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by Prof. Dr. M.F. HARAKE
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Project Management for INGOs working with Local Partners: The Role of Partnerships in Post-Conflict Countries[1]

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to present a general outline of INGOs project management who work with local partners to implement community programs and humanitarian activities. The idea is to review how a well-structured project plan can improve the implementation of both programs and activities while developing sustainable partnerships between different stakeholders to ensure targeted results and improved livelihoods. By checking the structure, process, and dynamic of the project – programs delivery and sustainable services provision can be checked. When it comes to partners, INGOs are working with various local partners ranging from government ministries, departments, local public administrations, non-governmental organizations, cooperatives private sector, etc. Hence, the value of the paper – when it comes to developing a clear project management process that helps strengthening the projects.

Key Words: INGOs; Partnership; Third Sector; International Collaboration; Project Management

1. Introduction

The existing and accepted literature developed by both academics and practitioners found that there is a significant gap when it comes to INGOs wanting to foster sustainable local development and their actual capacity for doing so. On another note, some studies have highlighted that INGOs can fall victims to wrong partnerships by collaborating with the wrong entity. Also, many experiences have proven that INGOs need proper project management guidance on how to plan for, implement, and learn from international activities and programs that are piloted in collaboration with local partners (CSIS & AUSA, 2002; Bender, 2011; Brown, 2018).

The aim of this paper is to present an outline of INGOs project cycle and processes when collaborating with local partners while providing further insight about adaptations in diverse contexts and partnerships.

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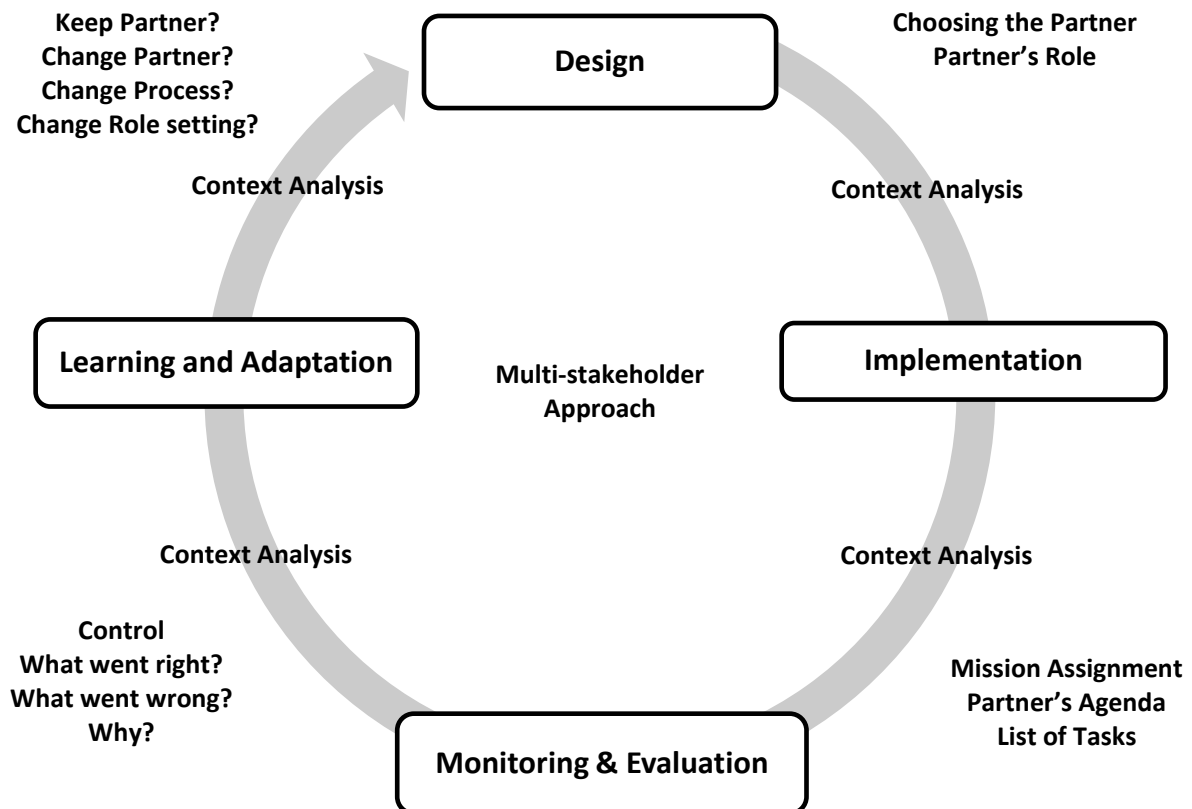
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Figure 01. INGO Project Management Cycle's Multi-Stakeholder Approach

2. The Collaborative Dynamic of INGOs and Local Partners

2.1. Context

From an international cooperative perspective based on humanitarian assistance and / or sustainable international development in demised communities and in most cases unstable environments (conflict and natural disasters), international project coordination seeks to improve the effectiveness of humanitarian response by ensuring better predictability, more secured accountability, and better partnership (Hamieh & Mac Ginty, 2010; Brown, 2018).

However, with crises becoming much complex over time – due to the changing nature of how they occur, their build-up, their amplitude as well as their lasting impact – hence, project response coordination becomes in turn much more difficult, and communication among all

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implicated actors more challenging, and resources more limited (CSIS & AUSA, 2002; Bender, 2011).

To overcome this challenge, both practitioners and academics have seen that a key method would be to focus on partnerships between international and local partners. Emphasis on such partnerships can create new opportunities to combine skills, expertise, as well as other much needed resources that more effectively deliver aid and strengthen local organization's leadership while accessing the targeted communities. In other words, collective international-local efforts are the best means to achieve results (Brown, 2018).

It should be noted that past experiences have shown how shown that in many cases collective and accumulative efforts by local communities and foreign entities have been instrumental in (CSIS & AUSA, 2002; Brown, 2018):
- Helping international entities gain access to the target (e.g. the French resistance and the allies during WWII; IRCRC staff; Maltesers international; Oxfam; Interpol; etc.).
- Developing and sustaining project delivery and livelihoods (e.g. Marshal Plan in post-WWII; Norwegian refugee council; UNHCR; etc.).

The process of local community participation is necessary to achieve the goal of social change. Hence, communal development and social activities should not be undertaken by one single party, but rather it should involve a range of entities (Bender, 2011; Brown, 2018):
- That are affected by the proposed change.
- Who are collaborating and coordinating between them towards the achievement of specific loral and material goals.

It should be noted that within the context of project management – the partnership dynamic is based on the relationship between International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) and mostly Local Non-Governmental Organizations (LNGOs) also referred to as Implementing Partners (IPs) (even though this can include other forms of local partners) (CSIS & AUSA, 2002). On another note, ''partnership'' has become a common term when it comes to describing the work dynamic and project cycle process in the literature of INGOs as well as in the publications of the United Nations (Bender, 2011). Also, INGOs have been working on involving LNGOs in most steps of the project cycle which include its design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. In short, local partners have become an integral part of the management cycle of development projects initiated and piloted by international entities (Brown, 2018).

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2.2. International Humanitarian Assistance Partnership

Even though there are many definitions and interpretations regarding the definition of international assistance partnership – what interests us the most is the one related to humanitarian assistance (CSIS & AUSA, 2002). In this regard, most experts have agreed that international humanitarian assistance partnership can be defined as a relationship of mutual interest between (semi)autonomous organizations based on the attainment of a common purpose with clearly defined expectations, responsibilities, and roles. That said, both parties can be either small or large entities in the form of INGOs and / or transnational and / or trans-governmental entities, community-based organizations or public administrations (Bender, 2011). The idea of a humanitarian partnership is built on the existence two bodies (not present on the same international territory) who agree to combine their resources to provide the needed goods, services, and expertise to act in response to an undesired situation (e.g. war, natural disaster, etc.) as a mean to elevate the conditions of the demised community (Brown, 2018).

It should be noted that within the dynamic of the cited partnership (CSIS & AUSA, 2002):
- There are various forms and types of humanitarian assistance.
- The service providers and used strategy will depend on their capacities, the situation's priorities and the existence or not of funding.
- The receptiveness of beneficiaries to such changes as well as to organizations will also evolve over time.

Hence, the critical role that the relationship between both INGOs and local organization play when it comes to managing project with the aim of providing aids for beneficiaries. On another note, given the severity as well as the complexity of such unwanted situations (e.g. wars, natural disasters, etc.), INGOs will need to react both quickly and efficiently – which in most cases deprives them of properly understanding the complexity as well as the general composition of the affected population (Bender, 2011). Hence, developing and strengthening relationships with local partners will lead to opportunities when it comes to understanding the affected population as well as to provide quality assistance (Brown, 2018).

On another note, international humanitarian development must be perceived and studied (Bender, 2011; Brown, 2018):

- ***From a normative perspective***: local people and their representative entities have the right to participate in the development process of their communities. This right is guaranteed and protected by provisions made by the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Also, official step that formalized such a development were adopted by

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the UN General Assembly resolution 41/128 in 1986. Hence, it is the right of local people to be the true catalyst of change in their respective communities. In this context, development INGOs and other international agencies must provide the impacted communities with the full opportunity to be part of the process of developing and managing their development and livelihoods.

- *From a strategic perspective*: International humanitarian development mission helps to achieve a common belief, target, mission, etc. This can include health aids, education-related services, poverty response, etc.

- *From a practical perspective*: International partnerships can be perceived as a useful tool to expand the coverage of development-intervention activities, increase the impact of humanitarian projects, and foster sustainability when it comes to INGOs provided services. Indeed, within the context of sustainability, international partnerships can be a mean of handing over the management and oversight of the implemented project to the local community – to ensure continuous deliverables and service provision.

Since impactful change initiatives are very much complex and multilayered – INGOs will need institutional, long-term local support as well as short-term contributions to meet their project requirements (Bender, 2011). International partnerships must maximize the sustainable inputs of local entities (given their mastering of the culture, freedom of movement, etc.) – which will expand the impact of development projects and help avoid future gridlocks and duplications, red tape, etc. (Brown, 2018).
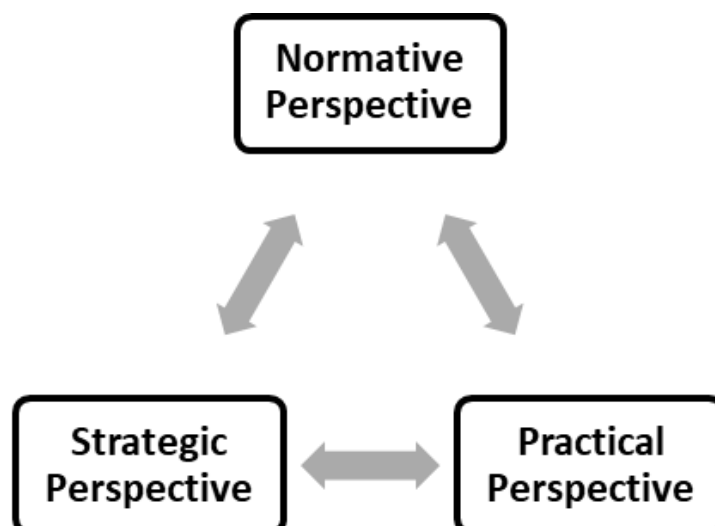
Figure 02. How to Study International Humanitarian Development

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2.3. The Foundations of International Humanitarian Assistance Partnership

Field experts have defined some main principles that set the foundation if international humanitarian assistance partnership. Such a foundation aims to facilitate positive results for INGOs and international entities partnering with LNGOs to benefit the targeted community (Bender, 2011). Some of the principles international humanitarian assistance partnership include (CSIS & AUSA, 2002; Caplan, 2005; Ernstorfer et *al*., 2007; Hamieh & Mac Ginty, 2010; Brown, 2018):

- *Humanity*: It must be at the heart of a humanitarian project – where different parties that are not necessarily located on the same geographical spectrum collaborate. The idea is to bring assistance without any discrimination to prevent and alleviate suffering in all pf its forms and wherever it may be.
- *Relevance*: This requires that the project be of importance and responds to an actual need. On another note, it must be sustainable.
- *Equality and Egalitarianism*: This requires a mutual understanding and acceptance between both partnered parties regarding their mandates, project obligations and independence as well as recognizing each other's constraints and commitments.
- *Transparency, Accountability and Governance*: This is achieved through the establishment of data flow, information sharing, as well as through dialogue.
- *Result-Oriented Approach*: This is achieved through a thorough coordination of activities based on pre-established objectives, proper capitalization on existing resources, and a correct role distribution and task allocation based on capacities.
- *Responsibility and Engagement*: INGOs and LNGOs working on humanitarian projects have an ethical obligation and responsibility to work with integrity, honesty, and appropriately towards the project in general and its beneficiaries.
- *Complementarity and Cooperation*: This necessitates valuing the humanitarian community in all its representations and striving to work with local capacity and resources to enhance and complement contributions from partnering organizations.
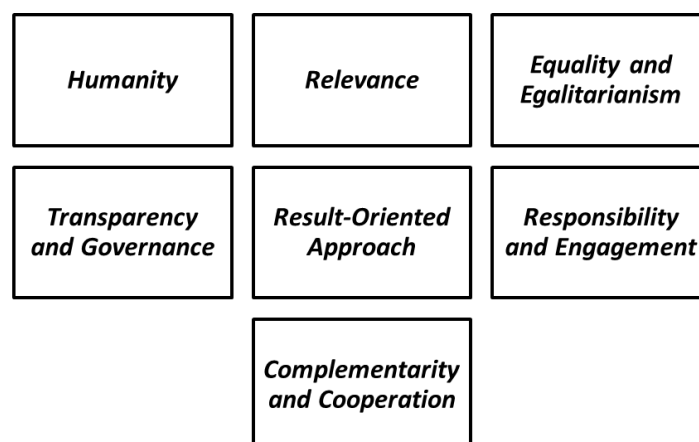

Figure 03. The Main Principles of International Humanitarian Assistance Partnership

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2.4.   INGO / LNGO Partnership: Long-term VS. Short-term

When it comes to establishing an INGO / LNGO partnership – two forms emerge the short-term partnership and the long-term one. The choice of the form is dependent on the circumstances (CSIS & AUSA, 2002):

- *Short-term*: For INGOs, a short-term partnership is considered a proper and useful mean for delivering quick results for one-off projects (e.g. food distribution, school construction, etc.). Furthermore, short-term partnerships might be more useful during the onset of an acute emergency when the nature of the situation requires quick impact solutions (Bender, 2011). Also, short-term projects may also be less costly as it does not require meticulous capacity-building programs led by INGOs for the local partners. However, short-term programs do not necessarily contribute to strengthening local institutions as local partners are dealt with as implementers in most cases (Brown, 2018).

- *Long-term*: INGOs and local partners will work together to build a lasting relationship through long-term projects. The idea is to build strong local development agents with higher capacities to lead and take over their communities' development processes after INGOs role is out – within the context of sustainability (Bender, 2011). In this context, the relationship between local partners and INGOs is usually established based on the strategic vision, mission, interests and agenda of both sides of the relationship – with sufficient and detailed capacity-building programs to bridge the gaps between both parties. The idea is to create an appropriation actor where local partners and impacted communities can be owner of the development projects, which in turn helps to facilitate sustainability of projects and development interventions (Brown, 2018). However, there is always the risk that when it comes to long-term relationships – dependency upon the international community might result instead of a partnership.

Short-Term	Long-Term
• Proper and useful means for delivering quick results for one-off projects. • More useful during the onset of an acute emergency. • Less costly • Does not require capacity-building programs. • Do not necessarily contribute to strengthening local institutions.	• The relationship between LNGOs and INGOs is usually established based on a common strategic vision, mission, and agenda. • The idea is to create an appropriation actor where local partners and impacted communities can be owner of the development projects. • Risk of dependency upon the international community.

Table 01. Short-term VS. Long-term Partnership

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2.5. Partnership Framework and its Forms

The partnership framework can be thought of as a roadmap that establishes the dynamic of the connection between the parties (INGOs and LNGOs). This framework can take various forms, including a contract, technical agreement, memorandum of understanding, or letter of agreement. Regardless of the form, the partnership framework clearly defines each party's roles and responsibilities, as well as the time range for formal cooperation (Bender, 2011). The framework also emphasizes the appropriate procedures for monitoring activities and measuring outcomes (Brown, 2018).

Such a framework can be created at the sub-office or headquarters level of INGOs. However, in both circumstances, the framework should reflect the partners' common vision and objective. The document must comply with local legislation, thus a government official or an officer from a specific ministry should witness the signing of the agreement. In some circumstances, the government official should also sign (CSIS & AUSA, 2002; Bender, 2011).

Long-term partnership frameworks typically include sections on LNGOs' capacity building and clarify both INGOs' and LNGOs' duties, including the project's sustainability and its relationship to issues such as the environment, gender, and good governance (Caplan, 2005; Ernstorfer et *al*., 2007; Hamieh & Mac Ginty, 2010). Short-term frameworks are more explicit because they address specific activities and responsibilities that LNGOs must carry out. Short-term collaborations rarely consider the development of local partners (Bender, 2011). However, INGOs, through short-term partnership agreements, require local partners to be very specific about monitoring and reporting, as well as financial systems to be used for results assessment; in this context, INGOs do not guarantee that they will make efforts to improve these systems if they are inadequate (Brown, 2018).

3. Project Partnerships in Post-Conflict Reconstruction

3.1. Context

When it comes to post-conflict reconstruction activities – one of the essential pillars of a successful project will be the establishment of sustainable partnerships between INGOs and local partners with a preference for LNGOs. Based on what was previously explained, it is of crucial importance to emphasis on the planning, coordination, and implementation dynamics of project management while considering the local specifics (Brown, 2018). INGOs or donors should be well prepared to provide sufficient funding to meet the needs of the targeted society as well as to over proper support whether it is on the long-term or the short-term (Bender, 2011). That said, it is important that the local partners – mainly LNGOs plays a crucial role in the planning, implementation and evaluation parts of the process, and that both the government and population support the process (CSIS & AUSA, 2002; Hamieh & Mac Ginty, 2010).

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In this regard, several elements are to be considered (CSIS & AUSA, 2002; Caplan, 2005; Ernstorfer et *al*., 2007; Hamieh & Mac Ginty, 2010; Brown, 2018):

- An open and easy flow of information exchange must be present among the implicated stakeholders to understand what are the essential components that are needed for the project to achieve positive socio-economic change and sustainable results.

- Both the beneficiaries and the civil society (LNGOs) should be included in any decision-making process as well as on all the other stages of the project to ensure creating and managing effective post-conflict reconstruction initiatives.

- INGOs should remain flexible to the changing post-conflict dynamics and should not bring preconceived ideas of the reconstruction process – given the unstable and uncertain nature of the environment.

- Given that post-conflict reconstruction projects must be designed based on local conditions by considering the particularities of each situation and environment – hence, LNGOs participation is of critical importance, specially during the planning and design phases of the project management process.

- Post-conflict reconstruction is a lengthy and complex process, and INGOs must be willing to get implicated and support the full project management cycle or true progress will not necessarily be possible.

- Project budget and investment should match the needs of the population rather than the agenda of the INGO.

- A secure project environment, the backing of the local population, and the support of the local government (or at least what is left of the public administration in a post-war environment) are some of the preconditions for successful post-conflict reconstruction.

- The targeted population as well as the involved LNGOs should be implicated in the governance of the entire project as they are the ones who are concerned and – to avoid any sense or act of imposition by INGOs.

- Although local ownership of the project and its derivatives is critical – there is always the risk of LNGOs and local elites to utilize such elements for their own agendas.

- Post-conflict reconstruction must be based on microeconomic activities where needs are linked to economic development that matches local understandings, while remaining compliant and compatible with local culture – with a focus on reestablishing livelihoods.

- Post-conflict reconstruction can have many negative externalities such as ecological impacts, corruption and lack of accountability, etc. hence, it is important that these are considered and mitigated.

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- It is important to have a proper coordination and data exchange between the multiple actors that are implicated in the post-conflict reconstruction to avoid project duplication and waste in all its forms (e.g. time, money, etc.).
- It should be noted that post-conflict reconstruction must ensure that services are delivered in a proper and fair manner.
- Post-conflict reconstruction projects must consider strengthening local institutions to maximize long-term benefits and make better use of INGOs resources.
- When it comes to post-conflict reconstruction, it is of crucial importance to rebuild society (social dialogue and reconciliation) as well as the state apparatus and its legitimacy.
- Within the context of each project, capacity building is a long-term initiative, and INGOs must be implicated in such programs and activities to develop local agents.

3.2. Post-Conflict Project Design-Making and the role of Partnerships

3.2.1. Outline

Within the context of post-conflict reconstruction – how INGOs enter a partnership is as important as how their project will transition. Given that proper and calculated INGO transition are significantly informed by how partnerships are framed (specially with LNGOs), investing in the design phase can have significant impact on the local leadership (mainly INGOs and what is left of the public administration) (CSIS & AUSA, 2002; Bender, 2011). INGOs can prepare for this phase of the project management cycle by considering how to enter the development context as well as partnerships in a responsible way that supports local capacities and leadership. Indeed, the benefits of time and resources investments in relationship building and forming partnerships are very important in the project design phase (Brown, 2018).

3.2.2. Crucial Reflections for INGOs entering a Post-Conflict Context

When it comes to INGOs entering a post-conflict context, there are several elements that should be considered (CSIS & AUSA, 2002; Bender, 2011):

- Whether the implication of INGOs in the post-conflict environment was made by local actors.
- Whether the intervention of INGOs will be positively perceived by the local community.
- How are local actors managing their post-conflict projects prior to the intervention of INGOs.
- What will be the added value of INGOs intervention.
- How can project duplicates be avoided.
- Etc.

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To be able to have a constructive reflection, INGOs my get to know the aspiration of LNGOs. They need to brainstorm, both independently and alongside LNGOs.

3.2.3. Partnership design among INGOs and LNGOs

When it comes to the design phase of the project – INGOs must review, choose and define (CSIS & AUSA, 2002; Bender, 2011):

- The LNGOs that will be involved in the all-in-all project in general and implementation part of the project in particular.
- How will the LNGOs be involved at every stage of the project.
- How can the INGOs engagement on a specific project / initiative contribute to the local leadership goals.
- The added value of each project participant in terms of availability, technical expertise, access to community, etc. and how will the INGOs be equitable.
- The clear expectations of each member.
- Etc.

3.2.4. Brainstorming INGOs Transition / Exist Planning

The INGOs must brainstorm their transition planning (Bender, 2011):

- To verify and settle on a desired post-transition relationship that should be attainable and manageable.
- To check if the partner (LNGO) also wants the same type of post-transition relationship.
- To check the international entity has the required resources for this type of relationship.
- To work to have a functioning post-transition relationship capable of contributing to the attainment of desired results.
- To formulate a transition plan to a LNGO when writing grant proposals.
- To adapt based on changed based local and institutional contexts.
- To allocate resources to support trust and relationship building processes.
- To provide opportunities for both INGO and INGO staff and partners to reflect together on the quality of their partnership.

3.3. Project Planning and how to consider INGO / LNGO Partnership

3.3.1. Decision-Making

The success of planning when it comes to post-conflict reconstruction projects depends on the ability to properly comprehend the complexities of the socio-economic-political environment of the targeted entity (Bender, 2011); this will enable the implicated INGO to coordinate projects both in an effective and efficient manner and involve an ensemble of capable stakeholders that can bring about an added value to the all-in-all project. Hence, stakeholders need to have an

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open dialogue and consult with one another for them to explain what they perceive as essential components of project planning systems and processes, to achieve a successful project capable that has a socio-economic impact (CSIS & AUSA, 2002; Earnest, 2015).

Even while many efforts and projects have demonstrated some level of success, post-conflict reconstruction procedures have been mostly criticized over the years for a lack of proper planning, resources, and money, as well as the absence of an existing strategy (Bender, 2011). INGOs frequently import their own organizational policies and operating processes, rather than establishing them for the context (CSIS & AUSA, 2002; Brown, 2018). However, involving people in planning, implementation, and evaluation is crucial since it ensures local ownership and support for accomplished programs. The ever-changing post-conflict dynamics also influence project perceptions, therefore INGOs must be adaptable in project planning and implementation. Furthermore, LNGOs are rarely included in decision-making processes and are solely involved in project implementation; to ensure long-term growth and development, beneficiaries must be engaged routinely throughout the project (Earnest, 2015).

Most infrastructure rehabilitation projects in post-conflict development processes have poor design and/or substandard construction. This could be due to a failure to evaluate local conditions, needs, and capabilities. As a result, LNGO engagement is critical in the early stages of project planning and design, ensuring that the initiatives are relevant and address the requirements of the community (Earnest, 2015). It is critical to consider the environmental context while constructing post-conflict rehabilitation programs (Caplan, 2005; Sakalasuriya et al., 2018).

Most experts have seen that popular participation in post-conflict project decision-making is crucial for developing acceptable and effective reconstruction initiatives since they have the best grasp of what a scenario requires (Saul, 2014). Furthermore, the more a populace is directly involved in decision-making, the higher their awareness and comprehension of the various elements and components of the reconstruction process (CSIS & AUSA, 2002). This will ensure that the affected community receives the full benefits of the post-conflict rehabilitation endeavor. On another note, raising awareness can help to keep some segments of the public from disrupting the reconstruction efforts (Brown, 2018).

Decisions on reconstruction must go beyond the more traditional definition of the term (with an emphasis on physical rebuilding, or the reconstruction of political institutions and public services) and must also consider the necessary sociological rebuilding (CSIS & AUSA, 2002). Reconstruction should also avoid reconstructing the issues that caused the conflict in the first place, instead focusing on the development of inclusionary institutions, places, and so on that help to overcome the conflict (Bender, 2011). This approach must be context-specific, but the

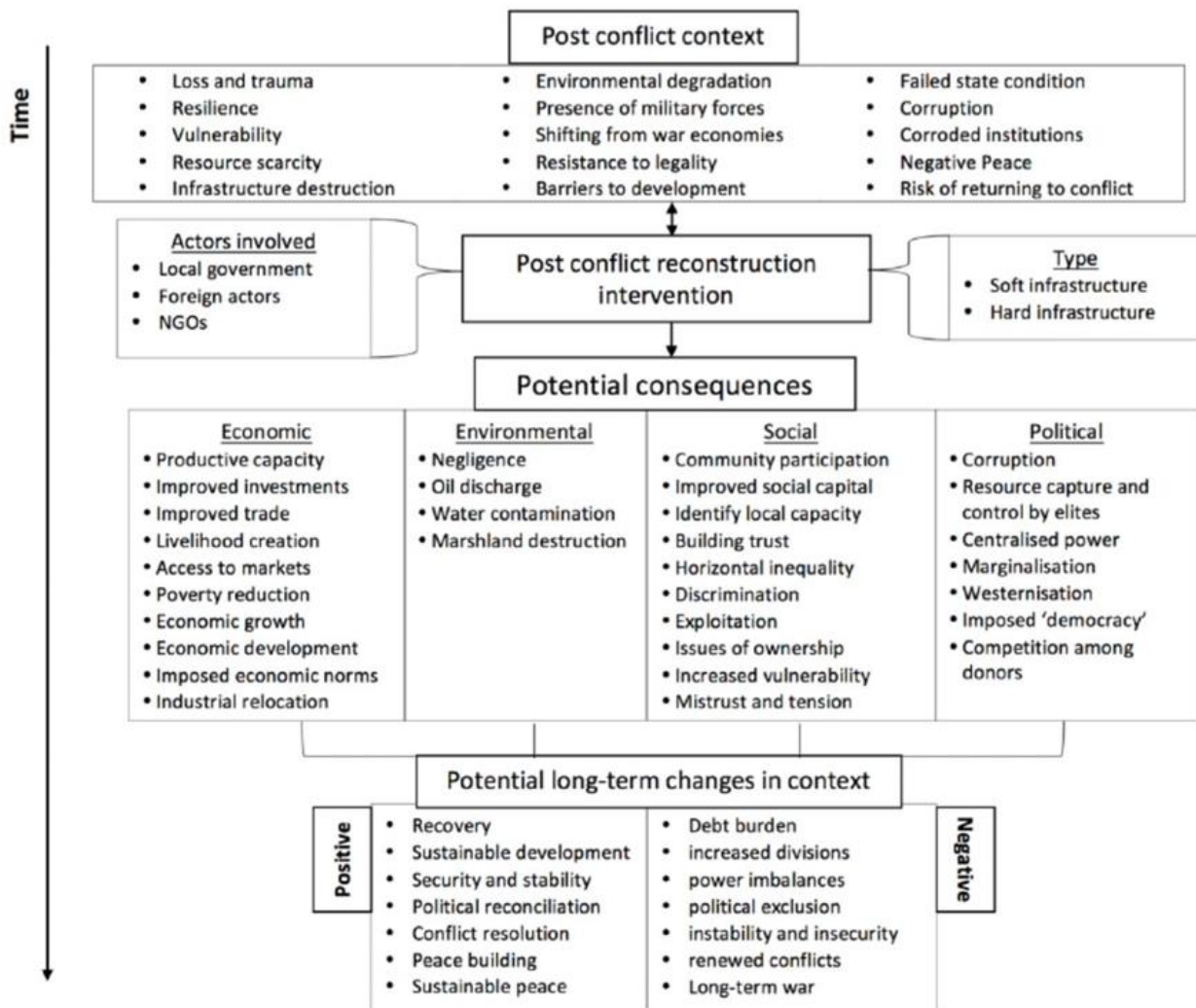elements that caused the conflict must be considered while making reconstruction decisions (O'Driscoll, 2018).

Figure 4. Post-conflict Reconstruction Process (Sakalasuriya et *al*., 2018)

3.3.2. The Element of Time

INGOs must consider the criticality of the time element within the post-conflict reconstruction period (Bray, 2005). Indeed, each post-conflict reconstruction project is a long-term commitment, and INGOS must seek for a smooth transition so that the exit procedure can be applied correctly to ensure a proper delivery of the project as well as its sustainability once its entirely managed by LNGOs (Francis, 2016).

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3.3.3. Post-Conflict Projects' Working Conditions

In a post-conflict environment, security is a key issue when it comes to managing reconstruction projects (CSIS & AUSA, 2002). In other words, collective and individual public safety is a pre-condition for achieving successful segmented outcomes of reconstruction projects. In order for such projects to succeed and for security to be guaranteed, LNGOs and local communities as well as what is left of the public administration must back the work of the INGO (UN-Habitat, 2017).

3.3.4. Funding Needs and Local Socio-Economic Requirements

In any post-conflict reconstruction project, the issue of funding is usually very serious given that there are often not enough resources to meet the project reconstruction needs. This is since each project has its own specifics – which may not be compliant with an initial pre-established plan, or that the intervention plan is not compliant with the socio-economic reality which can lead to scarifying local-led projects (Bender, 2011). As a result, post-conflict development project will usually be deployed and operate according to the priorities of the INGOs (donors), rather than the development needs of the local targeted communities or the recommendations of the LNGOs (CSIS & AUSA, 2002). Thus, it is important the INGOs support local-led projects and ensure that their funding is compliant with the needs of the population rather than the goals of the donor (Earnest, 2015).

On another note, it is important that reconstruction project truly address the needs of the local community that was directly impacted by the conflict. This is said, as in many cases, INGOs tend to focus on the big cities, urban centers, and major hubs (which can be one of the past causes of the conflict in the first place) – rather than infrastructure development in the most impacted areas (mostly remote and urban) (Bender, 2011). Hence, in such cases, the reconstruction project can be a source to further divide communities, rather than to ensure social reconciliation and cohesion; also, in many cases projects will center around the areas of the communal elites who were one of the main sources of the conflict (CSIS & AUSA, 2002; Sharp, 2018).

Furthermore, INGOs reconstruction projects are usually linked to communal economic development – based on a liberal peace approach; according to such a theory, economic development will allow for peace to be sustainable. However, things are much more complex as economic development will need to match local understanding (Brown, 2018). Hence, economic growth needs to be sustained through the immediate influx of aid delivery and funding in reconstruction projects following the conflict (CSIS & AUSA, 2002; Bender, 2011). This is why more INGOs-led infrastructure projects are usually connected to poverty reduction programs and are starting to put further emphasis on reestablishing livelihoods and replacing those that were based on the wartime economy (Sakalasuriya et al., 2018).

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Finally, it would be appropriate to mention that most INGOs focus on macroeconomic stabilization projects. However, such projects will have very change impact and fruitful results as they fail to provide organic growth for domestic business and tend to benefit transnational corporations rather than the people who were impacted by the conflict (Bender, 2011; Brown, 2018). Indeed, it is a microeconomic approach would better foster the growth of the local economy, decrease dependance on foreign aid, expand the economic base by reviving remote areas, and attract foreign investment in such places to develop their local businesses and infrastructure (Bender, 2011).

3.3.5. Post-Conflict Development Projects' Local Ownership

As previously stated, when it comes to the local ownership of the post-conflict development / reconstruction project, it should directly include those who are going to be directly impacted by the project as well as the LNGOs managing the project – responsible for ensuring its sustainability (CSIS & AUSA, 2002). That said, communal involvement in project governance must be prioritized as this will build legitimacy and offsets the sense of imposition and neo-colonialism by INGOs (Caplan, 2005; Ernstorfer et *al*., 2007; Hamieh & Mac Ginty, 2010). On another note, this will also contribute to increasing the engagement of the populous when it comes reconstruction and development projects (Saul, 2014).

Hence, bottom-up solutions to post-conflict reconstruction are vital to counter the actual causes of the conflict (e.g. poverty, political marginalization, social inequalities, etc.) and address them within society (Bender, 2011). However, it should be noted that there are also difficulties when it comes to encouraging local involvement in such projects that need to be overcome. Furthermore, there is also the risk that the local elite might try to hijack the development project To reassert power (Saul, 2014).

3.4. Project Implementation Phase

3.4.1. Context

It is important for INGOs to advance local management by setting and deploying incremental steps into project implementation and piloting plans and activities (Bender, 2011). In other words, the idea properly put into place and intentional implementation and adaptive management by INGOs that can assure a proper transition to LNGOs.

Indeed, many projects have shown how INGOs discovered during the implementation phase how the previously programmed and worked-on project was not entirely relevant or applicable – given that local stakeholders were not (or merely) implicated in the design phase of the project. However, experiences shown that when local partners are included – projects are more likely to

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become flexible and adapting to changes in the local context – thus, allowing or ownership and more sustainable results (CSIS & AUSA, 2002).

3.4.2. Implementation engagement among INGOs and local/national organizations

Within the context of post-conflict project development implementation, INGOs must consider several elements when working jointly with LNGOs (Earnest, 2015). It important to ensure planed coordination amongst both parties to develop successful and context specific solutions (CSIS & AUSA, 2002; Caplan, 2005; Ernstorfer et *al*., 2007; Hamieh & Mac Ginty, 2010; Bender, 2011; Sakalasuriya et *al.*, 2018).

- The decision-making process that will enable them to work with local partners.
- The decisions that will jointly be made with the LNGO.
- The input of each entity.
- The communication flow and actionable information sharing between the two entities.
- The interaction between the INGOs, LNGOs, and the project beneficiaries.
- The assignment of roles and responsibilities as well the distribution of tasks between INGOs and LNGOs staff – in anticipation of a responsible transition.
- The process for adapting to a potential dramatically changed project context – given the ever-changing nature of the environment and its unpredictability.
- The requirements and interests of both partes local partner's interest.
- The scenario planning process based on contextual data analysis and knowledge management while considering both the risks and opportunities that may emerge during the project timeframe.
- The hard and soft assets that will be transferred between parties (e.g. infrastructure, software systems, databases, human resources, etc.) crucial for project operations.
- The processes that should be put into place to ensure the local entity can be financially sustainable after the transition takes place.
- The establishment of a governance systems and anti-corruption monitoring systems to ensure transparency, however, it is important to also develop context specific accountability measures
- Etc.

3.4.3. Procurement

In a post-conflict environment, there's regularly a need of materials for reconstruction ventures, and thus these must be imported. This ordinarily leads to a tendering call to secure products, which INGOs frequently select to be included in (Bender, 2011). INGOs tend to apply weight on the implementing agencies to obtain products from the donors indeed when they don't

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coordinate the neighborhood prerequisites or are more costly than bringing in products from neighboring nations. This amplifies the cost, sustainability and suitability of post-conflict reconstruction; hence, it is vital that the procurement process is more open. Often, more reasonable and cheaper. Often, more reasonable and cheaper material can be found within the neighboring nations, and reconstruction policies must take this under consideration (Earnest, 2015).

3.4.4. Strengthening LNGOs Capacity

The need of local project capacity can be a major regulation limitation in executing post-conflict reconstruction projects. Subsequently, strengthening LNGOs will not solely bring about benefits to the community, but also helps to maximize long-term results of these projects (Bender, 2011). Therefore, strengthening LNGOs capacities through trainings programs makes better use of the available INGOs resources and will assist in mitigating both risks and expectations (Earnest, 2015).

3.5. Project Monitoring & Evaluation

3.5.1. Context

INGOs Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) systems are usually well established and an important resource for new pot-conflict projects to be accountable and generate data for international entities. Hence, INGOs must check how can the project build shared ownership of M&E approaches to contribute to LNGOs management and leadership of the project (Bender, 2011). It is of great importance to note that INGOs and LNGOs have different needs for M&E information during and after post-conflict project implementation (Brown, 2018).

3.5.2. INGOs & LNGOs M&E

Within the context of INGOs & LNGOs M&E – there are several elements to consider (CSIS & AUSA, 2002; Brown, 2018):

- The data for M&E evaluation.
- The needs that LNGOs have.
- The overlaps and differences.
- The reporting approaches.
- The implementation of culturally accepted M&E standards.
- The contribution of M&E plans and practices so that LNGOs partners can properly contribute to the project.
- The success measures of the project and its transition for LNGOs.

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- The measurement process and indicators capable of capturing changes in society.
- The identification of what M&E data will be most relevant during the post-conflict project for adaptive management, INGOs advocacy, etc.
- The role of both INGO and LNGO when it comes to the evaluation of the project.
- The outcomes and long-term impact of both the project and the transition.
- Etc.

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