

From Hubris to Humility: Localisation and Legitimacy for International Non-Government Organisations

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Abstract

INGOs are experiencing a legitimacy crisis. Historical concerns that INGOs were disproportionately focused on donor expectations have evolved into deeper criticisms of depoliticisation and self-interest. Recent critics have gone further, suggesting INGOs are neo-colonial in nature and perpetuate power imbalances that favour the global north. In response, INGOs are scrambling to re-purpose, re-structure, and re-position themselves in the hope of a more assured future. This study accompanies one such INGO, CARE International, exploring whether the transformation of CARE country offices into local NGOs positions those new organisations, or the confederation itself, for greater legitimacy. The research offers first-hand insight into INGO transformation, and this real-life lens constitutes the niche in the literature the thesis seeks to fill.

The dissertation draws on a breadth of literature, most notably from the disciplines of development studies and organisational behaviour, before providing an analysis of the operating context for CARE International and other INGOs. Case studies from Sri Lanka and Indonesia are compared and then contrasted with a third data set, predominantly made up of voices from the global north. Employing grounded theory techniques and a complex adaptive systems lens, this data is synthesised into findings and implications for researchers and practitioners. A myriad of diverse and often contradictory legitimacies emerges for INGOs, alongside an entrenched authorising environment that is proving difficult to change. I contend that the infrastructure of international development has historically sought and rewarded *hubris* among northern INGOs, celebrating INGOs that display confidence and certainty. This emphasis is at odds with the devolution of power, however, which necessarily assumes *humility* from the north. I argue that to address growing legitimacy gaps, INGOs will need to intentionally engage with the decolonisation discourse, to honestly accept the implications of legacy infrastructure on their current practices, and to institutionalise organisational values above organisational survival.

Statement of Authorship

Except where reference is made in the text of the thesis, this thesis contains no material published elsewhere or extracted in whole or in part from a thesis accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma. No other person's work has been used without due acknowledgment in the main text of the thesis. This thesis has not been submitted for the award of any degree or diploma in any other tertiary institution.

All research procedures reported in this thesis were approved as complying with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research by the Arts, Social Sciences & Commerce College Human Ethics Sub-Committee in April 2018 (Application HEC18066).

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This thesis is dedicated to Mère Geraldine Bond, who left us in September 2020 and didn't get to see me wear the silly hat.

List of Abbreviations

CBO	Community Based Organisation
CI	CARE International
CII	CARE International in Indonesia
CISL	CARE International in Sri Lanka
CISB	CARE International Supervisory Board
CMP	CARE Member Partner
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CUSA	CARE USA
DOC	Domains of Change
GSL	Global South Leaders
GSLF	Global South Leaders Forum
GOI	Government of Indonesia
GOSL	Government of Sri Lanka
HSL	Household and Livelihood Security
ICR	Indirect Cost Recovery
INGO	International Non-Government Organisation
LST	Longitudinal Study of Transition
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
RBA	Rights Based Approach
SPC	Shared Program Costs
YCP	Yayasan Care Peduli

Chapter One: *Introduction*

International non-government organisations (INGOs) are experiencing a legitimacy crisis. Historical criticisms suggesting that INGOs were straying from their humanitarian values by prioritising accountability to donors over accountability to the communities with whom they work (Bebbington, 1997; Hulme & Edwards, 1997) have not been adequately answered. On the contrary, such concerns provided the foundation for arguments that INGOs have become depoliticised, over-professionalised and self-interested (Banks & Hulme, 2012; Bloodgood & Tremblay-Boire, 2017). More recently, critics have gone further by suggesting that INGOs may no longer be fit for purpose and arguing that INGOs do not possess the drive and institutional agility to meet the most pressing development challenges of our time (Doane & Kojo Vandyck, 2020; Rights Co-Lab, 2020). In addition, a chorus of critical voices in the global south has created a backlash against the very presence of INGOs in local and national affairs (Brechenmacher & Carothers, 2012; Chimiak, 2014; Kucera, 2018). Around the world, INGOs are scrambling to respond—to rethink, repurpose, restructure and reposition themselves in the hope of enhancing their legitimacy and ensuring a more secure future as international development actors.

Despite high levels of public support and ongoing improvements to INGO systems, practices and reporting, there is a growing acceptance of the flaws of traditional north-south cooperation. The INGO model is perceived as neo-colonial in nature, and INGOs themselves are accused of perpetuating power imbalances that favour the global north (Elbers & Schulpen, 2012; Pailey, 2019). The reality for INGOs is that there are numerous tensions at play: externally, there are multiple stakeholders and audiences, often with competing interests; internally, there are entrenched personal and organisational behaviours among staff and leaders, often tied to the professional standing and self-worth of individuals. Moreover, aid continues to flow predominantly from north to south, and northern organisations continue to administer the bulk of the pool available to civil society globally—over 90% of nearly USD 20 billion between 2010 and 2016 (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2018). In receiving and administering these funds, INGOs remain responsible to the public and private donors who provide these resources; as such, a radical evolution in INGO behaviour is far from assured.

Legitimacy in the eyes of donors comes from strict adherence to structural and procedural practices that are founded on northern conventions and have not evolved in line with the wider north-south dialogue. On the contrary, these northern norms are generally met through risk-averse systems of command and control, each more likely to perpetuate than disrupt the pre-existing power

imbalance. Simultaneously, INGOs are expected to be responsive to, and representative of, the communities with and for whom they work. Walton et al. (2016) explained that questions of INGO legitimacy had traditionally been approached from either a top-down or a bottom-up perspective, where “top-down” denotes shared values and institutional congruence with prevailing international powers (generally of the global north) and “bottom-up” emphasises the centrality of stakeholder voices and progressive development practice (generally with and of the global south). These authors suggested that the interaction between the two perspectives has not been adequately considered and argued that a full understanding of INGO legitimacy can only come from a more nuanced understanding of each as they relate to one another. This is the academic context from which the idea for this thesis emerged.

In addition, the thesis is also closely tied to my professional work as a development practitioner. In 2017, I was afforded the opportunity to lead a longitudinal study for CARE International, a large INGO confederation working in 104 countries around the world. This study was intended to accompany the transition of four former Country Offices into local organisations. I was well known to people throughout the organisation having recently completed five years as Country Director for CARE International in Laos. The Longitudinal Study of Transition (LST) was created to discuss and document the process of transition, paying particular attention to the complexities of transition not captured in existing monitoring and reporting tools (CARE International, 2017d, p. 11). I was contracted to lead this work between 2017 and 2021. Around that time, I was also exploring possible PhD topics, broadly centred on the topic of INGO legitimacy. With CARE’s support, I devised a PhD proposal that envisioned providing detailed case studies of two of the four locations where transitions were taking place (Sri Lanka and Indonesia). Both parties perceived the idea of two simultaneous projects—a broad longitudinal study written exclusively for CARE and a more detailed PhD thesis that draws on that study but focuses more systematically on two case studies—to be of mutual benefit. CARE understood the thesis would deliver greater depth and rigour, while I anticipated greater access and authenticity as a result of undertaking the research from the *inside* of a large INGO.

This ability, to analyse change from *within* an organisation attempting transformation, provided the lens for a unique contribution to the literature on legitimacy for INGOs. There are well-documented arguments for the use of case studies as deductive tools for testing theory, as inductive tools for developing theory and as dialogical tools for exploring the relationship between a case and theory (Rule & John, 2015; Yin, 2014). While the body of literature on INGO legitimacy covers such topics as legitimacy criteria (Atack, 1999; Thrandardottir, 2015), legitimacy assessment (Halpin & McLaverty, 2010; Steffek & Hahn, 2010) and the long list of threats and challenges to legitimacy for INGOs

(Collingwood & Logister, 2005; Walton et al., 2015), there are few detailed studies of an INGO proactively seeking to build legitimacy. Similarly, while there is a plethora of literature on the importance of locally led development (Booth & Unsworth, 2014; Fowler, 1991; 1997; Tawake et al., 2021) and a growing body of work on the localisation of aid infrastructure (Barakat & Milton, 2020; *Shifting the Power*, 2017), there are comparatively few documented case studies of an INGO transitioning their long-term operations to national organisations. It is this unique perspective—this lived experience of the challenges and often contradictory demands of legitimacy for INGOs—which constitutes the niche in the literature this thesis seeks to fill. To this end, the thesis aims to answer one primary research question (1) and two sub-questions (2 and 3):

1. **Does the transition of an INGO Country Office into a local NGO position the local organisation and/or the international organisation for greater legitimacy?**
2. What purpose does INGO localisation serve and for whom?
3. What forces are most likely to constrain or enable the realisation of greater legitimacy through INGO localisation?

The analysis extends to not only whether but *how* localisation enhances legitimacy, and not only why but *how* multiple purposes and competing forces are experienced in INGOs. A perennial challenge for INGO legitimacy has been to reconcile their origins and obligations in the global north with their aspirations and obligations in the global south. Historical markers of INGO legitimacy such as charity, propriety and conformity (Mitchell et al., 2020, p. 100) have necessitated a clear separation, a *polarity*, between INGOs and their southern constituents. A demonstrable difference between the expertise and systems of INGOs and that of the states, partners and individuals with whom they work has justified the role of INGOs and underpinned their legitimacy. Conversely, contemporary markers of INGO legitimacy such as representation, dignity and enabling social movements (Banks et al., 2015; Doane, 2019; Mitlin et al., 2007) demand a demonstrable solidarity, a *proximity*, between INGOs and their constituent communities. For CARE, contemporary legitimacy criteria have not replaced but added to the burden of traditional expectations, with the implication that CARE and other INGOs must simultaneously address both.

The relationship between localisation and legitimacy proved quite different for the former CARE Country Offices compared to the wider CARE confederation. Whereas the local organisations uniformly reported greater claims to, and perceptions of legitimacy following localisation, and the influence of southern leaders within CARE dramatically improved over the course of the research, the results for the wider INGO were far less even. On the international stage, as described by participants living this journey inside and outside of CARE International, it seems legitimacy for CARE

and other INGOs will only be found in greater honesty about the multiple audiences from whom they seek legitimation. Furthermore, if INGOs wish to ride out the legitimacy crisis and rebuild their relevance in international development circles, a willingness to prioritise organisational values above organisational survival becomes fundamental. Where INGO practices are indefensible against espoused values, their legitimacy is lost. This will necessarily include changing the frameworks constructed for interaction within organisations, or what neo-institutionalists describe as “the rules of the game” (Elbers & Schulpen, 2012; Hall & Taylor, 1996).

It is from this wider analysis that the emergent themes of hubris and humility become apparent. I conclude that the infrastructure of international development has historically sought and rewarded hubris among northern INGOs—celebrating INGOs that display great confidence in their systems and certainty in their capabilities. In turn, INGOs themselves have sought and rewarded people and processes that echo such confidence or enhance the perception of certainty. In the context of north-south relations, however, such an emphasis is at odds with the decolonisation agenda and the deference to southern voice that is increasingly expected of INGOs. If commitment to these espoused values is to become earnest, it would seem organisational humility needs to take the place of organisational hubris. Systems that maintain authority and decision making in the global north, or that seek to replicate northern structures in the global south, need to give way to systems that elevate the voices of southern partners and enable emergent structures.

This argument is developed in nine chapters that are roughly divided into contextual background, presentation of the data, comparison of the data sets and, finally, findings and implications. Chapter Two outlines the specifics of the collaboration with CARE and explores my own positionality in the research, particularly as a former employee and contracted consultant at CARE. Drawing on literature from practitioner research in a range of social sciences, I explore the risks and benefits of insider positioning. Acknowledging the danger of preconceptions (Baines & Cunningham, 2011) as well as the possibility of over-identification and constrained objectivity (Greene, 2014; Merriam et al., 2001), I nonetheless argue that this research is strengthened as a result of my intimate understanding of the people and practices of the organisation being studied. I also unpack the principle of *reflexivity* in research, including my own attempts to continuously track my emotions and motives as they apply to the research, considering if and how these may have influenced my approach to data collection and analysis (Finlay, 2002; Mann, 2016).

Chapter Two also outlines the methods used for data collection and analysis. A mixture of interviews, focus groups, workshops and survey tools were employed across a purposive sample of 86 internal participants (staff and leaders from within CARE) and 25 external participants (expert

practitioners and academics from outside CARE). Data collection tools were developed around four domains of change: power, influence, accountability and legitimacy. These domains provided a deductive starting point upon which iterative and inductive themes could later be built. Once collected, data was analysed and synthesised through the use of grounded theory and elements of complexity theory, in particular literature on complex adaptive systems, to help make sense of the organisational change taking place at CARE.

Chapters Three and Four provide the conceptual grounding for the analysis, including a body of literature against which to situate the findings of this thesis. Chapter Three explores the legitimacy crisis for INGOs, paying particular attention to the competing pressures and tensions at play for these institutions. I also unpack the concepts of legitimacy and legitimation in some detail, drawing on classic and contemporary literature from across the social sciences, before exploring related processes of adaptation in INGOs, borrowing from the literature on institutional theory and organisational ecology. Chapter Four narrows the focus to INGO structures and shapes, and identifies organisational features that may enable or constrain legitimation. This chapter also includes a comprehensive history of CARE International, positioning that organisation along a spectrum of INGO structures and describing the preconditions that have shaped CARE's unique localisation agenda. When combined with my own personal experience working for INGOs and within CARE in particular, these two chapters also constitute the theoretical anchor for data analysis in this thesis.

Chapters Five and Six begin with a contextual grounding for each of the Sri Lankan and Indonesian case studies before presenting the data generated in each location. At this point the analysis is predominantly deductive, with data presented under each domain of change and under the categories identified as most critical by participants in each setting. These chapters purposefully seek to prioritise the undiluted voices of participants, and thereby to tell the story as it was told to me. The inclusion of raw data supports this attempt to "give life to the voices of participants" (Given, 2008, p. 14) after minimal open coding and prior to the more complex axial and selective coding to follow.

Chapter Seven provides a deeper analysis in the form of a comparative analysis of the data collections from Sri Lanka and Indonesia (the National Voices data sets). This chapter moves beyond the data as it was presented in chapters five and six and seeks to unpack the themes and independencies that emerged over the course of the research. Findings are presented under the deductive themes employed in Chapters Five and Six, broadly falling into the two categories of *external* and *internal* relationships or systems. Where apparent, emerging implications in terms of

the four domains of change are then identified and discussed. The chapter concludes with a summary of the most consistent findings to emerge from the consolidation of the two case studies.

To complement and contrast the National Voices heard in the case studies from Sri Lanka and Indonesia, Chapter Eight analyses the International Voices data set. The majority of these participants were from within the CARE confederation: from CARE Member Partners (CMPs), from the CARE International Secretariat and from CARE's regional structures where these exist. Additional voices came in the form of international development experts from academia, the private sector and civil society. Direct quotations are used throughout this chapter, with each being chosen because it usefully illustrates a commonality or exception identified through the coding and synthesis of responses. The data in this chapter is grouped under the prevailing domains of power and legitimacy, with additional analysis provided under the emergent themes of changes, contradictions and mixed motivations.

Chapter Nine concludes the thesis and summarises the cumulative findings of this thesis against the research questions. The consolidated data is triangulated with advice from relevant literature and my lived experience as practitioner, researcher and participant in the process. The chapter's sections build upon the domains of change, with each broadening to accommodate inductive themes to emerge from the data. These four main sections include: Accountability and the Authorising Environment; Influence, Expectations and the Appetite for Change; Power, Prosperity and Path Dependence; and Competing and Contradictory Legitimacies. The chapter concludes with a range of implications for practitioners and researchers interested in further pursuing a contemporary role for INGOs in international development.

Legitimacy is a critical currency for INGOs and is becoming ever more so. In the case of CARE, efforts at localisation have progressed the internal conversation and have helped shape a vision for the future that acknowledges the need for change. Localisation has enabled emerging southern voices to redefine the rules of cooperation, and these new organisations are leading a fundamental shift in organisational behaviour from the front. Southern leaders are, furthermore, claiming power rather than waiting for it to be ceded, and they are supported in doing so by solidarity and enabling practices from CARE colleagues across the global north. Despite this, the competing interests of other organisational responsibilities and the gravitational pull of historical systems and relationships are compromising the change, thus keeping CARE in the grey space at the edge of INGO legitimacy. If CARE and others like them are to meaningfully live their values, they will need to tackle their own northern legacies, openly and honestly engage with the decolonisation dialogue and find a way to institutionalise humility over hubris.

Chapter Two: *Method and Positionality*

Introduction

This chapter outlines the origins of the research before describing and explaining the methodology and approach. Under the heading Collaboration with CARE, I explain the unique relationship developed with the INGO and given their financial support for parts of the study, I acknowledge the ethical and philosophical questions of industry-sponsored research. In the following section titled *Positionality*, I explore my unique situation as both researcher and participant—outsider and insider—in the context of CARE International and the research itself. While acknowledging the limitations of this approach, in particular the blinding potential of a personal stake or emotional connection with the research content (Alvesson, 2003; Anderson & Herr, 1999), I argue that my established relationship with the organisation has facilitated more open exchanges with participants and a greater depth to the data gathered (Brannick & Coglán, 2007; Dwyer & Buckle, 2009).

The conceptual framework for the thesis is outlined in the section titled *Approach*, where a complexity lens is layered over an action research method to help make sense of the changes taking place at CARE. I also introduce four domains of change at this point, presenting working definitions of power, influence, accountability and legitimacy which provide an operational foundation for the analysis. A section on data collection follows, commencing with a description of the three primary research sites. The first two of these were Indonesia and Sri Lanka, where former CARE Country Offices were transitioning into local organisations. The third location was a virtual research site, a gathering of key informants from across the CARE confederation and international civil society, referred to throughout this dissertation as the International Voices. A further research site became available over the course of the research, hereafter referred to as the Global South Leaders Forum. The methods employed at each site are discussed in this section, and the ethical considerations associated with data collection are then summarised in a brief section titled *Ethics*. The final number and type of respondents from each setting follow in the section titled *Participation*.

I then proceed to summarise my approach to analysing the data, covering key features of the grounded theory approach and my interpretation of this method in the generation of findings. I allowed deductive features to shape the collection of data (most notably the domains of change) while anticipating that the bulk of the findings would emerge from the data itself (Oktay, 2012). The practical application of grounded theory involves the use of coding to make sense of the volumes of qualitative data generated through interviews, focus groups and other means of collection (Gray, 2009). I predominantly employed open and axial coding in cycles over the course of the research. In

this section, I also explain my use of personal reflections and memos to complement the cycles of data triangulation and iterative sense making.

Under Research Limitations, I acknowledge the risks associated with a small purposive sample and the methodological questions raised by a sole researcher walking the insider-outsider line. I conclude this section by proposing that any concerns regarding rigour or validity which arise from these limitations do not compromise the findings. Brannick and Coghlan (2007) suggest insider status is “not only valid and useful but also provides important knowledge about what organizations are really like, which traditional approaches may not be able to uncover” (p. 72). I contend that my detailed preunderstanding and privileged access within CARE facilitated just such an outcome.

Collaboration with CARE

I was well known to people throughout CARE International prior to commencing this work. During my five years as Country Director for CARE International in Laos (2012-2017), I collaborated with partners across the confederation. In 2017, I became an independent consultant yet stayed involved with CARE, supporting the confederation to develop a monitoring and learning framework for the transition of former Country Offices into local organisations. During this exercise, CARE International Secretariat staff identified that “while the monitoring tool is useful in tracking progress against transition milestones, there are a range of more complex questions arising which are not easily measured and for which findings do not emerge in a short space of time” (CARE International, 2017d, p. 11). Out of this conversation, the LST was born, and I was contracted to lead this work between 2017 and 2021.

Over the course of 2017, I was also exploring possible PhD topics broadly centred on INGO legitimacy. I was seeking to combine a long-held interest in the operational practices and decision making of INGOs with a growing curiosity about the future of north-south development cooperation. The longitudinal study gave this loose idea a defined shape, which then became the foundation of a PhD proposal submitted later that year. Under guidance from the university to limit the PhD investigation to no more than two of the four transitioning locations, all parties agreed to include Sri Lanka and Indonesia. In addition to the logistical advantages of their location in Asia, these two offices had been historically managed by different parts of CARE and were each working with different business models so offered a useful contrast. In January 2018, I negotiated a collaboration agreement with CARE that made clear the anticipated advantages of our cooperation. It also captured “some of the practical arrangements that will ensure both parties achieve their common and individual objectives”, outlined the shared and individual objectives for both parties and formally documented the commitments of each.

All industry-endorsed or industry-sponsored research arrangements come with a risk of undue influence from the organisation being studied. This risk is most obvious in the case of for-profit collaborations where industry-sponsored research may intend or be seen to intend to purposefully support the products or services of that industry (de Vries et al., 2005; Lundh et al., 2017). However, similar risks are apparent in social research that is sponsored by government or by third sector organisations (Drake, 2002; Vaganay, 2016). Sponsored studies are vulnerable to influence at the reporting stage as well as during design and implementation when decisions on what to include or exclude may be equally powerful in terms of outcomes (Fabbri et al., 2018; Martinson et al., 2005). Recognising the potential for actual or perceived bias in the case of the longitudinal study, both parties addressed this risk directly in the collaboration agreement. The collaboration not only acknowledged the concerns but also committed each party to tracking the risk; it went on to place limits on influence over the design and outcomes of the research.

Positionality

The method for both the longitudinal study and the PhD thesis asked that I be simultaneously a trustworthy, familiar colleague (an insider) and an objective, independent peer (an outsider). There are parallels with the concept of a *critical friend* in action research. First coined by Stenhouse (1975), the term has evolved to encapsulate a range of quasi-independent functions that balance an intimate, subjective understanding of context and content with the space and responsibility for honest, objective feedback (Costa & Kallick, 1993; Kember et al., 1997; Stolle et al., 2018). These assumptions underpinned my cooperation with CARE and were explicitly documented in our collaboration agreement.

An outsider is broadly seen to offer the perceived value of impartiality and objectivity on the part of the researcher. Objectivity “is a term of epistemic praise—a stamp of epistemic quality” (Zahle, 2020, p. 2) that is regularly questioned in the social sciences, particularly in qualitative studies where the intimate involvement of the researcher may be seen to compromise the rigour of the process or validity of the findings (Cooper, 1997; Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). In contrast, the researcher-as-insider adds value precisely through their shared identity and associated authenticity with research participants (Asselin, 2003; Rooney, 2005). Insider status can enable more rapid and more complete acceptance by research participants, meaning more open exchanges with participants and potentially a greater depth to the data gathered (Brannick & Coglán, 2007; Dwyer & Buckle, 2009; Hockey, 1993).

Merton (1972) suggested that insider research constitutes “a balance sheet of assets and liabilities” (p. 33). In addition to all the benefits of insider status described above (or assets), researchers must

also consider a list of risks and constraints (liabilities). In the years since, much has been written on the limitations of insider research, particularly in relation to studies with action research and/or ethnographic characteristics. Much of this literature points to the risks of researchers being blinded to important data or conclusions due to their positionality (Kanuha, 2000; Mercer, 2009; Rooney, 2005). In the case of professionals researching their own communities, significant experience or expertise in a given field can lead to assumptions that in turn may compromise a researcher's ability to capture data outside of these fixed lines (Baines & Cunningham, 2011; Brewer, 2000). Conversely, we are also warned that too much empathy with, or proximity to the lived experiences of those being studied can lead to over-identification and may compromise the researcher's ability to objectively explain or critique the data being captured (Greene, 2014; Merriam et al., 2001).

For each of the ways that being an insider researcher enhances the depth and breadth of understanding a population that may not be accessible to a non-native scientist, questions about objectivity, reflexivity, and authenticity of a research project are raised because perhaps one knows too much or is too close to the project and may be too similar to those being studied (Kanuha, 2000, p. 444).

Burawoy (1991) argued that a middle ground between too much rigidity and too much empathy can best be achieved through frank dialogue between researcher and research participants. He suggested that acknowledging the presence of preconceptions and preconditions can enable observation without partiality and participation without immersion. This approach embodies the principle of *reflexivity* in research, whereby participants, including the researcher, examine their own emotions or motives as they relate to the topic and acknowledge how these may influence their behaviour (Finlay, 2002; Mann, 2016). Reflexive research practice also allows for a less binary approach, seeing insider status and outsider status not as opposites but as features of a complex and fluid continuum. In this way, ensuring clarity on if/how one's positionality changes and if/how this may affect the collection or analysis of data becomes more important than any predetermined assumptions about insider or outsider status.

Holding membership in a group does not denote complete sameness within that group. Likewise, not being a member of a group does not denote complete difference. It seems paradoxical, then, that we would endorse binary alternatives that unduly narrow the range of understanding and experience (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009, p. 60).

As an experienced INGO practitioner and a former CARE Country Director, it was unrealistic to achieve complete objectivity and independence as the lead researcher. As an independent advisor no longer on the CARE staff and representing a formal university project, it was equally unrealistic to

assume that I would be treated in the same way as an internal colleague. As Dwyer and Buckle explained, participant researchers “occupy the space between that of insider and that of outsider, not able to fully qualify as either” (2009, p. 61). Acknowledging this position, the principles of frank dialogue and purposeful reflexivity were central to my approach to the research.

Approach

The study employed an action research approach, which involves a continuous cycle of reflection, analysis, planning and action over the life of the investigation. Action research brings together research and practice with the intention “to bring about practical improvement, innovation, change or development of social practices, and the practitioners better understanding of their practices” (Zuber-Skerrit, 2003, p. 68). The length and depth of the investigation allowed for what has been described as an *emancipatory* study, where results go beyond the technical (targeting functional improvements) and the practical (informing decision making) to also provide a wider critique of work and work settings (Kemmis, 1995; Senge, 1990; Zuber-Skerrit, 2003). As new information or perspectives come to light, these inform the next cycle of reflection, and in this way the research process is shaped incrementally through an iterative process. In action research, as with grounded theory, both data analysis and theory building occur at the same time as data collection (Dick, 2003). The application of these methods is described in more detail under the sections of this chapter titled Data Collection and Analysis of Data.

The research also draws from the complexity sciences, in particular the literature regarding complex adaptive systems (CAS), to make sense of organisational change. This body of work looks beyond simple linear (cause and effect) models to recognise a web of human interactions predicated on the power relationships and interdependencies of the actors involved (Harvey & Reed, 2010; Neely, 2015; Rowe & Hogarth, 2005). A CAS approach also assumes conflict, contestability and unpredictability in processes of organisational change (Eyben, 2006; Ramalingham et al., 2008). The study purposefully considers common features of complex systems, paying attention to preconditions that may affect outcomes, perceived and actual freedom of agents within the process, emergent themes or conditions and resistance or reinforcement of the status quo.

A plethora of literature has emerged over the last 20 years that seeks to translate complexity and other systems theories into tools for understanding or undertaking organisational change (Burnes, 2005; Fitzgerald, 2002; Lowell, 2016; Stacey et al., 2002). For the purposes of this thesis, I have paid particular attention to *relationships* and *systems* to capture and understand organisational change in INGOs. In much of the complexity literature, *relationships* constitute the interactions between

agents of change and include the direct and indirect implications of these interactions (Zimmerman et al., 1998). The term *systems* is used to encapsulate sub-systems or components of the wider complex system (Turner & Baker, 2019), which in the case of this research includes the internal and external structures that affect the day-to-day operations of CARE. In the case of international development organisations, relationships are thought to evolve into institutional norms and habits that become very entrenched and difficult to change over time (Mowles et al., 2008; Mowles, 2015). I also stayed alert to two additional concepts regularly mentioned in CAS analysis: *tipping points*, where a critical mass is reached and from which point a system shifts into a different equilibrium state (Scheffer, 2010); and the *butterfly effect*, where a small event or precondition can trigger widescale system change (Straub, 2013).

The conceptual framework for the research was sharpened by using four key concepts, as agreed between CARE and the researcher at the beginning of the longitudinal study and documented in the collaboration agreement. While this research is predominantly inductive in nature (see Data Collection and Analysis of Data sections), the decision to steer the research towards key concepts suggests a process that is at least in part deductive, where assumptions or hypotheses are in place from the outset (Flick & Metzler, 2019; Gray, 2009; Punch, 1998). The four concepts are referred to throughout the thesis as the domains of change and include power, influence, accountability and legitimacy. Each of these terms are complex and contested, and despite (or perhaps because of) extensive consideration in the social science literature, none have uniformly agreed definitions. The terms, their interpretations and their interrelationships are discussed further in Chapter Three; however, for the purposes of discussion and data collection, each was defined as follows:

Power	...as capacity to effect change AND as resistance to change
Influence	...as proximity to power
Accountability	...as inclusion and transparency in the exercise of power
Legitimacy	...as the perceived right to exercise power

The domains provided a scaffolding for the research, giving structure to the complex data collection process and employing language that would be readily understood by participants. The simplification of complex theories into something more readily understood is often described as operationalism or operationalisation. Practitioners and researchers alike employ operational definitions to move beyond debate and, in particular, to be able to study or measure change in any given construct. Slife et al. (2016) defined operationalising, quite simply, as “to translate the construct of interest that is not measurable or observable into something related to it that is measurable or observable” (p. 122). Operational definitions are necessarily flawed, as they cannot hope to capture the breadth of

ideas contained in the construct they seek to describe (Hoyle et al., 2002, p. 72); however, they serve the important purpose of providing a common language starting point that allows discussion to progress beyond the definition itself. In the case of this thesis, the domains of change provided a deductive starting point upon which iterative and inductive themes could be built.

Data Collection

The research employed a mixed-methods approach to data collection and analysis, combining a range of collection tools applied periodically over the duration of the research. It is predominantly a qualitative study, drawing most of its data from interviews, focus groups and workshop sessions across the four research sites. Sessions were captured through a mixture of handwritten notes and audio recordings that were later transcribed. This data was triangulated with advice from relevant literature, including that written or published while the research was being undertaken. I also prepared various written reports for CARE International during this time which came to constitute secondary data for the purposes of this thesis. The CARE reports drew from some of the same data as this dissertation and, in the case of data collected in Sri Lanka and Indonesia, the analysis for CARE constituted the first attempt at open coding for the purposes of the PhD.

Data collection in the transitioning settings included three primary data collection points: a baseline exercise in May 2018; a review exercise in May 2019; and a final review exercise in July 2020.

Individual participants were anonymised under a simple coding formula of two letters and a number (the first letter identifying their status as internal or external to CARE, the second letter identifying their location and the number identifying the individual). Each annual cycle followed a similar format: several days of workshops, focus groups and interviews, followed by the sharing of preliminary findings in a participatory validation exercise. The combination of formats accommodated a mixture of participation styles, acknowledging that some informants were more comfortable in private interviews or small groups than in a plenary environment. In addition to the annual exercises, two mid-year consultations were also undertaken (late 2018 and late 2019). With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, international travel became impossible; all data collection, including interviews and workshops, moved to an online format from February 2020.

In both transitioning locations, the qualitative data was complemented by three annual assessment exercises (2018, 2019 and 2020) and a final survey of change in late 2020. During the baseline exercise in 2018, research participants were asked to imagine what an ideal future looked like for the new organisation. Small groups drafted aspiration statements under each *domain of change* and fed these back for discussion and review in plenary. A simple prioritisation exercise was then held where each participant was asked to nominate their two most important aspirations under each

domain. In this way, long lists were whittled down to a final list of 10 aspirations for each organisation. In each of the three years, participants were asked to map the organisation's status against each of these 10 aspirations, providing additional information to complement the data captured in workshop notes and interview transcripts each year. The results of these three self-assessment exercises and the 2020 change survey are detailed in Chapters Five and Six.

The International Voices data collection took the form of web-based interviews between May and August in 2018 and again between April and July in 2020. Individual participants were anonymised under the same coding formula as those in transitioning settings. Informants were provided with some pre-interview reading, which explained the nature of the research and introduced the domains of change, before being asked to respond to a series of prompts. At the secondary research site, CARE's inaugural Global South Leaders Forum in Cairo in 2018, participants included senior leaders from previous, current and potential transitioning organisations, supported by a small number of Care International Secretariat staff and two external advisors (including myself). In this instance, and again at the second such event in January 2020, data collection took the form of workshop notes from key sessions and a documentation of the commentary after my presentations to each event.

All data collection activities were informed, directly or indirectly, by the primary research question: Does the transition of an INGO Country Office into a local NGO position the local organisation and/or the international organisation for greater legitimacy? Questions and prompts also targeted the sub-questions of: What purpose does INGO localisation serve and for whom? and What forces are most likely to constrain or enable the realisation of greater legitimacy through INGO localisation?

Participants were introduced to the four domains of change prior to each data collection exercise with the intention of defining these terms for the purposes of this study as well as signalling the anticipated importance of each area. It was also made clear at this point that participant responses need not be limited to these narrow areas of inquiry and that, on the contrary, the research sought all opinions that respondents felt were important in the context of the research questions.

Ethics

A small number of risks were identified with this research, as might be expected with any study involving human subjects. Of particular interest in this case were the real or perceived risks to individuals when asked to speak candidly about their employers. The freedom to speak frankly and without fear of repercussion was of paramount concern. Participation was wholly voluntary and all those who chose to participate were given the option of involvement through group workshops, small focus groups, private interviews or a combination of these. The Participant Information and Consent (PIC) forms were drafted and reviewed a number of times to ensure clarity and minimise

the risk to individuals, including anonymity wherever possible and the option of withdrawing from the study. These forms were completed by every participant who contributed to the collection of primary data.

A second risk specific to this study was the potential for a conflict of interest between the researcher and the organisation being studied. As a former staff member and part time consultant to CARE, I acknowledged that I could be viewed as biased or beholden to the organisation being studied. It is the very nature of action research of this kind, however, that it should be grounded from within and that the researcher is also a participant in the process. In mitigation of this risk, the collaboration agreement with CARE outlined the shared interest in a full, frank and critical analysis of the data generated through the research. Having addressed these and a range of more common human ethics criteria, the research was approved as complying with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research on the 4 of April 2018 (reference HEC18066).

Participation

Most participants were recruited through a purposive sampling method, a process described by Palinkas et al. (2015) as “identifying and selecting individuals or groups of individuals that are especially knowledgeable in the area of interest” (p. 534, citing Cresswell & Plano Clark, 2011). On several occasions, including in the case of the additional research site, existing participants identified others who were well positioned to inform the study, a process widely known as snowball sampling (Wejnert & Heckathorn, 2011 among many others). Participants were asked to respond to prompts and questions in semi structured interviews and/or to participate in focus groups, workshops and surveys. The total time involved for individual participants varied from one hour to more than 20 hours per person, depending on the length and number of interviews, workshops and surveys they joined over the course of the study. The research was intended to reach a minimum of 20 participants in each of the three planned research sites. In practice, that number was well exceeded with more than 100 individuals completing (PIC forms) over the course of the study, as detailed below:

Indonesia

Each cycle included an average of 15 participants, approximately 80% of whom were employees and approximately 20% of whom were external peers and partners. A total of 27 people participated, with 10 people joining more than one annual cycle and four people joining all three.

Sri Lanka

Each annual cycle included an average of 20 participants, approximately 80% of whom were employees and approximately 20% of whom were external experts from partner organisations,

academia and the private sector. A total of 33 people participated with 17 joining more than one annual cycle and 11 people joining in all three.

International Voices

A total of 33 individuals participated, with seven of these participating in both the 2018 and 2020 data collections. There was a total of 40 interviews, including 30 internal interviews (staff of the CARE confederation) and 10 external interviews (key informants from academia and civil society).

Global South Leaders Forum

Participants agreed to their conversations being considered in the context of this thesis and 14 individuals signed PIC forms. A further four participants had already signed consent forms in either the national or international data collection exercises, meaning a total of 18 additional participants joined the project through this (unplanned) research site.

Analysis of Data

The data analysis was informed by elements of grounded theory, an approach common to qualitative studies across the social sciences. Originally introduced by Glaser and Strauss (1967) as an alternative to the dominant structuralist and deductive theories of the day, grounded theory seeks to promote rigorous inductive reasoning and help legitimate qualitative research. Grounded theory is a broad church, “a way of thinking about and conceptualising data” (Strauss & Corbin, 1994, p. 275), which has since been adapted and applied to a diverse range of studies. As Bendassolli (2013) explained, grounded theory seeks to balance the tension between being so pre-defined as to miss emergent data (too deductive) and generating more data than is useful or manageable (too inductive). More specifically, a grounded theory approach allows for both deductive and inductive elements (Oktay, 2012; Punch, 1998). For the purposes of this research, some of the parameters for the collection of data were deductive in nature (in particular, the domains of change), while the bulk of the findings were expected to be inductive, that is, emerging from the data.

The analysis also drew from the literature on organisational ethnography, a practice with origins in anthropology that is increasingly applied to organisational analysis and is “frequently noted for its utility in providing in-depth insights into what people and organisations do on a day-to-day basis” (Neyland, 2008, p. 8). Whilst organisational ethnographies share many characteristics with more traditional anthropological studies, organisations display unique boundaries and behaviours that require a specific set of research skills (Garsten, 2009). The exclusive and protective nature of organisations, along with their tendency to rapidly evolve and regularly restructure, have implications on the way ethnographers must engage and interact with participants (Garsten &

Nyqvist, 2013). The insider positionality and reflexive practice described earlier in this chapter are well suited to the challenges of organisational ethnography, with self-reflexivity in particular “taking centre stage and becoming a requirement in this kind of research” (Gilmore & Kenny, 2015, p. 56).

During the baseline exercises in each research site, participants in the transitioning offices grouped their own comments and feedback under the broad categories of *external* and *internal* relationships and systems, then under collectively agreed headings such as *Government Relations* and *Cooperation with CARE International* (these categories appear in Chapters Five and Six in the country-specific case studies). From there, I undertook recurring, evolving cycles of open and axial coding over the course of the research, unearthing new connections between data and developing new findings. Open coding involves “the naming and categorising of data” (Gray, 2009, p. 503) and took place at regular intervals, generally after a minimum of two reviews of a single transcript or source document. New categories emerged less and less frequently as the analysis matured. Axial coding involves “making connections between the categories and sub-categories developed during open coding” (Gray, 2009, p. 507), something I did less often (annually in the case of the *National Voices* collection, twice in the case of the International Voices and Global South Leaders Forum collections).

Emergent themes and relationships were validated in consultation with the transitioning organisations and the CARE International Secretariat during the mid-year consultations. Under the terms of the LST agreement, I produced periodic reports for CARE outlining progress; in the case of the Sri Lankan and Indonesian transitions, these constituted preliminary steps in the analysis for this thesis. Through these cycles of coding and connecting, my understanding grew; the questions I was asking evolved, leading in turn to new categories and a more nuanced understanding of the connections between these. This process is a further practical expression of the grounded theory approach, where maintaining theoretical sensitivity is fundamental to giving meaning to the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 42) and to generating concepts and findings over time (Glaser, 1992). Each cycle also included space for my own professional and personal reflections, drawing parallels with ethnographic approaches where the simultaneous acts of data collection and theory building are woven together as the research progresses (Gray, 2009).

The quality of collecting, coding and analysing data was enhanced by a number of parallel processes. I developed a practice of recording (sometimes referred to as “memoing”) key reflections and realisations as they occurred over the life of the research. I also undertook more formal documentation of emails, messages and annotations, captured in the style of an *aide memoire*. Collectively, this data came to be recognised by my supervisors and I as the “nuggets”, those small

but important quotes or sensations or lightbulb moments that I suspected would be important over time. Locke (2001) explained that “the act of free form memoing of thoughts, hunches and reactions to the data helps us to literally write our way to naming what we perceive in the data” (p. 51), and this became my lived experience of the research. As I worked iteratively between the transcripts and relevant literature, I used these memos to further open up the data. Each nugget was explored, put aside, revisited and eventually either elevated or discarded over time.

In addition, several memos are highlighted in the “significant research moments” text boxes in chapters five to eight – four personal vignettes that explore a particularly important understanding reached during the collection and analysis of the relevant data set. This content is highlighted in this manner in keeping with my commitment to emotional awareness and researcher reflexivity. In line with the literature on organisational ethnography, the importance of these reflections is not diminished by their personal nature or by their separation within the text. On the contrary, each research moment has been included precisely because of its perceived importance and each is consequential in terms of the research findings discussed in Chapter Nine.

Research Limitations

It is a common yet obvious limitation that the bulk of this research was undertaken by a lone researcher. While the technical and logistical support provided by CARE and La Trobe University has been timely and useful throughout, I have largely undertaken the planning, collection, adaptation and analysis by myself. Although I have endeavoured to cross-check, test and validate my work, a larger research team may have reduced the vulnerability to bias. In addition, while I believe my positionality as an insider-outsider has deepened the analysis and strengthened this work, it remains true that a likelihood of some researcher bias accompanies this approach.

Case studies are useful when trying to understand complex social events and phenomena (Yin, 2014) and when “exploring and explaining mechanisms - identifying how, for whom and under what conditions outcomes are observed” (Woolcock, 2013, p. 241). Despite this, it is also necessary to acknowledge the limitations of a small purposeful sample. Barbour (2001) questioned the scientific adequacy of purposive sampling, suggesting that examples of this model “in effect involve hybrids, which retain elements of random or convenience sampling and which are unlikely to yield the spread of respondents required” (p. 1116). It is difficult to assert uniform and conclusive findings regarding CARE, a complex organisation of several thousand staff across more than 100 countries, based on a sample of less than 100 individuals. Similarly, a sample of less than 25 external experts from the populous and diverse international development community cannot be seen to meaningfully represent their diversity of views. Despite these constraints, I remain confident that the collective

expertise and insights of those chosen to participate in the research provide a meaningful basis for analysis.

It is important to acknowledge that all parties involved in this process came with preconceptions and assumptions regarding the content and likely outcomes. Perspectives from within CARE are shaped significantly by the participant's location within the confederation (e.g., whether they work for a traditional CARE member in the global north, the secretariat, or an emerging member) as well as their position within each organisation (e.g., board member, CEO or program manager.). As such, the stronger representation of *National Voices* in the thesis provided a useful counterbalance to the dominance of northern voices in much of the literature but may also have resulted in a bias towards the experience or opinions of participants from the global south. It is similarly important to note that priority was given to external participants with a high profile and an established voice amongst academics or practitioners. These external voices also carry assumed bias, particularly concerning the legitimacy or otherwise of INGOs operating in a local civil society space. Although participant bias is an expected feature of "real world" research, and while such bias may be largely reduced or constrained by adequate transparency and reflexivity on the part of the researcher (Galdas, 2017; Polit & Beck, 2014), I nonetheless acknowledge that it may have played a role in this thesis.

Finally, it is difficult to ascertain the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on this research. In a practical sense, the pandemic had the effect of triggering unanticipated changes to the methodology over the two years when face-to-face research in Sri Lanka and Indonesia became impossible. This change to the method approximately two-thirds of the way through the data collection was unplanned and may have imparted a different lens for triangulation and analysis of data in the final year. On balance, I do not believe that moving to remote data collection unduly affected the results, thanks in large part to the fact that relationships were already in place following visits in 2018 and 2019. Under other circumstances, the pandemic may have led to a wider change in scope for this research. It may have been possible to extend the scope to consider the relationship between the pandemic and INGO approaches to power, localisation and legitimacy. It was the view of all parties that it was unrealistic to retrospectively redirect the study in this way; however, given the many lessons being learned by INGOs in real time this feels like both a limitation and a lost opportunity.

Conclusion

This thesis is the product of a four-year cooperation between CARE International and the researcher, which was made possible through a shared interest in a deeper understanding of the legitimacy challenges facing INGOs and a shared recognition of the unique opportunity CARE's localisation process offered this discussion. As an insider-outsider, I have intentionally placed myself along the

fence line of subjectivity and objectivity by committing to the transparency and reflexivity such positionality demands. I have generated several discrete yet interconnected data sets, collectively including the voices of 111 individual participants from around the world. This data, in the various forms of notes, transcripts and completed forms and surveys, was reviewed through recurring action research cycles of reflection, analysis, planning and action.

Employing tools from grounded theory and organisational ethnography, the research combined inductive and deductive reasoning in the creation of findings. Operational definitions for the four domains of change (power, accountability, influence and legitimacy) provided the intellectual scaffolding upon which more complex and iterative findings could be built. Through open and axial coding, connections within and between data sets began to emerge. Through the added layer of a complex adaptive systems lens, the contribution of sub-systems, relationships and institutional norms drew particular attention. Despite the limitations of scale and bias common to case study analysis, and notwithstanding several unplanned methodological developments related to the Covid-19 pandemic, I contend that the findings reflect a robust analysis of informant opinion and a meaningful contribution to INGO research.

Chapter Three: *Literature Analysis*

Introduction

In this chapter, I introduce the literature most central to my understanding of the legitimacy challenge for INGOs and most fundamental to the analysis that follows. This thesis is intended to add a real-life analysis to the academic discourse, shaped by practitioner insights and the operational realities of an organisation attempting change. As such, the decision of what literature to include was determined by my focus on the relationship between legitimacy and localisation for INGOs. The review draws elements of INGO analysis from a range of academic disciplines, most notably development studies, international relations and organisational theory. This breadth reflects the fact that INGOs operate across a wide range of institutional and geo-political settings, each becoming increasingly complex (Davies, 2014; 2016; Lewis, 2014), and that INGOs are therefore of interest to scholars and practitioners across these and many other fields. I acknowledge, as did Walton et al. (2016), that a multidisciplinary approach is not perfect and that “attempts to unify disparate strands of a diverse INGO literature run risk of dealing in generalities and lacking in nuance” (p. 2767). Despite this risk, considering and comparing across disciplines allows for a broader understanding of the web of factors at play for contemporary INGOs.

Following a brief clarification of contested terms, the chapter begins with an analysis of the progress and pitfalls of INGOs, couched in terms of INGO contributions and critics. I explore a perceived disconnect between espoused values and organisational practices, particularly drawing from critiques of the professionalisation and corporatisation of the international development sector. This leads into a wider analysis of power imbalances between the global north and the global south, including the influence of donors on development cooperation. In turn, I look to the rapidly evolving global conversation about racism and decolonisation in the aid sector and the implications of this dialogue for INGOs. The chapter then considers the evolving understanding of legitimacy for INGOs, with emphasis on the interdependent concepts of power and influence. This section also considers the challenge of responding to diverse audiences, each with their own interpretation of legitimacy. The final section considers legitimation for INGOs, exploring the manner in which legitimacy is claimed by INGOs, particularly through demonstration of expertise and accountability.

I conclude that a disconnect between the values and practices of INGOs is central to the literature on INGO legitimacy and is seen to be deepening in the context of current dialogue regarding racism and decolonisation in the aid sector. Drawing on various types of legitimacy, in particular normative,

cognitive and pragmatic legitimacy (Koppell, 2008), I find that the diverse audiences and competing expectations work to complicate and compound the challenge of legitimation for INGOs. From within this complexity, it is the notions of legitimacy most closely tied to values that emerge as fundamental pillars for INGOs. Traditional markers of legitimacy tend to speak of an assumed difference between northern and southern partners (most notably in expertise and accountability) and these must now make way for the contemporary markers of respect, representation and humility.

Troublesome Definitions

It is important to recognise the contested nature of some of the terms used in this chapter and throughout this dissertation. Firstly, both academics and practitioners in the development sphere labour with the somewhat outdated and misleading terms *global north* and *global south*. First coined in the late 1960s and gaining popularity in the 1990s, the terms have been used to describe a socio-economic and political divide and have widely been seen as preferable to alternatives such as *developed* and *developing* or *first* and *third* world countries (Wolters et al., 2015). While many participants in this research were uncomfortable with the language of southern members or southern voice, the terms appear regularly throughout the primary data collection. Furthermore, the bulk of the literature and secondary data considered in this research employs these terms, including that provided by CARE International (see below). As such, and in the absence of a viable alternative, the terms *global south* and *global north* are employed throughout this thesis.

The divide between global south and global north countries is broadly considered a socio-economic divide, rather than one about location in the Southern or Northern hemisphere. The Global South is made up of Africa, Latin America, and the developing countries of Asia, the Pacific and the Middle East (CARE International, 2019b).

Secondly, I acknowledge that the terms *civil society* and *civil society organisation* (CSO) have many and varied definitions, rarely agreed upon and often developed for a particular audience (most commonly academics, policy makers or practitioners). Definitions are invariably regarded as too broad or too exclusive to be useful, depending on the purpose or intentions of the critic. Similar debates are held regarding where the lines can best be drawn between local, national and international CSOs, and whether non-government organisation (NGO) and civil society organisation are interchangeable terms. This thesis does not seek to engage in this debate and instead proposes that for the purposes of this research, CSOs are considered non-state, non-profit and voluntary organisations generally gathered around a common cause. Among the many organisations included

in this definition are NGOs, which in addition to meeting the CSO criteria have also fulfilled the legal requirements to operate in their chosen domain (this generally takes the form of registration or incorporation and often necessitates criteria such as a written constitution or articles of association). International NGOs (INGOs) are those which meet all these criteria and work across international borders (drawing from Coppola, 2020; Lewis, 2010; Martens, 2002). While in recent years the INGO community has grown to include organisations with origins in the global south (BRAC from Bangladesh being the most widely recognised of these), for the purposes of this research the term INGO refers to organisations with their origins in the global north.

Finally, there is some inconsistency in the language used to describe those people in developing settings with and for whom INGOs work. They are variously referred to as beneficiaries, stakeholders (often primary stakeholders), citizens, clients, community members and constituents, among other terms. Each of these terms is imperfect and open to different interpretations by different groups. Of the options, it has been argued that *constituent* imparts greater authority and agency to the individuals and communities embraced by this term: “A constituent authorizes what aid and philanthropy can do... A constituent can affect decision-making... A constituent’s voice is that around which the ecosystem is organized and oriented” (Ho, 2015, p. 2). For the purpose of this research, I employ the terms “constituent” and “constituencies” to describe these individuals and communities.

INGO Contributions and Critics

Public and institutional perceptions regarding the role and relative merit of INGOs have been in a state of constant change for some 50 years. Since their proliferation in the 1960s and 1970s, INGOs have been variously seen as advocates, saviours, agents of political change and instruments of neo-liberalism (Bond, 2013; Gray et al., 2006; Kamat, 2003a; 2003b). Despite these diverse and often contradictory interpretations, the core characteristics of an NGO have remained fundamentally unchanged: they are not for profit, self-managed (or ‘voluntary’) and values based (Fowler, 1997; Lindenberg & Bryant, 2001; Lissner, 1977). It is their strict values orientation that is seen to separate NGOs from the public and private sectors where values may change in line with politics, populism and market forces.

INGOs have proved hugely successful at mobilising resources in the global north for the purposes of humanitarian response and long-term development in the global south. In 2020, almost USD 20 billion of official development assistance (ODA) was channelled through international civil society (OECD, 2021). Private donations constituted more than USD 20 billion in the USA alone (Giving USA, 2021). INGOs are still largely trusted by donor communities (Davis et al., 2020), and, despite the

geographic, social and political complexity of the circumstances in which this aid is delivered, their projects are largely successful (Clark, 1991; DFAT, 2018; Riddell, 2014). The larger INGO families have built sophisticated relationships and systems that have in turn allowed them to extend their reach and effectiveness:

...the capacity of large INGOs to act and get results is because of their size, track record, international networks of influence, and brands; all of which make a huge difference to the ability to attract and retain good staff, produce good research and policy, and deliver programmes at scale with quality (Hobbs, 2013, p. 3).

INGOs have also sought to continuously improve their approaches to design, monitoring and implementation and have invested in ever-more robust systems for evaluation and impact assessment (Mitchell et al., 2020; Roche, 2010). As international advocates, INGOs have helped both to expand the space for policy dialogue in developing countries and to secure commitments to gender equality and other human rights as basic principles of development. They have also helped maintain the spotlight on international issues that disproportionately affect developing countries such as unfair trade practices and climate change (Edwards, 2008; Mayne, 2018; Stroup & Murdie, 2012).

At the same time, however, INGOs have been regularly criticised for straying from their values base in their approach to both policy and practice. Murphy (2001) suggested that the model for a successful INGO had become the corporation, ideally a transnational corporation, judged against corporate ideals. He argued that this positioning, and the pragmatic, realist ethos that underpins it, runs contrary to both the values for which INGOs stand and the transformational outcomes they seek. Similar concerns have been raised regarding the value placed on measurable outputs over empowerment outcomes and on professionalism over unique organisational values (Banks & Hulme, 2012; Eyben, 2005; Power et al., 2002). The professionalisation of INGOs is seen to contribute to a dilution of their values and it is argued that “an increasingly technocratic and tool-kit approach to development has exacerbated the depoliticization of development and the atheoretical perspective of much development discourse” (Kothari, 2005, p. 425). Criticisms of depoliticisation and over-professionalisation are tied closely to the importance of institutional donors to INGOS:

...the high dependency of NGOs on bilateral agency support forces them to vacillate between ethical convictions, and a logic of efficiency, rendering them vulnerable to the agendas of political actors. The logic of efficiency often necessitates adopting a mode of ‘professionalisation’ prescribed by the funder, which is sometimes in conflict with the mode of professionalism adopted by the NGO (Dhunpath, 2004, p. 1109).

As the volume of official development assistance funding to INGOS has grown, their perceived independence has weakened (Banks et al., 2015; Edwards & Hulme, 1998). In developing settings, INGOS can be seen to lack transparency in their decision making and to be motivated by priorities other than (or in addition to) those of the local community (Atack, 1999; CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness, 2016). By focusing on professionalisation and their appeal to donors, INGOS are accused of losing sight of their mission (Bush & Hadden, 2019) and their responsibility to challenge the status quo (Stroup & Wong, 2017). In the international community, both private and institutional donors favour homogeneity in NGO business practices yet are simultaneously critical of organisations too distant from the grassroots they claim to represent (Barbelet, 2018; Edwards & Hulme, 1995; Hudson, 2000). In this way, fulfilling donor expectations of consistent language and systems may have led to a perception, even amongst donors themselves, that INGOS are out of touch with their recipient communities.

The homogeneity of systems is perpetuated through processes of isomorphic mimicry, where organisations adopt and replicate the *form* of others (tools, language, structures) in the hope that improved *function* will follow (Andrews et al., 2017; Pritchett et al., 2010). Development scholars suggest that the link between form and function is rarely guaranteed, however, and describe isomorphic mimicry as “consistent with the observation that organizations and leaders are constantly engaged in ‘reforms’ putatively to improve performance and yet very little performance is achieved” (Andrews et al., 2017; p. 12). While much of the literature in this space refers to isomorphic mimicry between states, similar processes occur between states and INGOS and, equally, between INGOS and their partners.

It has been argued that by accommodating and replicating the expectations of international donors, INGOS institutionalise the power imbalance in north-south partnerships (Elbers & Schulpen, 2013) and necessarily compromise their ability to promote grassroots initiatives that are locally tailored and led (Hailey, 2000; Hulme & Edwards, 1997; Power et al., 2002). Similar commentary has been prominent in the literature since the 1980s, notably accelerated in the 1990s by the work of Chambers (1995; 1997) and Fowler (1991; 1997), without effecting fundamental change. “Despite at least three decades of well-argued critique calling for human-scale, bottom-up, contextual development rather than top-down projects, many critics suggest there are still significant forces towards normative implementation of development and against the empowerment of local participants/partners” (Ware, 2011, p. 59). Externally led or exogenous models of cooperation dominate the development landscape despite scholars, practitioners and even donors “calling for variations on endogenous approaches to development” (Holcombe, 2014, p. 751).

Such criticisms compound the view of INGOs as self-interested, with a tendency to employ practices that are self-serving rather than altruistic. INGOs are variously accused of choosing campaigns with a view to marketability rather than any 'meritocracy of suffering' (Bob, 2005, p. 1), of co-opting the plight of oppressed or marginalised populations to advocate their own cause and of overstating their contribution to change (Nelson, 2000). It has also been suggested that NGOs seek to manipulate public perceptions regarding their own successes and failures in order to maintain or grow donor support (Edwards & Hulme, 1995; 1998). Such challenges persist to this day, with the top-down nature of the aid industry featuring regularly in more recent interrogations of INGO purpose and practice (Bond, 2021; Green, 2015; Lawrence, 2018).

Criticisms of INGOs are compounded by the evolving status of local civil society in many developing settings and the changing relationship between local CSOs and the international community. INGOs are accused of claiming space that should rightly sit with local organisations; in so doing, they compete for limited resources and crowd out their local counterparts (Lewis et al., 2015; Batti, 2014). At the same time, it is understood that INGOs often play an incubator role for local CSOs and form partnerships to resource and empower them. There is evidence that these partnerships achieve outcomes that would not be possible in the absence of such collaboration (Better Aid, 2009; Brown, 1990). However, while INGOs may offer value by bringing global expertise and by attracting institutional donors to programming of this sort, the share of power in such partnerships is fundamentally uneven (Lister, 2000; Rights CoLab, 2021).

Interestingly, despite the attention paid to donor demands and the common understanding that INGOs are better able to meet the complex demands of institutional donors in the global north, expectations of measurement are still not easily met, and doubts persist regarding INGO effectiveness (Banks et al., 2015; Lewis & Opoku-Mensah, 2003; Roche, 2010). Simultaneously, economists and scholars are touting new funding trends that promote flexibility and responsiveness (Ingram, 2019), opening up the possibility of direct engagement of smaller organisations with less sophisticated systems. In this way, the historical acceptance of INGOs as necessary and useful interlocutors between rich and poor communities is being challenged, particularly where opportunities exist to support local CSOs directly.

In the time since this research began, the global conversation regarding power and legitimacy in international development has evolved rapidly. In 2020, the Black Lives Matter protests evolved quickly into a global movement that triggered a critical review of structural racism in states and organisations around the world (Leyh, 2020; McCoy, 2020). The international aid sector, including INGOs, was no exception. The criticisms of the aid architecture referenced earlier in this chapter,

particularly in terms of neo-colonialism and the structural disempowerment of the global south, have gained new and elevated voice. The conversation has become more explicit about the self-serving “white gaze” of donors and northern development organisations, which is seen to reflect a deep-rooted racism within the sector. Other critics point to myriad systems and behaviours that perpetuate the view of northern partners as powerful experts and southern partners as uncivilised and uneducated recipients (Pailey, 2019; van der Gagg, 2020).

Decolonising development, humanitarian aid and peacebuilding – the movement to address and dismantle racist and discriminatory structures and norms that are hidden in plain sight in the aid system – is emerging as an urgent, vital and long overdue discussion which adds greater weight to the existing calls to transform the system. If policymakers, donors, practitioners, academics and activists do not begin to address structural racism and what it means to decolonise aid, the system may never be able to transform itself in ways that truly shift power and resources to local actors (Peace Direct, 2021, p. 3).

Increasingly, INGOs and the wider development sector are being asked to acknowledge the role that racism has played in the evolution of their industry. “Race has to be spoken into existence and be mainstreamed within development... We need to speak race into existence in scholarship as much as policy and practice” (Robtel Neejai Pailey, as cited in Faciolince, 2020). This necessarily includes a review of language, systems and structures; however, it also demands that individuals take time “to consider their own racial, historical and positional power” (Tawake et al., 2021, p. 2). The anti-racism lens is both philosophical and practical and emerges as an important feature of legitimacy for INGOS.

Legitimacy

The concept of legitimacy is highly contested, and definitions vary widely according to the author and their audience. Some argue that legitimacy belongs at the very centre of political analysis and research, while others argue that the term is so multifaceted and loose that it has limited value in social science research. The concept featured strongly in the work of leading sociologists of the 20th century, in particular Max Weber and Jürgen Habermas. Weber (1968) wrote extensively on power and subordination, suggesting that legitimacy is generated when subjects believe and internalise the need for authority so deeply that they believe this power to be natural (as cited in Steffek & Hahn, 2010). Habermas (1976) tied legitimacy to the presence of a participatory democratic discourse and wrote extensively on the legitimacy generated when public voices and CSOs enter the discourse. Although this work initially centred on legitimacy within nation states, Habermas’ view evolved to accommodate the role of public discourse and civil society intervention for legitimacy in the “postnational constellation” (Habermas, 2001; see also Schrader & Denskus, 2010).

Suchman (1995) defined legitimacy as “a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs and definitions” (p. 574). As a normative concept, legitimacy generally refers to the conditions under which power is rightfully exercised. As an empirical concept, legitimacy generally refers to the conditions under which the powerful gain acceptance and support (Beetham, 1991; Hudson, 2000). Koppell (2008) reinterpreted legitimacy as a threefold concept, with normative, cognitive and pragmatic interpretations, as follows:

Normative (or moral) legitimacy is a function of beliefs about what entitles an individual or institution to wield power. An institution is legitimate because it is the just holder of power by the standards of an affected or concerned community. Cognitive legitimacy emphasizes the psychological, the degree to which an institution is accepted. An institution is legitimate because we accept and treat it as a given. Pragmatic legitimacy, as the name suggests, emphasizes the “interest-based” acceptance of an institution by the most affected parties. An institution is legitimate because the affected parties find it in their interests to accept it as such (p. 182).

The specific nature of these conditions—community standards and beliefs, institutional norms, the interests of affected parties—is continuously evolving. Legitimacy is a term most commonly applied to governments or nation states, and in popular use the term often refers to public acceptance of a government’s right to exert power. This form of political legitimacy is informed by the principles, ideas and values that govern a society. Power arrangements must appeal to underlying social norms in order to be accepted as legitimate (McLoughlin, 2014; 2017). Emphasis may be placed on either or both of *input* legitimacy—for example, the way in which an election was held—or *output* legitimacy—for example, the legislative changes a government enacts following election (Scharpf, 1999). Many features of political legitimacy translate to our understanding of organisational legitimacy, where public acceptance of an organisation’s right to intervene or advocate relates closely to the perceived values, functions and behaviours of that organisation.

Legitimacy for INGOs

As with states, organisations are also judged by their inputs (governance, affiliations, sources of funding) as well as their outputs or achievements. The notion of organisational legitimacy provides a “conceptual umbrella” (Steffek, 2003) under which other organisational features or criteria may be subsumed. In the case of NGOs, understandings of organisational legitimacy tend to include broad expectations of values as well as more narrowly defined notions of good governance or good practice. Collectively, these characteristics become proxies for legitimacy even though each

characteristic by itself may be contested or perceived differently by different audiences. Steffek and Hahn (2010) suggested that an NGO's mission and the altruistic, emancipatory values this implies have been adequate grounds for legitimacy in the eyes of many. They distinguished three historical sources of organisational legitimacy for NGOs: *mission* - their goals and principles; *participation* - their constituency and its involvement in organisational decision making; and their *policies*, and the impact these have on others.

Whilst in day-to-day operations INGO practitioners may regard legitimacy as something immediate and tangible, at the organisational or sectoral level legitimacy can also be seen as a product of complex interdependencies (Dellofre & Schmitz, 2019; Pallas et al., 2015). Among these, INGO legitimacy depends in large part on the accrual and use of influence and power, an intersection of domains that feature centrally in this thesis. Historically, some scholars have argued that the values orientation of INGOs, particularly in the absence of authoritative power, means that such organisations do not need to demonstrate legitimacy in the manner expected of states or elected representatives (Bruhl, 2002). Increasingly, however, it has been argued that INGOs exert considerable influence directly over states or indirectly over people and structures that are influential in the decision making of states. Although such influence remains modest by comparison with other international organisations or states themselves, it is seen by many observers as both significant and growing (Mathews, 1997; Steffek & Nanz, 2008). INGOs enjoy privileged access to international policy processes and have built considerable expertise in effectively "influencing the influencers." While such power may be informal and diffuse, many international organisations have come to depend on the contributions of INGOs and publicly endorse, thus elevate, their views (Edwards & Hulme, 1998; Hickman, 2010).

Understanding influence is inextricably linked to understanding power, from classical positions which focus on access to power by elite and non-elite groups (Dahl 1969; Bachrach & Baratz 1962; 1970) to more nuanced understandings of power, where some power is visible and some invisible (Gaventa, 1980; Mueller, 1973). INGOs position themselves between the powerful and the powerless; however, understanding INGO legitimacy requires an understanding of the power they either claim or are offered. While INGOs may claim allegiance with the powerless and may also lack direct power over citizenry, their opportunity to influence constitutes significant power. Lukes' (1974) description of "three faces of power" is useful in understanding the power of private organisations. Although NGOs lack the direct power to make decisions for constituents (the first face of power), they most certainly influence both the decision making between institutions (the second face of power) and the belief and acceptance of social or political conditions by individuals (the third face of power). This diffuse power of INGOs often comes in the form of persuasion. NGOs *frame*

issues for different audiences, seeking to convince them with compelling arguments or strategically compiled information. They seek to fashion common understandings of an issue, a set of circumstances or even themselves.

By shaping the discourse, INGOs also shape powerful identities for themselves and those they represent, much in the manner described by Foucault in his work on subjectivation (Foucault, 1982; see also Steffek & Hahn, 2010). Where INGOs are granted the opportunity to influence the discourse, they exercise the power to shape the perceptions of all participants, including themselves. With greater power comes greater scrutiny and, inevitably, greater criticism. If NGOs can influence the perceptions of powerful people and institutions, then who grants these “ill-informed northern do-gooders” (Hickman, 2010, p. 285) this power? On whose behalf do these “unelected guardians of the global good” (Florini, 2004, p. 73) speak? In the shadow of such reproval, legitimacy emerges as a necessary enabler for INGOs and, furthermore, any gap in legitimacy has the potential to constrain or derail both reputation and progress.

Clear purposes and policies are an obvious source of INGO legitimacy, yet these are also open to compromise and criticism (Dellofre & Schmitz, 2019; Pallas et al., 2015). Stakeholders in the global north tend to evaluate the effectiveness of INGOs against the normalised, universal standards suggested by their mission statements or organisational goals, despite such aspirations tending to oversimplify the nature of change in local contexts (Ossewaarde et al., 2008; Shutt, 2009). Public commitments, such as delivering quality programs in a timely manner, being effective and transparent in the use of funds and employing business practices that reflect core values, support legitimacy without guaranteeing it. Similarly, constituent representation and participation are key tenets of INGO legitimacy yet are also imperfect proxies. Participation for INGOs generally conflates the breadth and depth of constituent involvement in the organisation (specifically how many constituents, from where and in what way they are involved in organisational decision making). This is particularly challenging for INGOs for whom social and financial support generally resides in a comparatively small number of mostly northern countries. Critics note a tension between the interests and preferences of these northern constituents and accountability to the people with and for whom INGOs work, most commonly in the global south (Hahn, 2010; Elbers & Schulpen, 2013).

INGOs tend to present as either representative of a constituent community or as working in solidarity with a constituent community, and INGOs of both types are seen to play an important role in politics and international development (Halpin & McLaverty, 2010). Claims of representation are necessarily more open to criticism, however, particularly when INGO governance mechanisms and decisions making structures are located in the global north. INGOs face additional questions

regarding the appropriateness of northern institutions claiming or speaking on behalf of southern causes (Hogle et al., 2015). If we accept de Waal's (2013) proposition that "activism should be undertaken in partnership with affected people, under their leadership. It should facilitate those people defining the problem for themselves" (p. 1), then northern institutions must necessarily assume a more passive role. As such the assumed value of INGOs in this space, a feature of their *cognitive* legitimacy, is directly compromised.

Atack (1999) described the four criteria of development NGO legitimacy as representativeness, distinctive values, effectiveness and empowerment. This builds on Flathman's (1995) description of procedural and purposive legitimacy, where representativeness and values constitute the formal-procedural dimensions of legitimacy (the principles upon which the INGO operates) and while effectiveness and empowerment constitute the substantive-purposive dimensions (the normative results an INGO may be expected to achieve). In response to Atack's model and related literature of the time, Collingwood (2006) suggested that "defining transnational NGO legitimacy is complex due to the fact that legitimacy is both a sociological and a normative concept" (p. 454) and that mediating between these two dimensions is a perennial challenge in the search for INGO legitimacy. She questioned whether it was even possible "to come up with a normative basis for the legitimate exercise of power in international society... that allows for competing perceptions and visions of what 'legitimate' rules and membership of international society actually mean" (Collingwood, 2006, p. 455). This complexity, evidenced by the subjectivity of individual legitimacy lenses and the absence of agreed legitimacy yardsticks, compounds the legitimacy crisis for INGOs.

Mitchell et al. (2020) observed that INGO legitimacy has evolved over time and that traditional criteria have been replaced, or joined, by emerging legitimacy criteria. The authors suggested that in addition to the importance of principles, charity and representation (similar proxies to those expressed above) it has been the demonstration of conformity, financial propriety and elite expertise that have traditionally assured partners and particularly donors of the legitimacy of INGOs. Their emerging criteria include effectiveness, strategy, leadership, governance, transparency and responsiveness, many of which include multidirectional accountabilities (Mitchell et al., 2020, p. 100). The authors argued that the architecture of aid has long linked INGO legitimacy with trustworthiness: the ability to demonstrate clear ties to donor interests combined with adequate surveillance of spending (salaries and overhead ratios, in particular) and adequate minimisation of fraud or misappropriation risk. Despite the inadequacy of these features as indicators of development effectiveness or the impact of INGO work, such criteria remain important and dominate the infrastructure of INGO systems to this day (Mitchell & Calabrese, 2019; Mitchell et al., 2020).

All questions about INGO legitimacy ultimately boil down to implicit assumptions about the basic purpose of these actors, especially since these assumptions not only vary across stakeholders, but also have profoundly changed over time (Schmitz, 2020, p. 2).

In practice, legitimacy for INGOs is a complex web of diverse and often contradictory responsibilities. Walton et al. (2016) pointed to a “tension and intensive interaction between top-down and bottom-up dimensions of INGO legitimacy”; the former relate to “global norms, regulations and institutions” and the latter relate to “localised relationships with states and populations” (p. 2767). This is a particularly useful lens for the purposes of this study, drawing links between the various layers of legitimacy while also acknowledging that gains made with one audience often constitute losses with another. The authors’ article recognises, furthermore, that “since INGOs pursue a variety of goals, operate in a range of contexts, have different histories, and generate legitimacy in a variety of ways, there is no general formula or single solution to the contemporary challenges they face” (p. 2769). It is important to recognise that the legitimacy recipe cannot be assumed to be the same across a heterogeneous INGO community.

Legitimation for INGOs

Within the legitimacy discourse, the related term of *legitimation* refers more narrowly to the act of making an institution appear legitimate, often through a controlled discourse or the use of symbolic practices (Barker, 2001; Steffek, 2003). It may be applied to public and private organisations alike. Historical views positioned legitimation as a feature of political systems, where expectations and norms were incrementally consolidated through participation in the process. Weber (1968) defined legitimacy as belief in legitimacy, where power relations were *legitimated* when those involved in them, subordinate as well as dominant, believe them to be legitimate. Luhmann (1969) proposed that political subjects accept the terms of a political, legal or social condition simply through the act of participating in its development or adaptation. Over the last 50 years, the understanding of legitimation has evolved beyond the political context and may be applied to a spectrum of institutional forms and processes.

Legitimation and Accountability

For INGOs, legitimation is typically interrogated and addressed under the banner of accountability, a key reason for the inclusion of accountability as a domain of change. Whilst the two terms are not interchangeable, they again allow us to bridge operational and organisational thinking in the legitimacy discourse. In the face of deepening legitimacy questions, whether motivated by development principles or an existential threat, INGOs have actively sought to strengthen and better demonstrate their accountability over recent years. Although the concept of accountability is subject

to numerous and diverse interpretations, some common attributes generally include two *forms*—answerability and enforceability—and two *actors*—the object and the agent (Goetz & Jenkins, 2002; 2004). A useful starting point is that information must be provided (answerability), penalties may be suffered for inadequate information (enforceability), someone has a responsibility to provide information (object), and someone has a right to expect information (agent). Four common elements of accountability for INGOs include transparency, participation, evaluation and a mechanism for complaints and response (Blagescu et al., 2005; Brown, 2007). By demonstrating accountability against these elements, particularly accountability to the communities with whom they work, INGOs are seeking to reflect their organisational values more effectively and in so doing answer questions regarding their legitimacy as civil society actors.

Beyond these responsibilities, INGOs bear a more fundamental accountability to organisational values and identity, one that has proved difficult to track and demonstrate (Bruno-van Vijfeijken, 2019; Roche, 2009; Lissner, 1977). This raises philosophical questions regarding the difference between being responsible and being accountable, as well as associated questions regarding the moral obligations of individuals and organisations. Haney (2004) proposed that the moral community is composed of two kinds of actors: responsible actors and accountable actors. Within this model, the responsible actor is able to “self-oversee, self-regulate, and self-motivate responsive adjustments to maintain adherence with appropriate moral standards of action” (p. 406). The accountable actor is “held to external oversight, regulation, and mechanisms of punishment... in order to maintain adherence with appropriate moral standards of action” (Haney, 2004, p. 407). Philosophers from Aristotle and Plato to Kant and Weber have assumed moral agents to be autonomous and able to self-regulate (Bivins, 2006; Feinberg, 1970; Geffert, 2013); however, accountability demands external oversight, particularly in the case of institutions (Bovens, 1998). In the case of INGOs, particularly given their positioning as moral agents, it is no longer adequate to demonstrate responsibility without accountability.

A perceived disconnect between organisational values and behaviours leads to a gap in the wider notion of legitimacy for NGOs (Brown, 2007; Kilby, 2006; Lister 2003). The reputation of NGOs, including consistency between what they practice and what they preach, correlates with their political influence and their capacity to generate support. Accountability to values enables NGOs to successfully mobilise funding and endorsement, while any perceived discrepancy between values and practice leads to discreditation and resistance. In addition, expectations regarding the internal practices of INGOs are uniquely high: “If NGOs are to become social actors in a global world, pushing for justice, equity, democracy and accountability, then clearly these characteristics need to be reflected in their own systems and structures” (Edwards et al., 1999, p. 133).

Legitimation and Expertise

INGO structures and brands have in large part been built upon the premise of *international* expertise, which assumes that much if not most development wisdom resides with individuals and institutions of the global north. Through a “constant reiteration and renewal of technical language, methods and orthodoxies”, development specialists from the global north are “able to confirm the legitimacy of their role and intervention by claiming to possess the latest and more advanced expertise” (Crewe & Harrison, 1998, p. 112). In 1993, nearly 30 years ago, Chambers described a rapidly increasing rate of obsolescence of development fashions and ideas, and the pace has accelerated further since that time. Kothari (2005) holds the view that practices and toolkits are updated so rapidly that building expertise in them is always just beyond the reach of local development practitioners, thereby consolidating the involvement of international experts:

This process of “othering” legitimates forms of control and inequality and is therefore not surprisingly also invoked and reproduced in contemporary development discourse. Thus, the racial and gendered boundaries and distinctions marking the power relations between colonisers and colonised continue to be reinscribed though often subsumed within notions of expertise and professionalism (p. 432).

That priority and pre-eminence should be given to the most powerful among development players, notably the best resourced and long-established northern partners, is not new. Scholars of post-colonial development draw parallels between colonial rule and the origins of the development industry, where foreign rule has been replaced by foreign expertise (Goldsmith, 1997; Kothari, 2005). Dirks (1992) argued that to justify and sustain control, the process of colonisation was based upon particular types of knowledge which required a clear difference, an *otherness*, that implied superiority and inferiority. For Kothari (2005), professionalism and development expertise became that new point of difference between the north and south, a new dichotomy to replace the old, which would ensure a sense of *otherness* was maintained.

Legitimation and Locally Led Development

In response and often in parallel to the post-colonial discourse, development scholars and practitioners have spent decades inventing and reinventing processes that prioritise the needs and opinions of constituent populations over the assumptions of donors and implementing agencies (Chambers, 1993; Kelly & Westoby, 2018; Nelson, 1995). Countless thousands of project reports and evaluations speak to the importance of local leadership in development, as well as the power dynamics at play in participatory practice and the risks associated with cut-and-paste development solutions (Mubita et al., 2017; Waddington et al., 2019). Increasingly, the philosophical drive,

practical tools and myriad reports are being complemented by mounting empirical evidence that flexible and locally driven development programming is more effective than centrally led alternatives (Campbell, 2018; Honig, 2018a).

Despite these efforts, and despite decades of locally designed and delivered development and relief programs, the organisational structures of INGOs (reporting lines, financial systems and policies, governance mechanisms and decision-making processes) still tend to locate power with fundraising (Campbell, 2018, Edwards & Hulme, 1999, Steffek & Hahn, 2010). Acknowledging these shortcomings, large INGOs have been exploring horizontal forms of local partnership and local representation in an effort to transition away from the traditional vertical models that centre power and resources in developed or northern settings (Lewis 1998; Lindenberg & Bryant, 2001). More recently, INGOs have been specifically looking to localisation as a mechanism to redistribute power. This applies not only to the local presence of INGOs in developing settings, but also to the influence of INGO branches in the south over the resource allocation and decision-making structures of the wider organisation (Walton et al., 2016).

The localisation agenda picked up speed in the wake of the Global Humanitarian Summit in 2016 which “signalled the emergence of localisation as a central issue on the international humanitarian agenda” (Barakat & Milton, 2020, p. 1). This event launched the Grand Bargain, a landmark agreement between large donors and humanitarian organisations which specifically addressed the nexus between humanitarian and development work for these institutions. Although a uniform definition of localisation is elusive, most academic and practitioner descriptions include “the need to recognise, respect, strengthen, rebalance, recalibrate, reinforce or return some type of ownership or place to local and national actors” (Barbalet, 2018, p. 5). In this way, localisation is put forward as a means of legitimation for INGOs, as both a structural commitment to devolution and a demonstration of respect and northern humility. Despite widespread support, however, evidence remains scarce regarding what form localisation should take, how a process of localisation should be managed and whether localisation in any form can address the legitimacy gap for INGOs.

In 2021, a case study for the *Time to Decolonise Aid* report outlined a perceived watering down of the localisation commitments under the Grand Bargain of 2016, specifically in terms of the role of INGOs in localisation. The report’s author noted with regret that the Inter-Agency Standing Committee in charge of implementing Grand Bargain commitments did not agree to a proposed definition of local organisation that included the words “without affiliation to an international NGO/CSO.” The author went on to express dissatisfaction that Country Offices of INGOs can qualify as local or national actors and, furthermore, that the rules regarding “direct local funding” still

permit a role for INGOs as interlocutors (Peace Direct, 2021, p. 14). While the leaders and governance boards of INGO affiliates may disagree with this interpretation of “local”, the sentiment is clear. Given this context, understanding the relationship between localisation and legitimacy for INGOs is perhaps more pressing now than ever.

Conclusion

A perceived disconnect between the espoused values and organisational practices of INGOs, building momentum over several decades, has exposed a range of vulnerabilities in the sector. At the centre of this criticism is an entrenched power imbalance between the global north and the global south that is evident in the relationship between institutional donors and INGOs and is replicated in the systems and behaviours of INGOs themselves. In the context of a rapidly advancing movement to address racism and decolonisation in the aid sector, the legitimacy gap has become a legitimacy crisis with which INGOs must engage. Legitimacy for INGOs, however, is a complex web of diverse and contradictory responsibilities where gains with one audience often constitute losses elsewhere.

Koppell’s (2008) delineation between normative, cognitive and pragmatic legitimacy (2008) has resonance with INGOs and is instructive for the purposes of this research. Normative legitimacy for INGOs requires meeting the changing expectations of an ever-widening group of audiences and critics. Cognitive legitimacy requires attracting, maintaining or reclaiming broad public support for the value of INGOs as interlocutors of international development. Pragmatic legitimacy requires that INGOs provide a useful contribution that is readily understood by both northern and southern stakeholders, particularly when the understanding of what is most useful varies widely within and between these groups.

The traditional markers of INGO legitimacy (charity, propriety, conformity) have placed importance on a demonstrable difference between INGOs and their constituent communities (states, partners and individuals). It is the perceived difference between these parties, their *otherness*, which has long legitimised the role that INGOs play. Conversely, contemporary markers of INGO legitimacy (respect, humility, representation) place value on a demonstrable intimacy between INGOs and their constituent communities. It has become their perceived closeness, their proximity, which legitimises the role that INGOs play. Decades of work on participatory practice and constituent accountability, while improving the process and outcomes of INGO interventions, has not resolved the tension between these two rather contradictory sources of legitimacy. In principle, commitments to localisation demonstrate a concrete shift in favour of proximity. This thesis seeks to analyse whether localisation can swing that pendulum in practice and to explore how relationships and systems within INGOs work to enable or constrain this change.

Chapter Four: *CARE and the INGO Context*

Introduction

This chapter forms an extension to the literature analysis in Chapter Three, narrowing the focus to the various shapes and functions of INGOs and of CARE International in particular. I surmise that the vast majority of INGOs share a common legacy of decision making in the global north, linked closely to the public and private sources of funding for much of their work. Their organisational structures reflect the evolving expectations of both funders and their own members, with each choosing variations on a now familiar path. For CARE, a gradual and continuous growth into a large and reliable structure has enabled the mobilisation of significant resources and goodwill around the world, while also leaving a legacy of northern systems and relationships that are quite entrenched. Recent developments, including but not limited to localisation and membership diversification, present as steps towards a more agile and contemporary INGO model.

This chapter tracks this evolution and in so doing provides context for the localisation and legitimacy analysis to follow. I commence with a synopsis of the evolution of INGOs over the last 100 years, paying particular attention to their internal structures and their adaptation to changing demands. The focus then narrows to CARE International; a detailed history is provided, which documents the global presence and priorities of the organisation since its establishment in 1945. The chapter culminates in an analysis of the exercise of power within the CARE confederation and a summary of various criticisms and comparisons for the organisation in a rapidly evolving INGO environment.

Although the origins and programming interests of INGOs may vary, most share a common legacy of resources and decision-making power being held in the global north. I contend that the unique circumstances and choices made by INGOs along the way, particularly the trade-offs between autonomy and collective power, directly influence their ability to adapt and meet the legitimacy challenges they now face. For CARE International, the pace of change has increased markedly over the last five years. The global governance structure has evolved at a pace not seen in CARE's 75 years, and voices from the global south are being sought and heard at all levels. It remains to be seen, however, the degree to which CARE's relationships and systems can accept and accommodate the ongoing changes demanded of them.

INGO Structures and Shapes

Non-government organisations and societies began to include international missions in the mid-19th century, in support of a range of social and political causes. Save the Children, formed in 1919, was among the first of those that would evolve directly and continuously into the INGO model explored

in this thesis. Many more followed over the next 30 years, including Plan (1937), Oxfam (1942), CARE (1945) and World Vision (1950). In all these cases, the organisational structures and their international presence evolved gradually over the early years of their operations in line with changing priorities and emergent opportunities. The pace of this change, however, was glacial relative to that which would become necessary in the 1970s and beyond. The movement towards globalisation, which commenced in the 1960s, took hold in the 1970s with a profound economic shift that saw the emergence of powerful multinational organisations and new pressures on both developed and developing nation states. With these developments came changes to the form and depth of poverty in the developing world and, in turn, came opportunities for INGOs to dramatically grow in size, number and influence.

It is estimated that the total number of INGOs increased from less than 1,000 in 1955 to almost 10,000 in 1980 and more than 27,000 by 2005 (Turner, 2010). Much has been written on the likely combination of factors that enabled this exponential growth. Lindenberg and Bryant (2001) identified several structural, political and financial stimuli that appear to have fed this growth: changes to states as a result of globalisation (such as privatisation, reduced state capacity, increased fragility); democratic changes (including a reduction in the number of non-democratic regimes and the opening of space for civil society); and far greater public and private financial incentives in the form of institutional grant funding and private donations (particularly directed to humanitarian emergencies). These themes are echoed in the work of many scholars when describing the growth of NGOs as a societal response to socio-economic variables (Mathews, 1997; Turner, 2010). This is sometimes described as the demand side or “bottom-up” explanation for the growth in NGOs. It is countered by academics who argue that “top-down” drivers, in particular the manner in which states, international organisations and other structures have actively downplayed the role of the state and promoted NGOs, may be equally important in explaining why NGOs have become so numerous and powerful over this period of time (Boli & Thomas, 1999; Reimann, 2006).

Over the last 30 years, many of the larger INGOs have sought to consolidate isolated organisations sharing a recognised brand into INGO *families*. This has been driven by a multitude of motivations, commonly understood as operational efficiency at the micro (country) level, cohesion and coordination at the meso (organisational) level and collective authority and influence at the macro (international) level (Pratt et al., 2013). While these motivations represent internal drivers, several external forces were also at play in the move towards family structures. Host governments expressed increasing frustration at the presence of multiple members of a global organisation (for example, as recently as the 2000s, it was not uncommon for four or five different Save the Children

organisations to be working in a single setting, each with their own registration, management and infrastructure). To remedy this situation, individual INGO members in the north were necessarily required to relinquish some of their influence and control (Jayawickrama, 2012; Gnarig, 2013). Internationally, globalisation and changes in donor markets (in particular, structural adjustment at the World Bank and the failure of World Trade Organisation negotiations in 2008) also pushed INGOs away from their individualistic origins towards a more united model:

With increased globalisation, brand protection became an issue, and those who worked with international bodies such as the UN, World Bank, or IMF needed a global point of contact. This created a new challenge, which many ICSOs still grapple with: the organisations' perspectives, distribution of roles, responsibilities and power are all framed in a multi-national, rather than a global way. Decision making often seeks the lowest common denominator between divergent national interests, rather than aiming for the most effective global solution (Gnarig, 2013, p. 4).

INGO families exhibit a range of organisational structures, varying according to each organisation's unique history and chosen evolutionary path. Hudson and Bielefeld (1997) developed a useful fivefold classification to describe and delineate between the operating models of various (large) INGO families. Their classification is based on a continuum of central and dispersed power and includes the following five types: separate independent organisations; independent organisations with weak umbrella coordination; confederations; federations; and unitary, corporate organisations. At one end of the spectrum, separate organisations share a common name yet relinquish no decision-making to an international headquarters. Progressing along the continuum, the responsibilities and power of a central unit or organisation become progressively stronger until we reach the unitary model where all decisions, systems, methods and norms are determined centrally. Arguments for structures at the more independent end of this spectrum generally relate to flexibility, adaptability and a stronger national identity. Arguments for structures at the more federated or unitary end of the spectrum generally relate to efficiency, common standards for programs and increased brand cohesion for fundraising and advocacy (Mollenhauer, 2009; Van Vliet & Wharton, 2014).

It is interesting to note, in the context of this thesis, that for many INGOs the family has historically been limited to northern members or affiliates rather than the organisation's offices or operating presence in the global south. By way of example, Save the Children began as a unitary UK organisation before becoming a gathering of similarly named independent organisations, then settling into a confederated (and more recently a federated) model. Throughout this journey, it was

the relationship and power sharing between northern members (Save UK, Save Norway, Save Australia, etc.) that was being defined and redefined, not the relationship between northern members and their representatives or partners in the field. Staff and partners on the ground were both legally and practically considered part of the northern organisations and assumed to be adequately represented by leaders in the north. The same is true for CARE International and many others who established Country Offices that were under direct line management of one or more northern family members (Jayawickrama, 2010; Kavazanijian & Jayawickrama, 2010). Focusing on the terms of cooperation between northern members has been important in seeking to balance the expectations of northern boards and donors and OECD stakeholders; however, this may have come at the expense of attending to cooperation between the north and the south.

Within most INGO families, regardless of their position on the federation spectrum, complex organisational dynamics are at play behind the scenes. Members have unique personalities, demonstrating behaviours and attitudes that may reflect their own cultural norms as well as the expectations of domestic donors, the demands of local boards of governance, the personalities of individual leaders or, in many cases, a combination of all these influences. Most INGO families carry heavy historical baggage formed through years of cooperation, or failure to cooperate, internally. Internal allegiances have been forged in support of a perceived common interest or broken through a perceived wrongdoing; these histories inform the contemporary behaviour of affected parties. Such interplay is only one of many examples of internal interests and cultures, sometimes referred to as pathologies, which develop over time and have the potential to lead organisations away from their values or principles (Gourevitch & Lake, 2012; Lindenberg & Bryant, 2001). Although not always visible to those outside the system, such dynamics are common to large organisations and are an important feature of the complex adaptation taking place in INGOs.

Principles are further tested by the financial realities of large INGOs. In several such families, one member is far larger than—often many times the size of—the next closest in size (see World Vision USA, Oxfam Great Britain, CARE USA). No matter how strongly the principle of equality is embraced, “this reality makes it hard to decouple money, size and operational capacity from power and influence within the global organization” (Jayawickrama, 2010, p. 4). For new and aspiring members of INGO families, the philosophy of greater inclusion and power sharing may be further contradicted by a legacy of authorising environments, both informal and formal, through which change is constrained (Andrews et al., 2017; Pritchett et al., 2010). With few exceptions, such authorising environments are widely accepted by northern INGO partners and are grounded in the realpolitik view that ownership and expertise rest with the source of operations funds. While the origins of

such systems and behaviours may be based on principles of growth and good governance, in an era of transformation they may work to slow or even contradict those changes in organisational structure that are required to remain relevant.

A range of internal and external demands have placed steady pressure on INGOs to review and adapt their systems over time. In a 2010 case study of six large INGOs (Save the Children, Oxfam, Médecins Sans Frontières, World Vision, CARE and Mercy Corps), the Hauser Centre at Harvard University identified a range of tensions experienced by organisations seeking to adapt and evolve to meet shifting demands. Impact and efficiency were identified as key drivers, often interpreted as the need to ensure structures and systems are the most effective for each context and culture. In addition, an extended period of growth for INGOs (Banks & Brockington, 2020) has elevated legal and financial risks and therefore increased the expectations placed on organisational systems and governance. With these drivers come tensions, including the structural tension between affiliation and autonomy among the members of large INGOs:

...there is a strong push and pull between affiliation (what is gained by affiliating more closely with the larger organization or by giving the center more power) and autonomy (what is lost by ceding control over certain functions to central/shared mechanisms) (Jayawickrama, 2010, p. 4).

There are also deeper, more philosophical tensions at play for large INGOs seeking to evolve. Most organisations claim to be seeking greater diversity and equity in their governance as well as their operations, including a more equitable sense of ownership between members. Such goals are driven at least in part by philosophical aspirations, such as those outlined in World Vision's Declaration of Internationalisation (Whaites, 1999) or CARE's Delhi Resolution (CARE International, 2014) where the need for greater and more meaningful representation of southern voices is made quite explicit. Such motivations are no doubt sincere, yet there are also longstanding organisational imperatives that relate to the social, economic and political climate for INGOs in many developing and middle-income settings (Glennie, 2011; Lawrence, 2018; Naidoo, 2004). In many parts of the world, host governments and local civil society voices have begun to question the value-add of INGOs relative to local civil society alternatives (Doane & Kojo Vandyck, 2020; Ismail, 2019). Private and institutional donors, too, are purportedly looking to more authentic and more affordable implementing partners in many settings (Bond, 2021; CONCORD, 2017). Whether INGOs are jumping or being pushed is the source of some debate, and critics are alert to any prioritisation of institutional imperatives over values: "Although it is easy to justify organizationally driven actions as proximate means towards a

long-term goal, organisational interests may entail compromises that undermine the perceived 'goodness' of NGO and, thus, their credibility" (Gourevitch & Lake, 2012, p. 13).

CARE at a Glance

Among the many organisations grappling with the challenges outlined above is CARE International, one of the world's largest INGOs working in humanitarian relief and long-term development. CARE identifies as non-profit, non-sectarian and apolitical. In 2017, CARE claimed to have reached some 63 million people through 950 projects in 93 countries around the world. The total global revenue in 2017 was approximately USD 925 million (CARE International, 2017a). CARE works in four broad thematic areas: life-saving humanitarian assistance; food (and nutrition) security and climate change; sexual, reproductive and maternal health (including a Life Free from Violence); and Women's Economic Empowerment (CARE International, 2017b). CARE places women and girls at the centre of development efforts because they are disproportionately affected by poverty, discrimination and disasters. CARE believes, furthermore, that empowered women and girls become catalysts for greater change (CARE International, 2019a).

CARE International is a global confederation of 14 CARE member partners (CMPs) working through 70 Country Offices and a diverse network of partners. Each CMP is an independent organisation that plays a range of roles at national, regional and global levels—contributing program expertise, implementing programs, raising funds, advocating on key issues and communicating to and mobilising the public in their country (CARE International, 2017a). This group historically included only members from the global north but expanded between 1995 and 2015 to include members from Thailand, Peru and India. Among the 14 CMPs, five organisations play the role of Lead Member by providing line management and support to the CARE Country Offices. Lead members include CARE USA, CARE Canada, CARE Australia and, managing a smaller number of offices, CARE France and CARE Germany. Two new categories of membership have recently emerged in the wake of efforts to diversify membership in CARE. Local organisations replacing Country Offices in Morocco, Egypt and Indonesia have become the first three Candidate Members who, in addition to now having representation on the highest level of operational leadership (the National Directors Committee [NDC]), are transitioning towards full CMP status with equal rights at the highest level of CARE's governance structure (the CI Supervisory Board). Chrysalis (a local organisation that replaced the Country Office in Sri Lanka) is the first Affiliate Member of CARE and therefore have representation on the NDC yet are limited to observer status on the supervisory board.

In most settings where CARE implements programs, the footprint is heavy with a registered Country Office that fulfils local requirements and also meets an extensive list of CARE International Country Office performance standards. While specific implementation modalities vary widely depending on the context, history and specific grant portfolio, it remains true that in many settings CARE is still involved in direct program implementation and that local partnerships often take the form of sub-contracting with civil society (CARE International, 2018a). CARE is heavily dependent on institutional donors and has always had a lower percentage of private and unrestricted funds than many peer organisations. According to their annual reports, institutional funding in 2017 constituted 29% of World Vision International's income (World Vision, 2017), 42% of Oxfam International's income (Oxfam International, 2018), and just over 70% of CARE International's income (CARE International, 2017a). This percentage has historically been even higher for CARE and has far-reaching implications for the appetite and capacity for strategic investments, particularly those that relate to organisational change rather than fundraising (i.e., investments offering a limited or indirect financial return).

The CARE International Secretariat is based in Geneva with offices in Brussels and New York. The secretariat sets global strategy and supports the network to achieve common goals and shared global priorities. It is also responsible for representing the confederation in key global forums, leading CARE's global advocacy and hosting both the CARE Emergency Group and the CARE International Safety and Security Unit (CARE International, 2019b) As a confederation, CARE International sits in the centre of the INGO continuum (described earlier in this chapter), where there is shared planning and a pool of collective resources to be used for commonly agreed purposes, yet the power of decision making rests with individual members rather than a unitary organisational headquarters.

CARE's Evolution 1945-1960

The origins of CARE date back to the end of the second world war when the world's attention shifted to the many thousands of people left vulnerable as a result of the conflict. A consortium of 22 U.S. charities came together to create the Cooperative for American Remittances to Europe (C.A.R.E.). Members included a mixture of civic, religious, farm and labour organisations brought together with the shared aim of delivering food aid to relieve the suffering in post-war Europe (Henry, 1999). CARE's food aid took the form of CARE Packages, which were initially made up of surplus U.S. army rations such as canned meats, powdered milk and dried fruits. The first packages arrived in Le Havre in May 1946, and, over time, CARE packages became an iconic symbol of international cooperation and of the organisation itself (O'Keefe et al., 1991).

In 1946, CARE established an office in Canada, the first additional fundraising office and the only such office to exist outside the U.S for the next 20 years. In July 1948, CARE commenced its first non-European missions, initially to Japan and soon after to China and Korea. In 1949, programs and projects extended to the Philippines, India, Pakistan and Mexico. After supplies of surplus rations packs were exhausted, CARE began developing their own food aid packages, designed with the help of a nutritionist and tailored to different destinations. By 1949, CARE offered and shipped at least 12 different packages, and this year also marked CARE's first expansion into non-food aid, primarily in the form of self-help packages made up of tools. In light of the expanded geographic focus, CARE changed the meaning of its acronym to Cooperative for American Remittances to Everywhere in 1953 (O'Keefe et al., 1991, p. 39).

After much internal deliberation and debate, the CARE board of directors voted in July 1955 to reduce the focus on Europe and expand into developing nations around the world. More than half of CARE's 42 missions were closed, primarily in European countries (CARE International, 2019b). CARE's implementation approach also changed around this time, expanding beyond the provision of food and tools to other forms of support, particularly in response to emergencies. In 1959, CARE changed the meaning of its acronym (for a second time) to Cooperative for American Relief Everywhere (O'Keefe et al., 1991).

CARE's Evolution 1961-1975

In the early 1960s, CARE played a lead role in selecting and training the first cohort of U.S. Peace Corps volunteers and continued to partner on Peace Corps projects and recruitment for most of that decade. CARE's programs expanded into health in the wake of a merger with a medical aid organisation called MEDICO in 1962. Alongside expanded capacity in agriculture and the promotion of self-help models of community development, the internal and external shape of CARE had begun reflecting a broader role than emergency relief. CARE packages were officially phased out in the late 1960s with the last food package shipping in 1967 and the last tools package shipping in 1968. Over 100 million CARE packages were delivered between 1946 and 1968 (CARE International, 2019b).

The late 1960s saw the first formal partnership agreement with a host government (Honduras, 1967), followed by many more such agreements at local and national levels over the course of the early 1970s. Much of CARE's programming in this time focused on nutrition, along with the construction of schools and nutrition centres. CARE's local focus was lifted from the project level to a country-wide lens, and CARE began cooperative multi-year planning. This period also witnessed a range of systems improvements, notably the creation of more robust approaches to planning and

implementation (Henry, 1991). CARE Canada became an autonomous body in 1973, laying a path for the significant structural changes to follow.

CARE's Evolution 1976-1990

This era bore witness to the internationalisation of CARE as an organisation, beyond the confines of a U.S. agency working in developing countries. CARE established independent organisations across Europe, with a CARE Europe office (1976) followed by CARE offices in Norway, Germany and Italy. CARE's leadership at the time felt that these offices were quick to gain popularity and support because of the assistance provided between 1945 and 1955 and the personal connection many people in these countries had with CARE as a result. The concept of an umbrella organisation was first mooted in 1979, with the intention of coordination and reduced duplication between CARE Country Offices. This body was later named CARE International and met for the first time in 1982 with Canada, Germany, Norway and CARE USA (formerly just 'CARE') in attendance. New CAREs were established regularly over the course of the 1980s, including CARE France (1983), CARE UK (1985), CARE Austria (1986), CARE Australia, CARE Denmark and CARE Japan (1987) (CARE International 2018a).

In the early 1980s, CARE's longer term development programs increasingly began focusing on ways to improve the status of women and encourage their greater participation (CARE International, 2019a). Such programs included income-generating activities specifically targeting women, and these initiatives began to be integrated into planning processes for agriculture, nutrition, education and health. CARE continued to work in emergency response throughout the period, scaling up its interventions to be among the largest INGO responders to the Ethiopian Famine in the mid-1980s.

CARE's Evolution 1991-2005

In line with growing evidence and evolving sector norms, CARE's approach to understanding and responding to poverty became more sophisticated in the 1990s. Traditional views of an immediate relationship between poverty and access to basic goods and services gave way to a more nuanced appreciation of the role discrimination and social exclusion played in perpetuating poverty. CARE's 1996 Household and Livelihood Security Framework (HLS) sought to capture these relationships and CARE's response for the first time. Around the turn of the millennium, the human rights concepts of universality and interdependence began to feature in program analysis and planning. CARE formally adopted a rights-based approach (RBA) to development in the CARE International Programming Principles (2003) and clarified the relationship between HLS and RBA in the 2004 Unifying

Framework (CARE International, 2019c). This 15-year period also saw the development of programmatic responses that were to become flagships for CARE's practice. Most notably, in 1991 Niger CARE developed a local microfinance model called Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs) which would go on to be honed and replicated hundreds of thousands of times by CARE and many other organisations around the world (International Rescue Committee, 2012).

Within CARE, the early 1990s saw the development of the Lead Member model for sharing oversight of Country Offices. Historically CARE USA had managed all CARE Country Offices; however, the Lead Member model enabled other members to step into an operations role, managing an agreed number of Country Offices on behalf of the confederation. CARE Canada and CARE Australia took responsibility for several offices each, while both CARE France and CARE Germany took the lead on one or two each (Henry 1999). This shared the load of responsibility yet complicated reporting lines and responsibilities by adding an extra tier to the structure. All CMPs had historically only dealt with CARE USA Country Offices, but by the mid-1990s they were cooperating with up to five lead members depending on where they chose to fund programs. The same period included the development of the CARE International Code, commonly referred to as the CI Code, which outlined a set of principles and regulations governing the interaction between offices and functions across the confederation. The CI Code laid down the terms by which complicated relationships could be managed, including grant management protocols and common brand guidelines among many other practices.

In 1997, CARE International in Thailand became the first CARE Country Office to transition to a local organisation. The Country Office was deemed unsustainable due to reduced institutional funding and limited operating space for INGOs. Rather than close, a local organisation called Raks Thai emerged and was to become the first member partner from the global south. The CARE Country Office in Peru followed suit and CARE Peru was founded as a local Peruvian organisation in 2003. Efforts at establishing a new, local CARE presence in Brazil around this time were ultimately unsuccessful, and the fledgling local organisation folded into a more traditional Country Office until its eventual closure in 2016.

Contemporary CARE 2006-2020

CARE has continued to grow its overall portfolio and programmatic reach throughout most of the last 15 years. Following rapid growth related to the Indian Ocean Tsunami response over the course of 2005, CARE has responded to major emergencies regularly in the time since: the earthquakes in Haiti, Pakistan and Indonesia and the conflicts and crises in Sudan, Syria and Yemen among others

(CARE Canada, 2016). Long-term development programming also grew steadily throughout this period and CARE continued to shape and redefine its development approach. Among the most significant tools to capture and enable this practice were the Women’s Empowerment Framework (2006), the Program Approach (2008) and the Governance Programming Framework (2011). CARE’s international portfolio was unified for the first time under a collective global program strategy in 2013. In addition to clarifying CARE’s thematic priorities, the program strategy unpacks CARE’s contemporary development philosophy under three broad functions around the world: Saving Lives, Promoting Lasting Change and Multiplying Impact. This spectrum of functions is applied differently across a spectrum of operating environments, with the focus on Saving Lives in emergency settings and Least Developed Countries, a focus on Promoting Lasting Change in developing countries and a focus on Multiplying Impact in middle-income countries. CARE claims to focus exclusively on multiplying impact in the developed world (CARE International, 2019a).

Figure 1

CARE International Strategic Directions to 2020



Note. From *Secretariat Orientation Package: CI Overview* by CARE International, 2017.

Internal deliberations over strategy and structure have also been a feature of this recent period. In the mid-2000s, CARE developed a set of organisation-wide strategic directions to 2020 which were updated in the mid-2010s in unison with the global program strategy. The document described five key directions, as shown in Figure 1. Frameworks and sub-strategies fall out of each direction, including a Global Growth Framework and the CARE International Accountability Framework. The organisation has also extensively reviewed its governance structure and mechanisms to better link governance with the organisational ethos and goals (CARE International, 2019b). A challenge for

CARE has been to manage the competing and potentially contradictory nature of the five directions. In principle, the growth aspirations of the third direction support the other four; however, in the short term, given a finite pool of discretionary funds, investing in growth necessarily comes at a cost in terms of investment in the other directions. Accommodating further growth might also stretch capacity and reduce the bandwidth available to undertake organisational change endeavours. Diversifying CARE's membership could conceivably reduce program impact, at least in the short term, given the energy directed towards reforming organisational structure and systems. These and other combinations represent potential threats and belie the simplicity of a straightforward plan for organisational transformation.

Of most interest to this research is the work being done under Global Presence and Legitimacy. Of the five key elements of the organisational strategy, this is the most unique to CARE and the most directly related to structural change across the confederation. This focus and language were triggered in large part by a meeting of the CARE International Board in India in 2014, when a landmark commitment was made to accelerate the diversification of CARE's membership. At the time, CARE India had just emerged from its own localisation process, and the newly formed local organisation hosted the leaders of the confederation. Representatives from within and outside the CARE network addressed participants, collectively calling for a step change in CARE's hitherto slow evolution into a contemporary civil society organisation. The event culminated in a bold global commitment as follows:

No single element of CARE 2020 is more transformational for us than building our non-OECD membership in CARE. We are convinced that doing this will have a profound impact on our ability to fight poverty and social injustice, fundamentally alter the dynamics of our governance, determine the issues we prioritise, build our legitimacy, and enable us to mobilize significant resources in support of our critical work...With this in mind, we commit to a fundamental realignment of our confederation from one that is predominantly comprised of OECD country members to one with predominantly members from non-OECD countries. Specifically, by 2019 we aspire to have a majority of our members from non-OECD countries and by 2025 to have predominately non-OECD members (CARE International, 2014, p. 1).

The formal statement released in the wake of this meeting went on to describe the immediate steps that would be necessary, including changes to the CI Code, CARE's membership criteria and secretariat priorities. In the weeks and months that followed, the organisation sought to expand on its understanding and commitment to diversification through not only transitioning Country Offices

into members but also enabling external organisations to join and building external alliances that reflected and enabled these values (CARE International, 2019b). CARE currently has three types of confederation membership: CARE Member Partners (CMPs), Candidate Members and Affiliate Members. Candidate Members share the CARE brand and have committed to becoming CMPs within an agreed period of time. Affiliate Members do not bear the CARE name but can share in and contribute to the work of CARE International. Candidate and Affiliate Members sign agreements with the confederation outlining the unique terms of each cooperation, but both membership types include a seat on the CI Council with limited voting rights. In most other respects, these members share the same responsibilities and opportunities as CMPs. The only exceptions to this are that Affiliate Members are not expected to align with all global strategies and frameworks and may only join the National Directors Committee (NDC) by invitation.

Power and Influence in CARE

CARE USA are the central power brokers in the CARE confederation, linked largely to the fact that they generate the majority of CARE's global income. In 2017, CARE USA secured approximately USD 564 million in revenue, more than two-thirds of CARE's total global revenue (USD 841 million) and approximately five times the total annual revenue of the next closest CARE members, CARE Canada and CARE UK (CARE International, 2017a). In addition to their sheer financial size, CARE USA holds a unique legacy as the founding member and the centre of the organisation for much of its 75-year history. CARE USA is also lead member for the vast majority of CARE Country Offices. Despite the establishment of the CI Secretariat more than 40 years ago, CARE USA also maintain legal ownership of the CARE brand and to this day all parts of CARE must also licence the brand from CARE USA.

The reality for CARE International is that the confederation is highly dependent on CARE USA for investments that can make the confederation more unified and effective. Given the comparatively low levels of unrestricted funding across CARE, and as the challenge of raising unrestricted funds worsens, investment in the collective becomes an increasingly difficult trade-off for CARE USA (Jayawickrama, 2010). Assuming investment in collective aims is proportionate to the total income portfolio, any dip in CARE USA revenue disproportionately affects resources available to those collective aims. Similarly, an autonomous decision by CARE USA to *not* invest in any given confederation priority or CI Secretariat function has a disproportionate effect on the likelihood of other members choosing to invest. There have been many examples of this in practice, including the CARE USA decision to halt investment in a planned move to centralised Country Office management in 2015. After some years of consultation and discussion, the confederation appeared set to move

away from the lead member model in favour of unified line management. As the lead member in the majority of offices affected and the primary investor in this strategy, CARE USA's decision was unilateral and binding. More recently, a fall in revenue against CARE USA's projected income in 2019 led immediately and directly to a reduction in the funds available to the secretariat to pursue confederation goals, including but not limited to membership diversification.

CARE USA are not alone within the confederation in prioritising their own interests and pursuing autonomous rather than collective strategies. At various times, all or most members of the confederation have vigorously defended their independence and sovereignty, and several still resist the evolution away from their individual northern identities. As discussed in Chapter Three, the leadership and boards of autonomous INGO members have long been established with the intent of capturing and growing a share of the local donor market and/or capturing and growing a share of the global influence within their INGO family. At CARE, as elsewhere, this may be justified locally as a proximate means towards a long-term goal, despite possible ramifications in other settings. Northern CARE members resisting changes to the lead member model due to implications on their global budget is one such example. Northern CARE members waging legal battles with former Country Offices for control over locally generated funds is another. In these and many other examples, within CARE and many other INGOS, what constitutes responsible practice for one partner may compromise another partner and may also be seen as contrary to the goals or values of the global entity.

As a confederation, CARE International sits squarely in the middle of the spectrum of INGO structures described by Hudson and Bielefeld (1997), where independent organisations sit at the fully autonomous end and unitary corporate structures at the fully affiliated end. In the confederation model, some coordination, standard-setting and resource allocation functions are delegated to the central office (the CI Secretariat in the case of CARE); however, confederations are generally dominated by strong individual members (Lindenberg & Bryant, 2001). For CARE, as for other confederations, decisions made at the centre require unanimity across the membership or at least agreement by the most powerful among them. Historically, the capacity of the CI Secretariat to influence or enforce has been largely limited to moral suasion and consensus building. While common guidelines and protocols mean coordination is stronger than that found in independent or umbrella INGOS, it is weaker at CARE than in two other organisations I have worked for, namely Plan International (a federation tending towards a unitary model) or Save the Children International (after transition from an umbrella organisation to a confederation and, more recently, to a federated model).

CARE's mobilisation towards a more equitable and representative global structure has not been rapid. Conversations about NGO identity, in particular the need to evolve beyond a historical northern identity and more meaningfully cede voice and power to the south, have been a feature for large INGOs since the early 1990s (Kavazanjian & Jayawickrama, 2010). In the case of CARE, the first southern member, Raks Thai, transitioned from a CARE USA Country Office in the mid-1990s amid conversations about the future of the CARE model and the transition of several country presences in coming years. Ten years later, only CARE Peru had been added to that list, and a further 10 years on CARE India had become only the third (CARE Brazil had tried and not succeeded in this time). As members rather than Country Offices, these three organisations not only had national registration and national boards of governance, but one by one became the only southern organisations to claim a seat on the NCD and the CI Supervisory Board. The simultaneous transition of current or former Country Offices in Morocco, Egypt, Sri Lanka and Indonesia from 2016, therefore, represented something of a step change and a more radical shift in the dynamic of these powerful decision-making structures. While these transitions reflect and support CARE's transformation aspirations, it can equally be argued that in most of these settings the Country Office model was seen as untenable—CARE's choice was to transition or perish.

Over the period of this research, change has continued to hasten and diversify at CARE. A new strategy, CARE's Vision 2030, speaks to an evolved organisational structure and explicitly addresses issues of power and race. Vision 2030 is discussed in Chapters Seven and Eight, particularly in terms of the influence of voices from the global south in shaping the new approach. CARE have publicly voiced a range of values-driven undertakings, including a commitment to feminist leadership (CARE International, 2021b) and a statement of solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement (CARE USA, 2020). Furthermore, along with eight other large INGOS, CARE have signed a "Pledge for Change" in which they commit to playing their role in rethinking and decolonising the global aid system (Centre for Humanitarian Leadership, 2021). These and other commitments were made in the latter stages of (or after) the collection of primary data for this study and, as such, did not feature in the commentary of participants.

Conclusion

Although the origins and programming interests of INGOs may vary, most share a common legacy of resources and decision-making power being held in the global north. As their portfolios and practices have evolved so, too, have their structures, with each choosing different points on a federation spectrum and each agreeing to different types of governance and decision making. These choices reflect (or in some instances create) trade-offs between member autonomy and collective power,

and between the relative influence of voices from the global north and global south. Within northern partners, additional power dynamics play out linked to internal histories and the scale of funding each party contributes. Furthermore, regardless of these dynamics and independently of any decisions regarding structure and governance, the long and layered evolution of the INGO model means that they are complex and slow-moving machines.

For CARE International, despite deeply entrenched power relations and a confederated structure that emphasises member autonomy over collective action, change is occurring at pace. In the wake of the Delhi Resolution in 2014, investments in diversification have been debated and secured across the membership. Changes to the CI Code to enable a new affiliate membership type and changes to enable better donor access by non-OECD members have also been debated and agreed (CARE International, 2018a). The global governance structure has evolved at a pace not seen in CARE's 75 years, and at all levels of the organisation the voices and expectations of the global south are being heard. The following chapters seek to explore how ready CARE's infrastructure is to meet the demands of such change and the degree to which CARE's relationships and systems can adjust and enable, rather than resist and constrain, the devolution of power to new local members and affiliates.

Chapter Five: *Yayasan Care Peduli, Indonesia*

Introduction

After a local presence spanning more than 50 years, CARE International formally closed its doors in Indonesia on 31 August 2019, relinquishing operations to a newly formed local organisation called Yayasan Care Peduli (YCP). The CARE Country Office had operated under the stewardship of CARE Canada until that date, at which point the legal and administrative responsibilities were handed over to the board and CEO of YCP. This research accompanied the organisation throughout that period of change, with data collection taking place in 2018, 2019 and 2020. This chapter presents the first cut of data from this case study, with emphasis placed on the undiluted voices of participants. The inclusion of raw data is a purposeful attempt to give life to the voices of participants (Given, 2008; White et al., 2014) before this data is revisited later in a comparative analysis of the two case studies (Chapter Seven).

The transition from INGO Country Office to local association was challenging for CARE in Indonesia. Stretched local resources combined with high staff turnover at all levels of the organisation meant that it was difficult to achieve or maintain momentum for the organisational change. Uneven support from the wider CARE confederation further compromised the process and compounded the demands placed on those steering the transformation. Despite these constraints, the data suggests progress against all the nascent organisation's transition aspirations and a growing optimism among staff and partners by the final year of data collection. Among the successes described by research participants, the most consistent claim is that YCP enjoys greater legitimacy as a result of their transition from an INGO outpost to a local organisation.

The chapter commences with a brief synopsis of the Indonesian context and CARE's history in that location. Given the focus on organisational change, these summaries are deliberately brief; they seek only to position the research in context rather than deeply analyse the Indonesian operating environment. A section on participant perspectives follows, summarising key results from the three annual data collection cycles. As outlined in Chapter One, this chapter is predominantly deductive and descriptive in nature, with data consolidated through open coding and presented under the focus areas agreed with YCP. Particular attention is paid to commonalities and any stark contradictions that emerged. The qualitative data is then supported by quantitative data extracted through three annual self-assessment exercises and an online survey in 2020. The final section of the chapter presents a preliminary analysis of the data, re-grouped and re-interpreted through my own lens as practitioner and researcher.

Indonesian Context

Civil society organisations, in one form or another, have been a feature of the Indonesian social and political landscape for more than 100 years. The organised gathering of young people late in the colonial period was a central feature in the unification of the country prior to the eventual declaration of independence in 1945 (Eldridge, 1995; Beittinger-Lee, 2009). From the 1950s onward, and most notably between the late 1960s and early 1970s, students and intellectuals formed numerous non-government organisations, many of which were dedicated to community development activities. International NGOs were invited to support this work, and many of the larger INGOs (Oxfam, World Vision, Save The Children, Plan International) established a presence in the country sometime between the late 1950s and the late 1970s (He, 2003; Warren, 2005).

In the early years of Indonesia's New Order, from when Suharto came to power in 1966 until the early 1980s, NGOs were seen as important state allies in development. They were mobilised to help the government in providing low-cost health care and livelihoods support to some of the country's poorest people. Cooperation between government and NGOs was commonplace, and both local and international NGOs were permitted space for representations to government on the experiences and needs of those with whom they worked (Fakih, 1991; Eldridge, 1995). From the mid-1980s, however, under Suharto's de-ideologisation and de-politicisation strategies, the tone of cooperation changed. From this point forward, until the fall of the Suharto regime in 1998, no organisations were allowed to pursue any ideology other than Pancasila (the five moral principles), and the space for representation was tightly constrained.

Numbers of local and international NGOs continued to grow through this period; however, these were strictly for *development* purposes such as improving education, health and livelihoods, particularly for the most vulnerable or excluded communities. Any involvement in the *political* work of human rights, mobilising local civil society and/or community advocacy was not permitted (Hadiwinata, 2003). Many advocacy groups mobilised during this time but did so against the wishes of the regime. Moreover, they often saw themselves in opposition to the development NGOs, who they believed "had merely become the extended arm and implementing agencies of the authoritarian government" (Antlov et al., 2005, p. 4).

Following the fall of Suharto, circumstances rapidly changed. The country was in the grip of a financial and social crisis, with spiralling numbers of impoverished communities struggling to recover from the crash of the currency (the rupiah) in 1997 and the scars of the political upheaval in 1998. A window opened for NGOs, and they were seen to proliferate in both numbers and intent. This time was referred to as the "euphoria period" for established and emerging civil society actors, due to the

sudden and massive widening of political space in Indonesia (Lassa & Li, 2015; see also Nugroho and Tampubolon, 2008). The divide between development and advocacy NGOs began to diminish as humanitarian and development causes began to merge with the democratisation agenda being embraced by the new government and the international donor community alike (Harney & Olivia, 2003; Antlov et al., 2010).

The post-Suharto government's decision to allow the formation of new political organisations and the removal of all regulations seemed to have provided ample opportunity for society to become involved in political activities (Hadiwinata, 2003, p. 48).

The Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami in December 2004 was an emergency of unprecedented devastation, requiring a response on an unprecedented scale. For Indonesia, and in particular the province of Aceh, this meant the rapid arrival of seemingly limitless resources from the international donor community. Administering such resources would have been challenging anywhere in the world and was made all the more difficult due to the complex local history of religious and political conflict. Prior to the disaster Aceh was a special zone, with minimal international cooperation and strict limitations around human movement. Add to this a rapid influx of new and existing international organisations seeking to help, and the emergency response in Aceh quickly became both chaotic and uniquely complex. The fallout in terms of NGO reputations and NGO controls (geographic and/or thematic) was felt across all sectors and was not limited to those NGOs that only arrived in Indonesia to support the tsunami response (Barnett, 2005; Cosgrave, 2007; Zeccola, 2011). While the strengths and shortcomings of the tsunami response in Indonesia are not the specific concern of this study, this period most certainly represented a step change for INGOs working in the country and triggered a fundamental shift in the attitudes and expectations of the Indonesian state.

The years since have seen a fluctuating appetite for international cooperation from consecutive political regimes. Simultaneous with the dwindling of large tsunami recovery budgets and a slowing in international development assistance to middle-income countries, the Indonesian government demonstrated a greater willingness to contain, control and, in some cases, deny INGOs the necessary permissions to operate (Lassa & Li, 2015; Antlov et al., 2010). Several INGOs closed their Indonesian operations; others began to consider localisation or new, lighter country footprints. At the time of the baseline exercise in 2018, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was undertaking regular unannounced spot checks, and several organisations (or individuals) lost their right to work in Indonesia for perceived breaches of policy. As space for cooperation with INGOs was seen to tighten, however, space for local NGOs appeared to open. In 2018, a new presidential regulation (No. 16 2018) increased the flexibility of government procurement guidelines. As a result, social

organisations could bid for government contracts that fall within the category of self-managed projects. In the eyes of many, this change reflects a shift in the relationship between the government and NGOs (Jackson, 2018), recognising once again the role that (national and local) NGOs can play in reaching the poorest and most vulnerable communities.

CARE International in Indonesia

CARE International commenced operations in Indonesia in 1967, among the earlier of the large INGOs to arrive. Over the first decade, CARE's work focused primarily on food distribution, school feeding programs and small infrastructure projects. In the 1980s, the focus shifted to community development, particularly in health, the environment and water and sanitation. The financial crisis of 1998, the El Niño phenomenon in the late 1990s and the Indian Ocean tsunami in 2004 led CARE Indonesia to redirect its focus toward emergency response (Brooks, 2015; CARE International, 2020a). From that point forward, the size of the program portfolio has been closely tied to the availability of humanitarian funding and has fluctuated widely as a result. In the absence of emergency response income, and without any investment of unrestricted funds in resource mobilisation, the annual portfolio dipped to under USD 1 million in 2016. The portfolio returned to approximately USD 5.5 million in 2020, in large part due to humanitarian funding associated with several significant emergencies occurring in 2018 (most notably the Lombok earthquake in July and the Central Sulawesi earthquake and tsunami in September). The bulk of these funds are provided by large institutional donors (USAID and the EU) in grants that are administered by northern members of CARE International.

The Country Office was managed by CARE Canada and to this point remains the only CARE Canada office to transition into a local organisation. The Country Office, formally known as CARE International in Indonesia, explored localisation in the mid-1990s and again in the early 2000s in recognition of the country's growing economic prosperity and changing donor appetites. Indonesia was widely expected to be the second CARE office to do so (after Thailand in the late 1990s) and was preparing plans to formally transition when the tsunami struck in December 2004. Unsurprisingly, the focus shifted to managing an emergency response on an unprecedented scale and plans for localisation were once again shelved (CARE Canada, 2016; CARE International in Indonesia, 2016). A decade on, in the wake of the Delhi Resolution in 2014, CARE Indonesia once again sought to make the change and eventually secured support to do so under the CI Secretariat's Membership Investment Fund in 2017.

Participant Perspectives: External Relationships and Systems

Operating Environment

At the time of the baseline exercise, there was broad consensus that the operating environment was generally more secure for local NGOs than INGOs (faster time frames, less suspicion, greater technical and geographic freedom). Local organisations (Yayasans) were also seen as less vulnerable to deregistration or expulsion, and this security was an important motivation behind the transition to YCP. Participants warned of risks for CARE Indonesia if they tried to straddle the INGO/Yayasan line for too long. Several participants suggested that a clear path to localisation and a clean break from the international legacy were required:

There is greater freedom for local NGOs. No MOU, no annual visits, no restricted areas and also fundraising is allowed if you (are) local. Internal Participant AI7, 2018

While it is still very easy to revoke an INGO's status, it is very hard to revoke the registration of a local organisation. External Participant BI4, 2018

The following year included a national election and participants described a very divided political environment that saw political tensions peak. Participants spoke, further, of a rising unease among civil society organisations, often linked to their perceived allegiance with one political camp or another. Although these tensions remained high after the incumbent government was returned to power (at the time of the first annual review in 2019, violent demonstrations saw large sections of Jakarta shut down), participants explained that the situation for civil society actors had calmed noticeably. Fears of a reduction in civic space were not immediately realised and it seemed that the newly formed government might choose to engage more with civil society groups, particularly relative to other countries in the region. Changes in government priorities flagged during the election campaign (including infrastructure, HR capacity and internal migration) were seen as broadly positive, and review participants felt these were likely to generate opportunities for YCP moving forward:

The shrinking of CSO space is less true in Indonesia than elsewhere. Registration remains fairly straightforward and government at the national level has a generally high regard for CSOs. External Participant BI7, 2019

There is stability now and there is also opportunity. A new cabinet, new regulations, a new approach. External Participant BI9, 2019

The improved support for local civil society was not mirrored in support for international organisations, however, and examples of government resistance to international cooperation were commonplace in this second year of data collection. Participants explained that the number of nationalised INGOs continued to grow (Muslim Aid, FFH, Wetlands International) and such transitions were beginning to normalise across the sector:

There is very limited acceptance of international cooperation, even in disaster response. A long wait for declaration of a national disaster (to enable international support) and strict limitations on appointments and movements for international experts. Internal Participant AI17, 2019

By the time of the mid-year consultation in late 2019, participants advised that political tension and public frustration had further eased. Unfortunately for YCP, though, the operating space for civil society organisations remained contentious and uncertain. Participants advised that the political appointments of the newly returned government were not proving to be supportive of civil society's role and the anticipated policy engagement opportunities had not materialised:

The change of leadership in Indonesia, after this general election, is challenging. This will also have an impact on government policies and work plans and will affect the way CARE works. Internal Participant AI19, 2020

Government Relations

In 2018, baseline participants advised that constant changes in Government of Indonesia (GOI) expectations, communication channels and personnel were compromising the effectiveness of CARE's programs. This challenge was compounded by the five-year political cycle that brings constant flux, both in the build up to and the enactment of each regime change. Dedicated government liaison resources were described as critical to YCP's success, and participants also flagged the importance of evidence-based practice when engaging with government on policy. To be effective in this realm, it was suggested that YCP would need to invest in dedicated staff as other organisations had done around this time:

The government is constantly changing staff... there's no institutional memory... yet they are also very strict in terms of reports and other demands, often requesting something more than once. Internal Participant AI3, 2018

To build our legitimacy we need to build evidence. Having areas of specialism is important, and to target specific ministries. We need to do this full blast, and this requires investment in policy advisors, not just project staff. Internal Participant AI8, 2018

Over the following year, rapid growth in emergency response funding led to positive developments in CARE's organisational profile, as evidenced by invitations to participate in significant forums as well as public recognition for CARE's good practice. The decision was made not to extend the Country Office Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) beyond 2019, and this had been communicated with government counterparts at senior levels by the time of the first annual review in May. Many staff members expressed doubt that this was the correct course of action. Participants advised that CARE Canada was adamant the MOU should not be extended despite concerns about YCP's readiness to take over all projects with all CMPs:

The government want CARE to be there. We have seen that many times this year.

Internal Participant, AI1, 2019

CARE has committed to not extending the MOU with the government and the government likes this approach so we must follow through now. Internal Participant AI11, 2019

By the third year of data collection, many participants felt that YCP's new independence had enabled new and different relationships at both national and provincial levels. Participants spoke of closer alignment between YCP's work and local or national priorities, in line with the plans proposed in year two of the research. Importantly, in at least some of these cases, the new relationships were seen to be based on technical value-add rather than just financial value-add. Being a technical partner was seen as critical in terms of YCP's influence, and in elevating their work from project to program level:

...there has been a bit of a CARE bubble. Alignment and allegiance have not been the priority but moving forward our work should be grounded in development policies and national development plans. Internal Participant AI16, 2019

The government is increasingly aware of CARE's existence, not only at the national level, but also at the provincial, district and village levels. Likewise, CARE and local civil society work together on one platform. Internal Participant AI2, 2020

Civil Society

In 2018, baseline participants advised that in addition to government policies and procedures being generally less onerous for local organisations, local CSOs also enjoyed greater programming

flexibility. Participants also suggested that local CSOs have greater opportunities for growth through diverse funding streams and new funding windows. Despite this, not all experiments with localisation had been equally successful, and those that had worked best were generally those most generously resourced:

Local equals bigger. Local equals more scope for deeper partnerships over longer time periods. Internal Participant, AI9, 2018

The change (localisation) has been positive for several organisations who continue to grow. There have also been those that did not work out. The bigger ones got good support from their federations, funding the fundraising and the TA (technical assistance provided) during the change. External Participant BI1, 2018

Participants advised that despite some hesitation on the part of certain local CSOs, in general there was support for new players in the local civil society space so long as there was a clear area of expertise and/or a specific value to add. Several participants explained that CARE's previous relationships with local CSOs had mostly been based on command and control: subcontracting grants and focusing on administrative requirements. Many spoke to a confidence and a strong desire to use transition as an opportunity to start afresh in CARE's methods of working more collaboratively. It was suggested, however, that YCP would require a sectoral presence beyond their project portfolio to fulfil its ambitions of leadership among their civil society peers:

CARE is currently seen as a donor that sub-contracts CSOs to do tasks for them. Internal Participant AI3, 2018

Some don't want to 'share the pie' but how welcome you are depends on your people...on who you have and how they engage. External Participant BI3, 2018

Over the course of the following two years, partner perceptions of YCP were seen to gradually change as relationships with local authorities and local CSOs became more direct. Participants advised that civil society partnerships were gradually progressing towards genuinely collaborative practice, although several participants advised that it was difficult to shake the image of CARE as an international donor:

We have actively sought collaboration with others, including with local-based NGOs. We believe it is in our interest to initiate relationships... to demonstrate our commitment to collaboration and capacity building rather than to be seen as a competitor. With some we

have been successful and enjoy a good sense of trust (to the extent we partnered several times for joint proposals). ...With others there is still some way to go, since most still see YCP as 'ex international' and 'funder' rather than partner, but that is also gradually changing.

Internal Participant AI21, 2020

Donors

At the time of the baseline exercise, several international donors expressed enthusiasm about engaging with local rather than international actors, "as long as the quality was maintained" (AI7). Participants spoke to new public and private funding windows being available and acknowledged the rapid growth of other organisations that had made a similar transition to local:

There will be more donors, more appetite for our work and more funds available. There are also new geographic spaces that will open up to us (like Aceh and Papua). Internal Participant AI6, 2018

Local organisations with global systems are in favour with donors, especially the EU [European Union] and the local foundations which only fund local organisations. External Participant BI3, 2018

One year later, institutional and private sector donors continued to express a preference for cooperating with local organisations, often prioritising local partners to the exclusion of international options. Optimism remained high that new private sector partners could be found, although shrinking budgets for corporate social responsibility (CSR) within many businesses would mean that YCP needed to target partners very carefully and proactively:

In Indonesia and around the world the scope for CSR investments is shrinking. More than ever, YCP needs to carefully pair itself with the right companies and have a focused message. External Participant BI8, 2019.

YCP was able to maintain and grow the overall portfolio size (from less than USD 1.5 million in 2017 to more than USD 5.5 million in 2020), including growth of approximately \$2 million annually in both institutional and private sector funding. Institutional grants included new and returning donors, both bilateral and multilateral. Private sector grants, similarly, included both new and returning international partners (through CMPs) as well as some growth in locally mobilised funds. Local partnerships (with Ishk Tolaram, 3M, Cargill Indonesia, and others) were predicted to grow both in raw numbers and as a percentage of the total portfolio. Proposals were in place for institutional grants beyond 2023, and at the time of the final LST review the next stage of private sector engagement was about to commence:

A baseline survey with the private sector is about to start in October 2020, which will form the basis for a four-year engagement starting 2021. Internal Participant AI15, 2020

Participant Perspectives: Internal Relationships and Systems

Staff and Management

Participants in the baseline exercise advised that while enthusiasm for the transition was high around the time of the 2015 Country Presence Review (CPR), it had fluctuated greatly since that time. Transition time frames and milestones were not evenly understood within CARE Indonesia and, more pressingly, personnel were uncertain about their own tenure and their own role in the transition journey. A detailed understanding of the change taking place was largely limited to a handful of senior staff, and the variances were reportedly even greater between HQ and field office staff. Employees found it difficult to embrace the change in the absence of this knowledge:

As employees we are contract based... (we do) not feel safe. What commitment is there to staff? It is hard for staff to commit to the process when CARE doesn't commit to us. Internal Participant AI5, 2018

One year later, when asked about change over the following 12 months, the majority of annual review participants highlighted the changes in personnel. These changes swept right across the leadership group (including CEO, Finance Director and Program Director) and also affected program teams. Many suggested further changes seemed likely, particularly with the limited tenure being offered to staff during the transition to YCP. Operational challenges continued to impede CARE Indonesia efficiency, although it was unclear which of these were driven by the transition to YCP and which by the organisational stretch of simultaneous humanitarian responses:

...in 12 months (we have) new program leaders as well a new CEO hired and a new Finance Director hired. We also lost some senior people. This is big change. Internal Participant AI2, 2019

We have spent a lot of time recruiting and re-recruiting positions, often as a result of our own inefficient systems. Internal Participant AI12, 2019

Three significant humanitarian emergencies between the baseline and the first annual review fundamentally altered the operating environment in Indonesia and triggered rapid change for CARE Indonesia. Program priorities had to shift to accommodate the response efforts, including the establishment of a new office in a new location with new staff and partners. The significant growth over the first 12 months of the LST was broadly seen as positive, despite the pressure this growth

has evidently placed on people and systems. Participants advised that a review of the organisational structure was planned for the second half of 2019 and suggested that YCP should be ensuring the work is grounded in areas of national priority (so that YCP might be positioned to fill gaps in this space). Review participants described a waning appetite for problem solving and strategic thinking among staff, perhaps a symptom of their growing fatigue:

The emergencies have led to opportunities for new programs in new areas. CARE is doing more and better programming in the wake of the response. Internal Participant AI8, 2019

We have been so lean for so long that everyone plays two or three roles, and no one has the space for reflection. All the changes in senior positions have further slowed strategic planning. Internal Participant AI6, 2019

Staff turnover, program growth and the demands of transition combined to place significant pressure on personal relationships within CARE Indonesia during this time. Participants shared examples of professional challenges turning to personal grievances that affected both programs and operations. Despite this organisational stretch, participants also spoke of recent improvement in terms of staff awareness, interest and ownership over the transition process. It was suggested that these positive changes were helped by the stabilisation of the new leadership group and by a long overdue staff retreat:

We have seen a lot of staff turnover. We have lost staff partly due to the attractiveness of offers from outside and partly due to doubts about their future with YCP. There are also some entrenched patterns of behaviour and attitudes that are hard to shift. Internal Participant AI03, 2019

We are seeing more open communication and greater ownership... this peaked at the staff retreat, the first in seven years, where there was some consensus built on the way forward for YCP. Internal Participant AI06, 2019

In the final year of data collection, YCP witnessed numerous changes in personnel at all levels of the organisation, including several directors, two program managers and numerous new project staff. Participants advised that a new organisational structure and program focus were presented to the board in December 2019 and numerous internal procedures were overhauled. Despite the obvious stress of organisational change on this scale and in this time frame, there was evidence of significant progress in terms of both relationships (trust and new opportunities) and systems (new finance and HR manuals, new standard operating procedures):

The overhaul of organisational structure and key positions to better fit the YCP mission is a key success of the transition. Internal Participant AI16, 2020

There are more opportunities now (for staff) never accessed in the past... trust is building between management and officers. Internal Participant AI1, 2020

Communications and Establishing YCP

Historically, public awareness of the organisational brand has not been a high priority for CARE Indonesia. Baseline participants described CARE's social media presence and external branding as weak and believed this situation needed to change for YCP to succeed as a local organisation. Several participants advised that maintaining the link with the CARE brand and history would be critical, despite the pockets of suspicion and scepticism that sometimes surround INGOs. There was some optimism that YCP would be able to own this international history yet still be defined and recognised as local:

We need to build our global/local brand. We have enormous brand value in our 50 years as CARE. We also have a good local reputation to capitalise upon. Internal Participant AI7, 2018

Several milestones were achieved over the following year, including the legal establishment of YCP, the board structure being agreed and the inaugural meeting of the YCP board in March 2019. A staff retreat around that time provided a rare window for staff to connect with the transition journey and to become more familiar with YCP's strategic intentions, both established and emerging:

YCP has done all the important things for compliance and registration this year. The first board meeting in March was also important. Internal Participant AI16, 2019.

There has been good attention paid to keeping people informed. The retreat was positive in awareness and enthusiasm, people are quite positive as a result. Internal Participant AI11, 2019.

CARE's role in networks and consortia, in particular their sectoral leadership on gender issues, strengthened relationships with both government and partners throughout this period. Participants described how CARE Indonesia had also developed more direct relationships with private sector donors and had a more central role in activity design. These developments suggest significant steps towards the 2023 vision of trust and respect among peers and partners. Attitudes were also positive towards YCP's relationship with CARE International and the CARE legacy, with several participants suggesting YCP would be able to walk the line between local and international:

CARE has a good name. The record of good work is important. The name is important to YCP's brand. External Participant BI6, 2019.

YCP will be treated as a local organisation with international links, not an international organisation with local registration. This is different to others and is important. Internal Participant AI03, 2019.

Despite the emphasis placed on marketing and brand awareness in YCP's business plan, participants generally agreed that progress was limited over the course of the data collection. This was perceived as a gap, blamed in part on changes in personnel and in part on the focus on emergency response. Nonetheless, this was still regarded as important by participants in the final data collection, and several individuals suggested that the recent appointment of a Communications and Fundraising Director would bolster this work. Change was more apparent in terms of organisational structure, with participants able to point to tangible shifts in terms of people, portfolios and systems at YCP. Creation of the Yayasan and closure of the Country Office, in terms of both the governance structure and administrative requirements, was nearly complete by the time of the final annual review. Despite the abridged process of Country Office dissolution, participants felt progress had been steady and spoke with optimism about the organisation's new shape:

Currently, we are preparing to close the CII books and expect that to be completed by the end of 2020. We expect that we will have completed the transition on time in FY22. Internal Participant AI11, 2020.

Things have changed now for YCP. There is a new spirit, a new blueprint. Internal Participant AI17, 2020.

Evolving Business Model and Discretionary Resources

Baseline participants advised that the historical absence of flexible resources had compromised CARE Indonesia. Unlike most Country Offices around the world, CARE Indonesia had not had access to unrestricted funds to bridge the gap between the operating costs they were able to recover from grants (known widely as indirect cost recovery or ICR) and their actual operating costs. This also meant minimal funds were available to support local priorities such as maintaining key staff beyond projects, building resource mobilisation capacity or lifting the organisation's external profile. Participants believed this narrow project focus had meant an absence of space and time to act strategically (e.g., through sectoral working groups), further constraining effectiveness:

We have had many projects but there is limited cohesion in terms of advocacy beyond the project level... we are often starting from scratch. Internal Participant AI9, 2018

There was strong awareness that improving the availability of discretionary resources would be critical to the success of YCP, along with a recognition that YCP could not do this alone. New, bigger partnerships across CARE International were identified as important for accessing both traditional grants and new funding streams. A future that includes growth and financial viability for YCP would necessarily include income sources other than traditional (institutional) grants. Participants suggested that while YCP was making some progress in securing private sector partnerships, they still needed to better tailor language and practices to a corporate audience:

Hopefully being local will be a selling point within CI. New space for private sector partnerships, new geographic locations of interest to donors... we need to build awareness of this among CMPs. Internal Participant AI1, 2018.

Corporate partnerships require corporate practices. Philanthropy can be flexible [unrestricted] but you need to speak their language. External Participant BI4, 2018.

One year later, review participants advised that CARE Indonesia's systems had tended to focus inwards and prioritise compliance over simplicity, perhaps due to the project focus over many years. Specific shortcomings were raised regarding the HR and finance systems, a situation possibly exacerbated by the rapid changes taking place. Positive developments at the time included the adoption of Office 365 and improved internal communications through the staff newsletter, in addition to a stronger financial position brought about by the influx of humanitarian funding. There was some awareness in 2019 that the improved financial position was the result of circumstantial rather than structural change: there had been little movement towards the proposed new partnerships with CMPs, new public fundraising tools or new CSR partnerships over the course of the previous year:

CARE systems are heavy despite relatively small program budgets. Staff are very busy, yet their workloads should be manageable. There is a culture of compliance which makes us slow and perhaps too cautious. Internal Participant AI17, 2019

In Indonesia and around the world the scope for CSR investments is shrinking. More than ever, YCP needs to carefully pair itself with the right companies and have a focused message. External Participant BI9, 2019

By the final year of data collection, participants spoke positively about the new organisational structure and were cautiously optimistic about the new business model and the availability of

discretionary funding. The growth in local private sector partnerships (refer to donors, above) was significant, and participants expected this to continue. Despite this, participants were clear that the availability of discretionary resources for strategic investment remained limited and mechanisms for generating unrestricted funding remained elusive.

Cooperation with CARE International

At the time of the baseline exercise, participants reported that CARE Indonesia's relationships with the different parts of the confederation were somewhat mixed. The relationship with CARE Canada was described as quite challenging, with a particular focus on compliance obligations and less support for the organisational change taking place. The relationships with other CMPs were quite diverse, reflecting a wide variation in interests, expertise and approaches across the confederation. The most common concern was that CMPs required an expertise and availability for proposal writing that CARE Indonesia did not possess. A notable exception was those instances where CARE USA had funded proposal writing rather than assuming staff and/or resources were available:

The CARE USA model of funding design processes should really be celebrated. They don't assume that you have the capacity or money available to hire someone. Internal Participant AI5, 2018

Participants identified a tension between the demands of the transition process, including expectations of measurable progress against transition milestones, and the wider development project of organisational change. Several participants spoke to a fear of too rapid a transition and queried how long support would be guaranteed. The advice from participants from outside CARE was that everything takes longer and is more expensive than planned and CARE international needed to be prepared for this. A CARE Canada representative spoke to a contrary concern that CARE might support YCP for too long, and thus might be unrealistically propping up the organisation rather than letting it set its own course:

At what point is transition complete? When the MOU dissolves? What nature of support beyond this point and from whom within CI? Internal Participant AI2, 2018

We need to recognise the sovereignty of the new board and... (be) careful to avoid building dependence on subsidies. Internal Participant AI10, 2018

Each time (an INGO office has localised in Indonesia) their headquarters has underestimated the support requirements such as legal and HR, and each time fundraising has been slower and more expensive than thought. External Participant BI4, 2018

Over the course of the second year, support and engagement from the wider confederation remained uneven. Colleagues failed to understand the change and, even where the transition had been well communicated, the practice of CMPs often failed to reflect the philosophy of an evolved partnership with YCP. CMPs were described as outwardly supportive of YCP, yet, in practical terms, progress was slow and specific challenges remained unresolved. While most participants could point to positive examples of cooperation or technical assistance from the members, they also shared numerous examples of unanswered requests for support and uncomfortable exchanges with CMPs. The relationship with the lead member appeared particularly stretched, with many participants raising concerns about the tone and effectiveness of this cooperation over the last 12 months:

Despite the communication (about transition in Indonesia) there has been push back on ICR sharing and there is limited access to CI people and resources for CARE Indonesia. Internal Participant AI16, 2019

Some support has come from (the lead member) in terms of finance and the EPP [Emergency Preparedness Plan] but not with transition... not with the framework agreement or the brand or closing the CII [CARE International in Indonesia] tax number. Maybe some understand the transition, and some don't. Maybe they think their responsibility ends in August and don't realise that support is still needed. Internal Participant AI6, 2019

The most pressing concern raised during the first annual review related to unresolved agreements with CARE International. This issue was raised by almost all staff members consulted and was seen to pose a fundamental threat to the success of the new organisation. YCP was expected to adopt all CARE projects and responsibilities from the end of August 2019, yet as of July 2019 none of the necessary mechanisms were in place to facilitate this change. Neither the framework agreement with CARE Canada nor the brand agreement with CARE USA had been agreed, both of which needed to be in place prior to negotiating the changes to implementation with donors and signing new internal project implementation agreements (IPIAs) under the CI Code. Related to this, almost all staff contracts were due to expire at the end of August 2019, and it was not clear how staff could be retained beyond this time in the absence of agreements that legally hand CARE grant funding over to YCP:

The key thing is the framework agreement. This is a very important document. CMP need things in place to discuss the change with our donors. Internal Participant AI13, 2019

If there is no framework agreement there is no legal standing for YCP to work on behalf of CARE. We also need time to make the framework agreement work... this cannot be done in a few days. Internal Participant AI9, 2019

YCP achieved radical progress in terms of transition agreements during the last few weeks of the Country Office. Following urgent dialogue involving CARE Canada, CARE USA and the CI Secretariat, both the brand and framework agreements were signed within hours of the formal cessation of the existing MOU. A plan was instigated to rapidly transition existing grant agreements (IPIAs) over the first few weeks of the new agreement. At the opening of YCP, the evolving relationship was outwardly publicised and acclaimed, with senior representatives from CARE Canada on hand and a celebratory tone. Simultaneously, several LST participants were raising concerns over the adequacy of support in the months leading up to this moment. Among other hurdles, the technical challenge of transitioning IPIAs was seen as unreasonably complex for the time frame allowed:

The IPIA process [transitioning grants to YCP] took more time... that's impacted staff's employment status and also the project status. In the end, the project timeline was stretched. Internal Participant AI17, 2020

The final year of the study saw YCP's role within the wider confederation begin to change, particularly through the Global South Leaders Forum. After not participating in the first of these events (in Cairo in 2018), YCP hosted this group in Indonesia in January 2020. This forum has come to represent the change taking place across CARE, and the documents they have produced (most notably the *Cairo Compact* of 2018, and the *Jakarta Communique* of 2020) became important milestones in the elevation of southern voice within CARE. The forum and these documents and their impact are discussed in greater depth in Chapter Seven; however, in the context of YCP, their role as participant and hosts constituted both a symbolic and practical arrival in the eyes of YCP staff and partners. Participants suggested that the support of key individuals and teams across the confederation (most commonly the Organisational Development and Accountability team at the secretariat) were critical in enabling progress through this time:

This is where the global south group becomes important, because that's the platform where we can articulate the way that power shifts. ...And when we say power, it's the power to decide... on priorities and where money should go. Internal Participant AI16, 2020

CARE's commitment to diversification [secretariat advocacy, code changes, southern solidarity] has been critical. Internal Participant AI11, 2020

Despite this progress, participants suggested that CMP relationships remained mixed in year three, with a tendency among CMPs to default to historical command and control behaviours. In particular, and despite changes to the donor access protocols in the CI Code, CMPs continue to assume leadership and control over ICR and other terms and conditions outlined in grant management agreements with YCP. Participants described rising levels of frustration that the rules of cooperation were seen as clear and binding for implementing offices but only indicative, or a starting point for negotiation, on the part of CMPs:

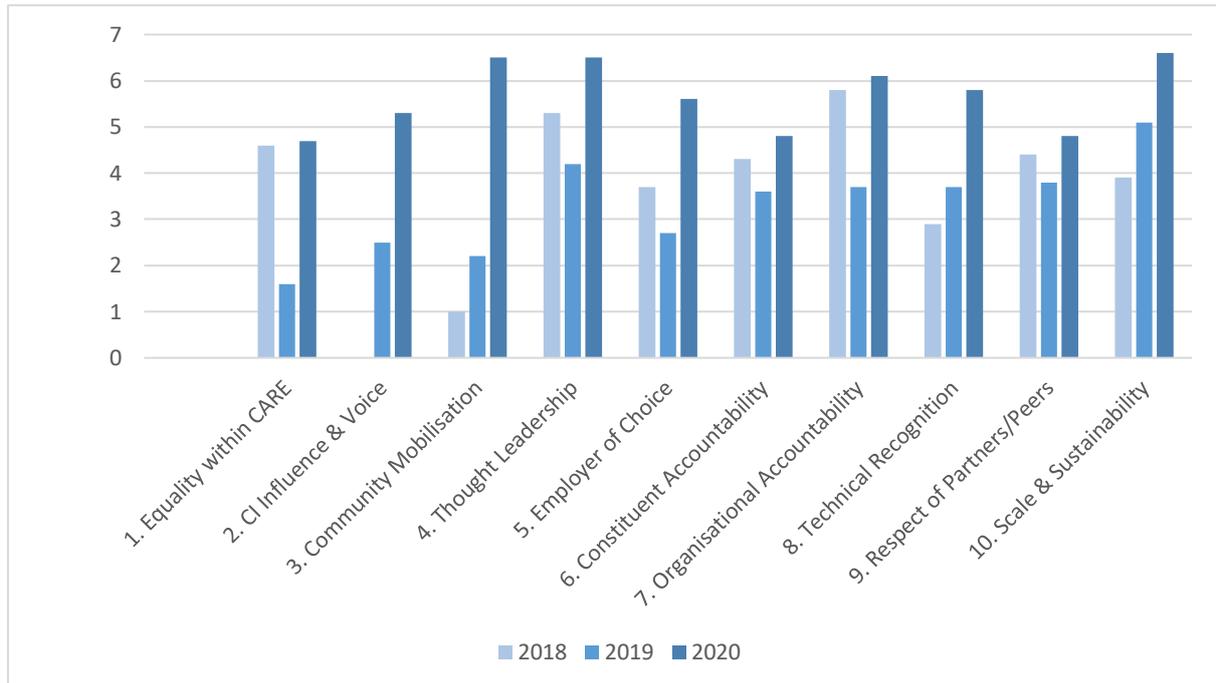
...the CI Code requires certain work from CMPs but this can be frustrating and irritating, since [despite code changes] they still claim ICR higher than our portion. Internal Participant AI7, 2020

Transition Aspirations for 2023

During the baseline exercise in 2018, research participants were asked to imagine what an ideal future looked like for Yayasan Care Peduli. Small groups drafted aspiration statements under each domain of change and fed these back for discussion and review in plenary. A simple prioritisation exercise was then held where each participant was asked to nominate their two most important aspirations under each domain. In this way a list of 21 was whittled down to a final list of 10 aspirations for YCP in 2023. These provide a useful starting point to consider the findings of the case study, as they represent the bulk of the motivations and intentions underpinning localisation, at least from the perspective of CARE employees.

In line with the LST methodology described in Chapter Three, management and staff undertook a self-assessment every year for three years. Each transition aspiration is seen as a long-term transition goal, progress towards which began prior to the data collection (arbitrarily 2013) and realisation of which would likely occur after completion of the data collection (arbitrarily 2023). Participants were asked to rate progress towards each aspiration on a scale of 1-10. Each year, the results were briefly discussed in plenary, with an emphasis on the motivations behind specific scores. Although no aspiration ever reached above 7 out of 10, the ratings report a sweeping improvement between 2018 and 2020, with higher scores against all 10 aspirations over this period. In 2019 (the middle year of the study), several self-assessment ratings were either very similar to or lower than the previous year, before bouncing back to higher ratings in 2020. Figure 2 displays these changes graphically and a synopsis of commentary follows under the numerical results for each aspiration.

Figure 2
Average Self-Assessment Scores 2018-2020 (YCP)



1. YCP has sustainability in finance and programs through diverse fundraising and partnerships

An average score of **4.6 out of 10 in 2018** down to **1.6 in 2019** and then back up to **4.7 in 2020**.

Plenary participants stated that while CARE Indonesia has diverse donors that increasingly include the private sector, significant limitations remained in unrestricted and flexible funds. The low score in 2019, they proposed, reflected an understanding that the rapid increase in portfolio that year was linked to funding for emergency response and did not imply a substantive shift in discretionary resources beyond projects. Participants described increased confidence in the income pipeline in 2020, linked to more measured resource mobilisation planning than was possible in 2019, and this is expressed in the higher average score.

2. YCP has the autonomy & independence within CARE International to negotiate as equal peers

An average score of **2.5 out of 10 in 2019** up to **5.3 in 2020**. Plenary participants stated that the lower score in 2019 reflected the view that YCP was still heavily dependent on CARE International and not yet able to communicate as equals with CMPs. The latter had begun to express the will to change old patterns, particularly around ICR and donor access; however, this had not yet occurred. In 2020, several staff evidently felt this was improving, leading to the higher average score. Please note: Aspiration 2 was replaced in 2019. Participants felt the original statement (regarding YCP as a

centre of excellence) was covered elsewhere and that equality within the confederation required an aspiration of its own. As a result, the scores from 2018 are no longer relevant.

3. YCP joins a unified global south in CI forums and becomes a CI representative for the region

An average score of **1.0 out of 10 in 2018** up to **2.2 in 2019** before a leap to **6.5 in 2020**. Plenary participants stated that in 2019 participants YCP had participated in a number of south-south exchanges but were not yet active or leading. YCP was not represented at the inaugural meeting of the Global South Leaders Forum in Cairo (2018) and were comparatively passive in deliberations to that point. In 2020, however, YCP hosted the second forum and became more involved in deliberations around global governance, leading to the much higher scores.

4. YCP enables communities to more fully realise their potential as actors in development

An average score of **5.3 in 2018** down to **4.2 in 2019** and up to **6.5 out of 10 in 2020**. While this aspiration has always been an intention of CARE's work in Indonesia, plenary participants stated that community building was challenging in 2019 when the focus shifted to humanitarian response. Staff argued that this had changed through the transition to recovery phase and that this was reflected in the much higher average score in 2020.

5. YCP is a thought leader and trusted local organisation able to shape policy and practice

An average score of **3.7 in 2018** down to **2.7 in 2019** and right up to **5.6 out of 10 in 2020**. There was a wide spectrum of views across plenary participants regarding YCP's position on this continuum. It was broadly agreed that CARE YCP has become more influential at local and regional levels in terms of policy and practice. It was stated that influence at the national level required more time and that YCP may not quite be there yet. It was similarly felt that YCP's influence was generally at the level of procedures and practices rather than the strategy and legislation level.

6. YCP is an *Employer of Choice* with dedicated, competent staff and efficient operating systems

An average score of **4.3 in 2018** down to **3.6 in 2019** and back up to **4.8 out of 10 in 2020**. At 4.8, this is the **equal lowest rating** against any YCP aspiration in 2020. Plenary participants giving lower scores expressed concern over gaps in YCP systems (especially staff contracting) and the loss of key personnel over the last year. Participants giving higher scores expressed optimism for the path that YCP has chosen and highlighted the quality of staff YCP has attracted and retained. There was

general agreement that YCP has room for improvement in this space and would benefit from dedicated positions that are not dependent on project funding.

7. YCP is accountable to participants through participatory planning, implementation & evaluation

An average score of **5.8 in 2018**, dropping to **3.7 in 2019** and recovering to **6.1 out of 10 in 2020**.

Plenary participants stated that YCP is generally good at involving people in implementation but do not often have this luxury at design stage due to tight time frames. Some suggested YCP does not adequately follow through on participation during evaluation. It was also suggested that “participants can also be partners and although this is improving, we still have room to improve the way we engage partners” (AI14, 2020). Participants related the dip in 2019 to the focus on emergency response work and the limitations on participation in these circumstances.

8. YCP is an accountable and transparent local organisation, publishing details of programs and finance both internally and externally

An average score of **2.9 in 2018** up to **3.7 in 2019** and right up to **5.8 out of 10 in 2020**. This is one of the most improved areas overall in the eyes of YCP staff. Plenary participants giving the highest scores stated that YCP had made sound progress towards this vision when meeting compliance expectations with donors and undertaking basic annual planning with GOI. Those giving lower scores pointed to gaps in report publishing and the absence of an online presence for YCP. This was one of only two aspirations that saw improvement in every year of the study.

9. YCP is regarded as a local and regional centre of excellence in our thematic priority areas

An average score of **4.4 in 2018** down to **3.8 in 2019** and back to **4.8 out of 10 in 2020**. This was the **equal lowest rating** against any YCP aspiration in 2020. Plenary participants gave several examples of progress towards this vision, including a regional project (*Dignified Work*) where YCP started well behind their peers but was rapidly catching up on innovations, tools and practices. There were also several examples of YCP’s evidence being considered and adopted by others. Despite such examples, the comparatively low score reflects a broad consensus that YCP has room for improvement in this space.

10. YCP is well-known, trusted and respected by peers and partners

An average score of **3.9 in 2018** up to **5.1 in 2019** right up to **6.6 out of 10 in 2020**. This was the highest of all ratings in 2020 after notable improvement year on year. Plenary participants described rapid improvement in this space. In recent times, GOI representatives have been seen to speak publicly about the strength of CARE’s work over many years in many locations. YCP has also earned a

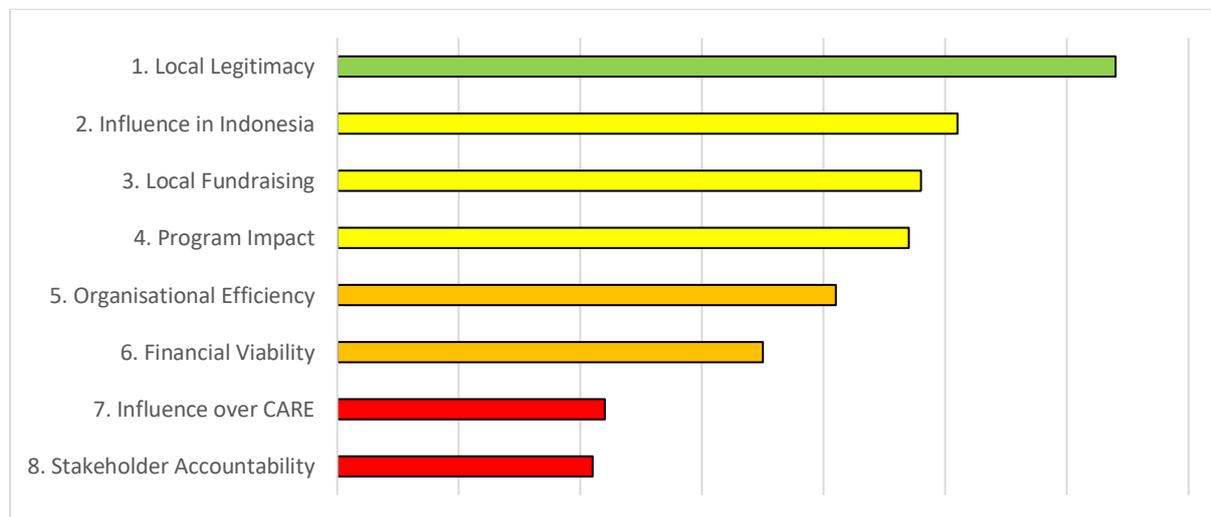
standout reputation in terms of transparency, with one participant stating YCP was considered the leader among 34 organisations signing MOUs in 2020. During the recent emergencies, there were several examples of companies choosing to make donations to CARE rather than competitors. This was one of only two aspirations that saw improvement in every year of the study.

Remote Survey Data

Under the remote review methodology developed in 2020, participants were encouraged to describe the change CARE Indonesia had witnessed over the course of the transition. The bulk of the answers were provided in narrative form and are encapsulated in the summary above; however, participants were also asked two ranking questions. Firstly, respondents were asked to retrospectively rank the most important motivations behind CARE’s localisation in Indonesia, drawn from a list of eight areas that were regularly identified in CARE International policy documents, including several from the CARE Indonesia Business Plan. “Local Legitimacy” was a standout preference with all participants nominating this as the first, second or third most important motivation. At the other end of the table “Influence over CARE” and “Stakeholder Accountability” received very uneven support, with rankings across the spectrum from most to least important. The full results are displayed in Figure 3.

Figure 3

Motivations Behind CARE’s Localisation in Indonesia (ranked from most to least important)

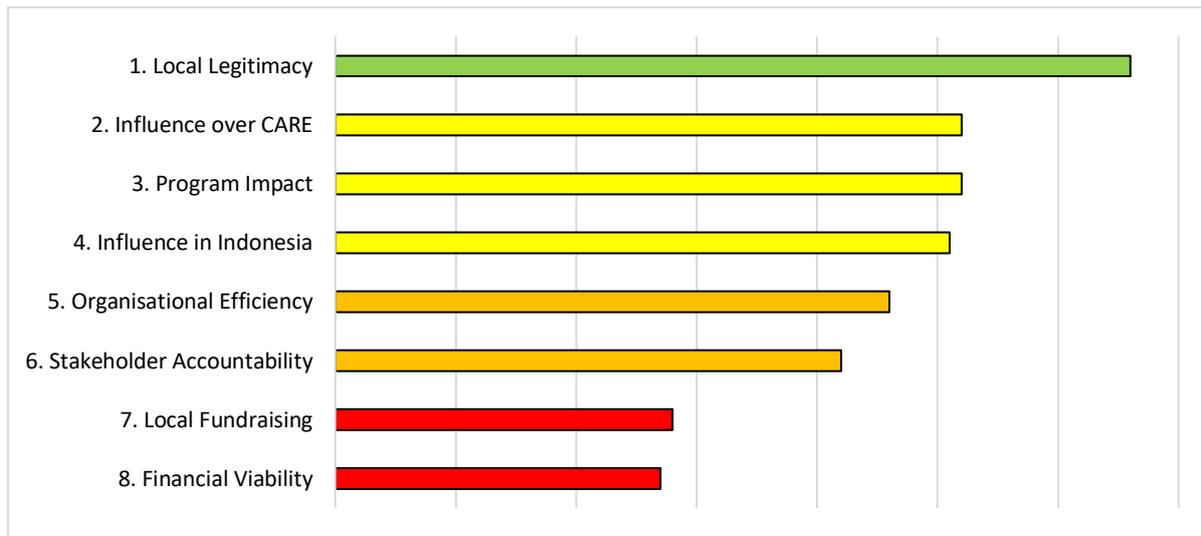


The second ranking question asked respondents to describe which of the same eight areas had witnessed the most improvement as a result of the transition, ranked from first to eighth. Once again “Local Legitimacy” stood out as the highest ranked. “Influence within CARE “and “Influence within Indonesia” were also very highly rated, despite the former not featuring highly in the

perceived motivations behind localisation. “Local Fundraising” and “Financial Viability” stand out as the two areas of least improvement. This is a significant result given the importance of local fundraising as a motivation for localisation and that the overall organisational budget was significantly larger at the conclusion of the study than at the start. The full results are displayed in Figure 4.

Figure 4

Areas of Most Improvement for YCP (ranked from most to least improved)



Country Analysis

The partnerships that have emerged between YCP and the Indonesian government at local, provincial and national levels present as the key success of CARE’s transition within Indonesia. Positive, proactive communication in the lead up to the closure of the Country Office was evidently helpful, and a tangible difference was described between the experience of CARE staff at the time of the 2018 baseline and the more recent reflections. YCP’s practice in this space seems to accept some mistrust on the part of government partners and to acknowledge that, far from being a single entity, the Indonesian state operates through many different branches and departments, each subject to different personalities and practices (Yumasdaleni & Jakimow 2017, p. 1019). Problems with the institutional memory of government partners and the political will of government officials to engage with CARE appear to have eased:

As a national organization, YCP (has) become more active in national forums and has a stronger and closer relationship with local government. Internal Participant AI15, 2020

Progress in cooperation with local and national civil society was less pronounced and, despite efforts at more evolved collaborative practice, perceptions of YCP as an international funder and/or an

international competitor persist. This was almost certainly compounded by the focus on emergency response during the period of the study; implementation of rapid response programming, often through new rather than existing partners, meant the space and time for orientation and relationship building was limited. This is a familiar challenge even where partnerships are in place prior to response efforts (Wake & Barbalet, 2019) and was exaggerated for YCP as a new organisation mid-way through the transition from a CARE Country Office. The wider operating environment also remains uncertain, with uneven support for civil society across the political landscape and ongoing threats to operating space (Nixon, 2021). Combined with the economic uncertainties triggered by Covid-19 and the potential implications for available funding (both public and private), a wider consolidation of YCP's position in Indonesia remains in doubt.

YCP successfully passed several key milestones over the course of the study, including establishing the inaugural board, registering the new organisation and transitioning the first projects. The third year of the study also saw a new organisational structure and refined program strategy approved by the board, along with a raft of systems simplifications (to standard operating procedures, finance policy and human resource management). The changes were detailed with some pride by YCP staff and partners, seemingly as evidence of their emancipation from the shackles of the Country Office and perhaps what Morgan (1986) would have described as *autopoiesis*, an internal process of self-discovery and identity construction (cited in Maturana & Varela, 1980). Collaboration between teams is described as "on the rise" and staff talk of improved relationships in both vertical and horizontal lines across the organisation. Furthermore, the timely boost in grant funding coincided with the registration of the Yayasan and worked to give the new organisation immediate scale:

[YCP] has new people, systems and organizational structure... there are new roles where previously there were none. I feel that the communication and collaboration across projects is more open and YCP has started to change their approach from Projects to Program.

Internal Participant AI5, 2020

These successes were achieved despite numerous serious internal challenges for CARE Indonesia, particularly in 2018 and 2019. Staff engagement and ownership was very uneven over the first two years, when individuals were feeling insecure about their own future and disconnected from the planning and decision making associated with the transition. Despite an awareness of the importance of internal communications from the outset, ongoing changes in leadership and personnel, particularly when combined with the shift to humanitarian priorities during the second year, were seen to compromise staff engagement in the transition. Although staff turnover and reorganisation are expected and necessary elements of a reform such as this, the burden placed on

staff and the eventual loss of many competent individuals was a heavy price for the change. For me, as an observer to this process, it always seemed likely that certain preconditions may have a butterfly effect, triggering widescale system change or disruption over time (Straub 2013). I believe the history of limited tenure for staff and very stretched resources in the Country Office predisposed the team to this scenario, accelerating frustration and almost certainly adding to the eventual cost in terms of lost wisdom and expertise.

YCP's new structure and apparent stability appear to position the organisation well; however, it seems likely the new organisation will experience further upheaval while the new systems and evolved portfolio settle into place. Organisational change scholars warn that treating day one of the new organisation as the end of the transition journey is a common reason for change processes to fail. They argue, instead, that this is a critical point for supporting staff and maintaining momentum (Watkins & Spencer, 2020). Despite the high percentage of new staff and the rapidly changing organisational profile at YCP, very few participants spoke with confidence about the transition process. The data tells us that the tensions of transition, in particular the competing priorities of the nascent organisation and those of CARE's established members in the global north, are not yet resolved. Furthermore, the data suggests that new staff in new positions may underestimate the personal agency required to engage with powerful northern CARE members and that leaders may underestimate the ongoing implications of this challenge for the organisation as a whole.

It is interesting to note that in the 2020 survey, "Local Fundraising" and "Financial Viability" were the two lowest ranked areas in terms of improvement over the course of the transition, despite the significant growth in portfolio size. It follows therefore that, in the view of participants, the continued availability of institutional donors and international corporate support (through CMPs) does not adequately address local fundraising or local viability goals in the eyes of the research participants. YCP's growth has come in the form of traditional institutional grants administered through CARE partners in the global north, not through new sources of public and private funds that might only be available to a local organisation. Such funding comes with well-documented costs, including heavy donor demands, assumptions of institutional homogeneity or isomorphism and loss of organisational autonomy (Ali & Gull, 2016). While such funding is welcome and very familiar to members and partners across the CARE confederation, it does not fulfil transition aspirations related to financial viability. Furthermore, much of this growth has been specific to humanitarian response and recovery, which participants recognise is finite by definition and adds limited value to long-term planning and investment.

YCP's presence and voice in the affairs of CARE International grew over the course of the transition, particularly over the final 12 months of the study. The organisation became more involved in south-south cooperation prior to hosting the Global South Leaders Forum in January 2020, and the *Jakarta Communique* (CARE International 2020a) offers a tangible demonstration of the evolving conversation across the confederation. Along with the *Cairo Compact* (CARE International, 2018b), this work summarises the collective view of CARE's emerging *southern* leaders and effectively demands attention from the historical *northern* power brokers in CARE. The voices of the Global South Leaders Forum are now echoed in key governance and planning mechanisms across the global confederation.

YCP has also been involved in much of the planning for the Asia-Pacific Hub, an attempt within CARE to design and model new types of bilateral and multilateral partnerships in that region. This mechanism constitutes an intentional system change within CARE and acknowledges the requirement for what Bond (2021) have described as "a different set of interventions, including reforming policies and services, altering the distribution of resources and changing the nature of power" (p. 8). YCP's engagement with this platform, along with YCP representation at the highest levels of the CARE governance structure, constitutes a local success story. Regardless of the specific status of the YCP portfolio (program types, portfolio size, funding sources), YCP has begun exercising their right to be heard as emerging members, something that would never have happened as a CARE Country Office. It was a recurring view among research participants that YCP's success in this space could not have been achieved without passionate leaders enabling and creating space for this work, particularly colleagues in the CI Secretariat and peers in other new and emerging member organisations. This echoes much of the literature on organisational change and organisational learning that emphasises the importance of change champions in developing and sustaining an environment for change (Burke, 2008; Warrick, 2009; Britton 2005):

The support from CI Secretariat and certain CARE Members, especially from the global south, has really helped YCP in the transition process. Internal Participant A18, 2020

The transition in Indonesia has faced many challenges in the context of cooperation within CARE. The former Country Office endured periods of isolation and great uncertainty between submitting their business plan in 2016 and the closure of the Country Office in 2019. In each of the first two annual reflection exercises, there was an atmosphere of trepidation and a culture of brinkmanship in many of the interactions with CARE outside Indonesia. Highest amongst the concerns expressed by participants was the belief that the formalities of transition were unnecessarily compressed, and the implications of this rushed process would continue to impact the people and projects of YCP for some time. Furthermore, while many member partners expressed philosophical support for the

evolution of CARE's presence in Indonesia, this was not consistently reflected by CMP staff in grant management negotiations.

Significant Research Moments: Off the Record

A recurring feature in my notes, memos and aide memoires from this research journey are the instances when participants asked to go off the record. This happened on many occasions, with participants from the global south and the global north, with participants from inside CARE and outside CARE. Almost without fail, this is when respondents wished to be most honest and be either openly critical, or openly emotional, or both. In many instances, these were very powerful and meaningful contributions to the study, yet I felt hamstrung in my ability to use them as anything other than context for my analysis or guides for my evolving workshop notes and interview prompts. My frustration with these moments is evident in my notes to self where I have tried to remember unrecorded content and have circled, stamped and highlighted notes, often nearly obscuring the content with the sheer volume of question marks and exclamation marks: Another OTR! What to do with OTR? This is important!

It is significant to note that a disproportionate number of the off-the-record interactions related to CARE's transition in Indonesia. The requests came from a range of respondents of varying seniority from both inside and outside of CARE and both inside and outside of the Indonesian data collection exercises. These off-the-record commentaries were certainly the most emotive and instructional of any I received, and they deeply shaped my understanding of the challenges this transition faced. They also triggered a more cautious investigation into the concept of internal confidentiality (Tolich, 2004) and the complexities associated with deductive disclosure (Baez, 2002; Sieber, 1992). In turn, this informed a decision to anonymise the entire thesis with only one or two purposeful exceptions. Despite a belief that putting names to comments in certain circumstances may have strengthened the work, my approach has deferred to mitigating any perceived risk for participants.

Conclusion

Enhanced legitimacy lies at the centre of the motivations behind CARE's transition in Indonesia. To improve legitimacy is to strengthen the perceived right of YCP to exercise power, and participants see this as fundamental to the ongoing success of the organisation. This is especially true in an environment where the operating space for local and national civil society is fragile and the operating space for traditional INGO models is ever diminishing. It is a noteworthy success,

therefore, that local legitimacy was regarded as the single most improved area following transition from the Country Office. This change appears predominantly related to perceived improvement in relationships with government and the nature of this collaboration at local, provincial and national levels. Changes in practices and relationships with local civil society are less obvious and participants suggested a need to bolster legitimacy in this space over coming years.

Power emerges as the other central theme of the transition for YCP, particularly the use of power within the CARE confederation. In the lead up to the closure of the Country Office, the relationship with the lead member was characterised by a sense of vulnerability and subordination in Indonesia. Concerns were left unaddressed and key elements of the formal transition were left uncertain until the very last moment, by which time the opportunity for YCP to exert influence was greatly diminished. While some of this was resolved with signing of agreements and new standards of cooperation in the final year of the study, the power imbalance of the first two years came at significant cost both then and now. Power is still expressed as resistance to change in contract negotiations with other CMPs, despite the systems changes that were designed to ensure donor access and a fairer share of cost recoveries.

The internal challenges for YCP through this period were profound. Competing demands and uncertainty over roles and tenure led to high staff turnover at all levels of the organisation. As a result, the difficult task of achieving and maintaining momentum for the organisational change was made even more challenging. Uneven support from the wider CARE confederation compounded these challenges and placed unreasonable demands on those steering the transformation. Despite these many constraints, the data still describes progress towards all YCP's transition aspirations and a growing optimism among staff and partners by the final year of the study. The number of positive partnerships with CARE peers from both north and south is on the rise, and increasingly the challenges YCP has faced appear surmountable.

Introduction

Sri Lanka was among the first countries outside Europe to receive support from CARE when they commenced operations in 1950. That presence was maintained for more than 60 years until a decision was made in 2014 to wind down operations and close the Country Office by the end of 2016. Between the decision being made and the deadline for closing the office, staff and partners of CARE International in Sri Lanka developed a plan for a new local organisation, Chrysalis, which might build upon the CARE legacy and evolve into new areas of work. The nascent organisation received a foundational grant from CARE USA and later became part of the cohort of transitioning offices supported by the CARE International Membership Investment Fund. This study accompanied the organisation throughout the early years of their operations while they sought to establish their local presence and define their unique relationship with the CARE confederation.

Chrysalis has rapidly and comprehensively evolved into a fundamentally different organisation to the CARE Country Office that preceded it. Participants described a robust organisational culture typified by passionate and skilled personnel who are committed to the cause and empowered to share their views. Chrysalis has also found a unique brand and a technical niche, couched in an organisational structure that allows for both traditional and contemporary development partnerships and is applied across a funding portfolio that is now both larger and more diverse. By most external markers, Chrysalis is a success story. This chapter explores that story in the context of the relationship with CARE International, with a focus on the way power has been ceded to and/or claimed by the emergent organisation.

This chapter constitutes the second of the national case studies and follows the same format as Chapter Five. As with the previous chapter, the Sri Lankan case study commences with a brief synopsis of the local context and CARE's history in that location before moving on to the presentation of data from the three annual cycles of data collection. The quantitative and qualitative data sets are once again followed by a preliminary analysis that seeks to regroup and reinterpret this information through my own lens as practitioner and researcher. The emphasis is again placed on the undiluted voices of participants, with analysis drawn predominantly from open coding and researcher reflection, prior to the more complex axial and selective coding that informs the consolidated analysis in Chapter Seven.

Sri Lankan Context

Contemporary Sri Lankan civil society began to take shape under British colonial rule in the 19th century, with a mixture of locally driven community-based organisations (CBOs) and religiously affiliated NGOs. The CBOs, such as Death Donation Societies and Irrigation Societies, were often linked to local Buddhist temples and had their origins in voluntary associations of pre-colonial times. The NGOs were more commonly ecumenical organisations, linked to the more recently arrived Christian missions and, later, the arrival of American theosophists. Formal structures sprang up around these interest groups in the second half of the 19th century, which were then replicated in a range of nationalist and suffrage NGOs in the early years of the 20th century. Above and beyond a shared commitment to giving and volunteering common across the groups with religious affiliations, Sri Lankan civil society increasingly became associated with political causes through this period (Mallawaarachchi, 2018; Asian Development Bank, 2013)

Following independence in 1948, the number of NGOs grew, and the nature of their work diversified. Around this time, INGOs were invited in to support the Sri Lankan government, most notably the work of the Department of Rural Development. During the political upheavals of the 1970s, international assistance to civil society began to flow more freely, including to those organisations focused on human rights. By the time of the national civil conflict outbreak in 1983, the start of a long and brutal war primarily fought between the Sinhalese-dominated Sri Lankan government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), the number and variety of NGOs involved in political causes and civil society activism had become a subject of controversy (Van Brabant, 1995; Orjuela, 2005). NGOs were suspected of supporting or enabling one side over the other, concerns which tended to be complicated and exacerbated when the NGO in question was receiving foreign funding. In 1990, the government established a Presidential Commission of Inquiry with the intention of securing greater control over the operations of NGOs, leading in turn to a Public Security Ordinance insisting on greater accountability and transparency among both local and international NGOs. An uncomfortable antagonism between civil society advocates and the Sri Lankan state then ebbed and flowed throughout the 1990s. This has continued in some form ever since, with consecutive leaders and political parties debating the relative value of civil society contributions, particularly those funded through foreign sources (Wickramasinghe, 2001; Akurugoda et. al., 2017).

The Indian Ocean Tsunami in 2004, for Sri Lanka just as for Indonesia, was an emergency requiring a response on an unprecedented scale. Sri Lanka witnessed a similarly huge influx of financial support and new organisations wishing to contribute to the response, a challenge made even more difficult

given the ongoing civil conflict and the established resentment towards foreign intervention among some sections of state and society. The generosity and flexibility of the world's donors meant that relief was provided quickly, and recovery activities, normally harder to fund and slower to begin, could commence simultaneously. The rapid proliferation of the number and type of NGOs contributing to the response, however, triggered a hotly contested and competitive environment (Harris, 2006) and exposed the INGO community to accusations of self-interest in the roll out of response activities and inadequate collaboration with local partners. As the response evolved from relief to the recovery phase, Sri Lanka's longstanding debate about the motivations and merits of international funding and international organisations was reanimated (Cosgrave, 2007; Uyangoda, 2005).

Much of the work of NGOs turned to peacebuilding and recovery following the end of the civil conflict in 2009. Themes of dialogue, protection, participation, reconstruction and social cohesion have become commonplace within the wider frameworks of human rights and economic development (Mallawaarachchi, 2018; ADB, 2013). A continuing dependence on foreign sources of funding is still met with much suspicion, however, and the desire to legislate greater control over the work of civil society actors is rarely off the legislative table (Akurugoda, 2017). Consecutive political regimes have continued to swing the pendulum for and against the centrality of civil society players in the ongoing development journey of Sri Lanka.

CARE International in Sri Lanka

CARE's work in Sri Lanka began in 1950 with a focus on food security and maternal and child health. The portfolio evolved to a long-term development program seeking to address the root causes of poverty and the marginalisation of vulnerable groups. Programs focused on peacebuilding, sustainable livelihoods, gender equality and disaster risk reduction. Target populations included poor rural communities, conflict-affected populations and plantation workers. CARE also worked to address gender-based violence through training, awareness-raising and supporting women's action groups. Following the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, CARE emergency response efforts supported tsunami survivors in seven of the worst-affected districts.

Following a Country Presence Review by CARE USA, the organisation was deemed untenable, and a decision was made to close the CARE Country Office in 2014 (to take effect from the end of 2016). Local management and staff began exploring a concept for a new local organisation that might be able carry forward successful elements of CARE's work in Sri Lanka. A number of former Country Office staff secured positions with the new organisations and commenced employment with Chrysalis shortly after cessation of the contracts with CARE. The business model included a suite of

professional advisory services to complement traditional development programs and gave priority to private sector partnerships over institutional grants. Following a change of leadership at CARE USA in 2015, it was determined that CARE USA would invest USD 300,000 of their discretionary resources in support of the new local organisation, which was called Chrysalis. Soon after, in 2016, Chrysalis was also selected as one of the first cohort of organisations to be supported by the CI Membership Investment Fund and secured funding and technical assistance from the CI Secretariat between 2017 and 2019.

The Chrysalis example differs from YCP, as well as the other transitioning offices in Egypt and Morocco, in a number of ways. Firstly, in each of the other settings the intention to establish a local organisation has been at the centre of the planned or presumed closure of the CARE International Country Office. The decision to close CARE International in Sri Lanka came before the idea for a local organisation had been developed, and in fact the Chrysalis proposal was initially met with reluctance from several senior figures in the CARE confederation. Secondly, the timing was significantly different for Chrysalis, in that the Membership Investment Fund came into effect from 2017 after the Country Office had closed and CARE USA had stood down from their role as managing (lead) member. Thirdly, and perhaps most significantly, YCP and the two former Country Offices in North Africa are candidates for membership of CARE. They have been established with the intention to seek full representation on the CI Council in much the same capacity as CARE's traditional members in the global north. Chrysalis, however, sought greater independence from the confederation and believed that a more autonomous brand and model were better suited to their content. They did not seek full membership of CARE and are, instead, the first (and to date, only) Affiliate Member of CARE. These differences were identified as potentially important preconditions from the outset of this study and are revisited throughout this chapter and the wider analysis.

Participant Perspectives: External Relationships and Systems

Operating Environment and Government Relations

At the time of the baseline exercise in 2018, participants advised that Sri Lankan NGOs had enjoyed a period of relative calm. The years since the change of government in 2015 were described as relatively peaceful and constructive for civil society actors, particularly when compared to the political climate of 2010-15 and the challenges of the early 2000s. Baseline participants advised that while there was declining support for generalist NGOs, organisations that could demonstrate expertise in specialist areas and provide evidence to back up any claims were broadly supported:

There is space now and it's not so tense... since 2015 things have been comparatively free.
Internal Participant ASO5, 2018

Most fundamental in Sri Lanka is to do what you say you will and do it well... only then you can speak to the evidence and applicability of your work. External Participant BS03, 2018

This operating space was at imminent risk, however, following deliberations over changes to the NGO act which exposed fundamental disagreement regarding NGO rights and responsibilities in Sri Lanka. The civil society space was becoming highly politicised, and participants felt that historical criticisms of NGOs would likely resurface in the lead up to a national election in 2020. This volatility meant that NGOs, particularly those with international links, were vulnerable at this time. Participants advised that being a local organisation was significantly simpler in terms of the level of government intervention in your operations:

A couple of months ago an amendment to the NGO act was sought proposing drastic changes to withdraw power from NGOs and vest this with the ministry. Clearly it had not been agreed. It was raised at the highest level and withdrawn at the highest level. Internal Participant AS06, 2018

Participants in the baseline exercise warned that the CARE legacy could have negative connotations for Chrysalis, particularly in the event of a conservative political shift. International organisations had fallen out of favour with Sri Lanka's politicians (and public) at times in the past. Pockets of resentment and ill-will were still apparent in 2018, and it was felt that any regime change could easily elevate this sentiment. Several participants raised the concern that for all the benefits of the CARE legacy, Chrysalis' origins and affiliations with the confederation may yet compromise its operating space:

Local equals credibility. There is mistrust of INGOs: they need to prove more, and they get asked different questions, especially in terms of funding. There is no requirement to declare income sources for local NGOs as there is less suspicion. External Participant BS02, 2018

The year following the LST baseline study was one of great upheaval in Sri Lanka. An attempted coup in October 2018 triggered turmoil and uncertainty in Sri Lankan politics, providing an unsettled environment in the lead up to the 2019 general election. The Easter bombings followed in April 2019 and fundamentally altered the socio-political landscape. Islamic State (IS) claimed responsibility for a series of coordinated attacks targeting catholic churches and exclusive hotels, although Sri Lankan officials believe National Thowheed Jamath (NTJ), a local militant Islamic group, were also involved.

Ethno-religious tensions rose dramatically and triggered security measures that were described by some LST participants as higher than those exercised during the war. The administrative systems of local and national government were seen to collapse repeatedly under the pressure of these changing circumstances:

Suddenly, the Muslims were the enemy. 30 years of saying the Tamils were enemy. For the Sinhala Buddhist majority, it was like, now we have a new enemy. And suddenly, the Tamil people have become the allies of the Sinhalese people. Internal Participant AS04, 2019

...the military would stop them [Chrysalis staff in the north] and they would say, if you're a Muslim, get off the bus. And they remember being told (in the past), if you're a Tamil, get off the bus. Internal Participant AS03, 2019

Despite all these environmental and administrative constraints, there were also some positive developments for Chrysalis during this period. Review participants advised that the breadth and depth of engagement with key government ministries had improved between 2018 and 2019. New relationships with the Ministry of Industry and Commerce and the Ministry of Provincial Councils and Local Government had opened the door for a greater role for Chrysalis.

The final year of the longitudinal study was no less complex in terms of the external operating environment. The presidential election in 2019 triggered a regime change, culminating in a new prime minister as well as a new president. LST participants described this as a return to the nationalist platform of previous years. CSO registration and oversight moved to the Ministry of Defence and existing government relationships were jeopardised. In Sri Lanka as around the world, the Covid-19 pandemic slowed the economy and stalled the operations of local and international development partners. The national election was twice delayed and the implications for the private sector were still unfolding at the time of the final LST review exercise:

The new regime doesn't see a big role for civil society in Sri Lanka's development. In fact, they have a particular distaste for CSOs. Internal Participant AS10, 2020

Civil Society

At the time of the baseline exercise, participants described a clear stratification between large and small NGOs in Sri Lanka. Gaps in program and contract management were common in smaller CSOs, compounded by limited transparency and a reputation for poor practices. INGOs and large local NGOs generally had more robust systems yet were often seen only as donors by other civil society players. Participants suggested these perceptions and stereotypes would be difficult to change and

suggested, further, that legitimacy for Chrysalis would depend largely on evidence, reputation and a particular specialisation or value-add. In addition, CSOs in Sri Lanka often relied on high profile leaders and Chrysalis had a choice to make about their public persona amongst this community of peers:

INGOs are seen as privileged because of their access to information and resources, or as funders whose only interest is reports and acquittals, or as messengers who are being told what to do by their own funders. External Participant BS05, 2018

Several participants advised that in 2018 it was uncommon to be both competitor and collaborator in Sri Lanka, where allegiances are fairly fixed. Partnerships for NGOs and CSOs tend to be fragmented and exclusive, and as a result it can be challenging to generate any collective action. Competition between CSOs was believed to be on the increase and scepticism regarding local NGOs with international links had the potential to intensify when operating space (and grants) became more hotly contested. It was also argued that in leaving behind their international status for greater local legitimacy, transitioning organisations such as Chrysalis may lose some of the objectivity and independence they held as INGOs:

Civil society is very exclusive. If you look at Gender, at the Women's Rights movement, at the Human Rights movement. There are established organisations and people there and it can be challenging to get involved in these spaces. Internal Participant AS02, 2018

There were examples of INGOs working in conflict spaces that local NGOs could not. These and similar advantages may be lost to nationalised organisations. External Participant BS04, 2018

By the time of the first annual review exercise in 2019, most participants felt the outlook for Sri Lankan civil society was bleak, particularly in terms of rights-based approaches. Despite no changes to the NGO law, the political upheaval of this period meant that tolerance for advocacy and agitation was declining rapidly. Chrysalis' technical approach was thought to be less combative and therefore more palatable than an activist approach, yet participants feared this may also be less powerful in effecting change. Participants suggested that the gender space was quite crowded in Sri Lankan civil society and felt that Chrysalis needed to build and maintain a specific value-add (beyond a generic commitment to women's empowerment):

Scenario planning ranges from grey to black in terms of the likely CSO operating environment over coming years. Internal Participant AS09, 2019

As long as they're not rocking the boat and really challenging anything, I don't see an organisation like Chrysalis being under threat. But then, what's the point of their work, if they're not really challenging some of the deep-rooted structural, cultural stuff? ...that really means they're not going to bring about any meaningful change. External Participant BS09, 2019

Despite the passage of time, participants in the final review exercise (2020) suggested that Chrysalis was still positioned in a middle space between local and international NGOs, perceived as not really national by peer organisations. The legacy and ongoing affiliation with CARE affords the organisation a unique status in the grey area between national and international. Participants advised that the decision to move CSO oversight to the Ministry of Defence during the final year of the study signalled a clear position from the state and set a concerning tone for civil society cooperation. The ramifications of the political change were still unfolding at the time of the final annual review exercise, with all eyes on the 2020 elections and the risk of a further reduction in civil society space:

This dual identity we have: local and international. There's still suspicion about that... who are they really? Internal Participant AS07, 2020

Donors

Institutional donors were outwardly expressing a preference for funding local NGOs over INGOs at the time of the baseline exercise in 2018. Participants advised that there was some evidence of scepticism on the part of donors regarding localisation, though this was balanced with relief at finding a local delivery option that met international standards. New funding windows targeting local organisations were often smaller in value, however, making it difficult to accommodate INGO-sized costs. In 2018, it was not yet clear whether donors would be willing to scale up the proportions of locally available grants, nor whether their expectations of cost sharing would differ on local grants on an international scale. It was feared that donors may assume that Chrysalis' program quality and grant management expertise would suffer with less involvement by the international confederation. Donors might also assume or expect that Chrysalis' costs would come down without the international infrastructure. While neither of these assumptions was necessarily true, study participants identified both as risks to the transition:

As a CO [Country Office] we had a huge problem raising funds locally. We explored options everywhere but could not raise funds when donor relationships happened through CMPs and when we carried the INGO label. Internal Participant AS10, 2018

Donors like USAID and DFID are purposefully targeting local organisations with either dedicated funding windows or by direct contracting for specific tasks. External Participant BS06, 2018

Baseline participants explained that the private sector had significant influence over the work of CSOs, particularly in terms of the large corporate social responsibility (CSR) sector. Private sector investors were seen to have reasonably high awareness of social issues yet were lacking the technical understanding of the systems, structures and programmatic responses to problems of this sort. This gap presented an opportunity for an advisory service such as Chrysalis to act as interlocutor. There was risk associated with funding of this sort, however, in that CSR donors tended to predetermine programmatic directions without the necessary technical expertise:

The private sector is the most important because it is the largest. There is money and there is awareness of the social issues, but they have limited understanding of the answers.

Internal Participant AS08, 2018

By the second year of the study, staff felt Chrysalis' was gaining organisational profile and numerous new relationships had begun to emerge. There was particular interest from multilateral (UN) agencies, and Chrysalis was also being directly approached by institutional donors such as the EU. Private sector partnerships continued without any dramatic increase in scale and staff were finding that the language and reporting style of CARE and its institutional donors did not fit neatly with private sector norms. By this stage, Chrysalis had begun to pursue greater influence over the private sector, not only for improved fundraising but as a tool for improved social impact:

I think we've really consolidated a lot of good partnerships like with the UN, with the EU, with some of the private sector. I'm not saying it's 100% yet, but we have become a go-to organisation for places like the World Bank. Internal Participant AS03, 2019

In the final year of the study, the overall portfolio size was maintained, although the funding formula changed. A scaling down of support from CARE USA and the end of support from CARE International through the Membership Investment Fund in July 2019 meant that access to unrestricted funds was significantly reduced. Income from professional advisory services shrank through this period, leaving the vast majority of Chrysalis' income in the form of institutional grants (bilateral, multilateral and

private sector). Interest from these donors remained strong and relationships remained robust, although participants feared that the effects of Covid-19 were yet to be fully realised. Participants worried that economic downturn could jeopardise Chrysalis' private sector partnerships in particular.

Participant Perspectives: Internal Relationships and Systems

Staff, Management and Board

Baseline participants described Chrysalis as less hierarchical than other local NGOs: all employees had ready access to senior management, and leaders engaged directly with staff at all levels. Management and staff described the flat structure and participatory approach to decision making as a real strength. Across the organisation there appeared a sense of ownership of, commitment to and alignment with the Chrysalis vision and mission. This enthusiasm and commitment seemed to be shared equally between the staff who had carried over from the CARE era and those that joined under the banner of Chrysalis. Some participants expressed the concern that if Chrysalis grew in the way it hoped to, it might be hard to maintain the structure and engagement. In 2018, there was some tension and uncertainty about the ideal pace of growth, assuming that this was within Chrysalis' control:

It helps that we have a balance of CARE and non-CARE staff. We need the non-CARE voices to build and change. Internal Participant AS11, 2018

The bigger Chrysalis grows, the harder it will be to maintain our democratic/participatory structure. Internal Participant AS12, 2018

Several baseline participants raised accountability as an area of vulnerability for Chrysalis, particularly when discussing the domains of accountability and legitimacy. Given that Chrysalis positioned themselves as advisors on governance and accountability, it was especially important that their own practice be of the highest standard. Participants acknowledged pockets of good practice within Chrysalis; however, the consensus view was that improvement was necessary in this space. To counter this, participants suggested that with adequate support from CARE, Chrysalis has the expertise and resources at its disposal to achieve high levels of accountability and redress any identified gaps. Chrysalis was seeking to consolidate accountability as a strength of the organisational model and to promote this through and beyond transition:

CARE has the existing thematic expertise and resources to enhance accountability (policies, systems, papers, guidelines) and Chrysalis has the people to deliver on this. Internal Participant AS03, 2018

One year on, the internal cohesion had begun showing signs of wear, and the commitment to vision and mission of Chrysalis appeared less uniformly shared. There was evidence of tension between old and new approaches within Chrysalis, with certain team members being seen as “less willing to part with tradition”. On a more positive note, the Chrysalis Board had evolved and expanded by this time, now including a wider set of skills and personalities. Participants also advised that Chrysalis’ accountability systems, both social and administrative, had undergone significant improvements in the last year. The evolving membership of the Chrysalis board was seen as similarly positive:

The change at the board level has been good. The extra board members on board. Some new advice from the banking sector and others. I think it’s broadened the capacity of the board and increased the board’s strength. External Participant BS02, 2019

By the time of the final annual review exercise in 2020, participants advised that Chrysalis had an appropriately diversified workplace, with a purposeful mixture of old and new skill sets (beyond traditional development expertise). The board members were now familiar with their roles and were functioning at a high level. Despite this positivity, there were still gaps and growing pains as the organisation attempted to remain agile while also ensuring the systems in place are adequate for the scale of the portfolio. The challenge of balancing these needs for old and new skills sets, for lean yet robust systems and for an affordable yet highly skilled workforce was seen by several staff as the central challenge of the transition:

Managing Human Resources is the single most difficult element of the change. Internal Participant AS04, 2020

Business Model and Brand

Baseline participants uniformly agreed that Chrysalis needed to diversify revenue streams away from institutional grants to boost viability and reduce dependence. Despite the establishment of an organisational structure that promoted diverse income streams, and some success in attracting non-traditional income, institutional grants continued to make up the vast bulk of the Chrysalis portfolio. This dependence constitutes vulnerability in an environment where institutional grants are expected to diminish, something well understood across the staff, management and board. Diversification was a central feature of the evolving business plan, and in 2018 the board had an aggressive plan to address this over the following two years. Professional advisory services were identified as a critical part of the Chrysalis income portfolio, and much effort was being placed on building this portfolio. Although these pieces of work were comparatively small in dollar value, participants advised they were high quality and were serving the purpose of building the reputation and evidence base that Chrysalis would need to expand this work:

We have to keep going on fee-for-service. We are keen to grow this but (it is) very competitive. Internal Participant AS02, 2018

Baseline participants also identified external profile as a priority area, suggesting that Chrysalis would need to continue to build awareness of the organisational brand, including their point of difference, to build investor confidence. Internal and external participants agreed that the CARE legacy was generally positive and that the strong reputation of key staff was highly beneficial when establishing the Chrysalis brand, yet there remained some way to go on brand. Participants broadly agreed that change of this sort takes time and that Chrysalis had commenced that journey well:

It takes time to build a brand and identity... Chrysalis is only two years old! External Participant BS08, 2018

Over the course of the following year, Chrysalis was seen to become more visible and more vocal on local issues as a local organisation. Participants in the first annual review described growth in almost every facet of the organisation: overall budget, number of projects, program reach and geographical reach. Chrysalis had been very successful at growing and maintaining a sizable portfolio of new programs (USD 10 million projected over 3 years from 2019), and many participants believed that the organisation's reputation had improved and consolidated over the preceding 12 months. Chrysalis had also begun to develop a new identity, somewhat independent of the CARE legacy:

In terms of legacy, I think if you talk to a lot of people about CARE, what they remember is the CARE biscuit. I'm not sure that they necessarily link CARE with Chrysalis. I think in a way Chrysalis has been quite successful in creating their own identity. External Participant BS01, 2019

There's recognition of our work now. People will say: gender-based violence, women's economic empowerment... isn't that what Chrysalis does? Internal Participant AS14, 2019

With growth came organisational stretch, and participants advised that Chrysalis' internal systems, especially HR and finance, were straining under the significant growth of the previous two years. Uncertainty about humanitarian capacity had also arisen during the recent development of an Emergency Preparedness Plan, most notably in the form of unresolved negotiations with the CARE Emergency Group regarding the capacity of Chrysalis to respond to emergencies. Several review participants flagged the risk of being too broad: a fear that Chrysalis would diversify technical areas too widely and in so doing dilute the credibility of Chrysalis. This was in keeping with the advice of internal and external participants in the baseline study one year earlier:

But when NGOs start talking about democratic transformation or whatever... Alleviating poverty... Health for all... Grandiose statements and objectives. No country in the world achieved any of those targets by some international or UN agency doing a five-year project. That came through political struggle. And I think there needs to be a recognition of that, and that whatever work NGOs and international agencies do, this shouldn't undermine, or delegitimise, or depoliticise the ongoing political struggles. External Participant BS09, 2019

On one level it is good, at the present stage of evolution, that Chrysalis has a combination of programs in the portfolio. Having said that, I think we also need to be proactive in trying to reshape that portfolio, so that we don't spread ourselves too thin. Internal Participant AS15, 2019

By the final year of the study, LST participants advised that Chrysalis' external profile had changed significantly, in line with the diversified business model and the concerted effort to specialise in gender. Chrysalis' systems and structures were greatly simplified from the days of CARE, and staff believed them to be more responsive, participatory and contextually appropriate. Chrysalis staff celebrated their independence and agility, perceiving the organisation to be liberated in many respects by their relative autonomy. In the 2020 survey, 100% of respondents believed that Chrysalis is fundamentally different to the CARE Country Office with 75% describing the shift as either significant or radical:

Without SPC demands [Shared Program Costs that a country office must allocate to their lead member on any grant] and the layers of decision making we had as a CO we have much more free will and independent decision making. Choosing to work with smaller amounts is OK if it makes strategic sense for Chrysalis. Internal Participant AS18, 2020

Cooperation with CARE International

In 2018, CARE International was watching the emergence of Chrysalis with great interest and anticipation. As one of only a small number of transitioning organisations and as the only one of these establishing themselves as a CARE Affiliate, the lessons learned would have long-lasting implications for the confederation. Baseline participants suggested that despite this, many of the moving parts within CARE International were yet to be aligned behind the transformation. As such, this was a time of both opportunity and risk for Chrysalis. There was an opportunity to set the scene, show the way, demonstrate new ways of doing things and push CARE International ahead. That opportunity was tempered to some degree by the risk of Chrysalis carrying too great a weight for a fledging local organisation:

There is a great chance for us to do [transition] well and set a path for others but in the meantime, it can feel like a burden... the burden of representing diversity. Internal Participant AS04 2018

Chrysalis has a unique opportunity to inform and influence CARE International, to show how it could or should be done. In the absence of clear CARE Affiliate rules, Chrysalis can help write the CARE Affiliate rules. Internal Participant AS12, 2018

In 2018, LST participants felt that CARE's programmatic priorities remained relevant to Chrysalis and believed there were still regular opportunities for cross-pollination. The same was thought to be true of many of CARE's tools, policies and practices. There were diverse views, however, on how to balance the old with the new, particularly on how to borrow the best of the CARE legacy while forging an independent path for Chrysalis:

We are still carrying the same hard drive of CARE methods and tools. They are still relevant for us and there is still a sense of inclusion in CARE. Internal Participant AS03, 2018

"Being outside CARE, we can be more honest, more critical of policies that don't fit. We want to exceed the work of INGOs, not replicate the work of INGOs. Internal Participant AS02, 2018

Baseline participants warned of the risks of tokenism for CARE international, suggesting that the development community were suspicious of a change that was transformational in name only. They suggested a superficial change would not be adequate to demonstrate accountability or build legitimacy for CARE, or Chrysalis, in Sri Lanka:

CARE runs the risk of tokenism if there are only a few transitioned offices, only one or two CARE Affiliates. Internal Participant AS01, 2018

To be local is to go deeper to a more authentic and accountable voice. The old model is replete with conflicts of interest... for legitimacy this needs to change. External Participant BS01, 2018

By the time of the first annual review in 2019, the range of collaborations across CARE International had continued to grow. Chrysalis had been involved in numerous council and committee meetings, direct donor engagements and technical working groups and had enjoyed many other opportunities never afforded a CARE Country Office. New partnerships, proactively forged by CMPs such as CARE UK, had begun to reflect and enable a more independent Chrysalis. Chrysalis' unique affiliate status was seen to afford Chrysalis a good balance of independence from, and influence over the CARE

Confederation. Furthermore, the collective voice of existing and emerging southern leaders across CARE had become louder and more cohesive, particularly in the wake of the *Cairo Compact* of 2018:

CARE's southern leaders have come together as never before in a demonstration of mutual support and collective voice. Internal Participant AS15, 2019

In 2019, most Chrysalis staff generally regarded the Sri Lankan transition as complete, although many believed this view was not shared equally across CARE International. While some CMPs, or individuals within CMPs, had begun to understand and appreciate Chrysalis' evolved form as a CARE Affiliate, others had not. The language of the draft affiliate agreement, at least initially, demonstrated that much remained to be done in terms of shifting power and politics in CARE. Furthermore, despite the passage of time, by mid-2019 the affiliate agreement was still in draft form, delaying clarity for both parties and providing a grey area for CMPs to resist change:

The CEOs, the programme directors, the people at the top... they do understand. There is communication at the higher levels, and we talk a lot about the work that we do. The bottom layers, though, the middle management, those are people who are still struggling to identify who CARE Sri Lanka has become. That's how I see it. Internal Participant AS16, 2019

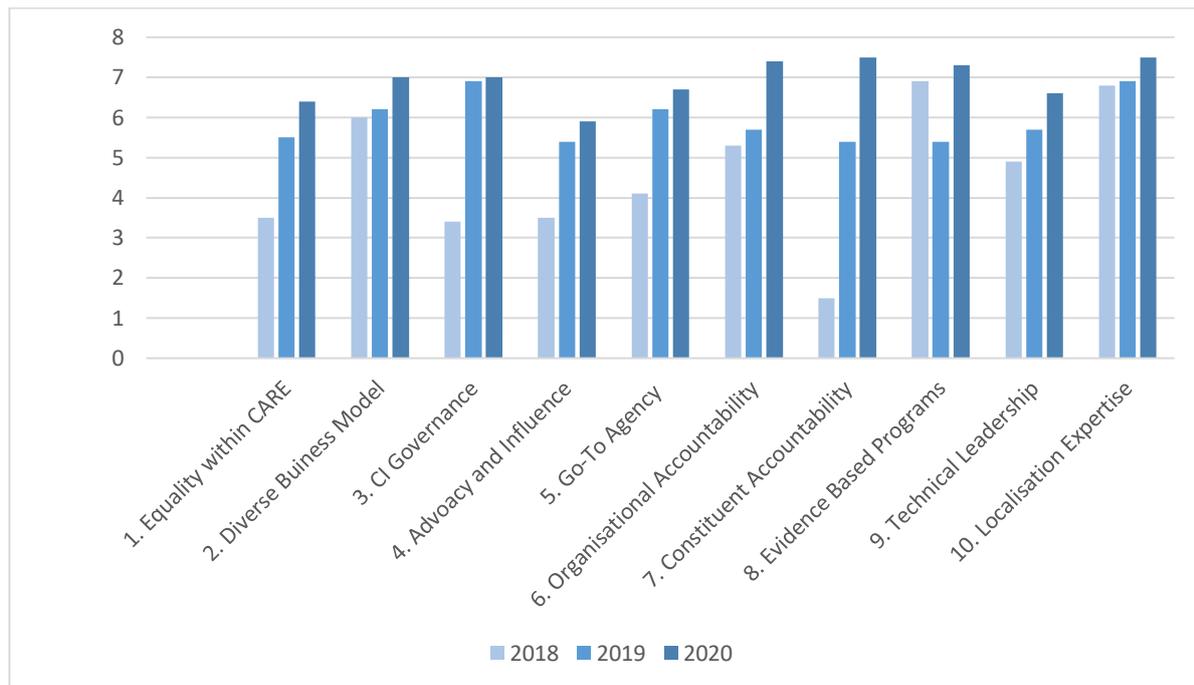
By 2020, LST participants suggested Chrysalis was exercising far greater influence over CARE than at the beginning of their transition, and many believed they were leading the way as the first CARE Affiliate. Donor access challenges were still apparent, and inconsistencies across the confederation still frustrated staff, but on the whole Chrysalis was seen to make a large and tangible contribution to CARE International. Strategic partnerships were deepening, and Chrysalis was seen to be closing the power gap with CMPs. The southern voice movement had continued to build, and participants cited numerous examples of new forms of cooperation (on fundraising approaches, governance structures, program coordination) between original, current and potential CARE members from the global south. The final annual review painted a picture of a fundamentally different collaboration landscape for both Chrysalis and CARE.

Transition Aspirations for 2023

As in Indonesia, Chrysalis management and staff were supported to develop transition aspirations for the new organisation in 2018. As with YCP, Chrysalis management and staff also undertook a self-assessment process annually for three years; each year the results were discussed in plenary, with a particular emphasis on the motivations behind specific scores. Overall, the self-assessment ratings report a sweeping improvement between 2018 and 2020, with higher ratings against all 10

aspirations over the course of the study. Unlike in Indonesia, improvement continued through the middle year of the study in all but one of the priority areas (Evidence Based Programming). Figure 5 displays these changes graphically and participant commentary follows under the numerical results for each aspiration.

Figure 5
Average Self-Assessment Scores 2018-2020 (Chrysalis)



1. Chrysalis has direct access to CARE’s networks, investors and donors as an equal partner

An average score of **3.5 out of 10 in 2018** jumped to **5.5 in 2019** and right up to **6.4 in 2020**. With a leap of almost 3 points in average scores, this was seen as one of the most improved areas. Plenary participants expressed new confidence in their status within CARE International networks. While examples of historic hierarchies and attitudes persist in patches, participants believed these scores reflected a steady movement towards a more equitable partnerships in CARE.

2. Chrysalis has built a viable, diverse business model based on specialist areas that enable greater impact on women and youth

Steady improvement from an already high average score of **6.0 out of 10 in 2018** to **6.2 in 2019** and **7.0 in 2020**. Participants advised that the very high scores related to the consistent/constant interest in the organisation’s work as well as the steady acquisition of new funding sources. The diversity of income streams remains a priority and the discussion drifted towards the proportions of income in different streams and the ongoing dependence on international institutional donors.

3. Chrysalis maintains a seat on CARE's international governance and programming structures

A low average score of **3.4 in 2018** leapt up to **6.9 in 2019** and **7.0 in 2020**. With a rise of more than 3.5 points over the three years, this was seen as the second most improved area. Participants were very enthusiastic about the position Chrysalis now holds in CARE International spaces. Much of the caution expressed in 2018 regarding transition and the implications of affiliate status on influence over CARE had gone by 2020.

4. Together with peer organisations Chrysalis is a key advocate in public and private sectors in our specialist areas

Steady improvement from an average score of **3.5 in 2018** up to **5.4 in 2019** and **5.9 in 2020**. Participants spoke of strong growth in the space as the Chrysalis brand builds. Staff referenced numerous invitations from government and other partners as evidence of a fundamental change since the baseline year of 2018.

5. Chrysalis is the go-to agency in our specialist areas, known for high-quality people and high-quality work.

Steady improvement from an average score of **4.1 in 2018** up to **6.2 in 2019** and **6.7 in 2020**. The shared focus on this aspiration was a recurring feature of the baseline interviews and focus groups, and both internal and external participants believed this to be working in the latter two years of the study. Confidence was high after "a successful period of building the brand, winning new grants and delivering high quality projects" (Plenary Workshops Notes, 2019).

6. Chrysalis demonstrates accountability and transparency through its systems, staff and programs

After gradual improvement from **5.3 in 2018** to **5.7 in 2019**, a leap to an average of **7.4 in 2020**. In the first two years, participants described this as a strong area of practice, while acknowledging an ongoing need for consistency and continuous improvement. 2020 constituted a big leap forward with participants able to point to systematic improvements across the portfolio.

7. Chrysalis is primarily accountable to its constituents beyond all other stakeholders

A very low average score of **1.5 in 2018** jumped to **5.4 in 2019** and all the way up to **7.5 in 2020**. With an overall gain of 6 points, this was easily the strongest improvement among self-assessments, partly because the vision was amended in 2019 from specificity around a feedback and complaints mechanism to wider accountability to constituents in Chrysalis's work. Participants were generally very positive about the organisation's practice in this space and were able to quote several examples

of decision making that was grounded in constituent priorities. This received the highest average self-assessment score of all 10 aspirations in 2020.

8. Chrysalis provides a suite of evidence-based programs and services that have been shown to work over time

Fluctuated from an average of **6.9 in 2018**, down to **5.4 in 2019** and all the way up to **7.3 in 2020**. This was the only aspiration to drop off in the second year, before recovering again by year three. Participants suggested this volatility was primarily due to concerns about Chrysalis' ability to adequately communicate their success. In the middle year of the study (2019), participants felt Chrysalis was sliding backwards in their production of evidence; however, the same participants suggested this had much improved in 2020.

9. Chrysalis holds advisory positions and plays a leadership role in national, regional and global platforms relevant to our specialist areas

Steady improvement from an average score of **4.9 in 2018** up to **5.7 in 2019** and then **6.6 in 2020**. Participants were generally very positive, referencing the roles Chrysalis play in CARE International (especially the global leadership on A Life Free from Violence) and in various national platforms. The steady improvement year on year mirrors the recurring advice from interviews and focus groups that Chrysalis had achieved consistent progress in this space over the study.

10. Chrysalis shares our experience and knowledge with other organisations in transition, servicing increasing demand for localisation expertise

Already high average scores of **6.8 in 2018** and **6.9 in 2019** went right up to **7.5 in 2020**, to achieve the equal highest average score of all transition aspirations. Participants spoke of a continuous stream of interest and enquiries about the Chrysalis model from both inside and outside the organisation. This was true at the beginning of the study, and plenary participants suggested that even in 2020, several years on from Chrysalis' inception, demand remained high, and the organisation remained committed to responding.

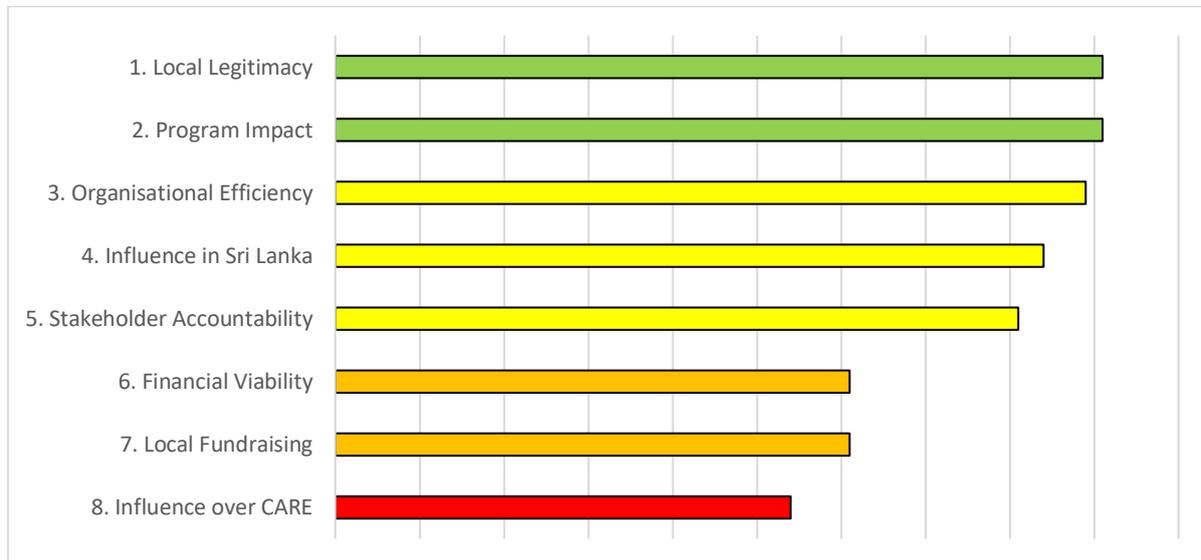
Remote Survey Data

Under the remote review methodology developed in 2020, participants were encouraged to describe the change Chrysalis had witnessed over the course of the transition. The bulk of the answers were provided in narrative form and are summarised in the chapter to this point; however, participants were also asked to rank those areas of organisational profile or practice that were, A)

the most important motivations behind localisation in Sri Lanka and B) the areas that had most improved because of the transition. The results are presented in Figures 6 and 7.

Figure 6

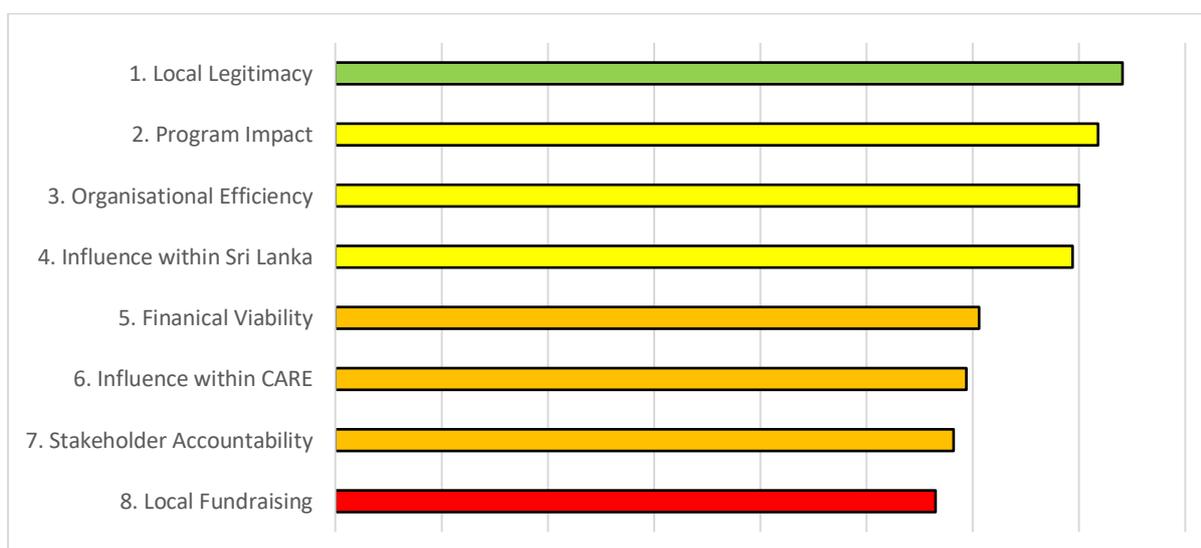
Motivations Behind CARE’s Localisation in Sri Lanka (ranked from most to least important)



“Local Legitimacy” and “Program Impact” shared the highest retrospective ranking in terms of motivations behind localisation in Sri Lanka. Interestingly “Influence Over CARE International” was ranked last of all the options in Sri Lanka, the lowest rank this motivation received in any of the transitioning settings (including Morocco and Egypt when asked a similar question for CARE’s *Longitudinal Study of Transition 2021*).

Figure 7

Areas of Most Improvement for Chrysalis (ranked from most to least improved)



“Local Legitimacy” stood out as the area most improved because of the transition. “Organisational Efficiency”, “Program Impact” and “Influence within Sri Lanka” were also very highly rated, the last of these being very closely linked with the concept of legitimacy and at the heart of the philosophical drive to establish Chrysalis as a local organisation. “Local Fundraising” was ranked lowest for improvement over the course of the transition, linked to the ongoing reliance on institutional funding.

Country Analysis

In the 2020 survey, Chrysalis staff voted “Improved Legitimacy” as the single greatest success of the transition in Sri Lanka. Participants believed external perceptions of Chrysalis have steadily improved over the course of the study. This is apparent in relationships they describe with civil society partners and particularly with government partners, who are embracing the organisation as experts in their specialist disciplines. Chrysalis’ status as both a local organisation and a local company limited by guarantee is seen as an important feature of these relationships. Legitimacy is also reported to have deepened in the eyes of donors, both local and international, some of whom place value on the local standing of Chrysalis as well as their legacy of credibility as CARE International. The Chrysalis brand is showing traction beyond its years, and the organisation is regularly acknowledged and sought after for its expertise:

We have now established our footprint as a legitimate local organisation. We have built acceptance and trust among donors and government partners. Internal Participant AS19, 2020

The Sri Lankan operating environment has been highly volatile over the course of the transition. Major political events included an attempted coup in 2018, a major terrorist attack in 2019, a change in the presidency (2019) and a change of prime minister (2020), all of which reflected or triggered shifts in the geo-political landscape. Within government, shifting views on the role of civil society and western influence are yet to be fully resolved. The cynicism and scepticism regarding foreign intervention through NGOs that is common to so many settings (Dupuy & Prakash, 2020; Howell et al., 2008) is no less apparent in Sri Lanka, with the result that the operating space for Chrysalis and others is far from assured. International organisations are still treated with suspicion in certain circles, as are organisations with international links, and goodwill can fluctuate. In this respect, the CARE legacy is not uniformly positive, and scepticism about the transition persists among certain civil society peers and government partners.

Internally, the data paints a picture of radical transformation from an unviable CARE Country Office with limited support and minimal agency within the CARE confederation to a powerful, influential player on both local and international stages. Staff and management describe a robust organisational culture typified by passionate and skilled staff who are empowered to share their views. In achieving this state, Chrysalis appear to have been following what Morgan (1986) described as the enactment of organisational culture, where rather than simply following expectations, participants are shaping and structuring their environment to achieve a desired state. Simultaneously, Chrysalis has established a unique brand and a technical niche, couched in an organisational structure that allows for both traditional and contemporary development partnerships. Over the course of the study, Chrysalis has also undertaken a range of system improvements to bolster accountability and applied these across a funding portfolio that is now both larger and more diverse. Locally and internationally, Chrysalis is regarded as a success story:

We are becoming stronger day by day in terms of funding, new partnerships, new programs, acceptance among donors and other CSOs. We are now known as a strong national level CSO. We have become a success story for CARE, and many other INGOs who are planning to localise seek advice from Chrysalis. We have proven that this model is working in the best way possible: by improving the scale of our impact. Internal Participant AS04, 2020

As with all organisational change at scale, the transition has not been without its challenges. The legal and administrative practicalities of establishing the new organisations were far greater than anticipated. Tensions rose from time to time between loyalty to past strengths and enthusiasm for new ways of working, and systems were stretched and tested as the organisation sought to meet both old and new needs. Perhaps most pressingly, the high dependence on institutional grants (both public and private) has constrained the organisation's capacity to invest in itself, be that for program development and in-house technical expertise or for adequate recovery of core costs. Increasingly, Chrysalis must manage a trade-off between the agility (yet modest scale) of a small organisation and the bureaucracy (yet grander scale) of a large one, with pressure in both directions in terms of finance, staffing and administrative systems.

Many respondents advised that CARE International's commitment to membership diversification (advocacy from the CI Secretariat, the allocation of CARE USA and CARE International resources, and the creation of new CMP partnerships) helped enable and accelerate change for Chrysalis. Despite this, relationships with CMPs have also proved challenging at times. It is a significant, recurring finding across the three cycles of data collection in Sri Lanka that the behaviours and expectations of

northern CMP staff have not kept pace with the evolution in organisational structure. Although many CMPs expressed philosophical support for the devolution of power, and specifically expressed support for Chrysalis as an embodiment of this devolution, staff shared examples of CMP staff employing demanding and at times disrespectful communication when undertaking grant management functions. In addition, the controlling tone of early drafts of the affiliate agreement and the ongoing uncertainties around affiliate membership can be seen as further evidence of resistance to change within CARE.

The unique history of Chrysalis remained important, both in the eyes of Chrysalis staff and in terms of the wider CARE confederation. Firstly, Chrysalis staff remained acutely aware that “our trajectory was different because there was a decision to close here” (Internal Participant AS04, 2020). Unlike any other transitioning office before or since, the decision to establish Chrysalis came well after CARE USA had decided to shut down CARE’s presence in Sri Lanka and after much deliberation and lobbying. CARE USA and the CI Secretariat went on to closely support the emergent organisation; however, the closure of CARE International in Sri Lanka meant that Chrysalis was locally owned and designed in a way that other transitioning offices cannot claim. The second point of difference is that Chrysalis is the first and, to this point, only Affiliate Member of the CI Confederation, which led to unique opportunities and challenges over the course of their transition:

It’s new, experiential learning for Chrysalis and for CARE, too. Chrysalis has set an example for the CARE world through this transition. External Participant BS07, 2019

The work done on developing the Chrysalis model and advocating for CARE to endorse this new type of presence positioned the nascent organisation well. The urgency and singularity gave their business plan greater clarity and simplicity than those of peer organisations proposing more gradual transitions. As the first CARE Affiliate, Chrysalis was also able to make up the rules as to how the affiliate relationship with CARE International should work. While this challenge came with additional pressure and responsibility, it was also a very rare opportunity for the organisation to help set the policy and procedures under which they and future affiliates would engage with the confederation. Chrysalis has flourished in their unique role, over time becoming not only the first affiliate but also the first southern member to take the global lead on a programmatic area (A Life Free from Violence). Given the Country Office closure and the unique affiliate status, it could be argued that Chrysalis has been the most disruptive force within the complex CARE system, triggering more, and more rapid, change than any other single branch of the CARE tree. Chrysalis has become a beacon to staff and leaders across the confederation and has helped shape a “new normal” for CARE.

Significant Research Moments: Pivotal Conversations

There were two interviews that took place in Sri Lanka which fundamentally shaped the way I was to understand and interrogate localisation and legitimacy for INGOs. The first of these took place in an interview in 2018 with Professor Arjuna Parakrama, a civil society expert from the University of Peradeniya in Kandy. In a generous interview that predominantly focused on politics and civil society in Sri Lanka, Arjuna also spoke of what he saw as the central flaw in INGO efforts at localisation, advising “To be local is to go deeper to a more authentic and accountable voice. The INGO model is replete with conflicts of interest, replete with self-interest. For legitimacy this needs to change”. He shared this view as fact rather than supposition, and while conflicts of interest within INGOs were very familiar to me, the notion of INGOs as ‘replete with self-interest’ crystallised and united a range of views I was hearing and reading during that first year.

A second such realisation took place in a 2019 interview with Harini Amarsuriya, a lecturer at the Open University of Sri Lanka who was soon to become a member of the Sri Lankan Parliament. Among her views on the failings of international organisations was a frustration with their bold assertions. “When (INGOs) start talking about democratic transformation or whatever... Alleviating poverty. Health for all. Grandiose statements and objectives. No country in the world achieved any of those targets by some international agency doing a five-year project. That came through political struggle. And I think that whatever work NGOs and international agencies do, shouldn’t undermine those political struggles, or delegitimise, or depoliticise those political struggles.” Her point spoke to the tendency of aid agencies to simplify and depoliticise complex development issues, but it also illuminated the sheer arrogance of some of the grand claims made by donors and implementing agencies, including INGOs.

Conclusion

As was the case for YCP in Indonesia, legitimacy emerged as the area of greatest reported improvement for Chrysalis over the course of the study. For Chrysalis, much of their success in building legitimacy is linked to improvements in profile and visibility, particularly the clear and consistent branding as a local organisation with a unique value-add. This is particularly true in an environment where the role of NGOs, particularly those with international links, is contested and uncertain. Relationships with government partners, private sector partners and CMPs have all

matured, in line with evolved perceptions of the organisation's right to exert power. Institutional donors, even those still funding through traditional grant windows with CMPs, have expressed their support for the evolution, and additional donors are coming on board specifically because of Chrysalis' status as a Sri Lankan company limited by guarantee.

There has been a dramatic shift in power relations between Chrysalis and CARE International. Chrysalis enjoys far greater access to CARE's networks and plays a more powerful role in global governance and programming than they did at the beginning of the study. As the first and only Affiliate Member, Chrysalis has shaped the rules for themselves and all future affiliates. In addition to their contribution to the work of the Global Southern Leaders Forum, their role as global lead on a key area of CARE's international programming positions Chrysalis right at the centre of the movement for change. While study participants acknowledged the important role of advocates across the CARE confederation in facilitating change, for the most part the Chrysalis story is one of power being claimed rather than ceded. Chrysalis developed a vision for their own future and their relationships with CARE, then went about realising this.

Despite this progress, it is also true that CMPs hold on to historical power relations at times. The tone of some grant management negotiations and the early negotiations around the affiliate agreement imply power being exercised as resistance to change by parts of CARE International. Furthermore, discretionary resources remain central to unlocking power for Chrysalis. The business model has shifted, and the mechanisms are in place for income diversity, yet most of Chrysalis' recent growth has come in the form of institutional grants with limited flexibility. While any growth is obviously positive in terms of Chrysalis' potential for scale and impact, until such time as discretionary resources are available to supplement tied grants, Chrysalis' ability to make strategic decisions and investments independently of the external CARE hierarchy will be constrained.

Chapter Seven: *Comparing the Case Studies*

Introduction

This chapter compares the results showcased in Chapters Five and Six, providing a deeper exploration of the commonalities and contrasts apparent across the two locations over the course of the study. The analysis is a product of the data coding discussed in previous chapters, triangulated with key literature and further informed by my interpretation as researcher and participant. For the most part, the comparison offers a story of commonalties. Both organisations report similar progress in terms of normative legitimacy, particularly in the eyes of government partners, and both are experiencing greater influence over CARE. In both cases, civil society relationships are yet to radically change, and uncertainty persists over the likely costs and benefits of the legacy (and continuing association) with CARE in this regard. Both organisations had grown significantly in terms of budgets and program portfolios by the conclusion of the study, although the nature of this funding does not offer compelling evidence for financial viability moving forward. On balance, the data suggests that Chrysalis is further advanced along the path of independence and influence. This is in part due to their earlier start on the transition journey; however, the data also suggests the endogenous origins of the Chrysalis model and their unique status as the only CARE Affiliate Member are also significant factors.

Findings are presented under the deductive headings employed in earlier chapters, broadly falling into the two categories of external and internal relationships and systems. Where apparent, emerging implications in terms of the four domains of change are then identified and discussed. The chapter concludes with a summary of the most consistent findings to emerge from the consolidation of the two case studies. This includes areas of significant change, most notably in the areas of local legitimacy and collective southern voice, and areas where change was limited in both settings, most notably in terms relationships with CMPs and civil society peers. Additional findings related to accountability and the unanticipated burdens placed on southern leaders are also covered here. This summary provides a platform for the deeper analysis to follow in Chapter Nine.

Preliminary Commonalities and Variations

The grouping of the two local organisations for this chapter is not intended to imply that their transition journeys are the same. On the contrary, both organisations operate not only in their own unique geo-political contexts but also on unique pathways of transformation. As such, while it is useful to draw parallels between the two organisations, it is also necessary to acknowledge that they each have distinct starting points, pathways, and endpoints. A note of caution is required, therefore,

when comparing one journey with the other. These results are presented in the knowledge that where the two organisations display either common or divergent characteristics, these have not necessarily occurred under the same circumstances.

Drawing on the quantitative elements of the study—the transition aspiration data, the results from the annual self-assessment exercises and the results from change surveys undertaken following the final review exercises in 2020—several commonalities emerged between the two case studies. There were, for instance, many similarities between the aspirations of each organisation, with both focusing on a sustainable business model, influence over CARE, policy influence, thought leadership, technical leadership and accountability to constituents and partners. Self-assessments of progress towards transition aspirations improved markedly over the course of the study. In another noteworthy commonality, both organisations described “Local Legitimacy” as the area that had witnessed the greatest improvement as a result of their transition from a CARE International Country Office. This was ranked most improved by a large margin in both settings.

Among the subtle variances between their transition aspirations, YCP developed a specific aspiration for accountability to staff, being an “Employer of Choice”, among their top 10 priorities. Chrysalis only mentioned staff, along with programs and systems, as the means with which they hope to demonstrate their accountability and transparency. Chrysalis, instead, dedicated one of their top 10 priorities to sharing their transition knowledge and expertise with others, thereby servicing increasing demand for localisation expertise. This did not feature among YCP’s priorities. Scores were uniformly lower for YCP, with the lowest, highest and average scores consistently below those at Chrysalis in every data collection. YCP also reported a significant backwards slide in several areas during the middle year of the study (2019) before recovering to show a clear improvement in all areas. There were very few significant variations between the change surveys in each location, the most notable variation being “Organisational Efficiency” which was ranked as highly improved in Sri Lanka but far less so in Indonesia.

External Relationships and Systems

Government Relations

In both transitioning settings, the operating environment for non-government organisations is constrained by prevailing attitudes towards civil society intervention in public affairs and/or by the legislative environment in which NGOs operate. The sectors and locations in which NGOs can work are tightly controlled and are vulnerable to political change. This is an example of what Andrews et al. (2016) describe as the “authorising environment”, where authority is required to make change happen yet attaining such authority “is highly complex, requiring engagement with many agents,

each of whom responding to different kinds of authority” (p. 3). This is particularly true for INGOs or NGOs with international links, where scepticism about the motivations and strings attached to NGO intervention runs high. In both settings, the INGO legacy remained a feature of the organisational culture and external reputation through the early days of transition and acted as a double-edged sword: on the one hand, it demonstrated commitment and expertise; on the other, it made it difficult to separate the old from the new. It did not appear likely that either organisation could seek to maintain the benefits of their association with CARE without incurring the suspicion and reservation that accompanied them as Country Offices, as reflected in the following comments:

INGOs are seen as privileged because of their access to information and resources, or as funders whose only interest is reports and acquittals, or as messengers who are being told what to do by their own funders. External Participant BS03, Sri Lanka, 2018

There is very limited acceptance of international cooperation, even in disaster response. A long wait for declaration of a national disaster (to enable international support) and strict limitations on appointments and movements for international experts. Internal Participant AI09, Indonesia, 2019

Despite the limited time frame for the research, significant fluctuations were witnessed in attitudes towards NGOs in both locations. In Sri Lanka, a severely limiting NGO law was proposed and publicly debated during the first year of the study. While it was not passed into law at that time, the political upheaval of 2018 and the leadership change of 2019 mean that the same law or something similar may yet be introduced. Participants in the 2020 data collection suggested the new regime “doesn’t see a big role for civil society in Sri Lanka’s development” and, further, that they have a “particular distaste for CSOs.” This constitutes the continuation of a long-standing political campaign against NGOs in Sri Lanka, in which NGOs are portrayed “as agents of a malign globalisation which threatens the very existence of ‘local culture’ and ‘local morality’” (Amarasuriya & Spencer, 2012, p. 116).

In Indonesia, local civil society organisations were enjoying relatively straightforward cooperation in 2018; however, after the turmoil and eventual return of the incumbent government in 2019, their operating space notably shrank. In a 2020 human rights report, Indonesia’s rating for civil liberties had returned to “almost the same as the score during the New Order era” (Khanif, 2021, p. ii).

Initially, study participants expressed optimism about the stability and opportunity that a returned government might offer, yet the reality of new political appointments was quite the opposite. This speaks to a perennial vulnerability in both locations that localisation cannot overcome.

In each setting, study participants spoke of the strong relationships between government and CARE, generally built upon years of cooperation and open communication between the two parties. Despite this, at the time of the baseline exercise in 2018, the governments in each setting were expressing a preference for partnerships with local organisations and participants in both settings advised that recent cooperation with the country office had been slow and cumbersome. Over the course of the study, government relations ebbed and flowed, often linked to the sway of the political environment. Changes in leadership or government policy frequently saw new reporting lines for the transitioning organisations, meaning new relationships had to be forged and time spent on historical partnerships seemed wasted. Despite this, both organisations reported progress in building the respect of their government peers and both described greater influence over government policy and practice as a result of the transition. The local organisations were offered opportunities to participate in forums and activities that were not accessible to CARE as a Country Office, in what appeared an expression of deeper trust and confidence among their national peers and partners:

The government is increasingly aware of our existence, not only at the national level, but also at the provincial, district and village levels. Likewise, CARE and local civil society work together on one platform. Internal participant AI13, Indonesia, 2020

Both organisations were focused on building trust in the new entity and overcoming any scepticism about the transition from Country Office to local organisation. In each case, systems decisions (regarding organisational structures, administrative procedures, government approvals and timing) were seen as important. In Indonesia, a clean break between the operations of the Country Office and the new Yayasan was believed to be critical. The Indonesian government was openly sceptical of a transition that was local in name only, citing examples of large INGOs such as Plan International that had chosen to run a Yayasan in parallel with a Country Office rather than instead of one. YCP thus made the decision to formally shut the Country Office prior to opening their doors, rather than maintain parallel organisations for even a short period of time. The rushed process was complicated and burdensome for YCP's employees, particularly the administration of existing grants that straddled the change, yet this was deemed an important concession to bolster the standing of YCP over time.

In Sri Lanka, the decision to register the new organisation not only as a local NGO but also as a company limited by guarantee has proved similarly wise. The company status allows Chrysalis the space to generate different types of income and provide corporate services, a feature of the business model the board hopes to grow over time. Moreover, this allows the organisation operating space regardless of the swaying political attitudes and/or potential legislative changes

directed at NGOs in Sri Lanka. As was the case in Indonesia, this strategic decision was complicated and burdensome for staff, and in this instance took more than a year of lobbying to achieve, yet as a result the organisation is protected and their future more assured. This status has also opened doors to new parts of government in Sri Lanka and made possible partnerships that were not anticipated when the decision was made.

Civil Society Relations

The historical origins and contemporary interactions of local and national civil society vary widely across the two settings of the study. Participants spoke of entrenched hierarchies among local and national actors, often linked to their origins or reputation as much as the size of their portfolio or their perceived influence over government. In both settings, there was scepticism among local civil society players about the motivations of international actors seeking to localise, echoing concerns raised in the literature regarding the conflicting priorities of INGOs (Atack, 1999; CSOPDE, 2016) and their tendency to compete with local organisations for already limited resources (Batti, 2014; Lewis et al., 2015). It was equally apparent that CARE's history of civil society cooperation tended towards a sub-contracting model, where services were provided in return for funding and reporting relationships more closely resembled that of a donor than that of a partner. Reflections on these historical relationships with national and local CSOs suggested that CARE were among those INGOs whose "words to describe their approach to partnerships... do not match the reality as experienced by those partners" (Shifting the Power, 2017).

While civil society relationships evolved in both locations over the course of the study, the changes were subtle and far from uniform. In Sri Lanka, despite the clean break with naming and branding, Chrysalis is still associated with the CARE legacy and, as civil society space shrinks in that setting, the historic association is still met with some suspicion: "This dual identity we have, local and international. There's still suspicion about that... who are they really?" (Internal Participant AS08, Sri Lanka, 2020). Although the distance from CARE International is clearer in Sri Lanka than in other transitioning settings, the decision to maintain a formal and public affiliation may mean such suspicion lingers indefinitely. In Indonesia, YCP was able to develop new local partnerships as a registered Yayasan yet was still finding it difficult to shake the image of a wealthy funder, rather than partner, to peer organisations:

We have actively sought collaboration with others, including with local-based NGOs. With some we have been successful and enjoy a good sense of trust... With others there is still some way to go, since most still see YCP as 'ex international' and 'funder' rather than partner, but that is also gradually changing. Internal participant AI14, Indonesia, 2020

Consistent advice emerged from both internal and external participants regarding the expectations of civil society peers in both locations. There was broad agreement that the transitioning organisations needed to be very clear on the specific and unique contribution they felt they could make to development in each setting. Where there was no discrete specialisation or value-add, CARE was warned, civil society actors would regard the transitioning organisations as crowding rather than complementing their work. To counter this risk, a clear organisational profile and strategic intent would be required. By the third and final data collection in 2020, Chrysalis had made more progress on this than YCP, helped in part by their earlier transition but also by the work on image and identity they necessarily undertook when establishing their independent brand. For YCP, the focus on humanitarian response through much of the study period meant that the strategic work on brand and value-add had only just commenced by the completion of the data collection.

There is evidence to suggest that CARE's long history of behaving like a donor, often deferring to a command-and-control model of grant management, has contributed to the sense of distance and difference (of polarity) with local and national peers. While such behaviour may be legitimising for CARE from the perspective of donors seeking assurances of control and predictability, it may simultaneously be delegitimising from the perspective of their local partners. Staff of the transitioning organisations regularly acknowledged the flaws in their own attitudes and behaviours around local partnerships, built upon a sense of superiority that was closely tied with their international affiliation: "We need to move beyond our sense of superiority because we are CARE International. We need to move to an eye-to-eye model with local partners" (Internal participant AI07, Indonesia, 2018).

Awareness of these flaws among staff and leaders was not seen to contradict a deep accountability to the primary constituents of their work: the people and communities with and for whom they work. Staff at both YCP and Chrysalis spoke of their dedication to inclusive and transparent practice, whether this be through directly managed programs or programs managed through partners. This view may not necessarily be shared equally by their partners locally or internationally within CARE; indeed, Davis et al. (2012) suggested it is quite common that "different actors may also hold contrasting views of the adequacy of existing accountability arrangements" (p. 948). However, a high standard of participatory practice is something participants held themselves, and any implementing partners, fundamentally responsible for. As such, a dichotomy emerges between a perceived arrogance that historically featured in relationships with civil society partners and a contrasting deference that typically features in relationships with constituent communities. This arrogance, perhaps a local mimicry of the wider self-importance exhibited by INGOs, presents a stumbling block to the acceptance of transitioned CARE members and affiliates as legitimate local actors.

Donor Relations

The premise of diminishing institutional funding was central to CARE USA's decision to close the Country Office in Sri Lanka, and the potential for alternative local funding sources was equally fundamental to the (later) decision to support the establishment of Chrysalis. Similarly, every time localisation was considered in Indonesia, a central consideration was the diminishing interest of CARE's traditional donors alongside the potential for local funding in Indonesia's burgeoning middle-income economy. In both cases, the financial burden of the heavy Country Office structure was regarded as too great in the changing donor landscape, and localisation was seen, among other motivations, as necessary for organisational survival. Importantly, these motivations were in place and documented before the Delhi Resolution was signed before the Membership Investment Fund was established and before any Country Offices had been chosen to participate in the cohort of four transitioning organisations.

Donors have historically preferred to operate through intermediaries in order to reduce their own administrative burden and hand over the risk of managing local partners to intermediaries (Tomlinson, 2013). At the commencement of the longitudinal study, it was still broadly accepted that the interest of institutional donors in funding the work of INGOs was rapidly waning in both locations. Motivated, perhaps, by deepening global criticisms of indirect development funding and a growing mandate to support local institutions (Ismail, 2019; Moilwa, 2015), traditional donors were openly expressing their preference to work with local organisations and funding windows were changing to reflect this intention: "Donors like USAID and DFID are purposefully targeting local organisations with either dedicated windows or by direct contracting for specific tasks" (External Participant BS01, Sri Lanka, 2018). The business models of the transitioning organisations were grounded upon this understanding and an additional understanding that, in time, local public and private funds would only be made available to locally registered and governed organisations.

Over the course of the study, however, the actual change in donor partnerships and funding was less radical than many participants anticipated. While it is true that new opportunities opened for each organisation which would not have been available to them as CARE Country Offices, in most instances the scale of this cooperation was modest by comparison with income from traditional institutional donors. In this way, the pragmatic incentives for localisation, the *push factors*, did not force the hand of the emerging organisations as they had been expected to, and the overall portfolio in each location was larger (in dollar value) by the end of the study. The availability of certain pools of foreign aid, most notably post-conflict funding in Sri Lanka and humanitarian funding in Indonesia, more than made up for any actual or anticipated loss in traditional income. The willingness of donors to fund INGOs and their (new) local partners for work of this kind, however, does not constitute

evidence that they will continue to fund long-term development programming in these settings or in this manner.

As a result, several questions regarding localisation remain unanswered at the completion of the study. Highest among these is the question of time and circumstance. If the end of Sri Lanka's civil war in 2015, combined with the political turmoil and terrorist attacks of 2019, had not harnessed and maintained the interest of institutional donors, would the predicted fall in foreign aid to INGOs have been realised? If Indonesia hadn't experienced a succession of earthquakes and a tsunami in 2018, thereby refocusing humanitarian donors towards the archipelago, would that country also be working with fewer institutional donors funding INGOs on a greatly reduced scale? And for the transitioning organisations, has the unexpected availability of stable or growing institutional funding reduced the pressure to identify local funding sources and delayed any meaningful assessment of local viability?

Internal Relationships and Systems

Staff and Management

At the time of the baseline exercises in 2018, there was a wide variance in awareness and understanding of the transition between the two organisations. Staff of Chrysalis were intimately familiar with the organisation's history as a CARE Country Office and their emergence as a local organisation. Apart from those who had joined Chrysalis very recently, individuals who had worked for CARE and those who had joined since the formation of the new organisation shared a common understanding of the organisation's purpose and path. By contrast, in Indonesia there was a wide discrepancy in awareness and acceptance of the transition journey among Country Office staff. This was true among staff at the headquarters (Jakarta office), where transition discussion and planning opportunities were largely limited to a handful of senior staff, and the variances were reportedly even greater between HQ and field office staff. In some instances, it was only through participation in the longitudinal study that individual staff members became aware of the formal transition to local governance and to membership or affiliation with CARE International. CARE Indonesia staff expressed high levels of concern and uncertainty about the transition, particularly in terms of job security and the potential loss of conditions or status through the transition to a local organisation:

Dissatisfaction and resentment have the potential to severely compromise the transition, so working with staff to resolve or come to terms with these issues will be very important.

Tracking these relationships presents as a priority (CARE International, 2018c).

Several factors may have influenced the stark contrast between staff engagement in Sri Lanka and Indonesia. The first and perhaps most obvious of these was the matter of timing: Chrysalis had already been open (and the former Country Office closed) for more than a year by the time of the first data collection. It may have been easier for Chrysalis staff to speak with clarity and confidence about their changed roles because the period of uncertainty was behind them and, importantly, because those individuals who had not made the transition to Chrysalis were no longer employed by the organisation. It is also true that the management styles and decision-making structures were fundamentally different between the two, from a staunchly democratic and participative model in Chrysalis to a rather more exclusive and autocratic model in CARE Indonesia (for a discussion of these models see Ejimabo, 2015; Lewin, 1947).

In the second year of the study, both organisations were stretched by the need to maintain business as usual at the same time as meeting the additional demands of transition. In Sri Lanka, the main pressure point appeared to be the challenge of balancing lean and flexible business systems, including a lean workforce, with a growing portfolio and a steady stream of expectations from the CARE confederation. Chrysalis had become a victim of its own success through this period, with a constant flow of requests to contribute to, lead or review CARE activities. They exhibited a strong desire to meet these demands and demonstrate their capacity despite the pressure this brought to bear on other functions. After high levels of workforce stability over the preceding two years, Chrysalis lost and/or let go several staff members during this time due in part to this organisational stretch.

In Indonesia, heavy workloads and heavy institutional demands, mainly from CARE Canada, were compounded by the uncertainty many faced around their own future in the new organisation. Internal communications systems were often criticised, even where specific people and processes had purportedly been put in place to ensure messages were sent and heard. Many staff expressed concern about workload and displayed symptoms of change fatigue (Bernerth et al., 2011; Huy, 2001), becoming exhausted and detached as a result of change perceived as either too great or too frequent. “We have been so lean for so long that everyone plays two or three roles, and no one has the space for reflection. All the changes in senior positions have further slowed strategic planning” (Internal Participant AI11, Indonesia, 2019). The number of resignations rose sharply over this period, with the effect of compounding the workload challenges for those that remained and exacerbating the atmosphere of turmoil.

By the time of the final data collections in 2020, staff movements had settled and the environment in both organisations had calmed. This was true for Chrysalis, where tensions had risen in the middle

year of the study, but was most critical in Indonesia, where the membership of management and staff had continued to change radically throughout 2019. This overhaul of personnel had occurred parallel to the rushed and compromised handover to YCP (described in detail in Chapter Four), leaving the organisation in a perilous position. By 2020, significant changes were being bedded down in YCP's composition, including a new organisational structure and wider systems improvements (to finance, HR, program quality and the business model itself). New staff members had come on board without the burden of the recent transition and were accordingly enthusiastic about their organisation and the path each was on. Although workload demands remained high and, in many instances, key positions remained unfilled, in general the relationships between staff and management in Indonesia appeared more cooperative and the atmosphere more optimistic by this final year.

Business Models and Discretionary Resources

Both organisations had prepared and presented a business plan to CARE International before being accepted into the cohort of transitioning offices. In both cases, the business modelling assumed a diminishing role for traditional institutional grants, particularly those administered through CMPs, and a sharp rise in the volume of grants sourced locally through national and international donors. Both business plans also identified a growing role for private sector partnerships, with additional interest expressed in public fundraising and social enterprise. At the time of the baseline exercises in 2018, these business plans were still in place, although in both instances the predictions for rapid change were coming under question and the fundraising projections were beginning to appear somewhat optimistic. Access to discretionary resources was seen as fundamental to the success of the new organisation, giving them the power to make strategic investments and move beyond the limitations of project funding and beyond the constraints of partnerships within CARE.

In the second year of the study, the business plans began to change. In Indonesia, large humanitarian grants in response to two local emergencies had changed the financial position of the organisation and constrained both the need and the space for other types of resource mobilisation. In Sri Lanka, the business model remained unchanged but, somewhat unexpectedly, the growth came from institutional donors and the percentage of funds from private partnerships and fee-for-service shrank during this time. The increases in institutional funding were important for a number of reasons, above and beyond keeping the nascent organisations afloat. Income of this sort comes with strict limitations on cost recovery and therefore provides limited value in terms of building a pool of discretionary funds. Fowler (1997) described institutional income as *cold* resourcing, accompanied by strict limitations and heavy reporting demands, and public and private funding as *hot* resourcing, accompanied by comparatively few donor expectations. As discussed in Chapter

Three, a heavy reliance on *cold* funding has long been a feature of CARE International's business model. This has constrained their ability to invest strategically, particularly when compared with other large INGOs that generate a higher percentage of their funding from flexible sources. The new organisations appeared headed on a similar path, despite the contrary assertions of the business plans and the expectations within the CARE confederation that new and aspiring members should be independently viable.

By the final year of the study, the resourcing pattern seemed entrenched: the overall portfolio value in both locations was significantly bigger than at the commencement of the study, but discretionary resources remained scarce. Although Chrysalis had begun building cash reserves, several participants still spoke of untied funds as an ongoing challenge. For YCP, the focus on delivering large humanitarian grants had necessarily been prioritised over revisiting the business model, and discussion had only just recommenced at the time of the final data collection. In both settings, investments in resource mobilisation and technical specialists were seen as necessary in order to pursue programming ambitions, yet scope for this remained very limited in the context of tied project funding.

Observing this pattern, the contradiction between the expectations placed on established CARE members and those placed on emerging CARE members was once again brought into sharp relief. In the global north, CARE has struggled to compete with other INGOs in the race for flexible resources raised through face-to-face fundraising and similar programs. This is well understood and much bemoaned across the confederation. Despite this, the business models for affiliate and candidate members are premised on an ability to generate discretionary resources in a way that global north members themselves find difficult. This seems to ignore the challenges of limited technical support for local fundraising, limited testing and confidence in local fundraising potential and, perhaps most critically, a self-perpetuating legacy of institutional funding that keeps everyone too busy and too financially stretched to invest in fundraising alternatives. The criteria for assessing the fundraising performance of CARE's nascent southern members, already grappling with the many demands of simultaneous program implementation and organisational transition, may require review.

Governance

At the time of the baseline exercises in 2018, each organisation was taking the steps necessary to register the new local entity and consolidate a local board of governance. Unsurprisingly Chrysalis was the most advanced, having just secured their status as company limited by guarantee and with the inaugural board by then in its second year of operation. This board included two representatives from CARE USA, former members of a steering committee established to support the creation of the

new organisation. Study participants shared varying views on the implications of having CARE USA so closely involved in their governance, with some uncertainty about whether this might be enabling or limiting in terms of Chrysalis' ability to evolve. At that time, CARE Indonesia was in the process of recruiting board members but was yet to agree a timeline with CARE Canada for the dissolution of their Country Office agreements.

Both organisations were still considering their approach to external communications, with some uncertainty being expressed about the correct mix of international and local to be reflected in their external branding. There was also some disagreement at that time, within and between organisations, about whether the transition to local should be a bold and explicit celebration or should be a more subtle shift, discussed publicly only as and when required. This hesitancy seemed to speak to the unresolved tension between the potential costs of international affiliation and the likely benefits of the rich CARE legacy in both locations. This spoke, furthermore, to the unresolved tension between legitimacy in the eyes of local partners and legitimacy in the eyes of donors and CARE members in the global north.

By the second year of the study, the inaugural board had met for the first time in Indonesia, while the governance structure had begun to mature in Sri Lanka. Chrysalis board members were actively considering what different or additional governance skill sets would be required in time. As the more established of the two, the Chrysalis board was undergoing its first rejuvenation, including the appointment of a new chair, recruitment of a new director and reconsideration of the priority given to CMPs as board members. These developments were described as evidence of a growing independence from CARE. Chrysalis had become more confident and capable of self-determination two or three years on from the initial governance discussions facilitated by CARE USA. It is also significant that Chrysalis had secured their standing as the first and only CARE Affiliate Member by this time, yet while in Indonesia the membership discussion had not progressed beyond the closure of the CARE office and the opening of YCP.

By the final year of the study, YCP had caught up somewhat, having fulfilled local registration criteria and having moved all staff and contracts across to the new entity. Although the two boards remained at different levels of maturity, both were by now firmly in place and the YCP board had also begun to revisit their membership for the appropriate mixture of numbers and skill sets. The inclusion of a CARE Canada representative on the inaugural board was, by 2020, all that remained of the line management relationship between lead member and Country Office. In both settings, leaders and board members spoke proudly of the changed external perceptions of their newly

formed organisation, with Chrysalis representatives in particular feeling their transition from INGO office to national organisations was fundamentally complete.

CARE International Relationships

At the time of the baseline exercises, relationships between the transitioning organisations and their outgoing lead members were vastly different. In Sri Lanka, CARE USA had representation on the Chrysalis board and provided periodic technical support through a change management expert in the region. CARE USA continued to cooperate as a member partner on existing and potential USAID funding, as expected. In addition, Chrysalis was required to provide annual updates on the use of the transition grant from CARE USA. Participants spoke of an honest and supportive exchange and an atmosphere of enthusiasm for the path Chrysalis was forging on behalf of CARE USA and the wider confederation.

The contrast with CARE Indonesia's experience was stark. Participants advised that CARE Canada were strictly focused on the Country Office's compliance obligations and performance standards rather than the imminent, wholesale organisational change taking place. Country Office staff suggested that communication from CARE Canada regarding the transition was largely limited to reminders of the end date: the date that CARE's MOU with the government was due to expire and YCP would be expected to commence operations. When CARE Indonesia proposed a possible extension of the MOU to allow more time for the complex transition of grants, donors and myriad agreements, CARE Canada reportedly made it clear this would not be supported. There was some support for this approach in the Country Office—one individual in particular who feared falling out of favour with the government if CARE sought to keep both Country Office and Yayasan operational for any length of time—but the majority of participants in the sample feared the sudden break.

Despite the commitment to a clean break, Country Office staff advised that their requests to engage on preparations for the financial and legal transition were often delayed or ignored, and there did not appear to be any commitment of financial or technical support beyond the MOU end date. When interviewed at that time, a CARE Canada representative suggested that it would be inappropriate to assume an ongoing role for the lead member beyond cessation of the MOU: "We need to recognise the sovereignty of the new board and... [be] careful to avoid building dependence on subsidies" (External Participant BI01, Indonesia, 2018). The lead member wanted YCP to set its own course and, in particular, wished to avoid unrealistically propping up the organisation. Conversely, staff spoke to their fear of too rapid a transition and, more specifically, of a fear that CARE Canada was either underestimating the complexity of the shift or regarding that complexity as the sole responsibility of the emerging organisation. There were three participants in the baseline

sample with external experience of localisation in Indonesia, and each one advised it took longer and was more expensive than planned and that CARE international needed to be prepared for this.

Baseline participants identified a tension between the demands of the transition process, including expectations of measurable progress against strict transition milestones, and the wider development project of organisational change. This was an important moment in the study for me, as I began to realise that transition was not only a negotiation between top down and bottom up (as per Walton et al., 2016), but that the understanding of what these terms meant and when they should be applied were fundamentally different. Borrowing from Holcombe's use of exogenous and endogenous development (2014), key elements of Indonesia's localisation, particularly in terms of the timing and graduation, were largely exogenous, externally led and managed as a discrete project. As such, these elements of transition met very few of the criteria for endogenous development: that it be locally led and controlled, with dignity and respect, and deeply rooted in context and culture (Holcombe, 2014, pp. 752-753). Contrarily, following an exogenous decision to close CARE International in Sri Lanka by CARE USA, the creation of Chrysalis was largely an endogenous exercise that was developed and owned locally.

As described in Chapter Four, relations between CARE in Indonesia and their lead member proved especially challenging in the second year of the study, with gaps in cooperation appearing regularly until the very last moment of the Country Office. As at the beginning of June 2019, with CARE Indonesia set to close at the end of August that year, none of the essential handover agreements were in place (a framework agreement with CARE Canada, a brand agreement with CARE USA, numerous grant agreements with CMPs and donors). When the agreements were finally struck, in some cases just hours before the cessation of CARE Indonesia's legal status in the country, the opportunity for meaningful discourse on content had gone. Despite this somewhat hurried demise of CARE International in Indonesia, during the weeks that followed the opening of YCP the relationship with CARE Canada was quickly repaired and publicly celebrated.

Outside of the relationships with lead members, support and engagement from the wider CI confederation was somewhat uneven over the course of the study. Positively, participants from both Sri Lanka and Indonesia expressed a common belief that the support of key individuals and teams across the confederation (in particular, the Organisational Development and Accountability team at the secretariat) was critical in enabling progress through this time. There was a shared view that having advocates facilitating cooperation, as well as directly and indirectly mobilising support for change, was an essential enabler. "CARE's commitment to diversification ...secretariat advocacy... code changes... southern solidarity, has been critical" (Internal Participant AS11, Sri Lanka, 2020).

There were also pockets of new and different collaboration between CMPs and the transitioning organisations, such as the Everyone's a Fundraiser program that CARE USA brought to new members to great acclaim. This and other examples fell outside normal grant management responsibilities which, importantly for the transitioning organisations, reflected a genuine commitment to support emerging members independently of any current or potential institutional grant.

While most participants could point to positive examples of cooperation or technical assistance such as these, they also shared numerous examples of unanswered requests for support and uncomfortable exchanges with CMPs. Colleagues failed to understand the change and, even where the transition has been well communicated, the practice of CMPs often failed to reflect the philosophy of an evolved partnership. CMPs were seen as outwardly supportive of transition yet progress was slow, and a tendency to default to historical command and control behaviours was still evident. "I'm uncertain about what change is occurring at CI. Claiming power is one thing... letting go of power is another" (Internal Participant AI13, Indonesia, 2020). Despite changes to the donor access protocols in the CI Code, CMPs continue to assume control over ICR and other terms outlined in grant agreements with Chrysalis and YCP: "Despite the communication [about transition in Indonesia] there has been push back on ICR sharing and there is limited access to CI people and resources for CARE Indonesia" (Internal Participant AI12, Indonesia, 2019).

The resistance to change represents a retention of power on the part of CMPs, who have a vested interest in maintaining the financial and procedural advantages of the past. It might equally be seen as a complex system returning to the status quo, where change is met with *cognitive rigidity* and reasons are found or created for the status quo to be maintained (Heidenreich & Hainrich, 2014; for *cognitive flexibility* see Chung et al., 2012). CMP staff were said to argue or imply that changing the tone or timing of grant management communication was impossible because the system demands it: to unbalance the system is to invite chaos in an otherwise orderly lineal system of requests, decisions and approvals. CMPs also suggested that an even share of ICR as a starting point was not possible because the financial health of the CMP demands otherwise, the human resource requirements of the CMP demand otherwise, or the terms negotiated with a donor (by the CMP, for the CMP) demand otherwise. This is the self-perpetuating premise of a system built with northern (donor) legitimisation in mind. To establish and maintain a robust and trustworthy NGO brand, an INGO must have unwavering standards and once established, these standards must be maintained in a particular fashion and resourced in a particular way. INGOS "have become adept at mimicking the strategies and practices of more well-known and financially successful organisations, adhering to financial benchmarks and adapting donor preferences as a means of gaining legitimacy" (Mitchell et al., 2020, p. 88). When the rules and habits of administration are later challenged, the very standards

are thought to be at risk. In this way, the rules and habits become proxies for the trustworthiness they defend, rather than simply tools to achieve that higher goal.

A consistent finding of this study, common across both data sets and echoed in related reports produced by CARE over the course of the study (CARE International, 2020a; 2021a), is that a clear gap exists between the views and commitments expressed by directors and thought leaders in the global north and the practices of people in the middle tiers of those same organisations. Participants in the south suggested that northern grant managers and/or power brokers persist with a tone of seniority and propriety, and in so doing perpetuate a culture of compliance with authority in the north. Seen subjectively from within day-to-day operations, such practices are easily dismissed as northern members fulfilling their role as interlocutors between donors and implementers. Seen objectively from outside the confines of business-as-usual, these behaviours speak to a pattern of neo-colonialism and resonate uncomfortably with what Pailey (2019) coined the phrase “white gaze of “development”

...which assumes whiteness as the primary referent of power, prestige and progress across the world. It equates whiteness with wholeness and superiority. The ‘white gaze’ of development measures the political, socio-economic and cultural processes of Southern black, brown and other people of colour against a standard of Northern whiteness and finds them incomplete, wanting, inferior or regressive. In essence, white is always right, and West is always best (p. 733).

This language is deeply confronting for people within CARE and other INGOs, from both the global north and the global south, not least for the people of colour working in northern offices. It contradicts the principles of equality and solidarity that attracted many people to this work and does not wholly reflect the lived experience of decades of north-south cooperation within these organisations. Nonetheless, there are enduring features of INGO systems that do not yet do enough to dismiss the critique. For CARE, the global shift towards more diverse governance and greater independence and voice for emerging members has not translated to different position descriptions or performance expectations for CARE’s agents in the north. Equally, changes to CARE international agreements, most notably the CI Code, are yet to translate into changes in the partnership protocols and grant management practice of many CMPs. Power is held and exercised by representatives of organisations in keeping with institutional norms, in a manner that Dan Honig (2018b) suggested “risks orienting agents toward meeting targets at the expense of delivering on broader organizational goals” (p 173; see also Honig, 2018a).

An unanticipated finding of the study was the scale of burden placed on emerging members to be the faces and voices of the change that CARE international was seeking. In addition to the more obvious challenges of closing down a complex operation and opening another, not to mention maintaining a portfolio of program implementation, the transitioning entities were regularly called upon to present on their challenges or present on their successes or to *tell their story*, in one form or another, at CARE events or through CARE platforms. Such opportunities are difficult to refuse as they are important steps in building the profile of an emerging member or affiliate in the confederation. It is also seen as an important legitimising message to share with peers and partners outside CARE, that the organisation is doing things differently. It became clear that despite their enthusiasm for the story of change at CARE, and their own role within it, southern leaders were growing weary of the recurring conversation and their responsibilities to 'represent diversity':

There is a great chance for us to do (transition) well and set a path for others but in the meantime it can feel like a burden... the burden of representing diversity Internal Participant CC06, Global South Leaders Forum, Cairo, 2018

The Domains of Change

Power

The most dramatic shift in power relations for Chrysalis has come in the form of the interaction with CARE International. Chrysalis enjoys far greater access to CARE's networks and plays a more powerful role in global governance and programming than they did at the beginning of the study. It is particularly noteworthy that Chrysalis took the international lead on a CARE International global programming area (Life Free from Violence) during this time, something they could never have done as a Country Office. As the first and only Affiliate Member, Chrysalis has shaped the rules for themselves and all future affiliates. Furthermore, an active role in development of the Cairo Compact and the Jakarta Communique positioned Chrysalis in the centre of that collective voice for change. In terms of their relationship with CARE International, Chrysalis is exercising power as both decision making and influence. They are also shaping the identities of themselves and others in line with Foucault's notion of subjectivation (1982), as captured in Chapter Three. Discretionary resources remain central to unlocking further power for Chrysalis. The business model has shifted, and the mechanisms are in place for income diversity, yet most of Chrysalis' recent growth has come in the form of institutional grants with limited flexibility. This growth makes Chrysalis more powerful; yet until such time as discretionary resources are available to supplement tied grants, Chrysalis' ability to make strategic, multiplying investments is constrained.

Power has also been a central theme of the transition for CARE Indonesia. In the lead up to the closure of the Country Office, the relationship with the lead member was characterised by a sense of vulnerability and subordination in Indonesia. Concerns were left unaddressed and key elements of the formal transition were left uncertain until the very last moment, by which time the opportunity for YCP to exert influence was greatly diminished. A feature of this period was uncertainty about where within the lead member responsibility lay for supporting the Country Office, with a tendency to redirect concerns to other members of staff or not respond on the apparent assumption someone else would. This is a common feature of complex authorising environments undergoing change, where many people are involved and each respond to different kinds of authority (Andrews et al., 2016). While some of this was resolved with the signing of agreements and new standards of cooperation in the final year of the study, the power imbalance of the first two years came at significant cost both then and now.

More positively, the latter stages of the study saw YCP step up into global discussions and begin to claim power within the confederation. CARE Indonesia was not strongly represented in the early stages of the Global South Leaders Forum; however, YCP went on to host the leadership group in January 2020 and play a central role in the creation of the Jakarta Communique. In so doing, YCP have begun exercising a voice greater than that afforded to (or claimed by) Country Offices in the confederation. In this space, the systematic support for the Global South Leaders Forum (primarily from the CI Secretariat) and the regional mechanisms set up by CMPs (particularly CARE USA and CARE Australia) have prompted and enabled a shift in power.

In both settings, CMPs hold on to historical power relations, both visible and invisible, at times. The tone of some grant management negotiations and the early negotiations around the affiliate agreement imply power being exercised as resistance to change by parts of CARE International. The tendency of organisations to do things much as they have always been done is sometimes described as *path dependence*, where organisations become “stuck” and to do things differently becomes very difficult (Hanrieder, 2015; Sydow et al., 2009). For CARE, the commitments to membership diversification and devolved power are not always reflected in practice.

Influence

Chrysalis has made steady progress in building relationships with public and private partners and has deepened its reputation as a credible voice in its specialist areas. Time spent on relationship building and maintenance has been underpinned by a focus on technical expertise and evidence gathering. Staff, management and board members have demonstrated a shared commitment to building the Chrysalis identity to the point where the new name has become widely known and the specialism

(on gender-based violence and women's economic empowerment) has become synonymous with the brand. In Indonesia, national and provincial governments have embraced the establishment of YCP, and the relationships appear to have strengthened as a result. The regular communication in the lead up to the dissolution of the Country Office MOU was well regarded and YCP has enjoyed more effective cooperation in the time since. At the same time, YCP is purposefully seeking closer program alignment with local development priorities and national development plans. While this may constrain the programmatic scope of the new organisation, it is a strategic measure intended to maximise overall influence in Indonesia.

The space for civil society and advocacy is somewhat fragile in both settings. Relationships forged with government counterparts appear vulnerable in political landscapes that have changed markedly over the course of the study. Furthermore, opportunities to shape policy and practice rely on a shared belief in the role of civil society to help shape these. Both organisations have taken steps to mitigate against these risks: in Indonesia, through a clear separation between the operations of the INGO office and the Yayasan; in Sri Lanka, through the establishment of Chrysalis as a company limited by guarantee. In principle, these steps constitute a clean break from the past and should offer greater proximity to power for the emerging organisations than they enjoyed as CARE International Country Offices. It remains to be seen, however, whether space will open or close for local civil society actors and what costs or benefits will accompany the association with CARE International.

Accountability

In both Sri Lanka and Indonesia, aspirations under the accountability domain included intentions around social accountability, broadly seen as the transparency and inclusiveness of the organisation's interactions with the communities for whom they work, and to external accountability, broadly seen as the rigour and reliability of the organisation's behaviours with donors, partners and the wider community. The data points to steady progress in both spaces and in both locations, particularly in Sri Lanka where Chrysalis has been able to continuously improve internal measures for quality, transparency, and inclusion over the course of the study. Despite improvements in both settings, however, the two streams of social and external accountability generated comparatively little opinion and discussion amongst participants.

Staff engagement and ownership, captured under the emergent theme of *internal* accountability, garnered much more attention among study participants. Chrysalis staff spoke regularly and openly about the atmosphere and collaborative practices inside the organisation. Relationships between staff, particularly between former CARE employees and employees who joined under the Chrysalis

banner, were seen to test the organisation at times. This was especially true during the second year of the study (2019) when the additional challenge of change fatigue took hold for a time. Despite these constraints, Chrysalis has managed to maintain a robust organisational culture that “balances participatory practice with a shared commitment to organisational goals” (Internal participant AS19, Sri Lanka, 2020). Staff losses have been minimal compared to organisations undergoing similar change, and the balance of new and existing skill sets has proved highly effective.

In Indonesia, staff engagement was fraught over the course of the transition, with uneven ownership and enthusiasm for the change. Both the relationships within the organisation and the systems for communicating change were stretched beyond capacity at times. Country Office staff felt very vulnerable, showing limited confidence in the change, and enjoying little to no certainty about their own future with YCP. Staff turnover was very high at all levels of the organisation and, while this has meant fresh skills sets have been introduced, it has also meant the loss of skilled and valuable employees. By the final data collection in 2020 the optimism and confidence of a new team under a new organisational structure suggested this tide may have turned, however it is important to note that this data collection did not include the voices of those staff that had left the organisation in preceding months.

Legitimacy

Legitimacy is regarded as the area of greatest progress for both transitioning organisations. This change appears predominantly related to improved relationships with government; however, participants suggested that relationships with private sector partners, donors and CMPs have also matured. In both instances, this emerges in the form of normative legitimacy, where the organisations are increasingly seen to meet the standards expected of them. For Chrysalis, much of the success in building legitimacy is linked to improvements in profile and visibility, particularly the clear and consistent branding as a local organisation with a unique value-add. For YCP, a focus on their unique value-add is seen as similarly important, combined with a greater synergy with national development plans and their commitment to model a “local organisation with international links, not an international organisation with local registration” (Internal Participant AI03, Indonesia, 2019). This is particularly true in an environment where the role of NGOs, not least those with international links, is contested and uncertain.

Legitimacy gains with local and national civil society partners are less apparent. Assumptions of rapid change have not been realised, and uncertainty about international affiliation in Sri Lanka and Indonesia appear to mirror the unease regarding INGO localisation found in the wider international development discourse (Scheid, 2021; *Shifting the Power*, 2020). Profound changes in organisational

shape and structure have not quickly translated to changes in the granting of a broad acceptance (cognitive legitimacy) by their peers. Each new organisation is finding its own way as a local organisation with an international legacy. In Indonesia, YCP acknowledged the scepticism about INGO localisation in that context and purposefully distanced the Yayasan from the Country Office model, endeavouring to demonstrate their genuine independence to peers and partners. This has not been possible to date, constrained both by the limited time since the registration of the local entity and the continuing presence of humanitarian programming and partnerships that commenced under CARE. In Sri Lanka, Chrysalis has forged its own path quite independent of the CARE legacy, as an independently branded local NGO *and* a company limited by guarantee; yet doubts remain, and their local status is still seen as cloudy amongst civil society peers.

Significant Research Moments: Bearing Witness

I was fortunate enough to be invited to join the inaugural face to face meeting of the Global South Leaders Forum in Cairo in December 2018, to present on the longitudinal study and help facilitate the wider discussions. This was the first meeting of its kind in the history of the CARE confederation. The conversation was rich and inspiring, with a tangible sense that CARE International has reached a point of no return. A little more than a year later, in January 2020, the forum met for their second face-to-face meeting in Indonesia. This meeting took the form of a stocktake on progress and challenges over the previous year before shifting to focus on critical messages to share with the confederation.

The 2018 Cairo Compact (CARE International, 2018b) ought to capture and communicate the sense of the collective voice being found among southern leaders: “to communicate who we are and what we believe, reflect our commitments to each other and to CARE International, and make recommendations for broader organisational change by all parts of CARE”. The document calls for a transformation of traditional north-south power dynamics in the post-colonial aid paradigm, suggesting CARE’s relevance would be seriously undermined without more concerted efforts at change than CARE had demonstrated over the previous 20 years. It goes on to list a series of recommendations, primarily directed at CARE’s power brokers in the north, that would serve to redirect power and resources to CARE’s representatives in the global south.

The 2020 Jakarta Communique (CARE International, 2020a) begins with a recognition of progress made among the southern members, and a pledge to do more, before urging the confederation to embrace the change more uniformly and enact diversification as a global priority: “We renew our commitment to the ambition, spirit and optimism of the Cairo Compact, and urge that the imperative of diversifying the CI confederation be embraced by all. Diversification is not a global

south agenda. It is a priority for the entire confederation because it is essential for the relevance and resilience of CARE in a fast-changing world.”

In addition to participating in face-to-face meetings, I was a participant observer in an informal message thread (a WhatsApp group) for three years. Being inside these formal and informal conversations—while ideas were debated, frustrations were shared, successes were celebrated and momentum was mobilised—was a unique privilege and the most tangible advantage of my status as an insider. The experience was instrumental in my interpretation of the change occurring at CARE, elevating my understanding of the significance of the forum and directly shaping the findings of this research.

Conclusion

Despite significant differences in the geo-political contexts of Sri Lanka and Indonesia, and despite differences in the historic functions of the CARE International Country Offices in each locale, Chrysalis and YCP shared very similar aspirations for their transition into local organisations. Highest amongst these was greater local legitimacy, and both transitioning organisations report that legitimacy, particularly in terms of the perceptions of government, has greatly improved. Influence over CARE has also changed quite radically, particularly in terms of the collective influence of southern leaders and, in the case of Chrysalis, by their leadership in a global programming area. In both cases, rapid progress in establishing a local entity and local governance structure has been celebrated, and the transition from INGO Country Office to local organisation is directly tied to these greater claims to power, influence and legitimacy. It is a further key finding that both organisations have demonstrated their ability to attract and implement sizeable grants as local organisations and that their internal systems have stood up through and beyond the handover of relationships from Country Office to local entity.

In other instances, the data tells a more complex story of change and resistance to change. Limited changes in civil society relationships and the perceptions of local colleagues indicate that building legitimacy in the eyes of civil society peers will take time. Relationships with CMPs have also been slow to change, and a number of interactions with the lead member and with grant managers within CMPs suggest the philosophy of a power devolution within CARE is not yet matched in practice. In addition, donors have continued to fund both organisations through sizeable traditional development and humanitarian grants despite widely held assumptions to the contrary. While it seems certain that reduced pressure on local fundraising has worked to the advantage of both

agencies, this may also have the effect of perpetuating historical systems and relationships as well as delaying the transformation of the collective business model.

Finally, two additional findings surfaced from the case studies which have significant relevance to the wider study. Firstly, an anticipated focus on *social* accountability (to constituent communities) and *external* accountability (to donors and government partners) garnered far less attention from participants than the focus on *internal* accountability (to staff and organisational values). Difficulties with staff ownership, engagement and change fatigue were among the biggest challenges faced by the organisations in transition. Inconsistency between values and practice was the single most common concern raised regarding the relationship between CARE's partners from the global north and the global south. Secondly, it became apparent in the data that in addition to the demands of closing a historic operation, opening a contemporary operation and managing the very complex transition between the two, the "burden of representing diversity" was itself a complicating layer for senior staff in the new organisations. Being, and being expected to be, the face of transformation both inside and outside the organisation added another unanticipated and under-considered layer to the change taking place. These two findings emerge as important considerations and will feature strongly in Chapter Nine.

Chapter Eight: *International Voices*

Introduction

To complement and contrast the voices heard in the case studies from Sri Lanka and Indonesia, the International Voices data set. The chapter tells a story of mixed progress for CARE and unveils a deeper uncertainty about the potential for INGOs to escape the legitimacy crisis without some deeper, more wholesale changes to their operating model. There is evidence of real advancement in CARE's global governance structure, enabled and accelerated by the success of the emerging southern organisations and their willingness to claim power, individually and collectively, from traditional custodians in the global north. At the same time, power brokers continue to contradict themselves and resist change, enabled and justified in doing so by the demands of an aid infrastructure that is equally slow to change. Furthermore, a diverse range of motivations for localisation suggest a disconnect between values and purpose, and in the confusion INGOs remain exposed to criticisms of path dependence and self-interest.

The results in this chapter are grouped under the familiar domains of power and legitimacy; opinions expressed over the course of the study are compared and particular attention is paid to the relationships and systems at play. Further analysis follows under the emergent themes of Change and Coalitions, which reviews the evidence of change taking place and the role of collective voice, and Constraints, Contradictions and Neo-Colonialism, which unpacks many of the challenges and inconsistencies arising from the data. These emergent groupings reflect the fact that participants in this data set rarely employed the language of *influence* and *accountability* in their commentary. Whilst all of the domains and emergent themes are interdependent, these new themes more meaningfully reflect the views of this cohort. A third theme of Mixed Motivations then explores the varied and at times conflicting purposes localisation is expected to serve. Direct quotations are used throughout, with each being chosen because it illustrates a commonality or exception identified through the coding and connecting of responses.

Understanding the *International Voices* Data

These results are drawn from a purposive sample of 43 participants from around the world. Most these contributors were from within the CARE confederation: from CARE member partners, from the CI Secretariat and from CARE's regional structures where these exist. Additional voices came in the form of international development experts from academia, the private sector and civil society. As described in Chapter Two, the bulk of this data is drawn from a schedule of interviews undertaken in 2018 and again in 2020. This data was supplemented by contributions made during the inaugural

Global South Leaders Forum held in Cairo in late 2018. Of the 43 participants who consented to take part in the research, 15 participated on more than one occasion.

The majority of participants came from the global north. While this provides a useful contrast function with the voices from the global south found in the other research sites, it is misleading to assume homogeneity among this group. Several of the international experts identify personally and/or professionally with the global south, even where they have come to represent a northern organisation or role. Moreover, many of those within CARE and other northern institutions are uncomfortable with the north-south delineation. This chapter cannot and does not seek to present a conclusive or representative view of all participants. Instead, what follows are some emergent themes, commonalities and contradictions that emerged over the course of the three years.

Legitimacy for Whom?

The International Voices data collection captured a diverse range of opinions regarding the relationship between localisation and legitimacy for CARE, and those commonalities that did emerge often contradicted my expectations. I mistakenly anticipated that a clear majority of participants would express confidence in the growing legitimacy of the local organisations replacing Country Offices. I similarly anticipated that there would be scepticism amongst respondents about a radical change in CARE's international legitimacy as a result of the Country Office transitions, assuming many would question the INGO's ability to change external perceptions in a short space of time. The reality emerging from the interviews was quite different, particularly for participants working for CARE at the time of the data collection. CARE staff were generally quite optimistic about building international legitimacy through membership diversification and a changed organisational profile yet far less optimistic about localisation leading to greater legitimacy for the former Country Offices. Many expected the local INGO legacy to limit change in the attitudes or practices of CARE's peers and partners, and/or expected some scepticism about the motivations underpinning the change.

Several among those interviewed in 2018 raised doubts about whether localisation alone offered a path to a greater standing for the emerging organisations among their southern peers. Some suggested CARE was persisting with a flawed model and that the very act of predetermining the shape of the emerging organisations might work against them. They felt that the creation of new CARE members in a familiar CARE shape might compromise their local legitimacy, for the reasons suggested here by a senior northern CMP staffer:

...in the process of doing this we are still replicating those colonial patterns. We are trying to replicate a model that in and of itself is illegitimate in this century. We are asserting an end

state of what a local NGO looks like despite a lot of evidence that it won't look like that, a lot of questions about the legitimacy of NGO models. Internal Participant AC01, *International Voices*, 2018

Similar sentiments were expressed by research participants from outside CARE, who expressed doubt that external perceptions of CARE would ever fundamentally change, at least in terms of their status as local players. In addition to CARE's own previous transitions in Thailand, Peru and India, several other large INGOs have undertaken their own versions of localisation in many countries around the world. Some of these examples are well known and, as a result, the experts consulted through the *International Voices* data collection often came to this process with their own understanding of the strengths and shortcomings of localisation. They were not all of one voice, but most expressed some degree of uncertainty about the way southern members of INGOs are perceived by their local peers and partners, including this commentary from a participant with a background in other INGOs:

I think part of the justification that's often given for this kind of exercise of diversification is that it gives us more legitimacy. And I'm not convinced that's the case. My experience is that actors in the global south tend to still see southern members of INGO families as northern NGOs. So I'm not sure it helps hugely with legitimacy. External Participant BC07, *International Voices*, 2018.

During the 2018 consultations, study participants suggested that new and fundamentally different civil society partnerships would be critical and were likely indicators of transition success, a sentiment echoed by participants in Sri Lanka and Indonesia around that time. By 2020, the actual change in each transition setting was less radical than initially thought, in part due to the political upheaval and emergencies that affected both settings, and expectations of change appeared to have toned down among international participants as well. In practice, the transitioning organisations were each working to define and promote the unique value-add that they could offer in their local context. Southern leaders suggested that understanding and being able to communicate this value-add is fundamental and, in many instances, the most important element of their perceived legitimacy among civil society peers.

Simultaneous to these civil society deliberations within CARE and the transitioning organisations, increasing external attention was being paid to the way INGOs, including CARE, were approaching localisation (Barakat & Milton, 2020; Doane, 2019). There was significant scepticism among some critics about the methods and motivations behind localisation, most notably where the primary intention was deemed to be maintaining or growing the INGO's share of a finite local fundraising

market. In one such example, a collective of southern NGOs wrote an open letter directed at “International NGOs who are seeking to ‘localise’ their operations” (Shift the Power, 2020). The letter criticises the intervention of INGOs in local fundraising, suggesting that these more powerful and better resourced local arms of international bodies only serve to weaken existing local civil society and perpetuate a power imbalance that favours the global north. The letter asks for support in strengthening local civil society rather than replacing it or crowding it out:

Do you need to exist in every country with your brand? No. There are often local organisations, like ourselves, who work effectively on the ground, with better connections to the local community. And many of us also have the skills and capacity to represent our issues on the world stage... Our plea is that you work with us, not against us. We need to be supported, not competed with, and certainly not replaced (Shift the Power, 2020, p. 1).

This letter is just one expression of concerns raised in a number of settings over recent years; however, its release was conveniently timed just prior to the *International Voices* data collection in 2020. Study participants were asked to read the letter prior to their interview, then asked to describe their reaction to the letter and share thoughts on what implications, if any, there might be for CARE. While initial reactions went from complete rejection to complete acceptance of the letter’s premise, the majority of participants saw the need for CARE to directly engage with this debate: to internally define a position and proactively seek an audience with critics and partners to ensure that the confederation was acting in good faith. For several participants, this level of engagement from INGOs was well past due. Several felt that CARE’s own leaders from the global south were best placed to engage in the conversation, as expressed by this senior secretariat staffer:

I think that if our southern leaders were able to authentically and openly really engage in these sorts of spaces, I think that would be better for CARE in terms of our legitimacy. I think there’s actually huge opportunity for actors in CARE to play a role in supporting this kind of conversation in a positive way. Internal Participant AC03, *International Voices*, 2020

This quote suggests a similar understanding of legitimation to that explored in Chapter Three, where the term applies to efforts to ensure an institution appears legitimate, either through a controlled discourse or the use of symbolic practices (Barker, 2001; Steffek, 2003). The positioning of CARE’s own southern leaders as representatives in this space makes sense (who better to embody the change, to demonstrate the practice?). This may also be seen as tokenistic, however, and has the potential to compound the burden of representing diversity discussed in Chapter Seven. Regardless of the preferred way forward with legitimation, a consistent tone of responses to the open letter

was that CARE and the INGO community had simply not done enough to respond to such criticism, thereby exposing the gap between values and practices and compromising their legitimacy:

So my initial reaction was: OK, here we go again. How long have we been talking about this? If global north NGOs haven't done it yet... then it's partially because they don't really want to do it. Which is that gap between espoused values and their real and usual behaviour.
External Participant BC10, *International Voices*, 2020

The open letter triggered some further commentary around the nature of legitimacy and the question of what constitutes local. This dialogue draws us towards a wider discussion in the literature around critical localism, where historical uses of the term "local" are inconsistent and contested, and often originate from somewhere in the global north (Ginty, 2015; Gordon & Kech, 2012). Importantly, the term is also vulnerable to simplification, co-option and misuse. For Ginty (2015), local is,

...a system of beliefs and practices that loose communities and networks may adopt. There should be no expectation of consistency in these beliefs and practices: they change with time and circumstances. In this view the local may have territorial characteristics, but it can also be extra-territorial... This version of the local is not immune from instrumentalisation and capture. Indeed, many actors strive to capture the authenticity and 'localism' that they believe is connected with local activity. Nor is it immune from romanticisation or overly benign interpretations of its simplicity and intent." (p. 851).

Some participants were quick to point out that the equation is not as simple as local-is-better, suggesting that in many instances local organisations are of questionable legitimacy and that the staff of international organisations cannot be deemed illegitimate or unrepresentative simply because of their choice to work there. More than one respondent pointed to the many settings where CARE and other INGOs are exclusively staffed by nationals from that location, all of whom are appropriately skilled and experienced, and they asked me as the researcher to explain how these people were less suitable to support their communities than their peers working for local NGOs. An uneasy and unresolved tension emerged between acknowledging the unique privileges and northern legacies of local organisations with international affiliation, while simultaneously respecting the expertise, practices and inherent localism of the staff working for such organisations.

Claiming and Ceding Power

Participants from across the CARE confederation shared a common view that power resides with resources at CARE and has always done so. Many suggested, quite simply, that the greater your

financial contribution the greater your capacity to effect or resist change. This has created a hierarchy of power that positions CMPs as the primary power brokers, and specifically places CARE USA as the most powerful organisation within the confederation. In addition to owning the largest proportion of CI contracts, CARE USA is also lead member to the vast majority of Country Offices and is the legal owner of the CARE brand. In line with the literature regarding confederated models (Hudson & Bielefeld, 1997), the CI Secretariat is seen to exercise comparatively little power as a result of both their dependence on CMPs for funding and their subordinate position in the global governance structure. Several participants spoke of the uneasy relationship between more and less powerful members of the organisations. As expressed here by a representative of an established (yet smaller) CMP, this is not limited to a simple north and south divide:

There's a very significant power imbalance, which isn't just the global south and the global north, and the different roles that those parts of the membership play. It's also about who has the most money, and that plays out among members from the global north as well.

Internal participant AC02, *International Voices*, 2020

Despite global awareness of the localisation and diversification agenda, and an evident accompanying desire for change, historical power patterns are difficult to shift. Although the philosophical and practical shift implied by a localised model is substantial, participants suggested that several members see the change as a subtle one and expect to “maintain certain conditions much as they have always been” (Internal Participant AC10, *International Voices* 2018). Other participants described a slightly different situation, where northern members held an initial assumption that the change would be achieved with minimal impact on the functions and finances of CMPs, only to later realise this might not be the case. This disconnect, an apparent gap in the business modelling associated with the transition project, triggered concern and consternation on the part of several established CMPs and led in turn to some expressing doubts and cooling on their support for the devolution of power. A senior staff member from one such CMP described this change of heart as follows: “I think it's very easy to agree to something until you realise that you yourself are going to lose something” (Internal participant AC06, *International Voices*, 2018).

CARE's approach to donor access and ICR presents as a very tangible example of the link between power and resources. Historically, the indirect cost recovery claims (i.e., the percentage of donor funding that may be allocated to operating costs) were decided unilaterally: CMPs decided how much they would claim of the available sum, and the balance was left for the Country Office. If a negotiation took place at all, it was generally between the CMP (in the global north) managing the grant and the lead member (also in the global north) who managed the Country Office on behalf of

the confederation. During the course of this research, some ground-breaking changes were made to donor access in the CI Code, ostensibly to enable direct communication with donors by emerging members (under agreed conditions) and to enable more equitable sharing of ICR. The CMP business model has not kept up with these changes, however, and participants in the *National Voices* data collection regularly drew attention to the gap between policy and practice. Several CMP representatives involved in the *International Voices* interviews also acknowledged that the new policy was yet to be evenly applied across CARE, with some going as far as to suggest that they did not fully understand the implications of the changes until asked to put them into practice. Long-established financial norms and assumptions, often central to the viability of the northern members, were being challenged:

I think we signed up to it without really understanding the implications in terms of what that means for our northern members. These four countries that we're working with at the moment were intended to be an initial cohort with more to follow. And then I think it hit home... what it would mean to existing northern members and their finances and their business model. Internal Participant AC10, *International Voices*, 2020

The slow uptake of CARE's changed policy around ICR is a clear example of power being exercised as resistance to change. Despite the changes being widely shared and endorsed at the highest levels of CARE's governance, CMPs have variously chosen to ignore, adapt or only partially adopt them. Both transitioning organisations gave examples of CARE Members interpreting the rule changes differently, describing circumstances where the emerging organisation did not feel empowered to argue their case. When asked about this, representatives of the CMPs spoke of their own precarious financial situation and a necessary attention to their own internal responsibilities. Some informants questioned whether power could ever shift at CARE while the majority of resources continue to flow from the north to the south, a challenge echoed in much of the literature related to north-south NGO partnerships (e.g., Fowler 1991; 1997; 2015). Of all the quotes on this topic from both sets of *International Voices* interviews, the following is perhaps the most forthright and telling. The CEO of a large, established northern CMP had this to say:

We (CMPs) are always under pressure, all of us, and none of us have a lot of cash to toss around. And as a result, we don't share it effectively. You know, that's it. It's just the business model problem we've got. We are an organisation of members, and those members see to their own interests first. Internal Participant AC16, *International Voices*, 2020.

When asked to reflect on what has changed most as a result of the transition, *International Voices* respondents consistently pointed to the power and voice being exercised by new members in CARE's global governance structure. Participants described a dialogue with new members that increasingly includes "the space to disagree and to have a contrary position heard" (Internal Participant CC02, *International Voices*, 2018). Over time, new members were exercising "the authority and autonomy to demonstrate different ways of doing CARE business" (Internal Participant CC06, *International Voices*, 2020) by modelling different practices and simultaneously demonstrating the capacity to effect change. Drawing again from Lukes' (1974) three faces of power, the stewardship of resources generally enables CARE's northern member partners to make decisions (the first face of power), yet emerging members are increasingly able to influence decision making (the second face of power). Evidence of change in the internalised beliefs of agents and the norms that shape their behaviour (the third face of power), however, is less clear. Ongoing challenges with assumed hierarchy and the proprietary tone of northern members suggest achieving change within this third face is a long-term proposition.

One such example included Chrysalis drafting and submitting the criteria for a new type of CARE Member (the Affiliate Member) after CARE International and CARE USA (their former lead member) had been slow to progress that conversation. Shaping a draft affiliate agreement pushed that conversation along and gave the emerging organisation the lead in describing and defining the content. In this way, power was being claimed by the emerging organisations rather than ceded by the traditional northern members, a theme that recurred over the course of the study. This and other examples gave practical weight to the less tangible perception, expressed by numerous participants in 2018 and particularly in 2020, that the atmosphere of CARE most senior management and governance meetings had fundamentally shifted with the arrival of the new southern voices. In addition to CEOs from Chrysalis and YCP, leaders from the CARE Egypt Foundation and CARE Morocco had joined the NDC and board members from each had joined the CI Supervisory Board. As the CEO of an established northern CMP explained:

Look at the NDC. The faces, the voices, the mood have all changed. The nature of conversations being held and the nature of decisions being reached have changed. This is fundamental. Internal Participant AC04, *International Voices*, 2020

At the Global South Leaders Forum in 2018, participants suggested that the willingness to cede power to transitioning entities varied greatly across CARE, depending on the strategic interests and priorities of each CMP. This crystallised a recurring theme that was to appear throughout the study: namely, that a clash existed between the interests of individual organisations and the collective.

Despite assumptions of greater effectiveness through localisation (innovation, influence, reduced running costs), perceptions of risk among CMPs (to donor relationships, to revenue streams, to continuing relevance) tend to constrain willingness to let go. Similar findings emerged in the review of CARE's governance reform released in April 2020, suggesting that for diversification to become real all parts of CARE need to change, including the long-standing CMPs in Europe and North America. This report argued that change needs to happen everywhere for a new diverse global organisation to develop:

Some consider... that Members have not adopted their ways of working and behaviour to a new kind of global organisation, underlining that diversification is not only about increasing Members/Candidates based in localities outside Europe and North America, but also about changing power patterns and promoting equity in collaborative partnerships" (Genberg, 2020, p. 1).

Change and Coalitions

The most noteworthy and consistent reported change in the International Voices data came in reflections about CARE's global governance. Throughout the study, participants spoke of a fundamental shift in the organisation's most powerful decision-making bodies: the NDC; the CI Council; and the CI Supervisory Board. The membership of these groups has changed; however, it is the change in discourse that appeared to generate the most enthusiasm for progress being made. Several study participants made the link between this change and the tone of recent strategic planning exercises within CARE. Many of the themes identified in this study have trickled up through CARE's strategic planning processes, as evidenced by this quote from a working paper summarising progress towards CARE's 2030 Vision: "Global North members will shift decision making and resources (technical, financial) 'closest to proximity' of the issue or opportunity. Our operating models, governance and behaviours will also evolve to support our networked vision" (CARE International, 2020c, p. 8).

Over the course of the study, several other pockets of change arose that suggested new forms of partnership were emerging within CARE. Echoing some of the examples emerging from the national voices data, international participants also saw these as evidence of a shift taking place in the locus of power. CARE USA's support to emerging members on fundraising capacity ("everyone's a fundraiser") was one such example, not motivated by a lead member's responsibility nor a CMP's grant management objectives. Similarly, CARE UK's exploration of technical partnerships with southern members emerged as another partnership of mutual benefit that fell outside traditional

lead member or CMP functions. Chrysalis' programming lead on Life Free from Violence was regularly referenced, along with the advice that global programs had historically been seen as areas of northern expertise. A Country Office had certainly never been offered the opportunity to lead a global program on behalf of the confederation. In 2020, attention turned towards developing regional coordination platforms, most notably in the Asia-Pacific and Latin America, providing space for devolved and more representative decision making. Study participants spoke to these and other examples as evidence of a rapidly evolving confederation, as suggested here by a senior leader at the CI Secretariat:

There are different pockets of activities and ways of working and collaborating that are new across the confederation that are definitely a product of localisation and the diversification agenda. So the example in the South Asia-Pacific region, the example in Latin America, are different ways of working together regionally than CARE is used to. I'm not sure they would have happened if it were not for these new members really pushing these new ways of working. And I think it's those different activities and ways of working that will actually create the change. Internal Participant AC15, International Voices, 2020

International Voices participants also spoke to the rapid advancement in the cooperation between CARE's leaders in the global south, occurring in parallel with the changes in governance and cooperation. The Global South Leaders Forum includes leaders from the three existing CARE members from the global south (Thailand, Peru and India), the four transitioning organisations (in Morocco, Egypt, Sri Lanka and Indonesia) and several countries identified as likely to make this transition in the near future (Bangladesh, Ecuador and Georgia/Caucasus). With financial and technical support from the confederation, these leaders from past, current and potential transitioning Country Offices were supported to interact and exchange ideas over the course of the study. While this was useful for the emerging organisations (learning from the experience of others), respondents advised that the real change came in the cohesion and collective voice generated when the southern leaders converged.

Through regular bilateral and multilateral communication, this group emerged as a powerful voice for transformational change at CARE. The collective became far more influential than the individual organisations and, in the language of organisational theory, the Global South Leaders Forum moved beyond the confines of a team or group to display the political characteristics of a *coalition* (Gavetti et al., 2012; Mithani & O'Brien, 2021). As discussed in Chapter Seven, these efforts culminated most tangibly in the creation of *The Cairo Compact* (CARE International, 2018b) and *The Jakarta*

Communique (CARE International, 2020b), two documents that have come to embody a power-shift within CARE and have directly influenced the tone and direction of CARE's forward planning.

Participants in the International Voices data collection consistently flagged the work produced by the Global South Leaders Forum as evidence of a step change at CARE. The timing of these efforts, and of the Jakarta Communique in particular, was influenced by the opportunity to inform CARE's strategic planning towards the organisational milestone of 2030. Under the three banners of *Shaping 2030*, *Implementing 2030* and *Enabling 2030*, the communique succinctly summarised a range of ways that southern voices could be placed at the centre of CARE's evolution, thereby both enabling and enacting the redistribution of power. This was widely viewed as successful among study participants in 2020, who drew attention to the elevation of this content to CARE's *Vision 2030*, the strategic direction document signed off by the supervisory board of CARE International in late 2020:

We position power and resources in proximity to the impact. We encourage collaborative operating models where strategy is co-created, resources are managed, and decisions are made closer to where we are seeking to have impact. We come together around shared objectives and seek to center power in the hands of the participants, communities, and civil society actors we work with and for (CARE International, 2020c p. 8).

Another noteworthy feature of the Global South Leaders Forum dialogue was the emergence of questions about setting standards for CARE's members in the global north. Participants suggested that there had long been talk of introducing a process for assessment and review of northern members, similar to the annual performance standard assessments and periodic country presence reviews that are expected of CARE Country Offices. This call became louder when the emerging members expressed frustration that northern members were still willing to judge the south for performance and suitability without being judged themselves. This was expressed as follows by a southern CEO at the first meeting of the Global South Leaders Forum in 2018: "We are often asked whether we are meeting the standards of the CMPs. Are we good enough? But who is asking these questions of them? Perhaps it is time for us to start asking, to start setting standards for them" (Internal Participant AS04, Cairo, 2018).

By the time this research was nearing its end, the CARE confederation had launched a range of initiatives to bridge values and practice. In addition to the public pledges outlined in Chapter Four, the confederation and individual CMPs had taken steps to improve diversity, equality and inclusion in HR practices and leadership (see, for example, CARE USA, 2020). Secretariat staff also advised that the criteria for confederation membership and the approach to accompanying transitioning country

offices had also been reviewed in line with lessons learned with the first cohort. It is not clear to what extent these changes were influenced by the demands of the southern leaders or simply a natural progression along CARE's evolutionary path. Regardless, these internal changes are significant and constitute evidence of continued change at CARE.

Constraints, Contradictions and Neo-Colonialism

Progress Impeded

Despite these many stories of progress made and power claimed, the International Voices data tells a contradictory story that is equally if not more compelling. Participants both inside and outside CARE expressed concern about a disconnect between the aspirations of INGOs and the systems (policies, procedures, processes) upon which they rely. As explored in Chapter Three, INGO systems are generally grounded in the implicit understanding that ownership and expertise start with the source of operational funds, a fact widely repeated across the *International Voices* sample. Many participants also advised that a focus on institutional interests and organisational survival among INGOs, including CARE, meant that systems and relationships often ran contrary to espoused values and intent. This underpins the commentary of the Sri Lankan civil society expert who, as discussed in Chapter Six, described the INGO model as "replete with conflicts of interest, replete with self-interest" (External Participant BS04, Sri Lanka, 2018). This focus on organisational interests also ties closely with much of the literature on authorising environments, wherein dominant institutions often adopt processes, both informal and formal, that function to protect their own power and justify their role (Andrews et al., 2016; Bolton & Dewatripont, 2013).

Within the confederation, there was broad agreement that CARE's systems are difficult to change and more effort would be required to bring systems into line with values such as diversity and devolution. Numerous internal participants suggested that while CARE's philosophical commitment may be earnest, implementation is commonly held up by institutional constraints that are deemed insurmountable. Such constraints commonly included, among others, sections of the CI Code, the sovereignty of members boards and the expectations of international donors. This mirrors common criticisms of INGO systems (Kane 2013) and is very much in keeping with common features of complex systems, which invariably prove difficult to change and will often default to the status quo before eventually, possibly, reaching a tipping point for change (Milkoreit et al., 2018). A cycle of commitment and constraint can ensue, as summarised quite neatly here by a leading NGO academic during in the 2020 interviews:

It's a repeated thing you see in NGOs, is that people adopt a policy because it's the right thing to do. And then, institutional and ideational constraints prevent them following

through. And then, what normally happens is that people then reaffirm their commitment to the policy, and the process begins all over again. External Participant BC06, *International Voices*, 2020.

Progress towards other types of diversification and affiliation has been limited, beyond the transition of a small number of former Country Offices. Of these, at the conclusion of data collection Chrysalis remained the one and only Affiliate Member. Participants both within and outside the organisation spoke of the need for diversification to include new partnerships, beyond CARE's own legacy in any given setting: "CARE runs the risk of tokenism if there are only a few transitioned offices, only one or two CARE affiliates" (Internal Participant AS06, Sri Lanka, 2020). This suggestion was the most common proposed by research participants for consolidating and accelerating the diversification agenda at CARE, and this sentiment was further echoed in an external review of CARE's progress with governance reform (Genberg, 2020, p. 6). When pressed for examples of what other forms of diversification CARE was pursuing, the possibility of a merger or membership affiliation with two potential partners (in southern and eastern Africa) were the only substantive proposals detailed by participants in 2018. Of these, one had been shelved and one remained a work-in-progress at the time of the final data collection in 2020; no additional proposals were shared with this study. The fact that most participants saw this as the way forward yet so little progress was being made suggested an institutional constraint, and a growing impatience was apparent among research participants.

Funding and Growth

There are two financial features of the CARE system that appear to constrain the expansion of the localisation agenda and, thus, constrain aspirations for bolstering organisational legitimacy. The first of these is an apparent clash between the philosophical aspirations and the financial realities of the confederation. Despite the discussions held at CARE's most senior levels of governance and the commitment of common resources through an agreed facility (the Membership Investment Fund), the wider financial implications of Country Office transitions were not fully considered. Many within CARE saw the diversification agenda as a means to reduce costs and sought to define success as the financial independence of the new entities, contrary to strong evidence that this was unrealistic. Commentary from participants in southern offices and those outside CARE suggests that a shared recognition that transformation comes at a cost and will continue to do so for some years would better reflect the philosophical commitment and facilitate more realistic financial modelling.

The second emerging feature relates to the scarcity of discretionary resources, a perennial challenge for those INGOs largely dependent on institutional funding. A reliance on tied grants limits an

organisation's ability to make strategic investments and, in this instance, has placed CARE at a structural disadvantage when compared with many peers (refer to Chapter Four). CARE's progress with developing private sector partners around the world has not changed this position, as these partnerships are reported as having similarly prescriptive requirements (Molina-Gallart, 2014). This situation works to compound the competitive disadvantage for all INGOs with a heavy reliance on tied funding: with less to invest in fundraising, technical expertise or strategic positioning, they risk a diminishing role among more flexibly resourced organisations.

This same challenge is exaggerated for the emergent CARE members and affiliates, where lucrative tools such as face-to-face fundraising are largely untested. Public fundraising, private fundraising and social enterprise models are being considered, yet the early returns are modest. For most CARE Country Offices, the gap between operating costs and available grant income has historically been covered by the lead member. For the transitioning organisations, until such time as social enterprise efforts and/or other fundraising tools bear fruit, this gap will still need to be filled. A simple proposition emerges from this analysis, recurring in various forms across all three years of data collection: if the organisation accepts that power and resources are entwined, and further accepts that discretionary resources are critical to the empowerment of the southern partners, then control over CARE's limited resources must change. Discretionary resources must proportionately shift to the south, regardless of whether the global portfolio is grown, maintained or reduced over time.

An additional inconsistency emerged from the *International Voices* data regarding the organisational focus on growth. For some, continuous financial growth equated to continuous impact growth and building the collective pot remained a central priority. For others, ambitious growth targets were seen as unrealistic given the trajectory of traditional aid flows and CARE's limited capacity to invest in alternative fundraising paths. For a third group, significant growth was possible but was dependent on a fundamental shift away from the traditional model of north-south aid flows, moving away from a reliance on CMP donors and instead tapping into local and national resources in the countries where CARE has an operating presence. On balance, a majority of participants suggested CARE should anticipate a decrease in traditional aid flows and a decrease in the proportion of funding administered through CMPs. This implies significant changes to the financial model and business planning of the CMPs, and several LST participants were of the view that CARE had not yet done enough work on such modelling: "I think the funding model is crucial. I think that's going to be our biggest challenge, our biggest barrier, and probably will require the biggest breakthroughs to be able to move forward" (Internal Participant AC13, *International Voices*, 2020).

Systems and the Status Quo

The majority of participants, regardless of their view on growth and future sources of income, agreed that CARE's systems were not built with flexibility in mind and would likely continue to constrain change. In addition to financial modelling and scenario planning for changing income flows, participants suggested that a range of internal systems (reporting, contracting, grant administration) would need to change to accommodate any movement away from the steady historical flow of institutional donor funding through CMPs. INGO systems are obliged to manage risk and as a result tend to focus on control and cautious administration (Ben-Ari, 2012; Green, 2015). The relationships between administrating agents in the global north and implementing agents in the south tend to replicate the authorising environment between donors and northern members. Participants suggested that this would need to evolve and adapt to accommodate independent organisations and sovereign boards, and that this was particularly true if CARE wished to expand membership to independent organisations without the CARE legacy:

...our organisational model is designed in this typical kind of historical aid flow model, all of our systems are set up to feed that model. So they're not very flexible; they're not very adaptable; they are very control heavy. And they don't really enable the kind of dynamic ways of working or the most relevant for every individual context. Internal Participant AC07, International Voices, 2018

A number of *International Voices* respondents raised the issue of human resource management and what expertise was most sought and most rewarded across CARE's membership. In each member organisation, many individuals are recruited and retained for their capacity to protect and grow that member's income, i.e., to maintain or improve upon their share of the available pool of funding. This is the way organisations seek to maximise their contribution to CARE's global aspirations and, furthermore, the more resources you control the greater your influence over domestic and international decision making. This is not unique to CARE at all and reflects a long-standing trend in which "the transnational environment is pushing INGOs and IOs toward greater competition, regardless of their normative starting points or orientation" (Cooley & Ron, 2002, p. 8). While maximising your contribution makes sense and is easily justified, it is also true that when northern members seek to protect their share of the pie or prioritise their own fundraising capacity, this can run contrary to the philosophical values of devolution and empowerment. Furthermore, participants questioned how ready CARE was to acknowledge and address the proprietary nature of north-south grant management and the power imbalance this suggests:

I don't think there has been a profound look at what needs to change in the north... it's seen as, oh yes, you come in and join our system and you do what it takes to be a part of that system. But there's been very little analysis of how the system needs to change and how those with power in the system need to change. External Participant BC09, International Voices, 2020

In addition to structural changes to CARE's business model and business tools, numerous participants suggested that attitudes and behaviours also need to change for the balance of power to shift. This speaks to the invisible power referred to in Chapter Three, expressed through a range of institutional norms and practices that perpetuate the status quo. Respondents, including several from within the northern members themselves, spoke of the challenge of translating philosophical commitments into changed practices. This emerged as a highly complex feature of the study, where structural norms, combined with values of pride and self-worth among staff of northern members, were seen to contradict the call for humility when cooperating with peers and partners in the global south. This ties in with a fundamental challenge facing the sector: to accept and embrace the truth that "the development industry is systematically flawed along colonial and neo-colonial lines" (Tawake et al., 2021, p. 1). Historical relationships with Country Offices were founded on a hierarchy of expertise, including the expectation of command and control from the global north, and this history became the starting point for relationships with transitioning organisations. A senior secretariat staffer summarised this as follows:

Changing the mindset and behaviour in the kind of historical centre of gravity of the organisation - our members in the global north in particular - is the fundamental change that is required. The assumption that technical expertise sits with them and then it needs to be transferred... is something that is challenged often by our Country Offices but certainly gets even more challenged when you're interacting with an independently governed and managed organisation. Internal Participant AC08, International Voices, 2018

Mixed Motivations

Pull Factors

All participants were given the opportunity to describe what they regarded as the primary purpose for the transition of former Country Offices and the creation of new CARE members from the global south. There was an acute awareness of the flaws of the traditional INGO model among respondents, in particular that decisions regarding resource allocation and strategic direction were generally driven from the global north. There was also a consensus that the INGO model needed to evolve, and many respondents appeared to regard localisation as a development imperative in and

of itself. This was regularly the first point that participants chose to make, and the commentary often took the tone of a statement of the obvious: something that everyone already knew and accepted, as implied in this commentary from a senior leader in one of CARE's well established northern member partners:

I think there's an innate understanding of 'the why' we need to diversify. And it's really about the essence of who we are, our identity, being credible, being legitimate as an organisation, ensuring that, you know, we are who we say we are, and that we're not a colonial, northern-based, donor-driven organisation. Internal Participant AC04, International Voices, 2018

This quote encapsulates many of the *pull factors* for localisation, often making up a participants first response to the question of purpose: localisation is about reflecting CARE's values, demonstrating commitment to those values and acknowledging and overcoming historical shortcomings. This speaks to an understanding of the gap between values and practices among INGOs, one which CARE are seeking to bridge through localisation and diversification. Edwards and Sen (2000) identified this gap as a major weakness for NGOs "because it is the link between values and actions that is crucial in generating legitimacy when arguing the case for change. Institutions must be seen to implement values as the bottom line in their own practice if they are to build a coalition in support of those values on the wider stage" (p. 615). Anchoring major organisational change to a purpose of this nature seems to fit that bill and position CARE well.

Push Factors

While the high level, philosophical motivations are critical *pull factors* for localisation, several *push factors* were also apparent. Highest amongst these were financial imperatives such as donors exiting middle-income countries and the heavy costs of the traditional CARE structure. Participants also explained that the ability to fundraise locally was linked to registration as a local entity, another example of a financial imperative to localise (push factor) that often followed the more philosophical motivation (pull factor). Still others spoke of a diminishing window to establish a fundraising presence in certain settings before others "beat us to it". Informants tended to speak openly and comfortably about these motivations, describing them as "pragmatic" and "realistic", suggesting that push factors to do with financial growth or organisational survival were as obvious as the philosophical pull factors. Commentary often pointed to CARE's need to endure a rapidly changing development context, as captured in this quote from a senior technical lead in the CARE International Secretariat:

There's a reality that the form of funding that CARE has, the institutional focus that CARE has, means that CARE will not survive as a global organisation... there are probably 20 or 30 middle-income CARE countries, or countries that are entering into that sphere. And CARE will just not be able to survive there with the current model. Internal Participant AC08, *International Voices*, 2018

In reality, donor practices changed very little over the course of the study. The anticipated redirection of institutional donor resources away from INGOs in middle-income countries, including Sri Lanka and Indonesia, has slowed rather than sped up. For varying reasons (regional strategies, post-conflict focus, humanitarian imperative), traditional donors have continued to invest in civil society programs in each of those locations, reducing the shock to the transitioning organisations and reducing the dependence on new types of partnership. Similarly, participants advised that in several instances, donors that had previously shown interest in diverting funds directly to local players had, in practice, continued to fund through traditional northern partners (CMPs, in the case of CARE). The local organisations are evidently accessing sources of funds they may not have accessed as Country Offices; however, the impetus to radically shift grant management practices has slowed. Much like the INGO community, it seems, the entrenched norms of risk aversion and control are proving more powerful in shaping behaviour than espoused commitments to direct funding:

Donors increasingly say they want to support more local organisations, so there's a sense of commercial imperative. But I must say, what donors say and do are quite different. It feels a very long-term commercial imperative, really, because, actually, despite what donors say about supporting localisation, they don't do much of it. Internal Participant AC16, *International Voices*, 2020

A variety of other rationales for localisation were also reported, albeit in smaller numbers. These included ideas concerning development effectiveness, which might also be regarded as values-based motivations, most commonly related to the belief that in many settings where CARE works, local organisations were more agile, more responsive and better positioned to advocate for policy change than international organisations. There were also other rationales that spoke to CARE's profile and competitiveness and were perhaps more closely related to the financial imperatives outlined above. For some participants, localisation was a means to counteract reduced support for INGOs by host governments, while others spoke of the need to evolve CARE's global brand to distance the organisation from unfavourable international criticisms of INGO behaviours. This diversity of localisation incentives was well understood by people both inside and outside the organisation, with external participants in particular expressing concern that multiplicity of motivations might signal an

identity crisis for INGOs. Such concerns echo much of the literature on the awkward evolution of INGOs (Edwards et al., 1999; Gabazira, 2015) and the tension between local and international claims, described as follows by a leading academic consulted for this study:

I've often thought that international NGOs have a bit of an identity crisis. It always seems to me that international NGOs identity is unclear because they are organisations in one society that work in another society. Until international NGOs are clear about what that identity is and implies, then I think localisation is always going to be problematic... You're an international NGO but you're trying to present yourself as a local one. Either that's a very clever, strategic, post-modern idea, which is the way forward, or it's an undermining of legitimacy and transparency. There's a sort of insincerity and tokenism in it, which I distrust.

External Participant BC04, *International Voices*, 2018

Variations and Additional Commentary

Differences in the relative priority given to value-based motivations over the organisational imperatives could not be consistently identified with a particular location, function or seniority within the 2018 *International Voices* data collection, perhaps because of the small sample size and limited numbers in each sub-group. The only variance of note was that the four respondents who spoke only of the push factors (such as dwindling funding or unaffordable Country Office costs) or spoke of the philosophical motivations as secondary to these, were all located in traditional *northern* CMPs. It also became evident that across the confederation people interpreted the end point of localisation quite differently. Some saw the CARE Office emerging from transition as a fully-fledged local actor, while others questioned whether this was possible or even desirable and saw new CARE members continuing to represent the INGO in much the same way they had as Country Offices. Still others envisaged the transitioned CARE offices as not quite local and not quite international, emerging instead as quasi-autonomous organisations that seek to garner the best of both worlds.

I think one of the worries I have about this process is that people, particularly leaders, talk about it as if we're going to suddenly become a local actor. And I think, no, we're not. And that's actually a good thing, right? We're providing a different value to generally locally grown organisations. What I want to do is just move into a much more diverse and much more effective global confederation so an INGO that is able to engage more effectively with voices, with views, with perspectives in the global south. Internal Participant AC09, *International Voices*, 2018

In the second series of *International Voices* interviews, held in April and May 2020, there was very little variation from the collective understanding and range of purposes described in 2018. A similar

blend of values-driven motivations, or pull factors, and of organisational imperatives, or push factors, was apparent. Furthermore, a similar spread of opinions was apparent among those individuals being interviewed for the first time and those being consulted for a second time. The only significant variation regarding purpose were shifts in the language used by participants to describe the transition process, most notably regarding the understanding of localisation. In this second round of interviews, participants increasingly described the transitions as the “nationalisation of CARE’s presence” rather than localisation, per se. This alternative phrasing may come as a result of the localisation discussion tending more towards locally led humanitarian partnerships than long term development at CARE (and elsewhere, see Barakat & Milton, 2020). In the civil society discourse, the term *nationalisation* more commonly refers to the elevation of local or sub-national organisations to a national level; however, and as a result, the term is not uniformly accepted as an alternative to localisation.

It is important to note that many among those consulted, both within and outside CARE, questioned the relative priority given to Country Office transition over other forms of diversification and localisation. By focusing on new members and affiliates from within the existing system, the aspiration is less radical: it is less different to what the organisation has always done and therefore more susceptible to perpetuating (or reverting to) the whims of the established power base in the north. CARE also leaves itself open to criticism of what is described in the literature as isomorphic mimicry: intentionally creating organisations of a similar shape to themselves (systems, tools, processes, people) regardless of whether that shape offers the best match with their espoused values or aspirations (Andrews et al., 2017). Pritchett et al. (2010) described this as “adopting the camouflage of organizational forms that are successful elsewhere,” which may lead to becoming stuck with a situation “in which the appearance of development activity masks the lack of development activity” (p. 2). Some participants warn that this might also happen when seeking partners outside the CARE systems, if priority is given only to those organisations that most closely resemble CARE:

I think there’s a huge problem here, which is that although we talk about partnership, what we’re actually doing is an institutional monoculture, where we’re trying to find and work with organisations which share our values, down to quite a fine level of detail... They start using all the jargon: the resilience, and the gender, and sexuality, and intersectionality, and all the rest of it. And that makes them very congenial to us, and then makes them look very alien to their own citizens and governments. It’s a difficult conversation, which NGOs I don’t think are sufficiently coherent, and cohesive, and confident to have. External Participant BC06, International Voices, 2020

A final noteworthy feature of the conversations about purpose is an implied assumption of financial growth and program expansion. There is a contradiction apparent between a widely accepted decline in traditional aid flows, both institutional and private, and the assumption implied by several participants that CARE will continue to grow its national and international portfolios. Despite unresolved challenges for CARE and other INGOs in this space, a financial growth motivation lies at the heart of the localisation agenda for several participants. Those that anticipate growth see the opportunity to increase access to both traditional institutional donors with a better network of local partners and new public and private donors in the settings where CARE builds a locally governed presence. While this may prove to be true in some settings, some participants suggested it motivates CARE to replicate familiar structures and may be a disincentive for alternative organisational models that look to multiply impact in different ways. A focus on growth and isomorphic mimicry also informs the nature of recruitments, particularly to boards and senior management, as summarised succinctly by this senior staffer from the CI Secretariat:

...when you're recruiting someone, you're looking for someone who is going to grow the income. Who is going to make this organisation survive. We're not looking for people with the imagination to close down. We're looking for people with a growth focus. Internal Participant AC14, *International Voices*, 2020

Does Motivation Matter?

In addition to being asked about the various purposes behind localisation at CARE, participants in 2020 were prompted to discuss the implications of any divergence in what triggered the push for localisation and diversification at CARE. If there is more than one purpose, does that matter? Does this affect the process or the outcome? As explained in Chapter Two, as the research progressed my understanding grew and the questions I was asking evolved, leading in turn to new categories and a more nuanced understanding of the connections between each. These prompts on purpose were added as I had come to see this as important over the course of the previous two years, especially when analysing the data from the 2018 *International Voices* collection and when delving further into the literature around values and organisational imperatives. Of these, I found Michael Edwards work on INGO behaviour (2001) and the role of INGOs in a transition from international development to global civil society (2008) particularly instructional.

In response to the new prompts, the vast majority of participants advised that, while a variety of motivations are to be expected, both the process and the outcome are negatively affected by this inconsistency in purpose. Only two of those asked these questions felt otherwise, implying in their answers that the ends justified the means. Most participants believed that being motivated by

values, seeing localisation as the right thing to do, was fundamentally different to being motivated by organisational survival or by a financial return on investment. Respondents advised that the people involved, the decisions made, the internal and external communications and the indicators of progress and success were all informed by what participants most valued or desired from the process. Participants both within and outside the confederation agreed on this matter:

If we are not all on the same page, if priorities and commitments are open to interpretation, then we will be less likely to achieve radical change. Change will almost certainly be constrained. Internal Participant AC03, International Voices, 2020

It absolutely matters – the process of getting there and the shape of the final product. Who, where and how are all very different if you don't share the higher goal. External Participant BC09, International Voices, 2020

Significant Research Moments: *Inside the Insider*

It was in the context of the International Voices data collection and analysis that I was compelled to look deeply into my own behaviours, assumptions and professional practices. The bulk of my career in international development has been spent as an international expert representing northern members of large international NGOs. I have worked hard to develop skills in facilitation and listening, have proactively sought to rein in my cultural privilege, and have always taken pride in being motivated by solidarity and universality rather than external expertise. Despite these efforts, my work in many countries of the global south has generally included a direct or implied seniority and has necessarily included a role as representative of funders or power brokers in the global north. The act of studying the behaviours of people in similar roles has led me to question how often my own behaviours have strayed from my principles.

There were many moments when I saw features of myself in the people I was interviewing, and not all of these were flattering. On several such occasions, individuals who were sincerely and earnestly invested in the devolution of power and the breaking down of structural injustice were also able to explain with confidence and clarity why they weren't able to do that. I could hear myself doing the same and needed to acknowledge this in order to proceed with the work. As Monica Nyiraguhabwa explained "individuals working in this space have to be comfortable with challenging personal biases and stereotypes and then put in the hard work to unlearn and reimagine what giving up and redistributing power looks like. Because power is at the core, and everyone has a crucial role to play in disrupting the cycle" (as cited in Cabot-Venton, 2021, p. 1)

In line with the commitment to reflexivity outlined in Chapter Two, I paused regularly to reflect on what I was learning and how I was changing as a result of this process. Much as a recurring answer to a question might be regarded as a pattern or theme, my recurring sense of an uneasy relationship between INGO staff and their responsibilities emerged as a theme of its own. It is clear that these interviews, and the response they triggered within me, informed my interpretation of the data and shaped my sense of important axial connections between data sources. This particularly piqued my interest in the concept of humility, not only on the several occasions that study participants chose to raise it but also where it appeared in the wider literature on NGOs and organisational change. The recognition that “humility doesn’t come easy to organisations that have been used to occupying the higher moral ground” (Edwards, as cited in Johns, 2000, p. 30) evolved to inform one of several investigative threads explored in the final chapter of this work.

Conclusion

The International Voices data paints a picture of an organisation undergoing deep and purposeful change. Structural changes to internal policy and procedures, particularly around donor access and cost recovery, promote an enabling environment for emerging southern members and affiliates. New forms of partnership between northern and southern partners stretch beyond the confines of traditional grant management and support the nascent organisations to build and demonstrate their organisational capacity. New operating space, supported by the north and owned by the south, has given rise to a remarkable advancement in voice and influence by southern leaders, reflected in change across the entire organisational spectrum of governance, operations and strategic planning at CARE.

Simultaneously, the data tells the story of an organisation struggling with such change. New policies are resisted where they contradict established norms and where they compromise the hold on resources and decision making in the global north. Northern members persist with proprietary behaviours and uphold the authorising environment that justifies such practice. Uptake of new ideas is slow and a multiplicity of motivations among traditional power brokers means that reasons are easily found to reinterpret what constitutes the best path forward. Perhaps most fundamentally, members generally see to their own vested interests before considering those of the collective or, in this case, before seeing to the interests of their fledgling southern peers. This business model reflects the nature of INGO structures built over many generations and is in no way unique to CARE, yet it is nonetheless fundamentally at odds with the localisation and diversification agenda.

We are left, therefore, with a raft of contradictions. Stories of change and resistance to change, of new power claimed and old power held, of innovation and inertia. These antithetical results give colour to the challenging reality of striving for organisational change in an industry that is dominated by path dependence, the necessity of operating in a certain way because the established practical and political systems demand it (Hanreider, 2015; Synow, 2009). Moreover, the data reiterates and illuminates the challenge of diverse legitimacies for INGOs, where legitimating behaviours vary widely depending on the distinctive and often contradictory expectations of multiple audiences.

Chapter Nine: *Findings and Implications*

Introduction

This study analysed the relationship between localisation and legitimacy for INGOs, centred around the primary research question: Does the transition of an INGO Country Office into a local entity position the local organisation and/or the international organisation for greater legitimacy? In exploring the topic, the research further sought insight into two sub-questions: What purpose does INGO localisation serve and for whom? What forces are most likely to constrain or enable the realisation of greater legitimacy through INGO localisation? This final chapter summarises the cumulative findings of the study against these questions. The results outlined in earlier chapters are analysed and reinterpreted as a collection of interdependent themes, both deductive and inductive.

The four domains of change that featured throughout the study evolved over time to incorporate emergent themes, accommodating findings from each cycle of data collection and analysis. Each theme is presented as a section in this chapter, commencing with *Accountability and the Authorising Environment*. This section explores the interpretations of accountability most apparent in the sample before delving into the relationship between organisational values and patterns of authority within INGOs. The second theme is titled *Influence, Expectations and the Appetite for Change*, drawing links between the way influence was employed in the study and the many and varied purposes localisation is intended to serve. *Power, Prosperity and Path Dependence* follows, with an analysis of the way power is exercised under and over the confederation, with consideration given to how an appetite for growth and an unwavering confidence in the organisational mission may shape this use of power. The final theme of *Complex and Contradictory Legitimacies* explores the challenging nature of legitimation for INGOs when seeking to satisfy diverse and often antithetical notions of legitimacy.

The chapter then highlights implications for practitioners and researchers with an interest in the continuing evolution of INGOs in international development. Finally, under a conclusion titled *Hubris, Humility and a North-South Collective*, I argue that in practice the INGO legitimacy gap takes the form of multiple legitimacy gaps, and that legitimation for one audience regularly compromises legitimation for another. I summarise the progress and challenges faced by CARE, before describing how this experience confirms or contradicts assumptions about legitimacy for the INGO sector more widely. I close the study with a contention that the greatest opportunity for leveraging change comes in the practical demonstration of espoused values by northern members of INGOs. Through the acknowledgment and dismantling of systems and behaviours that perpetuate a power

imbalance, and through the selfless pursuit of new practices specifically intended to redirect power, northern partners have the opportunity to forge a different path and close the legitimacy gaps.

Accountability and the Authorising Environment

Internal Accountability

Despite the multitude of accountabilities facing INGOs (Edwards & Hulme, 1997; Williams, 2010), participant commentary on accountability was largely reserved for positive reflections on external practices. Responses were less consistent and less uniformly positive, however, in the internal realm. Internal accountability is often tied to organisational values and identity, two themes notoriously difficult to track and demonstrate (Betts & Orchard, 2015; Kilby, 2006; Lissner, 1977). Study participants flagged a number of concerns related to the engagement, ownership and commitment of staff. In local settings, staff engagement in the transition was uneven at times and the flow of information unreliable. In Indonesia, uncertainty regarding an ongoing role for individual staff in the emerging structure compromised their commitment and enthusiasm for the change. This contributed to dissatisfaction and change fatigue and was central to the challenges both organisations faced retaining staff and maintaining morale, particularly in the second year of the study.

Enthusiasm for localisation was not uniform among individuals involved in the transitions. Some staff stayed with (or joined) the emerging organisation because of their commitment to localisation yet for others, the association with an international organisation was something hard-earned, a source of satisfaction and status, and the transition to local was seen as personally diminishing. This is a complex finding, combining a rational layer that speaks to achievement and pride on the part of individual development professionals and a deeper, post-colonial layer that speaks to the disproportionate power and status given to international organisations in the global south (McEwan, 2001; Peace Direct, 2021). Either way, there was an assumption by many within CARE that a localised operation with a local board and local status would be a source of pride and would prove motivational for transitioning staff over the course of the transition. I began the research with a suspicion that power may be expressed as resistance to change by the northern partners, yet I had not anticipated this from within the ranks of the transitioning organisations.

Despite broad institutional awareness of CARE's Delhi Resolution and seemingly uniform support across the confederation for the wider diversification agenda, the behaviours and practices of northern partners have not kept pace. The study produced examples of partners cooperating in line with these evolved expectations, yet, every year in every data collection, there were examples of

northern members failing to do so. Resistance to change may be brought about by a loss of control, a sense of unfamiliarity or a range of other common triggers (Kanter, 2012); however, its recurrence throughout the study suggests a need to unlearn northern biases and “to re-conceptualise intermediary roles and structures” (Cabot-Venton, 2021, p. 2). The principle-practice disconnection extended to relationships between the former Country Offices and their lead members, the CMPs who had managed the Country Office on behalf of the confederation. Whether intentional or circumstantial, a tendency to inertia and indecision was seen to both complicate the procedural layers of transition (financial, legal, administrative) and compromise the ownership of national staff and management. As explored in Chapter Four, the relative independence of members in a confederated structure means that any intervention from the centre is limited to influence and suggestion rather than intervention (Hudson & Bielefeld, 1997; Stroup & Wong, 2013). In the CARE model, the priority given to any one organisational priority over another is at the discretion of each member, within the loose confines of shared goals.

The Authorising Environment

Gaps in INGO accountability, particularly to values, can be tied to the concept of “NGO-isation.” The term speaks to the institutionalisation, professionalisation and bureaucratisation of values-driven movements and organisations (Choudry & Kapoor, 2010; 2013). Conformity with the operating systems, behavioural norms and reporting structures of the international network is expected, most notably by CARE’s northern partners. Like many of the well-established northern INGOs, CARE’s internal systems are generations old and have been “regularly adapted without ever being overhauled” (Internal Participant AC04, International Voices 2018). Participants point to a well-established authorising environment, where there are many layers of authority and multiple authorising agents largely residing in the global north. As noted in Chapter Eight, such authority is entrenched in job descriptions, reporting lines and in the strategic priorities of northern members’ staff, management and boards. These systems and practices are grounded in the vested interests of individual CARE members; seeking authority for organisational change in favour of a common institutional value, therefore, proves difficult.

The role of donors is also significant in this theme. The relatively slow pace of change witnessed amongst institutional donors means that CARE and other INGOs are not being pushed to evolve their accountability practices or restructure their authorising environment. The continuation of traditional aid flows through traditional windows means that organisational shapes and functions are replicated down the line in a chain of isomorphic mimicry: donors place systems requirements on northern partners, who in turn place similar requirements on southern partners, who in turn place similar

requirements on local partners. A risk of complacency emerges from this story where, in the absence of the anticipated slowing of traditional aid flows, both CMPs and the emerging southern entities may become either disinclined or simply too busy to pursue transformation.

Noteworthy Successes

Notwithstanding the challenges and contradictions that have emerged regarding accountability to values, the willingness of the confederation to explore new models of membership is a noteworthy success. CARE's approach to localisation and membership diversification is an example of adaptive management, where the expectations on new or emerging members have evolved as lessons have been learned. The example of Chrysalis, CARE's first and as yet only Affiliate Member, represents the most fundamental shift away from the traditional CARE model and has the most potential in terms of a rapid and broad diversification of CARE's global presence. Chrysalis have played a critical role in proposing an affiliate model where none existed, and then demonstrating how that might work both legally and practically. The support of their former lead member, CARE USA, has proved flexible and respectful; the wider CARE confederation has either stood aside or proactively stepped up so that the fledgling organisation might challenge the status quo.

Influence, Culture and the Pace of Change

Institutional theory explains that power and influence become embedded in organisational cultures not only through formal channels, such as regulations, but also in informal or subconscious ways through norms and shared understandings. Institutional complexity develops when these elements become incompatible with each other (Scott, 2008). "NGOs often create and become enmeshed and invested in maintaining webs of power and bureaucracy" (Choudry & Kapoor, 2013, p. 15), and these webs are generally administered by agents in the middle tiers of the authorising environment. These agents are trusted to exercise power in particular ways; however, when professional motivations intervene or organisational imperatives change, the way this influence is exercised may contradict organisational values (Lang, 2012). There is evidence of this within CARE where the values of the Delhi Resolution are not consistently reflected in institutional norms and/or the behaviours of their agents in the north.

Representatives and thought leaders within both established and emerging members spoke with confidence to CARE's diversification agenda; however, this did not consistently translate within their own organisations. The assumption underpinning this element of the research was one of influence *upwards*, of greater proximity to decisions being made at a higher level (of management, governance or policy making). What emerged was a breakdown in influence over decision making

downwards, most notably in terms of the decisions being made at lower levels (by managers, administrators and technical specialists). This was particularly true of CARE's northern members; many participants from both the national and international data sets suggested that the key messages were well captured and expressed by leaders around the globe but just weren't getting through to "the busy people doing the day-to-day work of managing donors and grants and submissions and deadlines" (Internal participant AC14, International Voices, 2020).

As explored in Chapter Eight, while most participants shared a values-based commitment to redressing the failings of the traditional aid system, a range of other motivations were also present. Of these, the majority had to do with reducing costs to enable financial growth or CARE's survival in a changing international development context. In organisational change, mixed motivations can alter the nature and timing of interventions. The theory of generative causality suggests that where interventions vary in shape, timing or context, the pathway between cause and effect is altered and the outcome is liable to change (Pawson, 2008; Stern et al., 2012). For example, in the context of former Country Offices transitioning to local organisations, an external motivation to reduce in-Country Office costs triggered staffing decisions that directly compromised the values-based motivation of establishing a viable local organisation. In this way, contradictory motivations were seen to alter the way influence was applied and suggest a reduced appetite for values-based change.

Another significant finding related to influence is the limited space ceded to, or claimed by, CARE's northern members when engaging donors on the topic of localisation and diversification. As Stroup and Wong (2017) explained, INGOs tend to strive for authority and influence. This can earn them an audience with policy leaders and decision makers, including the institutional donors that provide much of their income and enable them to act upon their own organisational priorities. To secure and maintain such authority, however, INGOs need to use language, proposals and platforms that fall within the acceptable limits of multiple audiences. As such, decisions about what to prioritise when engaging with donors may lead to a toning down of more confrontational or complex proposals (Banks et al., 2015; Edwards & Hulme, 1998; Stroup & Wong, 2017). Whether constrained by other organisational priorities or the fear of a diminished role for themselves, the data from this study suggests that CARE's northern members are yet to meaningfully engage with donors on system changes that might accelerate the emergence of southern members.

The pace of CARE's diversification is noteworthy relative to where the organisation was prior to the transition project, yet less radical when compared with that of some peer organisations. Oxfam International moved to a majority of board members from the global south some years ago, and Action Aid have a well-established flat organisational structure that empowers country teams in

organisational decision making. Both Action Aid and Save the Children evolved into federated structures, and thus have redirected power, in principle, from individual members to the collective centre. At the same time, the expectations being placed on INGOs, particularly in terms of decolonisation and locally led development, are changing rapidly (Bond, 2021; Kapoor, 2020; Peace Direct, 2021). As such, despite the efforts of CARE and other INGOs being celebrated by participants throughout the study, the demand for behaviour change continues unabated.

Noteworthy Successes

The CARE International Secretariat utilised their proximity to power, both north and south, and played a critical role as advocates and advisors for, and administrators of change. Participants from the emerging organisations and elsewhere within CARE believed that the progress made at local, collective and confederation levels is largely due to these efforts; the support given to the transition project was fundamental to its success. The support has come in many forms: technical support to organisations and their boards; coordination of people, information and events; advocacy and representation within CARE's global governance structures; and financial support made possible through the Membership Investment Fund. Although lead member support, both financial and technical, has been uneven across locations, it has been timely and adaptive.

As discussed in Chapters Four and Eight, CARE undertook a range of additional commitments in the later stages of the study that provide evidence of further change. Externally, public pledges related to race, gender and decolonisation (CARE International, 2021b; Centre for Humanitarian Leadership, 2021) reflect and elevate contemporary INGO values. Internally, more sophisticated practices to promote diversity, equity and inclusion began to feature in the HR practices and governance structures of the confederation and individual CMPs. These changes were not fully in place at the time of the final formal data collections in 2020, yet provide complementary evidence of a significant acceleration in the pace of change at CARE.

Power, Prosperity and Path Dependence

Power Ceded and Power Claimed

Decision making has historically resided with CMPs as the gatekeepers for the vast majority of CARE's income. Membership diversification, including the elevation of local organisations to membership status, implies a shift away from this model. At the signing of the Delhi Resolution in 2014, there were three southern members of CARE: Thailand (Raks Thai Foundation), Peru and India. These three had gradually emerged from former Country Offices in each location over the preceding 20 years. In the time since, Country Offices in Morocco, Egypt, Sri Lanka, Indonesia and most

recently Georgia (CARE International in the Caucasus) have all begun some form of transition to membership. While resources still predominantly flow from north to south, the shift in representation and voice at the highest levels of governance constitutes a step change for the confederation.

Through the work of the Global South Leaders Forum, emerging members progressed from having influence to having power. Their voices have shaped the tone of governance discussions and have directly informed key elements of *Vision 2030*, CARE's core strategic directions for the next decade. The capacity of new members to effect change has been further illustrated by emerging members leading global program portfolios and by southern members leading CARE's new regional coordination structures. There were also several instances where southern members began to reject recommendations regarding organisational structures and board membership. The ability to express a different view to the dominant cultural narrative, often referred to as a counter-narrative or counter-story, constitutes an important expression of power (Andrews, 2002; Bamberg & Andrews, 2004). It is a recurring feature of the data that such power would never have been afforded to Country Offices.

Although examples of northern members sharing and ceding power have begun to emerge, and the new entities are beginning to claim power rather than wait for it to be ceded, the established hold on power by the traditional member partners has not been broken. Despite changes to donor access and cost-sharing policies, grant negotiations continue to reflect the well-established understanding that when holding the purse strings, CMPs still hold all the cards. As discussed in Chapters Five and Six, CMPs also tend to communicate in a tone of authority rather than partnership; there were several examples of directions being sent to a new (southern) member in a manner that would be unacceptable in a similar exchange with an established (northern) member.

It is important to acknowledge that attempts to maintain control over decisions and resources are generally not consciously motivated by an interest in the power itself. Instead, they reflect the normalisation of an unconscious, internalised power. This echoes the literature on visible and invisible power discussed in Chapter Three as well as the more nuanced understanding of discourse, which Foucault redefined as the manner in which knowledge, power and subjectivity are drawn together (Foucault, 1970; 1971). Much of the data collected for this study embodies this notion of discourse: a well-established pattern of interdependencies and "a form of power that circulates... and can attach to strategies of domination as well as those of resistance (Diamond & Quinby, 1988, p. 185). This discourse speaks to a deep faith in the established authorising environment, expressed

as a deference to business-as-usual and a confidence that established systems are in place for a reason.

Country Offices and Power

Another interesting thread to emerge from data coded under the *power* theme was the widely accepted position of Country Offices in the INGO eco-system. A recurring position, growing louder over the course of the study, was that the transitioning members wanted and needed and deserved to be treated differently to Country Offices. Among a raft of expressed or implied expectations regarding emerging members, the most common was that they be consulted rather than informed about decisions that affect them and that their local expertise should be acknowledged and prioritised. Participants felt the voices of staff and leaders in emerging members deserved to be elevated to the highest levels in CARE's international structures, representing as they do the very communities with and for whom CARE exists. Country Offices, it appeared, should not reasonably expect this level of importance and deference in the INGO system.

The most obvious difference between Country Offices and member organisations is the matter of line management. For CARE and other INGOs, Country Offices are "almost always subordinate to a global headquartered organisation in a western country and, therefore, the governance and strategy of the Country Office is secondary to the strategy and governance of the parent" organisation (Mathews, 2021, p 1). As such, rarely did any study participant question the power claimed by or ceded to Country Offices, despite these offices generally having close to 100% national staff and vast experience in delivering on the INGO's international commitments. In these and many other respects, the arguments for "positioning resources and decision-making closer to our work" (CARE International, 2020b, p. 8) hold equally true for Country Offices. It is a significant finding of this study, therefore, that the existence of a local governance structure and/or the dissolution of the line management relationship appear to be preconditions for greater access to power. In turn, this finding may validate, at least in part, the growing chorus of critics that see INGOs as neo-colonial in nature (Ehtisham, 2021; Peace Direct, 2021).

Path Dependence

The power discourse ties, furthermore, to the concept of path dependence discussed in chapters seven and eight. INGO systems have evolved to include an understandable focus on risk minimisation and income maximisation. In my experience, northern partners sincerely believe that by mitigating risk they protect the brand and ensure resources continue to flow to those who most need them. By undertaking much of the work themselves, northern partners can be confident it is undertaken by experienced experts, thereby satisfying the expectations of their own internal

governance structures and public and private donors. It is also important to acknowledge that the management and staff of northern partners are generally motivated by solidarity with the south rather than northern exceptionalism:

These people (in northern offices) aren't monsters. They are generally clever, thoughtful and highly skilled. They are motivated by sincere commitment to the organisational aims. But they have a job to do and a big part that job is to protect their organisations, first and foremost. External Participant BC05, International Voices, 2020

The data reveals a tendency to point to system demands and accountability responsibilities as the reason that change cannot occur. Similarly, there is evidence of the appetite for change easing when external pressures are reduced. In systems thinking, this is sometimes described as change resistance, where structures tend to revert to the status quo whenever roadblocks appear and/or the pressure to change is relieved. Scholars vary in their views about the role that resistance plays in organisational change, from something that needs to be overcome to something that is valuable and instructive in achieving change (Bareil, 2013; Schweiger et al., 2018); however, it is widely accepted that systems resist change until such time as that change fails or a tipping point can be reached such that change becomes irreversible (Gladwell, 2000; Milkoreit et al., 2018). In the case of CARE, the data suggests that momentum continues to shift towards a redistribution of power, as evidenced by the gains made in governance, operations and strategic influence by southern organisations. Despite this progress, however, the status quo remains very powerful, both enabled and perpetuated by an authorising environment that is very slow to change. The data suggests that until localisation and southern leadership are given a higher status in the values hierarchy of CARE, the tipping point may remain out of reach.

Rather than the will of its people, it is the nature of INGO systems—including the entrenched behaviours and expectations of given roles within these systems—that promotes and sustains a power imbalance. The new institutionalist approach is useful here, drawing strong links between the institutional environment and how organizations behave (March & Olsen, 1984; Zucker, 1987) and understanding the “central goals of organizational activity to be obtaining societal, professional and political approvals and being legitimate” (Fushimi, 2018, p. 10). Viewed through this lens, the perpetuation of established practices is less of a choice and more of an organisational imperative. Such practices directly compromise transformation, instead leading to inertia and a perpetuation of the status quo.

Discretionary Resources and Growth

There are two financial features of the CARE system that appear to constrain the expansion of the localisation agenda and, thus, constrain aspirations for bolstering organisational legitimacy. The first of these is an apparent clash between the philosophical aspirations and the financial realities of the confederation. Many within CARE saw the diversification agenda as a means to reduce costs and sought to define success as the financial independence of the new entities, contrary to strong evidence that this was unrealistic. The second finding relates to the scarcity of discretionary resources, a perennial challenge for those INGOs largely dependent on institutional funding. This situation works to compound the competitive disadvantage for all INGOs with a heavy reliance on tied funding: with less to invest in fundraising, technical expertise or strategic positioning, they risk a diminishing role among more flexibly resourced organisations. This same challenge is exaggerated for the emergent CARE members and affiliates, where new income streams are offering modest returns yet many of the operational costs of a country office remain.

It is in the context of these two challenges – financial modelling and discretionary resources – that the question of growth reappears. As discussed in Chapter Eight, attitudes to growth varied widely across the sample. While some saw growth as a central priority, others suggested significant growth would be dependent on a shift towards local and national resources. A third group saw ambitious growth targets as wholly unrealistic in a changing aid context:

And still we talk of growth. And when we talk of growth we're talking about money. The reality is that there is not going to be a time of affluence. And yet there seems to be this beautiful denial. And I just find that really odd because that just doesn't seem to be the future for international NGOs and that in itself is part of what is motivating us to take a very long look at how we operate in the world in the future. It's ironic, that growth driver.

Internal Participant AC14, *International Voices*, 2020

Despite their prevalence in the data, these uncertainties regarding costs, income diversity and growth were yet to be reflected in any fundamental shift in the business model of CMPs, perhaps as a symptom of path dependence. It may also be tied to the slow pace of change amongst donors, as explored in Chapters Seven and Eight. Just as a continued flow of traditional resources may have eased the change urgency for transitioning organisations in the south, so too may this be the case for CMPs. Change is further slowed by competitive interests and institutional imperatives, a feature not just of CMPs or of CARE, but of an entire INGO sector characterised by “organizational insecurity, competitive pressures, and fiscal uncertainty” (Cooley & Ron, 2002, p. 6).

Noteworthy Successes

The data provides a number of examples of self-interest receding and power shifting to the south, including several instances of CMPs supporting the growth and development of southern members outside of their grant management responsibilities and without a financial incentive to do so. It is the selflessness of these actions—motivated by organisational values rather than organisational imperatives—that sets them apart from business as usual and provides a benchmark for future cooperation. The willingness of northern members to extend power and resources to the centre of the confederation, notably through the Membership Investment Fund, is considered central to the progress made by southern members individually and collectively. At the same time, the power claimed by the south through their propositional leadership in governance, operational and strategic realms have forever changed CARE.

Complex and Contradictory Legitimacies*Local Legitimacy*

Several common characteristics of legitimacy emerge from the data in each of the transitioning locations. In both settings, legitimacy comes from securing and maintaining a place at the policy table with government partners and civil society peers, as well as from a perceived value-add: a recognised specialism and well-earned expertise that sets the organisation apart from their local peers and avoids duplication. For Chrysalis and YCP, the transition aspirations under this domain tended to focus on building respect among partners, and/or strengthening the perceived expertise or value-add of the transitioning organisation. As discussed in Chapter Seven, Chrysalis and YCP believed they now enjoy greater legitimacy as a result of their transition from a CARE Country Office, and both organisations ranked this as the single area of greatest improvement since the transition began.

The nature of CARE's legitimacy with local and national civil society emerges from the data as less clear and generally less positive. Local assumptions about transition leading directly to a change in these relationships have proved inaccurate, and the reality more closely mirrors the uneasy tension around INGO localisation found in the wider international development discourse (Rights CoLab, 2021; Scheid, 2021; *Shifting the Power*, 2020). Locally (or nationally) in the transition settings, each new organisation is finding its own way as a local organisation with an international legacy. In Indonesia, YCP acknowledged the scepticism about INGO localisation in that context and purposefully distanced the Yayasan from the Country Office model to demonstrate their genuine independence to peers and partners. This has not been possible to date, constrained both by the limited time since the registration of the local entity and the continuing presence of humanitarian

programming and partnerships that commenced under CARE. In Sri Lanka, Chrysalis has forged its own path as an independently branded local NGO *and* a company limited by guarantee, yet uncertainty persists about their international status amongst local civil society actors.

International Legitimacy

Study participants suggested that the link between localisation and legitimacy on the global stage is even more fragile. The diversification agenda is intended to demonstrate to global south members that CARE is committed to a “fundamental realignment” (CARE International, 2014, p. 1). CARE’s governance structure and decision-making processes were expected to alter accordingly and strengthen CARE’s international legitimacy over time. While study participants recognised CARE’s progress, scepticism regarding the depth of commitment to membership diversification was equally apparent. These localisation efforts constitute a “small slice of the large CARE pie” (Internal Participant AC09, International Voices, 2018), and there was a general reticence towards claims of greater international legitimacy as a result. Study participants both within and outside the confederation believed that increased legitimacy will only come if the momentum for change is maintained at CARE and the diversification agenda does not end with the transition of a handful of Country Offices. One CMP representative put it simply: “Until we include organisations that are not CARE, we are not serious” (Internal participant AC05, International Voices, 2018).

The data suggests, then, that for legitimation to occur the localisation of former Country Offices can only ever be one part of a wholesale organisational shift. More pointedly, the data suggests that developing members without the CARE history and developing partnerships outside the CARE legacy may be more important than working within the comparatively “safe and familiar space inside the CARE tent” (Internal Participant AC08, International Voices, 2020). Furthermore, for some critics and civil society advocates, the transition of former INGO Country Offices into local organisations will never lead to an authentic southern ownership of development. On the contrary, turning an international presence into a local one exposes the INGO to accusations of superficiality and insincerity (Mathews, 2021).

If INGOs choose to pursue the localisation path in the face of such cynicism and doubt, study participants suggested they will need to engage directly and honestly with the race and decolonisation dialogue. An important feature of this conversation will be the role of national staff and southern leaders in telling CARE’s story, for better or worse. As discussed in Chapter Eight, southern leaders are considered the best placed to engage with the conversation about legitimacy for localised INGO offices. Yet they endure the unique frustration of having their topic expertise and credibility as national or civil society voices questioned because of their affiliation with an

international organisation. Moreover, southern leaders are already experiencing a disproportionate burden of representing diversity within and on behalf of CARE. At the same time, there is a fear of tokenism when the same few voices are repeatedly called upon to tell this story.

Donor Legitimacy

Given the seemingly overwhelming support for bottom-up legitimation, one might reasonably assume that a tipping point had already been reached. With national governments, local civil society, development practitioners and international scholars all echoing similar calls for endogenous development and an end to the neo-colonial features of the traditional INGO model, the path to legitimacy seems clear. In reality, however, the operational demands of the global north are yet to catch up. As explored in Chapters Seven and Eight, espoused views of a preference for local partners and systems are reflected in pockets of cooperation, but, for the most part, donors continue to mitigate their own risk by relying on northern INGO offices to act as intermediaries. INGOs, in turn, continue to fulfil their grant management responsibilities much as they always have. The data suggests that despite all the localisation fanfare, the authorising environment and path dependence of the global north remain largely unchanged.

Given the correlation between resources and power in the INGO ecosystem, a finding of limited change in the financial functioning of the global north is critical. In the absence of widespread change in the way institutional funding is administered, shared and accounted for, power remains with the custodians of the grants. This positioning of power enables a perpetuation of historical INGO legitimacy criteria (discussed in Chapter Three), including but not limited to conformity, propriety and elite expertise (Mitchell et al., 2021). Furthermore, this positioning of power preserves the perceived importance of the northern intermediaries and maintains a necessary difference between their role and the role of their peers in the south. Contrary to espoused commitments to endogenous development, this delineation of roles perpetuates exogenous practices that are typically described as top-down, short-term, monocausal and bureaucratic (Anderson et al., 2012; Holcombe, 2014). Until such time as both donors and their northern partners agree to different rules, it is difficult to see northern INGOs moving outside the established authorising environment and defining a new path.

Implications for INGO practitioners and researchers

Power Claimed and Power Ceded

This research offers some compelling examples of power claimed. Initially facilitated and enabled by allies in the global north, southern leaders have begun setting expectations for northern peers and

are writing the rules for contemporary cooperation within the confederation. Despite this progress, however, an equitable sharing of power relies in large part on goodwill and commitment from CARE's established members in the global north. The philosophical shift of power to the south (in CARE's model to the emergent organisations), needs to be accompanied by a practical shift in the expectations and behaviours of northern partners as well as in approaches to funding flows. To this end, the diversification agenda needs to be understood at all levels and reflected in the professional practice of all staff. An opportunity emerges to further study the barriers and incentives to uniform behaviour change in INGOs, including the way power is held and used.

Accountability to Values

The data suggests that CARE's external reputation as an accountable organisation (to constituents, partners, donors) and their credibility as technical specialists in social accountability are both enhanced by the movement towards localisation and membership diversification. A complementarity is apparent between accountable practice, technical leadership on accountability and the commitment to organisational change. Internally, however, maintaining staff engagement and ownership, meeting organisational imperatives and achieving development goals emerge as three conflicting accountabilities which compromise the commitment to organisational values. Understanding this complexity and interrogating the connection between accountability and the hierarchy of ethical values in NGOs (for more on this hierarchy, see Strickland & Vaughan, 2008) presents a possibility for future research in this area.

Civil Society Positioning

Partnerships with local and national peers were shown in the data as evolving at a slower pace than predicted and participants advised that these come with a reputational risk if CARE is perceived to be competing for local space. INGOs need to engage directly and honestly with this dialogue. Many of those consulted believed deeply that local members or affiliates offer a meaningful contribution and unique value-add in many settings around the world. While unlikely to satisfy all critics or assuage all concerns, it appears vital for INGOs to declare an organisational position on civil society cooperation and establish a global set of standards to clarify and outline their commitments.

Lessons on Accompaniment and Adaptive Management

An evident strength of CARE's diversification efforts—the localisation of former Country Offices and the creation of new types of confederation membership—has been a willingness to be adaptive and iterative. Key staff understood that to assume a lineal progression to a known position would ignore the experience of CARE (and others) and invite failure. To this end, the understanding of success, including the centrally agreed milestones and performance indicators for transitioning offices, has

evolved since the project began. Clear, consistent and timely support emerged as central to success because it enabled and accelerated change. Participants advised that future transition efforts, be they at CARE or elsewhere, should be based on an agreed set of accompaniment commitments where both sides are held accountable for their contributions.

Interrogating Grant Management and Engaging Northern Donors

This study centred on the experience of the emerging local organisations and gave priority to southern voices. A majority of participants spoke from within emerging entities or from locations where these transitions were taking place. Those consulted outside of these locations gave their views on the impact of these changes for CARE or other INGOs more widely, without focussing on the specific challenges faced within northern members. Given participants consistently referred to northern member attitudes and practices, it seems that a deeper interrogation of northern members is warranted. Moreover, the data revealed that northern donors have been slower to change than anticipated, which is likely to make it difficult to change north-south dynamics within CARE. Further investigation is needed to establish what efforts are being made by northern members to identify and change donor expectations and what specific advice or instructions from donors make it impossible for northern members to empower their southern partners.

Working for an INGO in 2030

It's a challenging time to wear an INGO t-shirt. For INGO staff based in the global north, simmering awareness of northern privilege and disproportionate authority have quickly evolved into a global critique of structural racism. Despite deeply embracing the principles of equality and solidarity, and despite devoting much time and effort over long periods to developing more participatory and locally led practices, individuals face an awkward and painful truth that they are agents of a development industry that "is systematically flawed along colonial and neo-colonial lines" (Tawake et al., 2021, p. 1). In the global south, those working for INGOs face similar criticisms from their local peers and, indirectly, from the scholars and commentators around the world who view INGOs as "part of the problem, not the solution" (Srisankarajah, 2016, p. 1). This criticism extends further to the staff and management of local organisations with international legacies or affiliations, for whom this association alone is seen to compromise their legitimacy. It is clear that, in both local and international settings, INGO grant managers are struggling to balance a sense of purpose and a meaningful contribution while not overstepping or assuming control (Schmidt, 2021). Much work remains to be done to better understand how this new reality affects individuals within INGOs, and how (or indeed if) those affiliated with INGOs can accept and respond to their altered reality.

Expertise Sought and Rewarded

In their vision for 2030, CARE states that “members will shift decision making and resources (technical, financial) ‘closest to proximity’ of the issue or opportunity. Our operating models, governance and behaviours will also evolve to support our networked vision” (CARE International, 2020c). If this philosophical commitment to transformation is earnest, CARE must become accountable to values over tradition, and where northern systems inhibit change the systems themselves must be rebuilt. For CARE and other INGOs the knowledge, attitudes and practices necessary for wholesale transformation will necessarily be different to those historically sought and rewarded. This applies to staff, management, and governance positions, both locally and internationally. A more purposeful and strategic introduction of new skill sets looms as an important step for evolving INGOs.

Conclusion: Hubris, Humility and a North-South Collective

CARE is an organisation trying to do things differently. The commitment to realign the organisation to the global south, first documented in the Delhi Resolution of 2014, created a space to enable and accelerate change. Three voices from the global south in CARE’s international decision-making structures have become eight, with more expected to follow. The data describes a fundamental shift in the tone and content of global governance in the wake of this change. Southern voices have also stepped into operational leadership, most notably when Chrysalis took the global lead on an international program area and more recently through the creation of regional hubs that seek to devolve decision making and administration. Most significant of all, the Global South Leader’s Forum has united a previously disparate group into a political coalition, claiming power rather than waiting for it to be ceded. Through the Cairo Compact and the Jakarta Communique, these leaders have written the rules for CARE’s commitment to southern voice and have directly shaped the vision for the confederation moving forward.

Their colleagues in the global north demonstrated their own commitment to transformation through the creation of the Membership Investment Fund in 2016 and the dedication of shared resources to accelerate this change. A number of northern personnel, particularly those located in the confederation’s central secretariat, have worked tirelessly to enable this change through their support and facilitation efforts with members both established and emerging. In addition, pockets of change amongst CARE’s traditional power brokers in the global north have demonstrated an increased appetite to work cooperatively towards collective aims, above and beyond their responsibilities as grant managers with institutional donors. More recently, a range of internal and

external commitments provide evidence of an earnest organisational commitment to address power imbalances and structural inequity head on:

CARE recognises that racism and inequality are deeply engrained in wider colonial and patriarchal systems that the aid system exists within. Addressing racism and inequality requires sustained and deliberate action, and in a global organization must be understood through many lenses (CARE International, 2021c, p. 1).

The reality, of course, is that localisation and membership diversity are two of many competing aspirations for CARE and are vulnerable to de-prioritisation. The data in this study highlights a focus on accountability to systems, norms and exogenous authority. This version of accountability is more familiar and better reflected in day-to-day practice at CARE than the accountability to the values that organisational transformation demands. CARE's systems reflect and reinforce the authorising environment of northern donors, consolidated over generations of practice, which tend towards isomorphic mimicry and perpetuate power imbalances. The practices of CMPs in the global north have been designed to protect their business model, minimising risk and maximising market share as proximate means towards a wider organisational goal. In reality, such practices can have the effect of compromising other forms of accountability, most notably to values. For CARE and other INGOs, this requires a willingness to acknowledge and embrace emergent business models and to move beyond the replication of command-and-control systems that contradict such values. New members should not be expected to take the form of established members, just as the partnership with new members should not be expected to replicate existing relationships.

Establishing local organisations with local governance has been effective at building local legitimacy, particularly in terms of government partners. If local legitimacy is the goal, building local structures and fostering their independence from CARE International are important steps on that path. Greater legitimacy for the new local organisations, however, does not translate directly to greater legitimacy for CARE internationally. Such change does not yet have the breadth or depth to shift global perceptions of the confederation or its place in international development. Moreover, this study illustrates that INGOs have a complex web of stakeholders and that legitimation with one party can be often seen to compromise legitimacy for another. As such, and as described by experts living this journey inside and outside of CARE International, legitimacy for CARE and other INGOs will only be found in greater honesty about the multiple audiences for whom INGOs work.

If INGOs wish to survive the legitimacy crisis and reinvent their relevance in international development, they must be willing to change the frameworks constructed for interaction within

organisations, or what neo-institutionalists describe as “the rules of the game” (Elbers & Schulpen, 2012; Hall & Taylor, 1996). Northern partners will need to agree and embrace procedures and operational targets that prioritise the success and independence of emerging southern members. Most critically, this needs to include changes that come at a cost in terms of power or resources in the north. Such changes need to take the form of responsibilities, equal or greater in stature to the responsibilities evident in the current authorising environment, and there will need to be similar repercussions for not meeting such criteria. The best examples of this in the CARE case study are those where northern partners have provided space or practical support to southern members independently of any financial incentive or grant management imperative. To institutionalise such selflessness, to formalise an expectation of procedural philanthropy on the part of northern partners, would be to introduce a lever for systems change (Birney, 2021; Meadows, 1999). While it may be naive to think simple levers can disrupt complex systems by themselves (Bates, 2016; Mowles, 2015), it does seem likely that power ceded would complement power claimed and help move INGOs closer to their tipping point.

INGO transformation cannot occur independently of the dialogue on racism, decolonisation and other hidden dimensions of power. INGOs need to engage directly and honestly with this reality if they wish to uphold their espoused values and secure an ongoing role in international development. Frank contentions and intentions regarding INGO interaction with local, national and international civil society peers must feature in this dialogue. Meaningful engagement in this conversation requires a conscious transition from hubris to humility among northern partners, a notion raised in the literature regarding nation states (Busby, 2020; Glennie, 2009) that is equally at home in the context of INGOs. The aid industry has been built upon an elitist and condescending belief that expertise resides in the global north (Khan, 2021; Pailey, 2018) and, as detailed throughout this study, INGO systems have variously accommodated, promoted and replicated this premise (Banks et al., 2015; Elbers & Schulpen, 2012). Letting go of assumptions about where expertise lies is a precursor to redesigning the authorising environment for INGOs and to institutionalising the principle of mutuality with southern partners.

It is only in this imagined future, where power is willingly ceded and ably claimed, where failings are acknowledged and intentions made explicit, where structures are rebuilt rather than repaired, that the spectrum of diverse legitimacies may ever be accommodated for INGOs. While some argue that the north-south delineation simply serves to perpetuate difference, I contend it is impossible to overcome the flaws and imbalances between the two if their different strengths and limitations are not honestly acknowledged. Implied within this is a willingness amongst northern partners to

prioritise organisational values above organisational survival and to accept that where practices contradict values, INGO legitimacy is lost. If there is to be space for solidarity and cooperation between the north and south, CARE and others like them will need to tackle their own northern legacies, openly and honestly engage with the decolonisation dialogue and find a way to institutionalise humility over hubris.

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