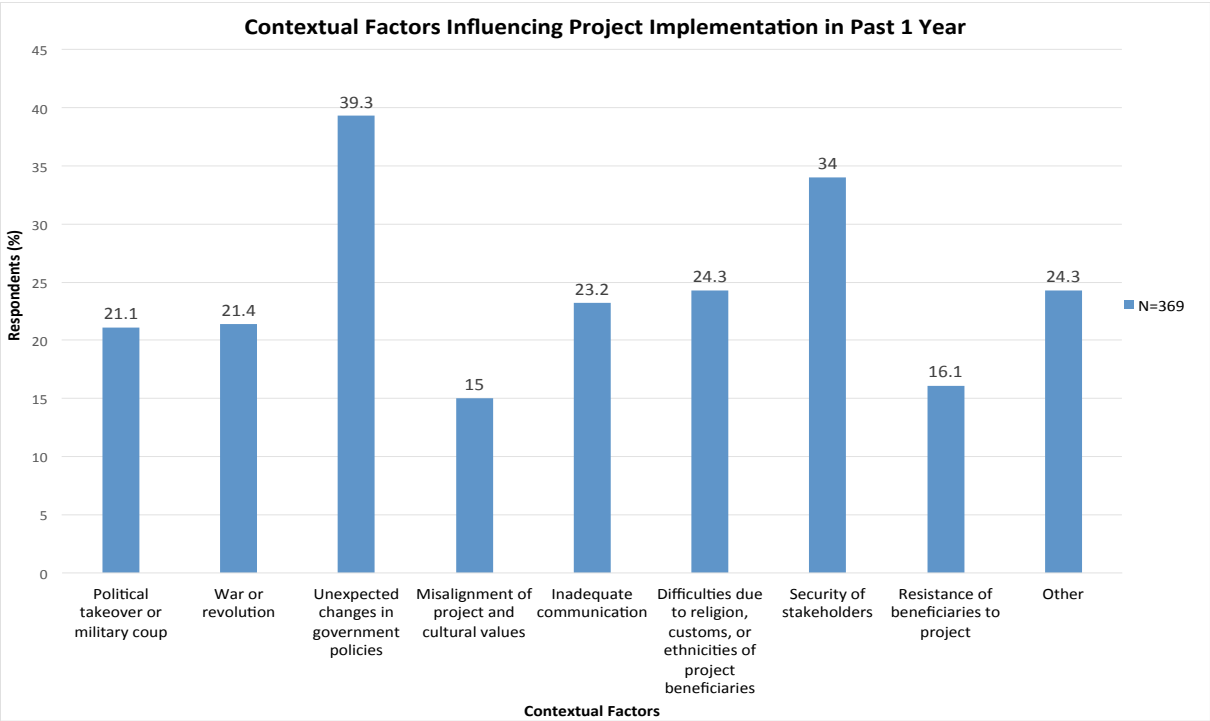


Figure 19: Contextual factors that have influenced project implementation over the past year

In addition during quantitative organisational and KAP surveys, respondents were also asked about contextual factors that have affected the project. Figure 19 presents the most common contextual factors that have affected project implementation in the past year. The most commonly reported contextual factors were unexpected changes in government policies, followed by security of stakeholders, and difficulties due to religion, customs, or ethnicities of project beneficiaries. The contextual factors that were expected to affect project implementation in the next 12 months were reported in similar proportions and are presented in table 25.

| **Looking ahead** to the next 12 months, what contextual factors do you anticipate will influence your project? | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | DEPP | | | |
| | All n=369 | Kenya n=64 | Myanmar n=41 | Philippines n=54 |
| Political takeover or military coup | 44 (27.7) | 23 (35.9) | 7 (17.1) | 14 (25.9) |
| War or revolution | 31 (19.5) | 12 (18.8) | 7 (17.1) | 12 (22.2) |
| Unexpected changes in government policies | 83 (52.2) | 26 (40.6) | 17 (41.5) | 40 (74.1) |
| Misalignment of project and cultural values | 37 (23.3) | 21 (32.8) | 0 (0.0) | 16 (29.6) |
| Inadequate communication | 32 (20.1) | 13 (20.3) | 4 (9.8) | 15 (27.8) |
| Difficulties due to religion, customs, or ethnicities of project beneficiaries | 34 (21.4) | 20 (31..3) | 4 (9.8) | 10 (18.5) |
| Security of stakeholders | 45 (28.3) | 18 (25.0) | 7 (17.1) | 22 (40.7) |
| Resistance of beneficiaries to project | 27 (17.0) | 13 (20.3) | 0 (0.0 | 14 (25.9) |
| Other | 47 (29.6) | 18 (28.1) | 15 (36.6) | 14 (25.9) |

**Table 25: Anticipated contextual factors to affect projects over the next year**

Contextual factors play a significant role in project delivery and had been considered with respect to design and to implementation. However, in most cases, they had not been adequately considered or certain contextual factors that had not been planned for emerged during the course of the implementation. Additional resources may be required throughout the remainder of the projects to mitigate these challenges.

## Internal Contextual Factors

### Human resources

Human resources were identified as a significant internal contextual factor impacting the projects and programme by a number of respondents. Recruiting in-country staff with the required expertise, skills and training emerged as a challenge in delivering the projects due to the limited pool of qualified individuals in certain areas. There are also significant challenges relating to high staff turnover. Throughout the course of the DEPP, DFID stakeholders, DEPP programme stakeholders, UK-based project leads and in-country staff have left their positions, leading to staff vacancies, lost information, delays and challenges relating to continuity of project delivery.

### Organisational culture

Organisational culture was identified as another internal contextual factor impacting project implementation, particularly when collaborating and working in consortia. Diverse organisational policies, management styles, administrative processes and expectations can both lead to challenges or alternatively facilitate innovation.

### Organisational Capacity

Organisational capacity emerged as both an internal and external contextual factor in the design and delivery of the DEPP. There have been challenges relating to accountability and weak governance structures among in-country partners. There are also differences in terms of capacity levels of small organisations versus larger ones, and local or national organisations versus international organisations. Some larger agencies with more capacity had an advantage from the onset, being able to collaborate and write proposals in the design phase due to resources.

### Pre-existing relationships

One of the factors that was identified several times as a positive internal factor which enabled design and implementation was the existence of pre-existing relationships between partnering organisations. As described earlier, during the initial START network design process, some of the projects put forward came from organisations that had already partnered and had strong existing relationships and trust. This facilitated project design and facilitated collaboration and cohesiveness. Having adequate stakeholder buy in and engagement from within the countries was also noted as an enabling factor. For example, the four projects that were funded in the second round of the START Network design stage, where country offices were incentivised to design the projects, which ultimately led to more contextualization and organisational buy-in.

## External Contextual Factors

### Government and political environment

Government and political environment were noted as key contextual factors affecting programme and project design and implementation. For some individuals at the project level, government involvement was viewed as a strength, leading to buy-in, ownership, and sustainability, while for others, government involvement was viewed as a constraint due to corruption, bureaucracy, and political crisis. At the UK level, the political environment has affected project delivery across DEPP countries. Most notably, the vote for the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the European Union has led to fluctuating exchange rates and reduced project resources. The political environment in the UK has affected the ability for in-country staff to secure visas and come to London for collaboration and learning events.

**Disasters and Emergencies**
Humanitarian emergencies have also had a significant impact on project implementation. Natural disaster and conflict lead INGOs, UN agencies, governments and other humanitarian stakeholders to shift priorities which results in reduced availability. Individuals from these agencies who were to participate in DEPP-related activities may no longer be able to given their involvement in a disaster or conflict. Staff time is often prioritised to emergencies rather than preparedness. Challenges relating to security have also had an impact on project implementation and communication.

**Geography**
There are challenges with accessing remote areas. Depending on the geographical location and available infrastructure, some areas where projects are being implemented are in hard to reach locations.

**Language**
Language was also a contextual factor affecting project delivery. Projects that did not translate materials in local languages faced significant barriers and were not able to reach certain populations and beneficiaries.

**Gender**
Gender norms are another external contextual factor that has affected project delivery. Some projects have had challenges in reaching target beneficiaries who are women. As discussed at the DEPP Learning Conference in Nairobi[31], gender norms and roles in different contexts can severely limit access to and participation in capacity building efforts.

**Summary: Key findings**

In summary, despite knowledge and awareness of how contextual factors can affect project design and implementation, and some efforts to plan ahead in this regard, contextual factors continue to impact project delivery across the DEPP. While a few positive, enabling contextual factors have been reported, for the most part, negative effects have been widely felt, and in some cases additional resources have been needed to mitigate these effects.

## 8. South Sudan Case Study

This section reports findings related to how violence and insecurity in South Sudan affected DEPP projects being implemented in that setting in the form of a case study. As described earlier, South Sudan was initially selected as intensive set country but when violence occurred in July 2016 resulting in suspension of DEPP project activities, the evaluation team adjusted its approach. The case study permits deeper exploration the decision-making processes, and challenges faced by project teams as they encountered the outbreak of violence. It aims to generate lessons learned to strengthen project implementation in settings where there is conflict.

[31] DEPP Learning Conference 2016, Learning Pack

## South Sudan Case Study

Background

Following South Sudan's independence in 2011, internal political struggles led to renewed conflict in 2013.(1) Within the context of ongoing conflict, violence erupted between government and opposition forces in Juba in July 2016 affecting both civilians and aid workers.(2, 3) Deepening an already complex humanitarian crisis, the violence resulted in displacement and famine, with an estimated six million South Sudanese in need of humanitarian assistance by August 2016.(4) The humanitarian situation continued to deteriorate, and at the time of this case study in 2017, there was ongoing violence in other states of South Sudan targeting both civilians and aid workers.(5)

The violence and insecurity affected two Disaster and Emergency Preparedness Programme (DEPP) projects in South Sudan: 1) the Communicating with Disaster Affected Communities (CDAC) Network *Communicating with Communities* (CwC*)* project and 2) the START Network *Protection in Practice* project.(6, 7) The CwC project is delivered as part of a consortium among World Vision, Internews, BBC Media Action and national and local organisations, and aims to improve emergency preparedness by increasing information exchange and community engagement.(6) One of the consortium partners served as in-country host for the project. The Protection in Practice project is delivered as part of a consortium among Oxfam, World Vision and International Rescue Committee, and aims to increase protection expertise and capacity in national level organisations.(7)

This in-depth case study focuses on the CwC project in South Sudan. The CwC project supports novel, experimental ideas and models to increase information sharing to improve response and enable those most affected to inform the response. The project has five different components: 1) a flexible funding mechanism projects whereby local organisations apply for funds through the broader projects, 2) a CwC in Emergency Working Group of agencies co-chaired by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), 3) CwC trainings, 4) exchange visits and networking, and 5) a simulation.(6) Preliminary proposals for major work streams were presented at the March 2016 meeting of the South Sudan CwC working group. As of July 2016, the working group had been established, a foundation training had been conducted and as part of the flexible funding mechanism, five potential sub-projects were identified right before the violence erupted in Juba.

The violence in Juba directly impacted the staff and partners of the CwC project as documented in media and humanitarian reports.(2, 3) The violence also impacted project implementation and activities. This case study, conducted as part of the DEPP external evaluation, aims to explore how project management navigated a challenging and insecure environment to implement project activities and how the violence impacted both the project and the multi-stakeholder platform.

Methods

The case study comprised individual semi-structured interviews and review of project documents. Due to the sensitivity of the violence and to protect the confidentiality of staff, project leaders for the CwC project and the Protection in Practice project were contacted to provide recommendations for potential interviewees. Potential participants were contacted by email with a brief description of the case study to be conducted as part of the external evaluation and invited to participate. In total, four were invited to participate in an interview and two agreed to participate.

The interviews were conducted in April 2017 and followed a semi-structured interview guide approved by the institutional review board at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. Upon obtaining verbal informed consent, the interviews were conducted via Skype and audio recorded using an online software program called Piezo™.(8) The interviews were transcribed and analysed and key themes were identified.

Results

In total, two interviews were conducted. Key themes emerged from the interviews related to four broad categories: 1) decision-making processes following the violence, 2) perceived impacts on the project, 3) perceived impacts on the multi-stakeholder platform, 4) key influences on the decision-making process, and 5) lessons learned. Within those categories, multiple sub-themes emerged as described below.

**1. Decision-making process related to project implementation**

The interviewees described the project management decision-making processes following the violence and noted two major decision-making points related to CwC project implementation.

First and foremost, as a result of the violence in Juba, the decision was made to temporarily suspend the CwC project. In the immediate period following the violence, staff from the in country host organisation were evacuated from South Sudan. Immediate decisions related to staff protection were determined by the in country host as per the duty of care protocols. The Department for International Development (DFID) was notified of the project suspension. While the in country host organisation continued its broader portfolio activities through its network of local partners and staff, its international staff were based remotely in the months following the violence.

The second major decision point followed the period of suspension. As a result of the violence, the contracting process for the flexible funding mechanism projects had been put on hold. In October 2016, several months after the violence, discussions resumed among consortium partners to discuss the future of the CwC project, possible re-entry, and contracting of the flexible funding mechanism projects. After conducting a risk assessment, the in country host determined that three of the five previously identified sub-projects could proceed as planned. As plans were outlined to implement those projects, differing opinions emerged among the consortium partners about the planned approach. At that time, given travel restrictions, the international staff members for the in country organisation were still based outside of South Sudan. World Vision advocated for an office with permanent office staff to allow for direct supervision. The in country host organisation noted that it had strong local teams on the ground.

It was here in the decision-making process that important questions emerged, exposing a lack of clarity and uncertainty about the roles of each consortium partner. *Who makes the decisions? Is it the in country host organisation or the organisation managing the grant, or is it the donor? Where does duty of care fall?*

One of the interviewees described the complexities of bringing numerous organisations, each with their own individual mandates and organisational procedures, to reach a decision. Despite attempts to outline organisational decision-making matrices even before the violence, there was still a lack of clarity about the roles of the donor, project manager or global grant holder, and the host agency, which also acted as a donor for its local partners. This was further complicated by the fact that the one branch of the host agency also hosted the CDAC Network.

One interviewee summarised the decision options at that point in the negotiations as to resume project activities as planned, resume activities but with reduced scale and scope, or take the funding out of South Sudan and move it to another country. It was noted that the dialogue around the decision options was particularly challenging due to the layers of people involved, that even minor decisions became overly complicated. Eventually, a decision was made through consensus between the global grant holder and the in country host organisation. A management advisory group at World Vision provided further support during the negotiations. The in country host organisation noted strong working relationships with its local partners and staff, but it was not clear what level of engagement national organisations had in the negotiations around re-entry.

It was ultimately decided to implement the three projects but at a reduced scale and scope with approximately one third of the budget to be reallocated to a CwC working group project in the Philippines. In South Sudan, the contracting process for the three projects was started in November 2016, was completed in December 2016 and the projects began implementation in January 2017. A national staff project manager was hired. In February 2017, budget revisions and reductions were finalised.

**2. Impact of violence on project implementation**

Beyond the obvious impact on project staff, both interviewees expressed that the violence directly impacted project activities, the project management structure, and project budget. Two periods of delay were identified that affected project implementation and timeline: 1) the delay between evacuation of staff from the in country host organisation and re-entry of staff and 2) the delay during the negotiations among the consortium partners about re-entry. These periods of delay were each two-three months in length, which as one interviewee pointed out, could arise in any project operating in a challenging context.

Following the violence, the contracting process for the flexible funding mechanism projects was put on hold. As part of the re-entry negotiations, it was determined to proceed with the three sub-projects, but given the CwC project end date of September 2017, project activities and the overall budget needed to be realigned. While the consortium partners considered applying for a no cost extension, it was determined that this would not be sufficient to cover the costs of salary support for project management that would be needed if the extension was granted. Therefore, the overall budget was reduced and funds were reallocated. The remaining funds were allocated to a CwC working group in the Philippines, another DEPP targeted country.

The planned management of the CwC project also changed as a result of travel restrictions. The project manager position, previously an international staff position, ultimately shifted to a national staff position and there were concerns expressed by one interviewee about how this decision may impact the project.

In addition to delays in project activities, the activity mix was adjusted. Activities that were previously stand-alone activities, such as a message library and media landscape, were merged into the three selected projects. Additionally, there was supposed to be a second round of flexible funding to support the growth of those pilot projects that were successful. Due to the delays and the window within which to apply for project funding, a second round of flexible funding would not be possible.

**3. Impact of the violence on the multi-stakeholder platform**

When asked about the impact of the violence in July 2016 on the multi-stakeholder platform, both interviewees mentioned ways in which the CwC working group was affected. Both positively noted

that the CwC working group did meet during the period of project suspension, but expressed concern about the effectiveness of those meetings.

One interviewee expressed concerns that within the context of violence and with the resulting famine and humanitarian crisis, the CwC working group may not have been prioritised given the competing priorities for OCHA, the working group co-chair. The other interviewee noted that the group was at a nascent stage when the violence occurred, so there is now a need to reinvigorate the working group.

**4. Influences on decision-making**

Both interviewees described the complexities of the decision-making processes in the months following the violence. While the immediate consideration was toward staff safety and security, several other key factors emerged during the interviews including competing priorities and considerations of the project mandate, and the impact of trauma on decision-making processes.

***4.1. Project mandate in a crisis state***

Both interviewees expressed how the CwC project mandate played an important role in the decision-making processes. The CwC project was positioned in South Sudan as an emergency preparedness project and not an emergency response project. Meanwhile, the in-country host organisation's broader portfolio, beyond the CwC project, was partially focused on emergency response activities. One interviewee posed the question about whether it is appropriate to try to focus on preparedness in such a context where there is ongoing insecurity, how to most effectively consider emergency preparedness in the context of ongoing insecurity.

Beyond the CwC project, there were broader reflections about focusing on preparedness in the midst of an active conflict. One interviewee reflected on how the host agency operates as both a development project and a humanitarian project. Because of internal flexibility, the organisation is able to pivot activities and funding in response to violence. But because of the mandate of the DEPP on preparedness, this kind of pivoting was not possible. The mandate of emergency preparedness applies to the entire consortium and maintaining the attention on preparedness among consortium partners, some of whom also have response activities, was noted to be particularly challenging in the midst of an active conflict and famine.

***4.2. Trauma and support during decision-making***

In order to acknowledge the sensitivity of the violence and to protect the privacy of affected staff, the interview did not ask targeted questions about the events in July 2016. Both interviewees emphasised the great care and attention that was involved in protecting the safety of staff and also in engaging in dialogue about the events. Even without direct questions about the events, it was evident in the interviews that the experience had a lasting personal impact on the interviewees and their colleagues. One interviewee commented on the impact of the trauma on decision-making related to the project.

**5. Lessons learned**

Interviewees were asked to reflect on lessons learned as part of project management in the context of violence and prominent points were raised related to duty of care and to the management arrangements that were in place.

**5.1 Protocols, duty of care and operating in a conflict setting**

Interviewees were asked about project planning and implementation in South Sudan and what learning could be applied to other DEPP projects operating in settings at risk of violence and insecurity.

In regard to security protocols, one interviewee noted that the violence in Juba was unexpected and that the security planning had prioritised other areas in South Sudan that were thought to be higher risk. One interviewee noted that whether or not a project is operating in a context of violence, it is important to have clear agreements about duty of care when creating multi-lateral agreements among multiple institutions in a consortium and the responsibilities of care for the host agency in relation to consortium partners.

**5.2 Clarifying consortium agreements and streamlining contractual arrangements**

In addition to having clear agreements of duty of care, interviewees described the importance of streamlining the contractual arrangements among organisations.

Both interviewees independently and spontaneously suggested that future projects ensure that the global grant holding organisation and the in-country organisation are the same when possible, such that if World Vision UK is the global grant holder that the in-country organisation would be World Vision in South Sudan, as an example. This was suggested to streamline administrative procedures, flow of funds, and duty of care.

**Key recommendations**

Based on the interviews and subsequent analysis of the transcripts, several key recommendations emerged that could be applied to current DEPP projects or future projects operating in a crisis-affected setting.

- [To the DEPP Board] Given DEPP's focus on disaster preparedness, all selected countries have a high risk of a pending disaster, whether natural or manmade. Given this default vulnerability, all DEPP projects should have a contingency plan in place in case of disruption to the program. For example, the Programme Criteria could specify that contingency planning must be an element of the Governance criteria "Analysis of risk and risk management".
- [To DEPP Projects] Ensure that all risk assessments and risk management plans specifically address the possibility of an outbreak of violence and of a sudden-onset natural disaster, and include contingency plans for such events. This should include budget contingencies – where and to whom resources would be allocated.
- [To DEPP Projects] Establish clear roles among consortium partners, including outlining which partners hold the duty of care for specific project staff members, among other responsibilities. This should include a set of agreed guidelines for how management decisions will be undertaken, including in crisis settings. Issues to address include whether decisions should be by consensus among all consortium partners, whether the global grant holder and/or donor have specific roles to play, how to incorporate national and local partners in to the decision-making processes, who makes decisions on re-allocation of resources, and a mechanism for who can arbitrate when needed to advance difficult decisions.
- [To the DEPP Board] Consider streamlining management decisions and flow of funds so that the global grant holder and the in country host are the same organisation when possible. Along these lines, ensure that the skill sets of organisations involved in the consortium are aligned with the primary aims of the project.
- [To DEPP Projects] Within multi-stakeholder platforms, implement a mechanism for regular feedback on risks to the project and personnel, and risk mitigation strategies, among

consortium members (for example, as a standing agenda item at consortium meetings). This could allow for proactively heading-off difficult decisions.

- [For all DEPP actors] Consider the role of preparedness projects in settings with ongoing humanitarian crises. Many DEPP focus countries have a mix of natural and manmade, and complex and acute crises. All projects therefore grapple with how to best position themselves within the context of competing priorities. Future DEPP programming could benefit from more structured analysis of how disaster preparedness is prioritised in different contexts.

**Limitations**

The findings are limited by the small sample size and subject to bias. While there was scope to conduct further interviews, the primary consideration regarding sample size was related to protecting the security of project staff; therefore, these findings may not represent the views of other CwC project staff. Furthermore, this case study only includes perspectives related to one of two DEPP projects operating in South Sudan and it is possible that interviews conducted with the other project would have yielded different findings.

**Acknowledgments**

The external evaluation team would like to thank the interviewees for their time and participation in the in-depth case study.

References

1. Daniel Maxwell, Phoebe Donnelly. The Violence in South Sudan, December 2013 to Present. Kings College London, Feinstein International Center, Overseas Development Institute, 2015.
2. Guardian T. Attack on aid workers in South Sudan: 'There was incredible naivety' 2016 [cited 2017 14 April]. Available from: https://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2016/oct/17/attack-on-aid-workers-in-south-sudan-there-was-incredible-naivety.
3. Center for Civilians in Conflict. Under Fire: The July 2016 Violence in Juba and UN Response. United States: Center for Civilians in Conflict, 2016.
4. Guardian T. 'Untold devastation' in South Sudan triggers grave humanitarian crisis: The Guardian; 2016 [cited 2017 14 April]. Available from: https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2016/aug/09/untold-devastation-in-south-sudan-triggers-grave-humanitarian-crisis-un.
5. UN News Centre. After attacks, UN senior official in South Sudan urges protection of aid workers and civilians 2016 [updated 8 April 2017; cited 2017 15 April]. Available from: http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=56528#.WPIcD7uGPfY.
6. CDAC Network. Communicating with Communities in South Sudan 2016 [updated 11 March 2016; cited 2017 14 April]. Available from: http://www.cdacnetwork.org/i/20160311131929-0c4ru.
7. START Network. Protection in Practice [cited 2017 14 April 2017]. Available from: https://startnetwork.org/start-engage/protection-in-practice.
8. Rogue Amoeba. Piezo. 2016.

## CONCLUSIONS:

This report has sought to present initial findings from the formative phase of the 3-year external evaluation of the DFID funded Disasters and Emergencies Preparedness Programme being implemented in 10 countries considered at high risk for disasters and emergencies. The primary objectives of this report are to assess:

1. **The relevance of programme outputs**

2. **The efficiency and effectiveness of programme delivery thus far**

From the mixed methods research conducted in this phase of the evaluation, several overarching findings have been identified and explored in depth in this report. The key findings include the following five conclusions:

1. The targets of the DEPP are appropriate, and the right people in the right places are being targeted. The focus on building national capacity, improving preparedness and targeting prioritised groups to ensure their inclusion during humanitarian response activities is consistent with needs identified during literature and evidence reviews. At a high level, the programme's objectives are clear, relevant, aligned with DFID's humanitarian priorities and aim to fill a clear gap in humanitarian capacity. However, the programme's 3-year time frame is unrealistic.

   There were flaws in the design process, including sub-optimal country selection processes, lack of strategic direction and systems at the portfolio level, limited involvement of beneficiaries, inadequate time for collaboration.

2. Implementation start up was slow but is expected to accelerate in the coming months. Key project activities are being implemented and there is evidence that quality of interventions is high. There may be a need for extension of project timelines.

3. There is preliminary evidence of increased collaboration and increased staff capacity to prepare and respond to disasters, improved organisational capacity to plan for disasters and increased opportunities for local organisations to network and collaborate.

4. Early VFM findings show good indicators of cost economy, though some budgets have been lean, with insufficient resources for portfolio management and collaboration activities. There are positive findings related to VFM reporting, adaptive management and collaborative ways of working, but gaps in efficiency of systems and resources for governance and strategy, consortium arrangements and portfolio management.

## RECOMMENDATIONS:

Based on the key findings of the evaluation team, a number of targeted recommendations have been developed with the specific aim to improve programme effectiveness and enhance learning, and to inform future similar programmes. The key recommendations have been grouped according to the specific DEPP stakeholders they target and are presented below.

***For all DEPP actors***

1. There is preliminary evidence that collaboration is contributing to learning, innovation, and creativity among DEPP organisations. To maximize this effect, the programme should focus on building both bonding and bridging social capital. This means finding a balance between developing deeper bonds of trust with a set of peer organisations who are coordinating programmatically (bonding), while also looking outward and seeking out new ideas, relationships, and information from a diverse set of actors (bridging – would include national and international, DEPP and non-DEPP). The latter is usually harder to do, but is critical to innovation and to problem solving. Concretely, all actors involved in DEPP should encourage organisations to seek out and participate in relevant, novel conversations wherever they are happening (both inside and outside their sector). DEPP organisations can then bring back new ideas, case studies, and approaches to their core partners and adapt them to communities and context. This again returns to bonding capital.

2. Give further consideration to the role of preparedness projects in settings with ongoing humanitarian crises. Many DEPP focus countries have a mix of natural and manmade, and complex and acute crises. All projects therefore grapple with how to best position themselves within the context of competing priorities. Future DEPP programming could benefit from more structured analysis of how disaster preparedness is prioritised in different contexts.

***For the Department for International Development (DFID)***

3. For any future programme on the scale of DEPP (including any further phases of DEPP), the business case should be finalised and published at the earliest opportunity. To facilitate project design, the business case should include the focus countries, the criteria for country selection, a set of definitions of key concepts (such as collaboration, institutional arrangements, and preparedness systems), and a concise summary of DFID policy on inclusion of prioritised target groups in programme and project design.

4. A reasonable programme design period should be allowed between publication of the business case and the issuance of a call for proposals for individual projects, to allow the Programme Board to refine the portfolio-level strategy before requesting project proposals.

5. During the programme design period, DFID should work with others on the Programme Board to develop a programme-level log frame to be in place before projects are awarded. Alternatively, the log frame could be developed in collaboration with the projects during the project-level inception phase. This would ensure buy-in from projects and benefit from their perspective on measurable outcome and impact indicators. A third option could be an iterative process, with a log frame drafted during the programme design and refined once projects are awarded.

6. Consider creating programmes with a commitment to at least a 5-6 year timeline, since building systems and capacity takes time. Two stages of funding may still be beneficial to allow for gathering evidence of programme effectiveness and programme adaptation at the mid-point. But an assurance of longer-term funding would help programme and project staff

to plan activities aimed at longer-term impact in improving humanitarian preparedness and response.

***For the DEPP Programme Board***

7. If networks are pre-selected to deliver an intervention, the onus then falls on the network to manage the project-development process. The process should be undertaken through an open call for proposals, but guided by a set of Board-approved criteria – such as the "Programme Criteria for the designed programme element" in the case of DEPP – that are designed to ensure that projects are put forward which advance the overall programmatic goals. The criteria should be transparent, for example, they should be published as part of any call for proposals under the programme.

8. The Board should allow sufficient time after issuing the call for proposals for network members to develop proposals that meet the "Governance Criteria", and to build a consortium around a project. The Board should consider adding an in-country needs assessment (consultation with in-country staff and potential consortium members) as one of the Governance Criteria. Consultation with beneficiaries - to assess needs – should be strongly encouraged where possible when specific projects are being designed by consortia.

9. The Board should take steps to operationalize the learning from the first START Network design phases to the second wave of proposal development: encouraging national project staff to take the lead, involving local stakeholders, focusing on the overall goals of the DEPP portfolio, and allowing consortia to develop naturally around shared interests. These points should be spelled out in the call for proposals. In order to encourage locally-led proposals, the Board and/or programme management might need to provide support to local organisations so that they can meet the governance and selection criteria.

10. The Board should recognize that projects need to plan and budget for the time needed to set up and manage collaborations. This would include a reasonable duration for an inception phase and approving higher non-project attributable cost levels (project management costs) to account for ongoing staff time spent managing collaborations, participating in network activities, and managing relationships and decision-making within consortia.

11. Given DEPP's focus on disaster preparedness, all selected countries have a high risk of a pending disaster, whether natural or manmade. Given this default vulnerability, all DEPP projects should have a contingency plan in place in case of disruption to the program. For example, the Programme Criteria could specify that contingency planning must be an element of the Governance criteria "Analysis of risk and risk management".

12. Consider streamlining management decisions and flow of funds so that the global grant holder and the in country host are the same organisation when possible.

13. While recognizing the importance of subcontracting processes and organisations' internal procedures, the Board could take steps to minimize and streamline contractual processes in future phases of the DEPP or similar programmes. For example, pre-agreement letters of commitment could help clarify some contractual issues prior to projects kicking off. The Board or programme management could also provide a template for sub-contracts and consider setting a standard timeline for contract turnaround.

14. In the governance criteria, consider broadening the gender statement to a statement on inclusion of prioritised target groups. Develop guidelines for DEPP projects on requirements for this statement. This could include links to key documents on best practices and the law and policies governing inclusion of prioritised target groups in development programming and project design.

15. There is evidence that the Learning Project is worthwhile in stimulating both collaboration and learning. For any future DEPP phase or similar programme with a Learning Project, launching the Learning Project before other projects would help to streamline M&E processes throughout projects.

***For DEPP Projects***

16. Reflecting the recommendations for the DEPP Board, those designing projects for any future phase of DEPP should take steps to ensure relevance of design: an in-country needs assessment that includes consultation with beneficiaries at the inception phase if not before, proactively establishing consortia around shared interests and complementary areas of competency, and planning and budgeting for the time needed to set up and manage collaborations. International NGOs should encourage national project staff and organisations to take the lead and support them in doing so.

17. Develop a detailed gender statement (or statement on inclusion of prioritised target groups) for all new projects, adhering to best practices and the law and policies governing inclusion of prioritised target groups in development programming.

18. Ensure that all risk assessments and risk management plans specifically address the possibility of an outbreak of violence and of a sudden-onset natural disaster, and include contingency plans for such events. This should include budget contingency planning on where resources would be re-allocated.

19. Establish clear roles among consortium partners, including outlining which partners hold the duty of care for specific project staff members, among other responsibilities. This should include a set of agreed guidelines for how management decisions will be undertaken, in crisis settings. Issues to address include whether decisions should be by consensus among all consortium partners, whether the global grant holder and/or donor have specific roles, how to incorporate national and local partners in to the decision-making processes, who makes decisions on re-allocation of resources, and a mechanism for who can arbitrate when needed to advance difficult decisions.

20. Within multi-stakeholder platforms, implement a mechanism for regular feedback on risks to the project and personnel, and risk mitigation strategies, among consortium members (for example, as a standing agenda item at consortium meetings). This could allow for proactively heading-off difficult decisions.

21. For international DEPP actors, continue the trend toward fostering collaboration at the national and local levels as much as in the UK. Adopt a brokering mindset focused on how to facilitate and weave connections for national organisations and emerging leaders in the system at the national level. There is evidence of a risk (more so in Kenya and Myanmar) of preferential attachment towards international actors. One way this can be combated is for

international actors to primarily aim to bridge new relationships for national organisations. This helps to increase their reputation and social capital as vital local resource hubs. A more nuanced strategy would take into account the country level networks in specific contexts. For example, an approach aimed at involving more national NGOs is not appropriate for the Philippines where the national NGOs are already very strongly involved. These recommendations on strengthening networks are applicable to the implementation of the current DEPP and future programming.

22. The demographics of evaluation respondents indicate that over 90% of respondents at the organisational leadership and staff levels had been at their organisation 5-10 years. Yet staff turnover was frequently mentioned as hindering capacity development. Even in small numbers, key staff members departing frequently may be problematic. Projects should take steps to understand the drivers of staff turnover, for example, whether certain positions are turning over more frequently than others.

***For the Learning Project***

23. The Learning Project is mostly considered a useful element of DEPP. However, it could work more closely with DEPP project staff to strengthen their M&E systems, ensure consistent approaches across projects, and thereby expand learning. Project staff expressed to the evaluation that they lack the capacity to design and implement M&E systems. While it is likely too late to set up such systems for the current DEPP, incremental improvements may be possible and it is strongly recommended for any future phase of DEPP. A unified approach should include a core set of output and outcome indicators across projects (including value for money), derived from the overall theory of change, but also allow projects to add additional indicators as relevant for their projects. The Learning Project should consider adopting an online platform where indicator data can be captured and quarterly reporting analysed and easily visualized.

24. The Learning Project has made progress in articulating its strategy and activities to DEPP projects since its early days, but could take further steps to communicate its role to DEPP projects. For example, it could develop concise introductory materials for new DEPP project staff and/or disseminate an annual or bi-annual strategic plan or activity summaries, centralising information about capacity building and training events.

25. The RLA's have been very well-received by DEPP projects. Their role could be improved by communicating their mandate more clearly to projects, and the Learning Project should explore ways to alleviate the challenges faced by the RLAs in promoting collaboration particularly in Kenya. Learning Events would benefit from going beyond showcasing by specific projects, and provide more time and space for active collaboration and strategic thinking.

26. The Learning Project should think creatively about new ways to improve evidence-sharing across DEPP projects, across different DEPP countries, and with stakeholders outside DEPP. Documenting lessons-learned on contextual factors, including strategies that mitigate negative factors, would also be helpful for future programme design.

27. The Learning Project should undertake further analysis to understand the constraints behind why, in some of the major collaboration areas like early warning systems, WaSH, livelihoods

and emergency response – the emerging networks are isolated rather than connected. In Myanmar, all networks around all collaboration types are isolated.

***For further research, using existing data collected***

28. Data collected as part of the network analysis are extremely rich and can provide additional unique insights and learning beyond what was originally planed. First, deeper exploration of the level of influence, and role of DEPP organizations (i.e. as resource hubs, knowledge brokers etc.) within the network in each intensive set country would be extremely valuable to understand whether the right organisations have been engaged in the DEPP. Further to this, linking this data with individual and organisational capacity as well as preparedness levels and other programmatic measures could help test the hypothesis that networking leads to greater impact.

29. Data collected at the organisational level could be further explored to assess the delivery of early warning system development at different levels and compare implementation in urban vs. rural settings. Further analysis could help shed light on the effectiveness of different policy arrangements and institutional environments that facilitate or impede early warning system development.

30. Organisational, community and household level data could also be further examined to compare perceived effectiveness of collaboration and consortia among projects that used participatory processes or involved local organisations in the design with projects that did not use these methods. Through isolating these stakeholders, differences relating to collaboration and capacity building could be measured. Furthermore, looking deeper at these differences could lead to a better understanding of how the design impacts delivery and retain lessons learned on effective institutional arrangements.

***For further research, but requiring new data collection***

31. Building on the framework and tools developed for the network data collection, there could be scope to expand this to include additional data collection at second and third degree organisations to assess their capacity and preparedness levels. This would help answer questions related to how organisations that are positioned several degrees away from the DEPP organisations are affected by the intervention, and thus to assess how intervention effects have diffused through the network.

32. In addition to further network data collection, organisational level data collection could be extended to include a larger sample of government and UN agencies. The formative phase data collection included a sample of government and UN officials for in-depth interviews, however collecting quantitative data among a larger sample would allow sub-group analyses and triangulation of findings relating to humanitarian capacity. Furthermore, additional data collection among this sample would provide more insight to the institutional and policy environments in each intensive set country and would facilitate network data collection, as the network surveys are embedded within the organisational and KAP surveys administered at the organisational level.

33. Further sub-group analyses could also be done through additional focus group discussions. These discussions could be held with 1) consortium members to better understand the

advantages, disadvantages and perceived effectiveness of working in consortia; 2) individual staff receiving training from DEPP projects to explore the longer-term implications of staff vs. organisational level capacity building activities and 3) prioritised groups involved in DEPP activities to assess levels of accessibility and inclusion and understand barriers to participation. These focus group discussions help understand the "why" behind the quantitative data and could elicit immediate changes in project activities within the timeline of the DEPP to better fit the needs of beneficiaries and improve the design of future programmes.