USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

WINROCK
INTERNATIONAL

Learning from our Actions: How can we be Comfortable with Failure?

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, we would like to thank all CTIP practitioners and academics from a range of civil society organizations who took part in the vibrant Learning from Our Actions working session at the 2021 Evidence to Action Conference. We are also immensely grateful to our interviewees, comprising of USAID Agreement Officer Representatives (AORs) and Contracting Officer Representatives (CORs) from across the Asia region, who spoke with such candor and provided invaluable insight. Without these diverse voices, this report would not have been possible, and we are grateful we got to hear your stories and learn from your experiences. Finally, we would like to thank Sara Piazzano for her constructive feedback and unwavering support, particularly for designing the brilliant graphics that are scattered all throughout this report. We hope this report can serve as a starting point to reconfigure the way we think about and react to failure in the Counter Trafficking in Persons sector.

AUTHORS

John Luke Chua and Michaelle Tauson

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Findings from a series of learning papers previously developed by USAID Asia CTIP in 2021[1], showed that openly communicating, sharing and learning among CSOs and donors is key to ensuring that iterative programming takes place. This is vital to ensure that the real needs and wants of survivors are met. However, findings also showed that this type of communication rarely occurs, leading to many challenges and inefficient programming across CTIP.

As a result, USAID Asia CTIP decided to undertake research to identify the major challenges to facilitating open learning and increase dialogue. This paper dives deep into this issue, analyzing and synthesizing feedback from practitioners and donors alike. Findings from this research show that many barriers exist on the side of CSOs and donors: both internal and external pressures drive CSOs to put their best foot forward, and at the same time, donors face analogous pressures from governments.

While many of these barriers may seem overwhelming, findings from this research show that much can be done to improve interactions. This paper puts forward some actionable ways forward that can foster a more iterative CTIP work environment to meet the diverse needs of survivors. Hopefully this is just the beginning of a wider conversation that can change dynamics and lead to better results for vulnerable migrants and survivors across the globe.

METHODS AND BACKGROUND

The USAID Asia Counter Trafficking in Persons (CTIP) project hosted the second ever Evidence to Action (E2A) Summit, virtually on December 1-2, 2021.

On Day 2 of the virtual summit, Asia CTIP held a working session, titled *Learning from our Actions - How can we be Comfortable with Failure?* The session aimed to provoke discussions in CTIP programming around **admitting and learning through failure and adapting programming accordingly**. The session focused on the major barriers to investigating, understanding, and sharing failures and potential pathways to overcome these impediments. During the session, interactive group discussions took place among roughly 60 CTIP practitioners and academics from civil society organizations[2] (CSOs) across the Asia region. Breakout focus group discussions were held in Bengali, English, Khmer,

1 Winrock International. (2021). Providing Services to Survivors In Counter Trafficking Projects: Learning From Our Actions; Winrock International. (2021). Approaches To Safe Migration Activities In Counter Trafficking Projects: Learning From Our Actions; Winrock International. (2021). Private Sector Engagement In Counter Trafficking Projects: Learning From Our Actions

2 In the context of the UN Guiding Principles Reporting Framework (2015), CSOs are non-State, not-for-profit, voluntary entities formed by people in the social sphere that are separate from the State and the market. CSOs represent a wide range of interests and ties. They can include community-based organizations as well as non-governmental organizations (NGOs). CSOs do not include business or for-profit associations.

Nepali, Russian, Tagalog, and Thai to create an inclusive environment where participants could share issues and brainstorm solutions openly.

While the group discussions provided important insights on the topic, upon review of the data from the focus group discussions, a lack of donor perspectives was identified as a glaring gap. To fill this gap, the USAID Asia CTIP research team decided to conduct interviews with donor[3] representatives. A questionnaire was developed based on the findings from the conference session, and in June 2022, semi-structured interviews were conducted with nine representatives from USAID in seven different countries across Asia. Finally, the findings of the research were corroborated and triangulated by the current body of evidence on donor and CSO relations. Findings were substantiated by the literature and show that the issues uncovered in this research are not uncommon across the wider development sector.

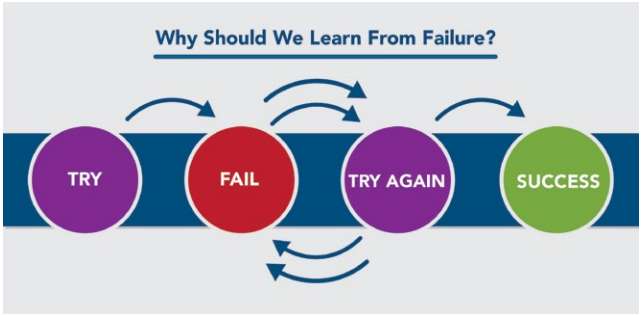
Based on the vibrant focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews, USAID Asia CTIP and its partners identified and discussed 1) key barriers for CSOs, 2) recommendations for CSOs, 3) key barriers for donors, and 4) recommendations for donors to overcome these barriers and ensure iterative and effective programming for survivors of trafficking.

WHY SHOULD WE ADMIT AND LEARN FROM FAILURE?

Why learning from failure is important, who misses out when we don't invest time to investigate then share learnings?

Before delving into the outcomes of the discussions that took place during our working session, it is necessary to debunk the notion that "failure is not an option". Not only is it an option, but also a great asset to us when used properly. Whilst drafting this paper, the ethos put forward by Engineers Without Borders (EWB) was a source of immense inspiration[4]. These thought-provoking reports provide important insights on the concept of discussing failure within the international development sector with candor. According to EWB, this should be done in a way that not only reflects a transparent environment, but also one that facilitates learning and normalizes trial and error. When done this way, the experience of failure provides the impetus for organizations to develop contingency plans so that they are better equipped to deal with similar challenges in the future (EWB, 2017). In addition, admitting failure also provides an opportunity to re-think fundamental assumptions about how we communicate with each other, and indeed encourage a greater transfer of knowledge and information in a transparent manner. This can help ensure that stakeholders involved in a program acquire the same baseline of understanding (EWB, 2015).

Beyond the Failure Reports, there is growing academic literature around the subject area of learning from failure, particularly in the STEM sector. For instance, Arshad-Ayaz et al. (2020) examined "failed" international programs in the humanitarian engineering field. The authors provide examples of international donor-funded development programs which neglected local knowledge systems and cultural norms, and therefore were unable to attain buy-in from the local population. In doing so, the authors highlighted the need for program implementors to strive towards a greater understanding of historical, cultural, and socio-economic factors when engaging local communities. Also, within the engineering field, Slegers et al. (2012), conducted a panel



3 Donors can include governments, international organizations, international non-governmental organizations and can also include private entities such as foundations, coalitions, or private companies

4 Engineers Without Borders, both the US and Canada organization, have a number of learning initiatives and take learning from failure very seriously. A number of reports can be found online: annual *Failure Reports*, *Admitting Failure Stories*, and *Lesson Learned* sections on their websites provide frank and honest feedback on what can be done better

discussion on the importance of learning from failure in systems engineering, and contend that:

> Failure is the thing that provides the chance to re-assess, to reassess how well we are listening to the team, to reassess how accurate and at what level of veracity are the assumptions we are making, to reassess the viewpoint of our perspective of the problem we have defined… (p.77).

The few examples provided here are a glimpse of why admitting and learning from failure is important. We argue that failure provides educational moments, which, although tough and awkward to deal with at times, contribute to long-term learning and improvement of programming. From a CTIP perspective, it can contribute to the sustainability of support and services that are crucial to survivors. On the flipside, a reluctance to adapt and acknowledge systemic issues in the pursuit of short-term results can lead to unproductive outcomes, which survivors and vulnerable migrants pay for.

Hence, we argue that acknowledging and learning through and from failure is not only a viable option, but often necessary for us to assess our work in the field of CTIP. By admitting and learning through failure, we are better able to cater our work towards the real needs of survivors. We believe that these perspectives of failure will provide great insight and resonate deeply within the CTIP movement.

KEY BARRIERS FOR CSOs

What is keeping CSOs in the CTIP field from actively investing time, money, and capacity to regularly learn, share, and apply learnings?

DONOR PRESSURE

CSOs are the recipients of an ever-growing amount of foreign aid and development finance, compared to government or private entities (AbouAssi, 2012; Banks et al., 2015), and foreign aid can make up a large portion of CSOs' operating budget, depending on the country and context. As a result, CSOs may also find themselves in a position where they must fiercely compete with one another for donor support (Aldashev and Verdier, 2009). Naturally, all CSOs aim to secure a consistent stream of funding by ensuring that they are successful in reaching the targets and objectives which they set out to achieve. As such, the relationship between donors and CSOs is driven by a clear power dynamic whereby donors essentially set the agenda and requirements for funding in which CSOs must comply (Mount, 2022; O'Brien and Evans, 2017; Rauh, 2010). Hence, failure to meet these requirements is often not an option, as CSOs run the risk of losing out on funding. As a result, as one participant put forth during the working session, CSOs constantly feel the need to showcase the best version of themselves

> All CSOs compete for funds, and in doing so have to convince donors that they are going to succeed. This makes it difficult to speak openly when things are not working (CTIP program staff, Bengali-speaking focus group).

Indeed, within this competitive environment, CSOs working in CTIP are under pressure to align their program strategy with donor priorities and interests, even if their direct experience may lead them to disagree about what should be prioritized (Elbers and Arts, 2011). Hence, these organizations are made to navigate a complex terrain, whereby fulfilling the diverse needs of program recipients is at times at odds with donor expectations and understandings. CSOs are afraid that donors simply do not understand this:

> There is fear of donor not understanding the complexity of the reality, and different responsibilities that the CSOs have to carry out and do not have full control over (CTIP program staff, Bengali group).

In addition, participants highlighted that collaboration and partnerships with law enforcement agencies also bring added complexity. CSOs are often legally prohibited from discussing certain sensitive information or are prevented from speaking openly:

> Sometimes there are challenges around what you can share because of perhaps working directly with law enforcement, so you might not be able to be transparent because there's ongoing agreements, ongoing cases for example (CSO manager, English-speaking room).

RIGIDITY OF AGREEMENTS

Linked to this, CSOs are increasingly expected to be results-driven entities that are both effective and efficient, delivering what is essentially mandated by donors. Further, results are expected with a given timeline, which in turn is formalized by deliverable-based contracts and agreements. There is an inflexibility once contracts with donors are signed, and budgets are allocated. Overall, there has been a shift away from more flexible forms of funding towards "short-term funding earmarked for specific projects" (Mount, 2022, p.70). This creates a working environment where there is little margin for error or correction. Moreover, when errors do occur and things are not working, there is a reluctance to confront faults in the system as this may require additional time and resources and open CSOs up to greater scrutiny by donors (Reith, 2010). In an environment in which short-

term results are prioritized, participants mentioned that admitting failure and changing course can be very difficult,

> Changing requires spending time convincing and changing work plans and budgets etc... Not worth the effort to make changes (CTIP program staff, English-speaking room).
>
> When [CSOs] fail to meet the promised timeline, they tend to fall under a lot of pressure, since it's not easy to communicate with donors due to aspects such as funding, agreements, and promised indicators. They have to sit down as a team to discuss their activities and strategies to fit the donor's needs, instead of confronting the issue with donors. So, there is a big gap in communication (CTIP program staff, Thai-speaking room).

This corroborates Smits and Wright's (2012) assertion that international donors often emphasize measurable objectives that need to be met within a short and specified time frame. These types of working agreements impose stringent time and budgetary conditions on CSOs. Consequently, CSOs' ability to adapt when something is not working, or to come up with innovative solutions that fall outside the agreed terms, is fundamentally limited. Ultimately, participants feel that the rigidity of agreements create working environments that do not support failure and learning.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND CULTURE

Within most, if not all organizations, there is a formal structure which dictates the flow of work and communication. This structure is often a hierarchical system of work where some employees are situated at higher level positions than others. Further, there is evidence to suggest that a worker's position in this hierarchy can determine how and what they communicate (van der Rijt et al., 2013). In some cases, support staff which can include volunteers, frontline workers, consultants, and program managers are hesitant to admit failure or communicate the need for change because this is simply not what their bosses want to hear (Milliken and Morrison, 2003). Participants from our working session mentioned a reluctance of program staff to honestly express their concerns to top-level management,

> I also noted that people found it very difficult in some organizations in the Asian countries to criticize headquarters, as in the "Big Boss Office". There are issues around for example, people talked around concerns with regards to headquarters, around top-down program planning, around the monitoring and evaluation indicators that they were asked to use (CTIP Researcher, panel session).

In addition to this structural aspect, organizational culture also plays a huge role as to whether there is transparency and openness in communication. Although an ambiguous term, 'organizational culture' can be thought of as the belief, norms, and values that shape an organizations sense of identity, in a way which determines "the way things are done around here" (Boyle and O'Donell, 2008, p.4). Without a culture that promotes trust and honesty between staff in an organization, employees at all levels are reluctant to speak up openly when things are not working (Premeaux and Bedeian, 2003). From our working session, participants felt that this was sometimes the case. There appears to be a culture of "fear of failure" within some CSOs, which hinders honest communication between program staff, senior management, and donors,

> The problem is that everyone is afraid to share their failures. They are afraid to share their failures because they feel they do not have enough space to share their experiences, they do not have a safe space for sharing and learning. There is a big gap in knowledge between person-to-person, program-to-program. They also don't have a kind of reflection or sharing information practice. (CSO manager, Khmer-speaking room)

PERCEPTION - "FAILURE TO DO YOUR JOB"

From an individual-level perspective, admitting failure is often one of the most difficult things to do. In contrast, most of us have been taught from a young age to avoid failure whether through formal or informal education (Cannon and Edmonson, 2001). Further, most of us much prefer to participate in activities that boost our self-esteem, rather than in activities which can potentially threaten it. Besides self-perception, the perception of others really matters, particularly in the places where we work. From an organizational perspective, by admitting failure, we essentially put ourselves at risk of being perceived as incompetent at our job. There is a real possibility that admitting failure may hinder the chances of career progression and future opportunities in the workplace (Camerli et al, 2009). This is exacerbated by the hierarchical structure of work mentioned previously that exists in many organizations including CSOs. Hence, a combination of self-perception and job insecurity is a significant disincentive for individuals to communicate failure. Indeed, this corroborates with what participants from different professional backgrounds brought up,

> The first is that I think it's difficult to criticize your own program, which is essentially what we were asking people to do. That's because it could be perceived as failure to do your job well, among many other reasons (CTIP Researcher, Panel session).

> Everyone feels embarrassed about sharing their failures as they are concerned about their job security (CSO program staff, Khmer-speaking room).
>
> I felt that there was really a lack of people's desire to be honest with headquarters about this. It was just a case of just, you know, continuing to try and try and try to please your supervisors, to defend your program. And of course, in the end, admitting failure can potentially be disastrous for retaining your job (CTIP Researcher, Panel session).

OVERCOMING BARRIERS

What can CSOs do to overcome barriers?

SAFE SPACE FOR COMMUNICATION

In the E2A session, participants were given room to reflect upon and discuss actions that needed to be taken by CSOs in order to facilitate learning through failure. Donors were also asked to reflect on what CSOs could do to help facilitate a safe space for communication. Participants identified the need for honest and regular inter-personal communication, particularly between program implementors and donors,

> When we're implementing projects, we will need communication with donors, and we need to find donors the moment when we are failing to do something. With joint efforts, we discuss the possible ways to resolve the issue. After joint discussions, we can come to a common solution (CSO Director, Panel Session).

It is important to note that feedback and communication is not a passive process and scholars such as Hains-Wesson (2021) assert that effective feedback loops can only be established when there are safe spaces for employees to "better consider failure, examine and share it, providing regular opportunities to exchange failure experiences" (p.2). In fact, leaders within an organization play a huge role in establishing a workplace culture that encourages staff to speak openly about failure. Project leaders need to address failures that occur by identifying systemic factors and fostering a collective sense of responsibility, instead of singling-out individual mistakes (Edmonson, 2011). This perspective seems to be shared by participants from a diverse range of professional backgrounds within the CTIP sphere,

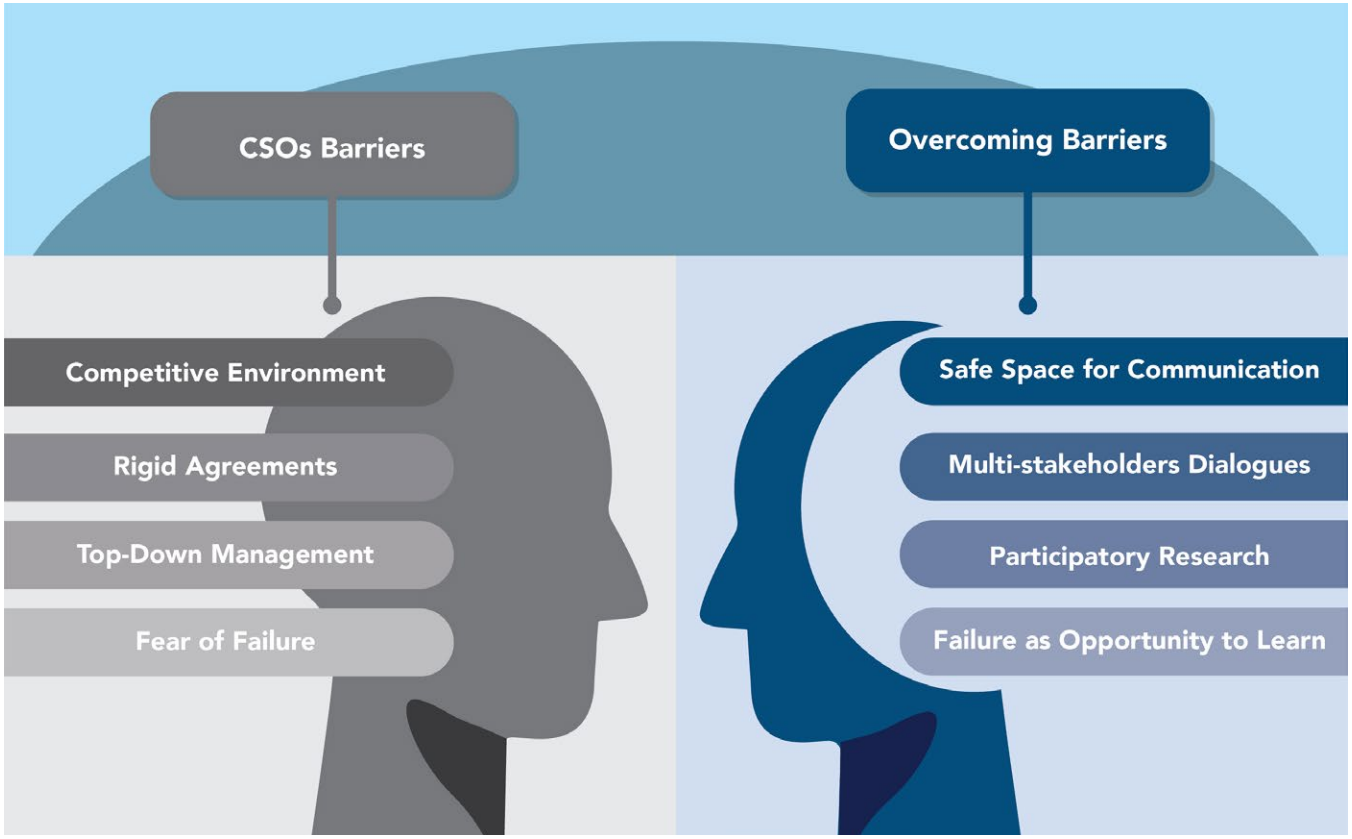
> We talked a lot about both donors and program staff needing to be bolder, creating more safe spaces for these discussions and creating spaces where you can have counter narratives or feedback loops where you can really discuss what isn't working, in a space which allows for that kind of conversation as well (CSO manager, English-speaking room).
>
> It is good if we can have some safe space for sharing information or some platform. All the lessons learnt, doesn't matter the failures or success, we have to compile all of these and share in the weekly meeting, or in the annual reflection so that we can improve (CTIP program staff, Khmer-speaking group).
>
> We talked about encouraging staff to be story collectors. I really liked this point - story collectors rather than just the sort of photographers that capture what works. So capturing also data, stories and impact of what doesn't work or what is not working (CSO manager, English-speaking room).

Donors felt that setting clear and realistic expectations early on in the implementation phase was key, as this can set the stage for a relationship built on honest communication and trust between CSOs and donors. One USAID representative mentioned,

> I would encourage, if implementing partners have anything they want to say, say it at the very early stage. Once they have those agreement in place, speak to your respective donors and talk about expectations. I mean I would much rather have someone under promise and overachieve, rather than someone who overpromises and underachieves, because that will come up very badly, at least to me anyway (USAID representative 1).

Several USAID representatives highlighted that the experiences and knowledge base of local CSOs should be the guiding light of CTIP programs, particularly in regions where they are constantly evolving geo-political factors. As early as during the call for proposals, CSOs are encouraged to pushback on unrealistic calls for proposals based on their strong grasp of the local context and ways of working. Further, CSOs are in position to advise donors on what does and does not work in CTIP early in the design phase, to ensure that archaic and ineffectual CTIP programs which take up scarce funds are not perpetuated,

> I think setting a realistic expectation early on is something that I would highly encourage and again, like most of the time when we have a solicitation for proposal or whatever. I think that's the time when implementing partners should tell whoever is announcing that, hey this is not realistic. Instead of saying, you know, yes we want your funding but we don't know how we are going to achieve it. That's not how it should go. It should be



based on evidence. Like this is the reality, just make a reality check (USAID representative 1).

MUTI-STAKEHOLDER DIALOGUE

Alongside the need for safe spaces for communication within CSOs, multi-stakeholder dialogues (MSD) are seen as an effective way to generate honest and inclusive discussions about failure. Apart from the USAID Asia CTIP Evidence2Action Summit, examples of recent MSD events within the anti-trafficking sector include the UNHCR's Interactive Dialogue on Trafficking in Persons, OSCE's Conference of the Alliance against Trafficking in Persons, and Freedom United's Human Trafficking Through an International Lens Online Forum. Dodds and Benson (2013) assert that MSDs are flexible tools which provide opportunities to discuss common challenges, facilitate the exchange of new ideas and good practices, and solutions between stakeholders who are responsible for making decisions and stakeholders who are affected by the decisions. Further, MSDs can play a vital role in provoking discussions about what works and what doesn't, increase the sense of ownership amongst all stakeholders, and ultimately create an environment where learning through failure becomes the norm (Hemmati and Rogers, 2015). From our working session, participants mentioned that catch-up meetings, webinars, and interactive workshops are vital forms of MSD that can encourage learning through failure,

> The exchange of experiences between partners plays a big role, meaningful seminars are very useful for all employees of the organizations. Different areas of CSO activities and webinars will allow for more development of activities. We get maximum opportunities! There is always something to learn (CSO Director, Russian-speaking room).
>
> If donors have partner meetings, beneficiaries can be encouraged to join these meetings (CSO program staff, Khmer-speaking room).

Although MSDs are seen as way to engage in frank and productive discussion, it is worth keeping in mind that sometimes, MSDs become little more than tokenistic discussions littered with what Hemmati and Rogers (2015, p.7) call "partnership speak". In other words, multistakeholder meetings can quickly turn into sterile, one-sided conversations about the great work that that donors or program implementors are supposedly doing. Instead, there is a need for agenda-setting to include stimulating discussions about failure, and the willingness of all stakeholders to engage in a candid manner.

RESEARCH AND PARTICIPATORY METHODS

In order to create an environment where admitting failure and learning is normalized, there is a need for

greater insight into what is currently working and what is not. We asserted previously that this can be achieved by providing safe spaces for communication and multistakeholder dialogue. This can also be achieved by conducting research to better understand the perspectives of all the actors connected to an issue. From a CTIP perspective, research to gain insight into the multiplicity of viewpoints including those of survivors, local community members, program staff, senior management and donors can lead to a greater uptake of learning through lived experiences.

For example, research was conducted by Winrock International (2021) to learn more about the provision of services by USAID CTIP projects, through the experiences of survivors and program staff. One of the interesting findings from this research was that program staff and NGO sub-grantees "do not feel that they can provide honest feedback to the donor on project design problems and implementation challenges" (p.10). However, there is evidence from the healthcare and development sectors to suggest that participatory methods are an effective and inclusive means of collecting rich data from participants whose lives are most affected by the support and services provided (Burke et al., 2017; Blomqvist et al., 2010; Crishna, 2007). Although it is important to design research that can extract authentic and honest feedback from participants, researchers in our working session mentioned the need to report findings in ways that protects participants,

> There were a couple of findings that would clearly identify a country program that may potentially get someone in trouble, so I tried to write around that [and] still present the findings without identifying anyone (CTIP Researcher, Panel session).
> It's important in a research context to explain in detail in the email invitation and at the start of the interview the principle of anonymity and assure people that they won't be identified in any written outputs and emphasize again who requested the papers in the first place and the importance of people being honest (CTIP Researcher, Panel session).

Further, although it is sometimes not what senior management or international donors want to hear, it is important for researchers to be brave and honest about their research findings. Participants mentioned the need to focus on reporting unique and authentic research findings, and be prepared to justify to headquarters why speaking openly about failure can be beneficial,

> Give people ample review time whenever possible and be ready to justify your findings and explain why you think it's important to present them (CTIP Researcher, Panel session).

> Interview external stakeholders for triangulating results and understand the perspectives of different practitioners and policy makers on the subject, including the associated challenges (CTIP Researcher, Panel session).
>
> Choose findings which are relevant, helpful to everyone and not so well known in the anti-trafficking space (CTIP Researcher, Panel session).

In short, research can play a major role in building a deeper understanding amongst both donors and frontline practitioners of the realities and barriers that exist in CTIP programing. Most importantly, it can inform and advance CTIP programs towards more iterative ways of working. However, for this to happen, research needs to be conducted in an impartial, ethical, and participatory manner placing the voices of program participants at its front and center.

KEY BARRIERS FOR DONORS

What is stopping donors from fostering a culture of learning and innovation amongst CSOs in the CTIP sector?

OUTCOME OVER PROCESS

From interviews conducted with USAID donor representatives, it appears that the work culture within USAID can sometimes overemphasize the final outcomes of CTIP projects, rather than focusing on the gradual progress made over the course of a projects' multi-year implementation. USAID representatives reported to increasingly feel pressure and responsibility for ensuring that the project meets the targets and objectives set at the outset of the project. Some USAID representatives mentioned that they feel that they are being evaluated purely on the final outcomes of a program. The overemphasis of results within donor organizations also creates and sustains a work culture which fails to seriously consider the contextual complexities of a field as challenging as the CTIP sector. Further, donor representatives admit that they struggle to convey the realities which grassroots NGOs face during the program implementation to others at USAID. Although donor representatives may be aware of the realities on the ground through regular site visits and assessments, existing reporting mechanisms do not incentivize reporting these complexities. Instead, great focus is placed on reporting on project results and outputs, which convey an oversimplification of the complexities of CTIP programming,

> There is the lack of narrative of how the people are struggling on the ground, and that also include the struggle of the people implementing the activity. We rarely talk about the burden, frustration and what a lot of implementing partners or humanitarian workers are experiencing as a person, and that could also create pressure and stress on mental health. We rarely talk about this (USAID representative 2).
>
> The indicator reflects the final outcome, but it doesn't really reflect what has been happening during the process. The process is not reflected in the indicator. You know what I mean? So that's why the relationship between the donor and implementing partner has been reflected nowhere in this kind of reporting (USAID representative 3).

Further, although learning and innovation is increasingly being discussed within the offices of donor organizations, particularly USAID, the fact that it is not being carried out in practice suggests a lack of incentives to do so. USAID representatives mentioned that when reporting back on the use of taxpayers' money to Congress, the focus and attention is mainly on showcasing quantitative data and outputs that paint the successes of a CTIP intervention. Conversely, USAID representatives perceive a lack of interest amongst government officials to hear about the challenges and failures CSOs face during the program implementation phase. There is a sense that large, eye-catching statistics that illustrate the efficacy of an intervention are ultimately what Congress wants to see and hear,

> So, this kind of contextual, qualitative, or quality of the things we do, that doesn't sell. It doesn't communicate well because it needs a lot to explain, right? Compared to this a kind of like snapshot, kind of like dashboard type of data? The level of kind of charm is very different from that perspective, like the top numbers, especially those who gave the budget. They talk like, "OK, I gave you a million dollars, how many people reach? How many commodities you procured and distributed? That kind of thing is easier to understand and clearer to them, right? So, with that, we also tend to do it that way. (USAID representative 3)

Several USAID representatives mentioned that they view the efficient use of taxpayers' money as their responsibility. Subsequently, when barriers to implementation start occurring, it becomes immensely difficult to communicate because USAID representatives do not want to be seen as wasting taxpayers' money.

Finally, hierarchical structures also exist within donor organizations, in the same way that they exist in CSOs, as previously described. Senior leadership in European or North American offices may lack understanding of the contextual factors which shape a CSOs day-to-day work on the ground. Some USAID representatives mention that they often need to consider carefully what is being reported to senior leadership and the potential consequences of sharing this information.

EXISTING CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION ARE INEFFECTIVE

Although channels of communication currently exist between USAID representatives and CSOs, they are generally underutilized or ineffective in facilitating honest, two-way feedback. One of the main reasons for this is that the relationship between donors and CSOs is fundamentally underpinned by a power imbalance, which often positions smaller CSOs as disempowered recipients of development aid.

Larger international NGOs (INGOs) are often chosen based on their social capital, experience in a specific geographical region, and familiarity with the complex reporting mechanisms required by funding government agencies such as USAID. Most donor-CSO relationships are based on supply-led models, which in practice means that funds are channeled to programs that have specific objectives predetermined by international donors (Krawczyk, 2018). This seemingly creates an unequal relationship where donors give instructions which CSOs are required to follow and deliver. Larger INGOs may subcontract local and smaller NGO partners in the Global South, who act as project implementors on the ground. Although these implementing partners may communicate the realities and struggles of day-to-day project implementation, this is often not reflected in upstream reporting by INGOs, as they are keen on reporting what funding agencies want to hear.

Further, CSOs have little leeway to explore grassroot innovations or trial novel alternatives to programming, because donors often contract CSOs as providers of repetitive services and programs (Gioacchino, 2019). This is substantiated by scholars such as Appe (2018, p.272), who contends that "few aid projects allow CSOs to define the parameters of development". Ultimately, the current way in which development aid is configured and delivered disincentivizes trial-and-error and iterative approaches to CTIP programming. Several USAID representatives recognized that this power imbalance makes it difficult for CSOs to speak up honestly when things are not working,

> People cannot simplify this issue, by just asking "Hey, you are CSO, tell us what to do, we are open, and you just can talk about anything". It is not easy like that, it shouldn't be simplified like that. We need to figure out the precondition that prevent us to talk friendly about the failures or the challeng-

> es when we are given implementing the activity. We need to tackle the precondition first. From my perspective, we need to unpack these layers of the power…. it requires time and consistency to convince the people who always believe that this is not even a problem at all (USAID representative 2).

In addition, donors mentioned that interpersonal relationships often determine whether honest communication takes place with implementing partners. Different feedback mechanisms may exist, for instance weekly meetings, quarterly reporting, pause and reflection sessions etc., but the efficacy of these feedback mechanisms often depends on the rapport (or lack of) between USAID representatives and implementing CSOs. In other words, the relationship built between donors and implementing partners is very much personality-driven and complex. These interpersonal relationships determine the level of candor and empathy when discussions do take place between the two parties,

> But in terms of relationship, keeping aside the rules and regulations, what we have must have to follow, I think without having a good relationship, we cannot go far. That I am pretty sure of, that is where interpersonal relationships come into play. I saw like several years back there was a Chief-of-Party, I was not able to move forward with her at all, and we had to work with our head office to deal with this issue (USAID representative 4).

Finally, CSOs working in the CTIP sector are increasingly being contracted via agreements which allow for program iteration and flexibility of outputs. Nevertheless, CSOs struggle to communicate when adaptations need to be made because they are uncertain of their level of autonomy in course correction decision-making, and what adaptations can be made without jeopardizing their relationship with donors. USAID representatives asserted CSOs struggle with this because the contractual language can sometimes be ambiguous and donors do not make enough effort to explain this aspect,

> It could be also you know, we as donor organizations are not explaining clearly to CSOs that we don't want, after the contract is signed on day one, that everything needs to follow the plan. Maybe you are working with us for the first time. I guess CSOs have the feeling that they need to comply to everything that's been signed from day one, and there's no room for its adjustment. So, I think it's a combination of things that maybe people don't take advantage of these channels effectively (USAID representative 5).

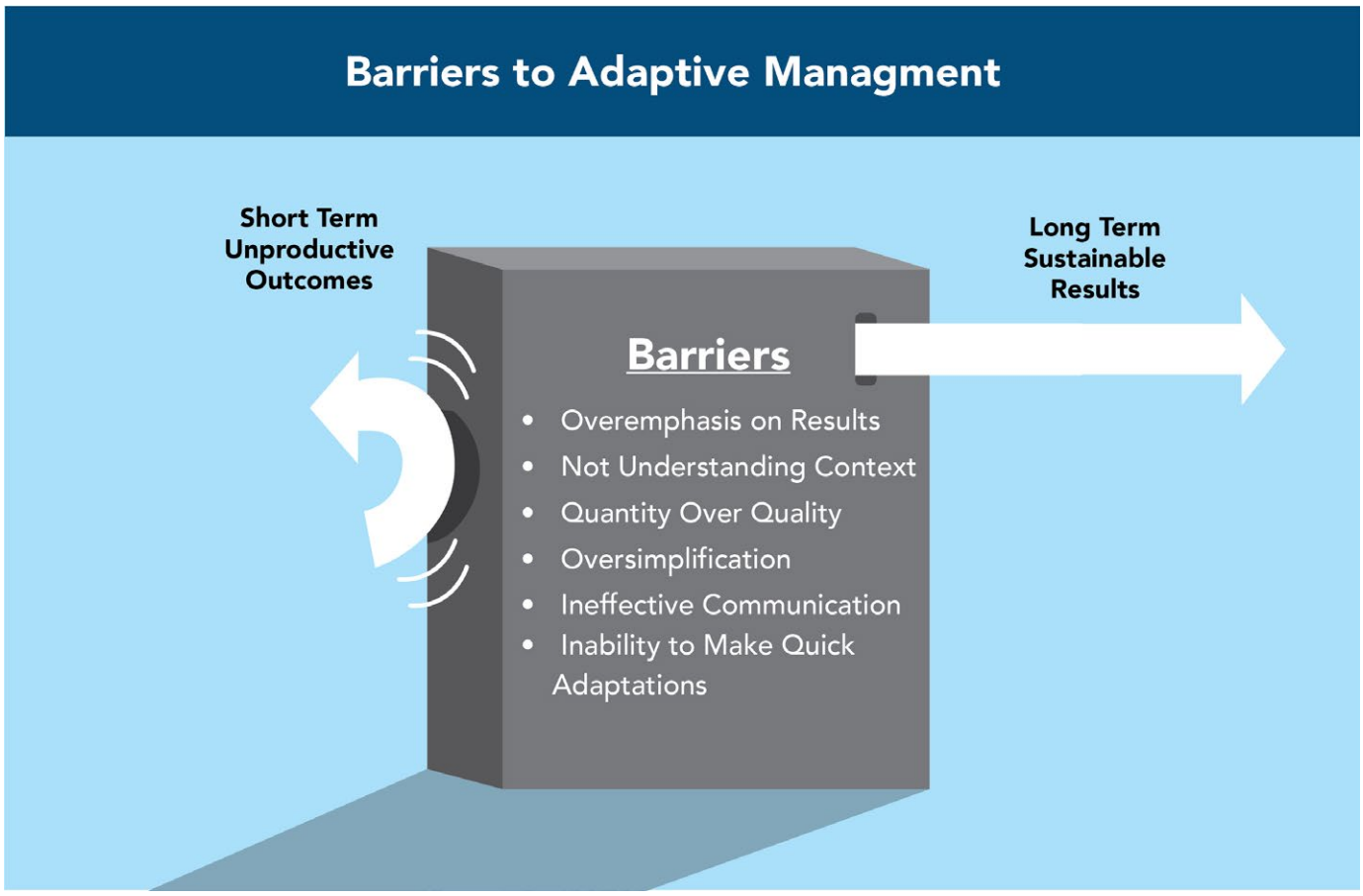
COMPETING PRIORITIES

Within some donor organizations, efforts have been made to promote adaptive management and learning activities amongst implementing partners. However, USAID representatives mentioned that there are competing priorities, for instance the need to focus on diplomatic work in more politically volatile donor countries rather than their more typical role of overseeing development projects and assisting implementing partners. This means that there is a lack of time and resources to promote iterative programming and learning amongst implementing CSOs.

For instance, donor offices are sometimes co-located with their respective country consulates or embassies, where they are required to support administrative and diplomatic functions. This, in turn, shifts time and resources away from activities that may seem negligeable, such as weekly dialogue with implementing partners and ground visits to program activities. However, these activities are vital to help donors attain some understanding of the local context and challenges of program implementation. This results not just in a gap in understanding, but also creates distance in the relationship between the donor and CSO.

> I think resources are also kind of a constraint. One more thing the shift in in priorities, I think this also a factor. At the mission, we have a lot of tasks, we have a lot of other priorities that we receive from the embassy, or we receive from Washington, and I think that's kind of like stretching our time, our resources from focusing on that rather just put every effort to complete the task that we receive from Washington or from the embassies (USAID representative 6).

Linked to this, the increasing bureaucratization of donor agencies has resulted in the inability of USAID representatives to make adaptations in a timely manner. This is a huge challenge when taking into consideration the ever-changing political and social realities which CSOs have to contend with, for instance frequent turnover in the leadership of government offices and the recent COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, USAID representatives are often unable to react swiftly to the needs of CSOs; CSOs are required to follow stringent protocols in requesting changes to be made to program implementation. This certainly disincentivizes a culture of learning and innovation from being established. Further, this is exacerbated by short-funding cycles that make it difficult for CSOs to implement CTIP programs in an iterative manner, communicate transparently, and make adaptations when needed: there is simply not enough time to follow all the bureaucratic procedures to make the needed changes. In essence, this culminates in the over reliance on the same programming being consistently favored over more unfamiliar and innovative approaches which require an investment of additional time, technical capacity, and resources,



> When you have to do things in a short period of time, then it's like OK, start with what we have done before, right? And that's kind of like the pattern of it. So it's not like we don't need like improvement. Of course, we do. But it takes time, and it goes quite slowly, little by little to make changes (USAID representative 3).

OVERCOMING BARRIERS

What can donors do to overcome barriers?

LOCAL CONTEXT AND OWNERSHIP

Alongside CSOs, donors have an equally important role to play in creating an environment where there is room for constant innovation and learning. As previously described, decision-making of CSOs and program implementors is significantly influenced by what donors want to see. On the flipside, we argue that it is vital for donors to be more knowledgeable about the organizations and programs that they are funding. Not all donors have an understanding of the ways in which they can support programs that need bolstering, particularly beyond conventional financial support.

Donors require a deeper understanding of the realities which CSOs face in their day-to-day work and commit to supporting CSOs in the face of new challenges and altering realities. From the interviews conducted, USAID representatives mentioned a sense of detachment from the actual implementation work conducted by CSOs on the ground, and a heavy reliance on implementing partners to report back on what is and isn't working,

> I think that this is a very subjective and personal opinion, but I think the people at the donor level need to be informed more on the narrative of the experience of the people on the ground, for both beneficiaries and also implementing partners work burdens their frustration. To be honest, again, I want to emphasize that this is my personal experience and assumption. I feel that some people at the donor level, that are working at a higher level lack experience of the lower-level work (USAID representative 2).

Based on this, there is a real need for donors to engage more frequently at the implementation level with CSOs, to better understand the local context. Ultimately, a deeper understanding of the local context and realities of program implementation is the foundation from which donors can begin to support CSOs in making necessary adaptations throughout a project life cycle, to ensure survivors altering wants and needs are met.

Indeed, there is evidence to suggest that many donors are taking deliberate steps to become better informed about the programs they fund, particularly in terms of how impact is being defined and how data is being collected, monitored, and reported (Feedback Labs, 2016; Root Cause, 2019). From a CTIP perspective, it is crucial that donors are well-informed about the day-to-day work that CSOs and programs perform, because this work tends to be complex and difficult to see short-term results (Mörner, 2009; Dottridge, 2014). Donors who are orientated towards supporting more holistic and long-term goals may be better placed to understand how and why mistakes occur along the way and provide time and resources for implementing partners to problem-solve. This corroborates with recommendations made by participants to donors during our working session,

> We talked about donors perhaps proposing more holistic funding, rather than funding a specific project or program i.e., the prevention program, the human rights program, the rescue program etc…Things that are focused instead on a solution, decreasing vulnerability, or getting people out of instances of slavery and how that might provide for more holistic programming, as opposed to for example providing 10 anti-trafficking trainings in three communities. And we also talked about the pressures for immediate impact and perhaps how we all need to focus more on longer-term solutions (CSO Manager, English-speaking room).

In addition to this, USAID representatives alluded to the need for more "local ownership" to foster an environment of constant learning and innovation. As one of many ambiguously defined yet overutilized feel-good buzzwords in the international development sector, we must tread carefully when recommending more local ownership. Aarsaether's (2021) argues that to operationalize the term, the localness of CSOs receiving funds, beneficiaries and the agendas[5] must be considered. The same author refers to ownership as "participation and having the power to control, decide over, or at least influence, the agenda and priorities during the course of the project/ program and make changes if needed" (p.65). From this perspective, local ownership clearly means that CSOs need to be given time and resources to develop, test out and learn from new ways of CTIP programming. Donors need to ensure that CSOs are consulted early in the design phase of CTIP programs, including when allocating budgets for program activities and staff,

> I want to share that also sometimes donors restrict the budget for the employees. That really limits us to recruit people who are highly qualified. If they can open the budget and depend more on the NGOs for creating the budget, because we know our situation, we know how to want to pay our employees so we can assure that the qualities (of services) are up to the mark (CSO manager, Bengali-speaking room).

FLEXIBLE AGREEMENTS

As mentioned previously, the resource dependance of NGOs on donors' manifest in agreements that can sometimes include "excessive conditionalities and onerous reporting requirements on the part of funding recipients" (O'Brien and Evans, 2017, p.1403). Such conditionalities often favor quantifiable, short-term results. In order to overcome this barrier, there is need for donor agreements to be reassessed, to allow for the development and piloting of innovative programs, to facilitate opportunities for learning through trial and error (Dottridge, 2014).

It is argued that the challenge for CSOs should be to expand their impact, not to replicate or scale up standard interventions, particularly those that may not have desired impact (Banks et al., 2015 ; Smits and Wright, 2012). Indeed, this corroborates with what some participants mentioned,

> It's the way our agreements with donors are structured. If we continue to have agreements where we list what we are doing with indicators of success, targets against the indicators, it's clear that we will have proposals that show this is what we will do. It's difficult then to say it didn't work. As donors, I think it would be useful to re-think the way we ask for proposals and prepare agreements, that is not solely based on targets and deliverables (CSO donor, Bengali-speaking room).

Given the climate of uncertainty caused by the Covid-19 pandemic in the last few years, participants mentioned the need for agreements or contracts. that are more flexible and sensitive to ever-changing circumstances,

> We talked about a need for more flexibility and collaboration, Covid being such a great example of that. Many of us have received grants before Covid that are now perhaps coming to the end of their funding cycles and we just have not been able to do the same things that we had once provided and perhaps projected, and perhaps those things are not relevant anymore (CSO Manager, English-speaking room).

5 Both the agendas of the donor organization (whether these are locally relevant and appropriate, and based on contextual understanding) and the agendas of the beneficiary CSOs (whether their agendas are defined by themselves (not donor driven) with contextual understanding and effective participation from their own beneficiaries).

RELATIONSHIP GOALS

As mentioned all throughout this paper, we argue that the donor-CSO relationship is a fundamentally unequal one, owing to the overall structure of the international development sector and how aid from the Global North has historically been delivered to the Global South. Ironically, because donors are in a position of power and authority, they are the main actors who have the ability to change the way things have always been done. Key decision-makers right at the top of donor organizations have a big role to play in restructuring the donor-CSO relationship,

> It's not just simple that how the organization could establish an enabling environment between donor and partner, but it should start within the donor organization. And one person, one key person that could allow that would be the leadership of the organization (USAID representative 2).

As has been well established, CSOs are generally held back from communicating failure or barriers in program implementation because they fear potential repercussions, in particular, losing their funding. Hence, USAID representatives can play a leading role in establishing good rapport with implementing partners, in a way that ensures CSOs can communicate without judgement or fear. We acknowledge that this is easier said than done, as these relationships can be complex and delicate at times. This is because, as mentioned, USAID representatives themselves face pressures from within their respective organizations to report on positive program results. However, the communal pressures shared by both donors and CSOs to succeed should be channeled in a way that fosters mutual understanding and cooperation, making the donor-CSO relationship a more equitable one. As it stands, bureaucratic command chains and heavy reporting requirements can be a barrier to this. CSOs and donors should strive towards working together as counterparts to meet the real needs of survivors,

> And they should work together hand in hand, just like the same team, not that this is USAID, this is the implementing partner. And also, not just AORs[6] and CORs[7], but the support office here like Ms. Z and myself. We are in program office, and we are ready to help the AOR and COR to create such kind of environment if it should be a kind of mission wide, or something that we can support AOR and CORs with. (USAID representative 3)

In fact, USAID representatives mentioned that alternative ways of managing implementing partners have been introduced by senior management, which is a positive sign of the changes that are being made to replace long-standing, rigid ways of working that still dominate the international development sector,

> So we have recently launched a kind of initiative on adaptive management, meaning that we need to look at certain environment around us and emerging trends and things that allows our implementing partner to be able to come to the donors and say that "Hey, this is not working, we need to adjust certain things so and so…..This is the indicator that we could no longer be able feed to, so is it ok for us to adjust to something else or something that's more attainable and reachable and realistic" (USAID representative 1).

One strategy which has the potential to create more equitable relationships between CSOs and donors is co-creation. In essence, co-creation is about bringing together diverse stakeholders from various organizations to work together through every stage of the process, starting at the design phase, to jointly develop the idea and purpose of a project (Chernikova, 2011). From this perspective, co-creation can provide CSOs, including local grassroot organizations, with a voice to decide the types of CTIP programming they would like to implement, and approaches that play to their strengths. This has the potential to result in favorable outcomes for both donor and CSOs, that is the development of CTIP programs with realistic objectives which CSOs are not just capable of achieving but also passionate about. Importantly, CSOs who have been involved from early on in the design phase of programs will likely feel more comfortable in communicating when challenges arise during implementation, or when adaptations need to be made,

> I think in order to encourage IPs to be more candid, frank in their conversation with donors, I think co-creation is a great beginning because from there you can start all these conversations, you can identify some maybe red flags from the very beginning, from scratch as we say (USAID representative 7).

SHARE LEARNINGS WIDELY

Through the donor interviews conducted, it was clear that learning events, for example pause and reflect sessions, are becoming increasingly common in development projects, broadly speaking.

6 USAID Agreement Officer's Representative (AOR) is the technical or program officer responsible for overall management of USAID award by monitoring and evaluating the recipient and its performance during the award.

7 USAID Contracting Officer's Representatives (COR) perform a variety of duties, including serving as the technical liaison between the Contracting Officer (CO) and the contractor.

From a CTIP perspective, learning events play a role in enabling donor officials and representatives to better understand CSOs day-to-day work and providing support and services to survivors. On the other hand, implementing partners have the opportunity to share their concerns and struggles with donors, in order to find solutions to these issues,

> For example, staff member from MEL team would not be able to know what's happening on the ground, so pause and reflect is an opportunity for them to learn from the technical team who always are out in the field working directly with the beneficiary, and then apply the intervention from the project (USAID representative 4).

Although these learning activities often lead to the production of learning papers (such as this one), a lack of dissemination means that these learning products are not shared. One USAID representative mentioned this lack of knowledge sharing,

> And my observation, another observation is about the final or like the best practice, that is collected at the end of the project and the final products like a lesson learned compiled at the end of the project implementation is not widely disseminated, distributed, used by other implementing partners (USAID representative 4).

When dissemination does occur, prosaic styles of writing and repetitious findings mean that these learning products are rarely ever read. Indeed, traditional means of sharing learnings and research findings, for instance reports and articles that are filled with academic jargon, simply do not accommodate a wider audience (Asogwa et al., 2019). A study conducted in 2014, found that 31 percent of World Bank policy reports are never downloaded, and almost 87 percent of policy reports were never cited (Doemeland and Trevino, 2014). Although we should be careful to equate small-scale learning papers with formalistic policy reports produced by global institutions, it is clear that, broadly speaking, knowledge sharing is not taking place efficiently or effectively enough in the development field. In an environment where knowledge is churned out on a mass scale, but never widely shared or absorbed, learning events and the resulting products run the risk of becoming echoic, feel-good ornaments that adorn CTIP programs, rather than tools that can impact change in a meaningful way.

Ultimately, donors play a role in supporting and encouraging CSOs to trial and use more innovative and effective modes of learning dissemination. For instance, research by Luzon (2022) has shown that disseminating research through videos offers a convenience and accessibility which has the potential to reach a wide-ranging audience. Linked to this, USAID representatives mentioned that donor-to-donor sharing on lessons learnt from funding different CTIP programs is vital, to ensure that scarce resources are not squandered on programs which have not been effective in the past,

> They have information on what went well and what didn't work well and based on that and they will design new projects. That will either build up on what they've already created and that new project. Maybe another donor has already done before or has had a similar assessment and decided that it's not going to work well based on their expertise. I think that's why donor-to-donor relationship really matters a lot in helping to co-design new projects (USAID representative 8).

In reality, it appears that USAID may sometimes work in silo in the CTIP sector, and communication with other donors is not commonplace in the CTIP field. Although this research was not able to determine if this issue is common amongst the international donor community, it is abundantly clear that a lack of donor-to-donor communication can lead to precious resources being spent on duplicating programs or projects which already exist,

> We tend to keep it a secret like we don't really share the challenges that USAID is facing with the other donors. I think that is a big point because I feel like donor-to-donor relationship is also important because if you can either keep funding the same thing or you can really be leveraging one another's ongoing activities or planned activities and make sure that you're not funding in the same area. Instead, maybe choose the area that will enhance one another's work (USAID representative 5).

From a CTIP perspective, wide dissemination of more iterative ways of working, and the uptake of these learnings by all stakeholders including governments, donor organizations and CSOs can slowly but surely shift CTIP programming towards better meeting the real needs of survivors on the ground.

CONCLUSION

In summary, the purpose of this learning paper was to shed light on major barriers to actively and openly learning from failures in CTIP programming and potential pathways to overcome these impediments. We argue that admitting and learning through failure provides opportunities to reassess basic assumptions about the way things are done in the CTIP sphere. If done in a systematic and useful way, we can properly make adaptations so that programs more adequately cater to the lived experiences and realities of survivors.

Through this research, we found that CSOs and donors face analogous barriers that prevent learning and adaptation from taking place. These key barriers include:

An overemphasis on the final (quantitative) outcomes of CTIP programs within USAID. This creates a work environment that fails to account for the contextual complexities of the CTIP field, and the challenging work which implementing CSOs and USAID representatives undertake on a day-to-day basis.

Failure to meet targets (is falsely) seen as failure to do your job. The results-driven work culture in USAID makes it a significant disincentive for both USAID representatives and implementing partners to communicate failure to senior leadership, as it can be seen as a reflection of an individual's inability to perform their assigned responsibilities.

Existing channels of communication between USAID and CSOs in CTIP programs are generally underutilized or ineffective. CSOs are often dependent on donors for program funding. A failure to meet these requirements can sometimes result in a loss of funding, which can subsequently create an environment where CSOs are reluctant to speak up when things are not working.

Competing priorities in more politically challenging regions means that USAID representatives lack time and resources to promote iterative programming and learning amongst implementing CSOs.

To overcome these barriers, both USAID and CSOs have a role to play in ensuring that learning and adaptation in CTIP programming do not become mere buzzwords but are operationalized to meet the real needs of survivors. We recommend that the following actions are taken:

For CSOs

Set clear and realistic expectations early in the design phase, as this can set the stage for a relationship built on honest communication and trust with donors.

Pushback on calls for proposals with calls to carry out programming that does not work well, based on knowledge of local context and ways of working. CSOs need to take advantage of their experience and know-how to advise donors on what does and does not work in CTIP early in the design phase, to ensure that archaic and ineffectual CTIP programs which take up scarce funds are not perpetuated.

Facilitate multi-stakeholder dialogues in a safe space, leveraging on the strength in numbers of CSOs working in the CTIP sector, to generate honest and inclusive discussions about what is currently working and what is not.

Ensure that learning products are developed for a wider audience, and dissemination strategies utilize digital and social media according to evolving trends.

For USAID

Develop MEL strategies and indicators which capture milestones and progress of a CTIP intervention, rather than just the final outputs/outcomes of programs. Encourage the development of learning products that can capture successes in a robust way, such as action research. Ultimately, this is what is required to shift towards a "process over outcome" work culture.

Incentivize the use of flexible agreements and adaptive management strategies in CTIP programming. This should include opportunities for CSOs to pilot innovative activities and room to make adaptations as needed during program implementation.

Include CSO and participant voices in a non-tokenistic way. Donors need to involve CSOs and target participants in consistently in the decision-making processes, including in project design and budget allocation.

Engage more frequently at the implementation level with CSOs, to better understand the local context and complexities of program implementation. This ensures that when barriers to implementation do emerge, USAID representatives are able to communicate these challenges accurately to senior leadership and advocate for the necessary adaptations to be approved.

Engage other donor agencies to better understand existing CTIP programs that are already being implemented in the Asia region, so that areas which need strengthening can be properly funded, and new programming can meet the diverse needs of survivors.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Aarsæther, T. C. (2021). Local Ownership in Funding mechanisms' Support to Civil Society Organizations' Peacebuilding efforts (Master's thesis, The University of Bergen).

AbouAssi, K. (2012). *Hands in the pockets of mercurial donors: how three theories explain NGO responses to shifting funding priorities* (Doctoral dissertation, Syracuse University).

Aldashev, G., & Verdier, T. (2009). When NGOs go global: Competition on international markets for development donations. *Journal of International Economics*, *79*(2), 198-210.

Appe, S. (2018). Directions in a Post-aid World? South–South Development Cooperation and CSOs in Latin America. *Voluntas*, *29*(2), 271–283. https://doi.org/10.1007/S11266-017-9838-0

Arshad-Ayaz, A., Naseem, M. A., & Mohamad, D. (2020). Engineering and humanitarian intervention: learning from failure. Journal of International Humanitarian Action, 5(1), 1-14.

Asogwa, U., Liberatore, M., Malefyt, A., & Duckett, T. (2019, January). Problem Solving When Using Student-Written YouTube Problems. In ASEE Annual Meeting.

Banks, N., Hulme, D., & Edwards, M. (2015). NGOs, states, and donors revisited: Still too close for comfort?. *World development*, *66*, 707-718.

Blomqvist, K., Theander, E., Mowide, I., & Larsson, V. (2010). What happens when you involve patients as experts? A participatory action research project at a renal failure unit. *Nursing Inquiry*, *17*(4), 317-323.

Burke, K. J., Greene, S., & McKenna, M. K. (2017). Youth voice, civic engagement and failure in participatory action research. *The Urban Review*, *49*(4), 585-601.

Cannon, M. D., & Edmondson, A. C. (2001). Confronting failure: Antecedents and consequences of shared beliefs about failure in organizational work groups. *Journal of Organizational Behavior: The International Journal of Industrial, Occupational and Organizational Psychology and Behavior*, *22*(2), 161-177.

Carmeli, A., Brueller, D., & Dutton, J. E. (2009). Learning behavioursbehaviors in the workplace: The role of high-quality interpersonal relationships and psychological safety. *Systems Research and Behavioral Science: The Official Journal of the International Federation for Systems Research*, *26*(1), 81-98.

Chernikova, E. (2011). *Shoulder to shoulder or face to face?: Canada's university-civil society collaborations on research and knowledge for international development*. https://idl-bnc-idrc.dspacedirect.org/handle/10625/46120

Crishna, B. (2007). Participatory evaluation (II)–translating concepts of reliability and validity in fieldwork. *Child: care, health and development*, *33*(3), 224-229.

Dodds, F., & Benson, E. (2013, December). Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue. In *Stakeholder forum for a sustainable future. Johannesburg: Civicus*.

Doemeland, D., & Trevino, J. (2014). Which World Bank reports are widely read?. World Bank Policy Research Working Paper, (6851).

Dottridge, M. (2014). How is the money to combat human trafficking spent?. *Anti-Trafficking Review*, (3), 3-14.

Edmondson, A. C. (2011). Strategies for learning from failure. Harvard business review, 89(4), 48-55.

Elbers, W., & Arts, B. (2011). Keeping body and soul together: Southern NGOs' strategic responses to donor constraints. Revue Internationale des Sciences Administratives, 77(4), 743-764.

Engineers Without Borders Canada (2017). 2017 Failure Report. Accessed online www.ewb.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/EWB_FAILURE-REPORT_EN_03-08-2018-pages.pdf

Feedback Labs (2016). Can Website Data Help Measure Our Impact.https://feedbacklabs.org/blog/2016/06/22/can-website-data-help-measure-our-impact/

Gioacchino, G. (2019). *Learning with Small and Medium-Sized CSOs.* https://opendocs.ids.ac.uk/opendocs/handle/20.500.12413/14458

Hains-Wesson, R. (2021). Admitting failure is hard, but as academics we should learn to fail better. *Impact of Social Sciences Blog*.

Hains-Wesson, R. (2021). Admitting failure is hard, but as academics we should learn to fail better. Impact of Social Sciences Blog.

Hemmati, M. and Rogers, F., 2015, Multi-Stakeholder Engagement and Communication for Sustainability, CatalySD Sustainability | Communications, London,

Krawczyk, K. (2018). The Relationship Between Liberian CSOs and International Donor Funding: Boon or Bane? *Voluntas*, *29*(2), 296–309. https://doi.org/10.1007/S11266-017-9922-5

Luzón, M.J, (2019) Bridging the gap between experts and publics: The role of multimodality in disseminating research in online videos," Accessed online https://zaguan.unizar.es/record/86410?ln=en

Molland, Sverre (2018). 'Humanitarianized' Development? Anti-trafficking Reconfigured. Development and Change, (), –. doi:10.1111/dech.12459

Mörner, N. (2009). Anti-trafficking efforts: hard to get results. *Baltic Worlds*, *2*(3-4), 10-13.

Morrison, E. W., & Milliken, F. J. (2003). Shades of silence: Emerging themes and future directions for research on silence in organizations. *Journal of Management Studies*, *40*(6), 1563-1568.

Mount, L. (2022) "Funding does something to people": NGOs navigating funding challenges in India, Development in Practice, 32:1, 69-81, DOI: 10.1080/09614524.2021.1911938

O'Brien, N. F., & Evans, S. K. (2017). Civil society partnerships: Power imbalance and mutual dependence in NGO partnerships. *VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, *28*(4), 1399-1421.

O'Donnell, O., & Boyle, R. (2008). Understanding and managing organisationalorganizational culture. Dublin, Ireland: Institute of Public Administration.

O'Donnell, O., & Boyle, R. (2003). Understanding and managing organizational culture.

Premeaux, S. F., & Bedeian, A. G. (2003). Breaking the silence: The moderating effects of self-monitoring in predicting speaking up in the workplace. *Journal of management studies*, *40*(6), 1537-1562.

Rauh, K. (2010). NGOs, foreign donors, and organizational processes: passive NGO recipients or strategic actors?. *McGill Sociological Review*, *1*, 29.

Reith, S. (2010). Money, power, and donor–NGO partnerships. Development in Practice, 20(3), 446-455.

Root Cause (2018). Informed Giving: Information Donors Want and How Non-Profits Can Provide It. Accessed online https://rootcause.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Informed_Giving_Full_Report.pdf

Slegers, N. J., Kadish, R. T., Payton, G. E., Thomas, J., Griffin, M. D., & Dumbacher, D. (2012). Learning from failure in systems engineering: A panel discussion. Systems Engineering, 15(1), 74-82.

Smits, R., & Wright, D. (2012). Engagement with Non-State Actors in Fragile States. *Clingendael Institute*.

van der Rijt, J., Van den Bossche, P., & Segers, M. S. (2013). Understanding informal feedback seeking in the workplace: The impact of the position in the organizational hierarchy. *European Journal of Training and Development*.