STOPPING AS SUCCESS
TRANSITIONING TO LOCALLY LED DEVELOPMENT

CASE STUDY SYNTHESIS REPORT

January 2020

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

DISCLAIMER

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Stopping As Success (SAS): Transitioning to Locally Led Development is a 3-year USAID funded collaborative learning project which aims to provide positive examples and guidance for how international development actors can foster locally led development through successful and responsible transitions out of projects or relationships with partners. SAS has produced 20 case studies of transition in 13 countries, and over 20 resources and practical tools to inform transition processes for INGOs, NGOs/CSOs, and donors. SAS looked at both organizational and programmatic transitions, and identified the following eight key takeaways:

1. How INGOs enter matters just as much as how they leave: partnerships based on solidarity and trust from the beginning allow for smoother transitions.
2. A joint vision for transition from the outset enables accountability.
3. INGOs that promote local leadership are able to transition in a more sustainable way.
4. To support locally led development, INGOs need to address existing power imbalances and engage in mutual transformation Transition plans that remain flexible and adaptive support local ownership.
5. Transition plans that remain flexible and adaptive support local ownership.
6. Periods of overlap (when INGOs and new local entities operate simultaneously) can help to minimize the disruption of transition periods and foster financial sustainability.
7. Smaller, more flexible funding sources and other types of resource transfer are invaluable for successful transitions.
8. Transition is as much a beginning as it is an ending: post-transition relationships can continue in many different forms.

SAS has sought to contribute to a limited but growing body of evidence on how INGO transitions can promote locally led development. The project has shown that successful, responsible transitions address both technical and procedural aspects alongside relational and partnership-based ones. A procedurally perfect transition that does not address fundamental issues of power and legitimacy is incomplete.

At a few moments throughout SAS we have encountered some skepticism about how 'local' an entity that transitions away from an INGO truly is. But in the cases studies we examined, new local organizations were established to fill a gap left by an INGO departure, or to change course based on shifting local priorities, and were fully locally owned and run. We recognize the problematization of the word 'local' and seek to clarify how we use that term in the Definitions section of the synthesis. Additionally, we opted to distinguish between exits and transitions to emphasize the importance of INGOs transferring ownership, responsibility, and resources to local entities when promoting locally led development. Transition is not about walking away, it is about making way for local organizations to lead.
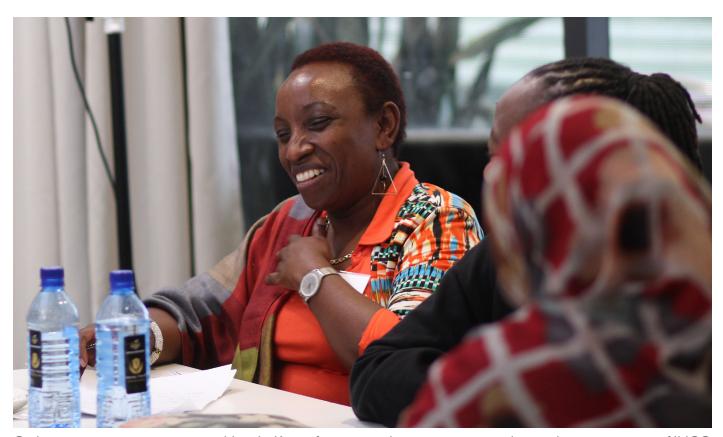
INTRODUCTION

Stopping As Success (SAS): Transitioning to Locally Led Development is a 3-year USAID funded collaborative learning project which aims to provide positive examples and guidance for how international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) and local civil society organizations (CSOs) or NGOs and donors can foster locally led development through successful and responsible transitions out of projects or relationships with partners. The SAS learning project is a collaboration between Peace Direct, Search for Common Ground and CDA Collaborative Learning Projects (CDA). The SAS team conducted 20 case studies across 13 countries to analyze the historical and current realities of INGOs and CSOs/NGOs, with regards to the evolving nature of partnerships during transitions and transition strategies that support locally led development.

The SAS project has shown that it is possible to promote locally led development through transitions when INGOs transfer responsibility, ownership, resources and power and by creating new forms of post-transition partnership. While SAS acknowledges that the technical aspects of transition processes are important, equally important are the more intangible aspects of partnerships, such as how to address ongoing power imbalances. SAS's driving belief is that in order to make 'stopping as success' a reality, international actors cannot simply end partnerships and relinquish responsibility overnight. Indeed, SAS has documented many instances where responsible transitions have led to continued collaboration, solidarity and partnerships that contribute to longer-term sustainability for local entities.

In addition to the case studies, SAS has also produced a range of tools and resources on five key themes: partnerships in transition, leadership and champions, financial sustainability, capacity development and two-way learning, and communications. All of these can be accessed alongside the case studies at: www.stoppingassuccess.org.

Civil society representatives met in Nairobi, Kenya, for a regional review meeting to discuss their experiences of INGO transitions. September 2019

METHODOLOGY

The overall SAS project was conducted as a 'Collaborative Learning Project, with a primary emphasis on a qualitative case study design. For more detailed information on our overall project methodology including our case study selection criteria, please refer to the 'SAS Methodology' document.

This synthesis report forms a part of the overall SAS project methodology, and draws on insights from across all 20 case studies and SAS tools and resources in order to summarize lessons learned. In doing so, we hope to inspire international actors regarding what is possible when transitioning, and to share practical insights for international and local actors about fostering financial sustainability and sustaining post-transition partnerships. This report is meant to provide a broad overview of the overarching lessons from the project rather than provide in-depth analysis of specific case study examples. For readers who are interested in learning more about specific findings and relevant case study examples, please refer to the recommended case studies and resources provided underneath each section.

The process for developing this synthesis report had two primary phases:

1. The SAS team jointly developed a code scheme with common definitions of target audiences and themes, and inputted the data into Dedoose according to target audience (organizational leadership, organizational management, and the wider aid sector) and by theme (including building partnerships, communication, capacity development, and financial sustainability); Findings from the data were then manually clustered according to distinct insights by the SAS team.

2. The team then analyzed data clusters to generate cross case lessons. Cross-case lessons were agreed upon collaboratively within the SAS consortium. Following this, the SAS team drafted recommendations for three key audiences:

   (1) INGOs,
   (2) NGOs/CSOs, and
   (3) donors.

It should be noted that the lessons within this report are drawn exclusively from the positive deviance case studies analyzed within the SAS project. As such, the findings should not be viewed as representative of all INGO transitions, and should instead be interpreted as insights drawn from a specific selection of findings focused on successful transitions (those that fostered locally led development). Furthermore, SAS did not seek to evaluate or assess whether specific transition approaches or models from our case studies were more effective than others, for example by including 'negative' cases within the project design.

DEFINITIONS

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WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN AN EXIT AND TRANSITION?

Based on SAS findings and terminology used by other organizations , we have developed the following definitions for two types of exits and transitions: organizational and programmatic.

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WHAT DO WE MEAN BY LOCAL?

The term 'local' has different connotations in different contexts and is a contested term. In the context of SAS's research, 'local organization' is used to refer to CSOs or NGOs in the global South that are undergoing a process of transition in their partnership with an INGO. This encompasses organizations that work at the local and national level. The broader term 'local actors' recognizes the diversity of this group, which can include individuals, communities and community-based groups, newly created NGOs or CSOs, NGOs that have devolved from an international federation, or local and national governments.

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		Organizational	Programmatic
Transition	**Description**	An organizational transition is defined as a transfer of responsibility and ownership from an international to a local organization while maintaining ongoing collaboration and partnership. This can take many forms, including Memorandums of Understanding or fielding representatives for each other's Boards. In most cases, the international organization withdraws its physical presence in the country post-transition, but it can continue to operate alongside the local organization with a different focus.	A programmatic transition is defined as the withdrawal of international actors following the close-down of a program, with a transfer of responsibility and ownership to local entities (NGOs/CSOs, communities, governments). In some cases, the international organization continues to operate in that country or area, but is no longer directly involved in implementing the program, and in other cases it withdraws its physical presence in the country.
	Type of case studies (see annex 1 for a list of relevant case studies)	We conducted case studies on two types of organizational transition: 1. Devolution transitions: Defined as cases where ownership transferred from an INGO federation member to a locally-run/owned NGO. 2. Phase over transitions: Defined as cases where ownership transferred from an INGO to a new local NGO.	We conducted case studies on two types of programmatic transition: 1. Formal entity transitions: Defined as cases where INGOs transferred ownership to a defined, registered structure, such as an NGO or governmental structure. 2. Informal entity transitions: Defined as cases where INGOs transferred ownership to a less defined structure, such as community groups.
Exit	Description	An organizational exit is defined as the withdrawal of an international organization from a country without a transfer of responsibility and ownership to a local entity, and with no continued relationship with former local partners.	A programmatic exit is defined as the withdrawal of international actors following the close-down of a program, with no transfer of responsibility or ownership to informal local entities.
	Type of case studies	SAS did not examine cases of organizational exit, as we focused on cases where the process entailed a transition towards locally led development.	SAS did not examine cases of programmatic exit, as we focused on cases where the end of a program entailed a transition towards locally led development.

THE TRANSITION 'LIFE CYCLE'

INGO transitions are a relatively under-researched area. As such, the SAS team has developed a framework for guiding our process in recognizing and assessing the transition process from INGOs to local entities. The 'life cycle' provides an idea of the various phases in a transition and their respective factors.

There are three phases:
1) a decision to transition motivated by a set of triggers;
2) a process for implementing the transition; and
3) an outcome in the form of a new relationship post transition (which we observed in all SAS cases).

DECISION
TRIGGERS FOR TRANSITION

Top-down triggers:
- Financial pressures: INGOs facing financial cuts & decreases in donor funding (especially in middle-income countries)
- INGO global restructuring processes
- Governments closing or restricting civil society space

Bottom-up drivers:
- Increasing levels of available domestic funding
- National staff with high existing capacity push for transition (local agency)

OUTCOME
TYPE OF POST-TRANSITON RELATIONSHIP

- Formal relationship (governed by an MoU) or informal relationship
- Different types of continued support, including financial and fundraising, technical assistance, international advocacy support, and ongoing relational care
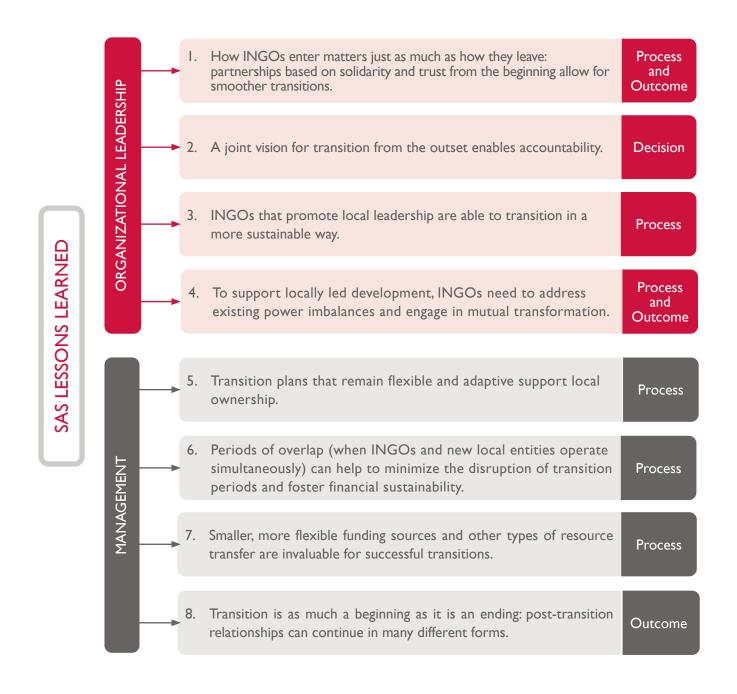- Ongoing mutual capacity development (for instance sitting on each other's Boards)

PROCESS
HOW THE TRANSITION OCCURED

- Rapid or gradual
- Internationally driven, locally led, or a combination of both
- Organizational: Can result in the devolution of an entity within an INGO federation, or the creation of an entirely new organization.
- Programmatic: transfer of responsibility during or at the end of the program

LESSONS LEARNED

The SAS project identified eight lessons learned organized across the 20 case studies, which hold particular relevance for two categories of stakeholders: 1. Lessons relevant to the executive leadership of INGOs, donors and NGOs/CSOs (including Board members and senior management), and 2. Lessons targeted at the management level of INGOs, donors and NGOs/CSOs (those responsible for implementing the transition process). Despite this classification, we do consider the lessons learned to be applicable and valuable across all stakeholder groups and recommend that these are read and considered by all stakeholders. The findings below are not intended to be prescriptive, but are presented as recommendations for organizations to consider when planning for or undergoing transition.

SAS LESSONS LEARNED

ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERSHIP

1. How INGOs enter matters just as much as how they leave: partnerships based on solidarity and trust from the beginning allow for smoother transitions.	Process and Outcome
2. A joint vision for transition from the outset enables accountability.	Decision
3. INGOs that promote local leadership are able to transition in a more sustainable way.	Process
4. To support locally led development, INGOs need to address existing power imbalances and engage in mutual transformation.	Process and Outcome

MANAGEMENT

5. Transition plans that remain flexible and adaptive support local ownership.	Process
6. Periods of overlap (when INGOs and new local entities operate simultaneously) can help to minimize the disruption of transition periods and foster financial sustainability.	Process
7. Smaller, more flexible funding sources and other types of resource transfer are invaluable for successful transitions.	Process
8. Transition is as much a beginning as it is an ending: post-transition relationships can continue in many different forms.	Outcome

LESSONS RELEVANT TO ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERSHIP

1. HOW INGOS ENTER MATTERS JUST AS MUCH AS HOW THEY LEAVE: PARTNERSHIPS BASED ON SOLIDARITY AND TRUST FROM THE BEGINNING ALLOW FOR SMOOTHER TRANSITIONS.

One of the most important success factors behind the transitions examined by SAS is the creation and maintenance of partnerships that operate on a less hierarchical, shared basis. Due to the trust and sense of solidarity built from the beginning of a partnership, transitions were able to occur in a way that encouraged authentic local ownership of both the transition process and the outcome.

- Timorese NGO Belun, which transitioned from its founding partner Columbia University's Center for International Conflict Resolution (CICR), "began with a relationship." International team members saw their roles as temporary from the outset, and invested significant time and resources into working themselves out of a job. Belun's founders, both American and Timorese, spent two years prior to the organization's official establishment as part of a USAID-funded program planning for the long-term sustainability of the work to strengthen civil society and foster peacebuilding.
- For many INGOs with long-term, pre-established partnerships, it is still possible to adapt the nature and structure of existing partnerships to develop and emphasize solidarity and trust, particularly when considering a future transition. Essential to this is rethinking the project-focused model of aid funding, which often means that transition processes over-emphasize capacity building that revolves around compliance with international donor requirements instead of the institutional development of local partners. This approach can also be applied to any planned or ongoing program.

- As part of a World Vision Tuberculosis program in the Philippines, program staff reported that "thinking with the end in mind" underpinned the organization's delivery. Preparing communities and partners for the end of the program was embedded in a number of activities, even during the implementation phase, including strengthening the technical skills of Filipino TB task forces.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

INGOs: Assess current partnerships, especially in countries where transitions are planned or imminent, and consult with local actors on whether solidarity-based approaches enable the support of local priorities.

NGOs/CSOs: When looking ahead to a local vision for transition, communicate views on how to craft a partnership model that will facilitate a trust-based transition process.

Donors: Review ways of tailoring funding processes or outcomes to encourage solidarity-based partnerships to emerge.

RELEVANT SAS TOOLS AND RESOURCES:

Responsible transitions and partnerships: issues at stake and practical guidelines

Thought piece on power and legitimacy

USAID mission checklist and procurement guidance

2. A JOINT VISION FOR TRANSITION FROM THE OUTSET ENABLES ACCOUNTABILITY.

Our evidence base shows that the trigger for or decision to transition tends to be driven by INGOs. However, when the vision for transition is created jointly with local organizations (at the time of or prior to their establishment), this can ensure that the transition process is well managed and produces more sustainable outcomes. Creating a joint vision allows both local and international actors to have a stake in the process and to hold each other to account. SAS documented many instances in which the vision for transition was genuinely co-driven.

- International organization PADCO did not have an explicit strategy to transition ownership to a Burundian organization – it was the Burundian staff's decision to create the Ikibiri Coalition to continue their work on community reintegration. According to Ikibiri members, more important than a transition strategy was "… the accompaniment that PADCO gave us when there was no obligation or 'deliverable' required of them."

Local organizations noted that the vision for what happens once a transition is complete is broader than a change in legal status or the creation of new organizational structures. It is also about transitioning in a way that maximizes the success of local entities in carrying out their broader vision and mission.

- The decision for CARE Morocco to become an organization entirely autonomous from CARE France was made during its founding period, and this vision drove the transition away from CARE France as well as the transition to becoming an affiliate member of CARE's international confederation. A CARE Morocco staff member noted: "The vision is that we are local and we should be local and we should not be dependent on CARE France." This was implemented successively over the course of ten years, with French members of the board replaced by Moroccans to the point where only two individuals from CARE France remain (in an advisory capacity rather than a decision-making one).

KEY TAKEAWAYS

INGOs: Even when the decision to transition originates from headquarters, pro-actively seek opportunities to jointly craft a locally led, locally relevant vision.

NGOs/CSOs: Commit to and promote a vision that focuses on what the overall outcome of transition will be (for instance the creation of a local organization).

RELEVANT SAS TOOLS AND RESOURCES:

INGO program cycle and NGO program cycle

Communicating INGO transitions issue paper and practical guidelines

Talking points for senior management

Leadership and Champions Issue Paper

3. INGOS THAT PROMOTE LOCAL LEADERSHIP ARE ABLE TO TRANSITION IN A MORE SUSTAINABLE WAY.

For a post-transition vision to be sustained, local leadership (NGO/CSO Boards and senior management) must be given space to drive the agenda. As shown in SAS's case studies, when INGOs promote local leaders and ensure their perspectives are valued equally as part of the transition process, not only do they experience greater buy-in to the process, but the work that is carried forward is more likely to be locally owned and sustained.

- In all its interactions with Timorese partner CEPAD, Interpeace acted as a "silent partner," ensuring the local NGO took the lead. As noted by a CEPAD staff member, "Interpeace provided ideas, experiences, but we always revise them so it fits the Timorese context. Interpeace never forced CEPAD staff to adopt their ways. They were clear that things should be adapted to Timorese ways." Furthermore, Interpeace opted not to request representation on CEPAD's Board of Directors, who are all Timorese, nor has it become involved in the selection of members of CEPAD's General Assembly, which contributes ideas and recommendations to the organization's decision-making.

The SAS case studies show that local entities are not only able to survive a transition, but they can truly thrive.

- When discussing what has contributed to her flourishing as a leader, Nuru Kenya's Country Director emphasized the freedom to fail, innovate and experiment. She quoted Nuru International staff as saying: "You know what happens on the ground. You are the experts at the end of the day… So, as you continue on your own maybe things will change, and you need to tell us 'this will not work.'" In line with their leadership approach, Nuru International created space for Kenyan staff to make the decisions from the outset. They pushed for a focus on community needs and eventual ownership at the community level. This has been crucial to Nuru's success in working with cooperatives in Migori County.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

INGOs: Do not assume the leading role in a transition in cases where local leadership exists and is keen to drive the process forward; in other cases, strive to foster local leadership throughout the transition process. Also, allow space for failure during the transition process.

NGOs/CSOs: Assert the right to be positioned at the center of a transition process.

Donors: Facilitate INGOs to take a secondary role during transitions to locally led development.

RELEVANT SAS TOOLS AND RESOURCES:

Leaders and champions issue paper

Responsible transitions and partnerships: issues at stake and practical guidelines

4. TO SUPPORT LOCALLY LED DEVELOPMENT, INGOS NEED TO ADDRESS EXISTING POWER IMBALANCES AND ENGAGE IN MUTUAL TRANSFORMATION

Closely linked to the previous lessons, SAS found that the success of transitions is dependent on how willing an INGO or donor is to cede power and control during the process. Indeed, it is not possible to jointly develop a transition vision or create genuine space for local leadership without letting go of top-down, hierarchical models of development partnerships. But letting go of power and control does not mean exiting abruptly after 'handing over' to a local entity: letting go in a responsible way that both acknowledges existing power imbalances and is mutually agreed is paramount.

- The Country Director of GLID in Burundi offered some imagery to illustrate this point: "The small trees cannot grow under the shade of the big tree, so we have to cut some branches to allow the small trees to grow." He was referring to the need for CARE Burundi to create space for partners to grow, and for community structures to develop into broader social movements. But the principle applies more generally to the need for INGOs to take a step back and give power to others.
- Furthermore, letting go of power allows for mutual transformation. This type of engagement, which includes two-way learning and capacity development, is critical both for healthy, equitable partnerships and successful transitions. SAS has documented numerous examples of meaningful mutual transformation.
- A Bosnian staff member from Partner Microcredit Foundation noted in relation to Mercy Corps: "We learned from each other; it was not just us learning from them… We were actively and

jointly adapting the lessons and methods from other countries to make it fit to the Bosnian context. Mercy Corps took lessons from its experience with [this] transition before trying similar initiatives in Kosovo and Central Asia."
- The Mennonite Central Committee in India explicitly refers to its process of accompaniment and working closely with Indian partners as 'mutual transformation.' MCC India's senior international staff are referred to as Representatives rather than directors to send a clear message that it is interested in understanding people rather than directing them. In addition, MCC does not implement programs directly and has intentionally resisted doing so. Rather, it feels its role should be to support existing local organizations working on development and social justice issues.

KEY TAKEAWAYS
INGOs and donors: Conduct a deep and honest analysis in different contexts of the power dynamics that inhibit led development and take practical steps and actions to shift or transfer this power as part of a transition process.

RELEVANT SAS TOOLS AND RESOURCES
INGO program cycle and NGO program cycle

Communicating INGO transitions issue paper and practical guidelines

Talking points for senior management

Leadership and Champions Issue Paper

LESSONS RELEVANT TO ORGANIZATIONAL MANAGEMENT

5. TRANSITION PLANS THAT REMAIN FLEXIBLE AND ADAPTIVE SUPPORT LOCAL OWNERSHIP.

A written transition plan or strategy can allow local and international actors to hold each other to account over an agreed approach and objectives, but in some cases longer-term, less formally documented plans also work. Deliberately crafting a plan that can be adapted over the entire period of the transition (which can last several years) allows the leadership of new local entities to own the process and adjust based on a changing context.

Once SOS Children's Villages International announced that it would gradually withdraw its funding, SOS Colombia seized the opportunity to create a transition plan and a sustainability strategy (with both financial and programmatic components). The process was driven by the Colombian team, who found a new office, restructured the national team, spoke to new donors, and built a new strategic relationship with the Colombian state. The overarching goal was not only to sustain itself post-transition but to grow by expanding its fundraising and communications teams, creating a strategy team, and appealing to more Colombian funders. By 2016, they were able to secure 65% of their funds from the public and private sector within Colombia. In 2018, this increased to 92%.

In the case of Nuru Kenya, the transition plan was jointly designed and implemented between the international and Kenyan team members over a longer period of time, as this was the model deliberately adopted at the inception. The plan involved ongoing leadership training alongside a gradual transitioning of functions away from international team members to Kenyan staff. Nuru Kenya's staff described this consistent, ongoing approach as crucial to the implementation of the agreed transition plan. There were also regular, formal opportunities to give feedback on the training and the transition process, including through evaluations and questionnaires.

Transparent and continuous communication on how a transition plan will be implemented is crucial, especially since many transition processes can last more than five years and are likely to require course corrections along the way.

During the transition from Plan International, Plan India's Senior Management Team (SMT) used a wide range of inclusive tools to ensure that all staff members had an opportunity to feed into the transition plan, either in person or anonymously. This included: town hall meetings (important to avoiding speculation or the spread of rumors), a transition-specific security email address for anonymous questions, and a general open-door policy encouraging staff to meet with the SMT to raise any questions about the process. Plan also appointed a transition manager who was not part of the SMT to encourage Indian staff members to share ideas and raise concerns with a more approachable, less senior person.

During the transition from CARE Thailand to Raks Thai Foundation, CARE and the future leadership of Raks Thai created space for Thai staff to voice concerns about the transition before it took place, including through multiple meetings across Thai provinces to elicit concerns about the process (including job security and benefits). CARE hired a consultant to help broker this process and manage ongoing communications to ensure that clear channels remained open. CARE then worked closely with the newly hired Thai Program Director to discuss the new management structure, name, and funding strategy.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

INGOs: As part of a wider transition plan, craft a mutually agreed upon transition communications plan with the local entity that is open and transparent about the decisions behind the transition and any potential constraints that are foreseen (for instance regarding funding withdrawals) at the outset.

NGOs/CSOs: Include considerations for how to communicate the implications of the transition to key local stakeholders, including communities and government bodies.

RELEVANT SAS TOOLS AND RESOURCES

Relevant SAS tools and resources:

Communicating INGO transitions issue paper and practical guidelines

INGO program cycle and NGO program cycle

6. PERIODS OF OVERLAP (WHEN INGOS AND NEW LOCAL ENTITIES OPERATE SIMULTANEOUSLY) CAN HELP TO MINIMIZE THE DISRUPTION OF TRANSITION PERIODS AND FOSTER FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY.

In all SAS cases of organizational transition, the INGO and new local entity have operated alongside each other during the transition process. This overlap has allowed for smoother, less disruptive transition periods and for continued partnership building. Time is a crucial factor: transition processes do not have to be abrupt (unless that is desired by the local organization) and when done over a longer period of time can themselves foster a greater sense of solidarity and trust. Most of the transitions SAS has documented take place over an extended period, most often between five to ten years, even in cases where international funding was in decline. In some cases, overlap is important in allowing a new entity to establish itself legally and build its structures while national staff members are still employed (especially in countries where job prospects in the development sector are limited).

- During the transition from Plan International to Plan India, the newly appointed Indian National Director operated alongside the international Country Director for an entire year while the two offices co-existed. Staff members told SAS that they felt there was complete alignment between the two organizational leaders, and that this facilitated a smooth transition process. As one interviewee said, "We all worked under the same roof and were able to build a relationship."
- During Oxfam transition process, Oxfam's Georgian staff made the decision to establish BRIDGE – Innovation and development, a spin-off NGO that focuses on poverty reduction. The decision to establish BRIDGE in parallel to Oxfam Georgia was key to the successful transition. BRIDGE was officially registered prior to Oxfam's planned withdrawal date in order to fulfil the standard three-year operational eligibility criterion required to bid for large-scale projects. Georgian staff were also allowed to devote 10 percent of their paid time to establishing BRIDGE, in parallel with managing Oxfam's projects.

Periods of overlap can also allow further time for new organizations to increase their prospects for financial sustainability (explored further in lesson 7). This is crucial in contexts where even INGOs face financial difficulties; it is harder still for newly established local organizations who are suddenly competing for funds with international organizations that are often larger and better connected with international donors. Transition, therefore, need not entail full financial disengagement.

- The Mennonite Church Canada (MCC) continues to provide PeaceBuilders Community Inc (PBCI), a Filipino NGO based in Mindanao, with direct funding as it transitions part of its structures. When PBCI decided to set up Coffee for Peace (CFP), a social enterprise designed to foster less reliance on funding from the Mennonite Church, MCC's members provided donations. Now, half of CFP's total budget comes from revenue generated within the coffee value chain, with the other half coming from investments made by individual members of the Mennonite Church in Canada. The income generated from CFP also funds 75 percent of PBCI's peacebuilding work.

PBCI now requests that church members invest in CFP instead of directly paying for staff member salaries. Investments are multiplied through the enterprise, which in turn pays the majority of PBCI staff salaries.

- Although SOS International made a unilateral decision to reduce and eventually end funding for national associations based in middle-income countries (including Colombia), it offered a choice as to how this would be done. SOS Colombia was given three options for funding withdrawal:

  1) wind down steadily between 2013 and 2020;
  2) wait and wind down quickly by 2020; or
  3) wind down quickly then slowly taper out the rest of the remaining funds by 2020.

  Although this did not change the fact of withdrawal, it allowed Colombian staff members the opportunity to choose a timeframe that would best allow them to pursue alternative funding sources (which, as noted above, it has done successfully).

KEY TAKEAWAYS

INGOs: Using available resources, support the development of locally driven entities with as much overlap time as is possible by planning far ahead of the eventual transition deadline.

NGOs/CSOs: Push for as much support as possible from a transitioning INGO in various different forms, including flexible funding and dedicated staff time to develop the new entity.

Donors: Remove restrictions on funding given to INGOs that are transitioning out of countries, or to enable them to fund or support new local entities to the greatest extent possible.

RELEVANT SAS TOOLS AND RESOURCES

Financial sustainability issue paper and practical guidelines

How to: Accessing unrestricted funding

NGO program cycle

7. SMALLER, MORE FLEXIBLE FUNDING SOURCES AND OTHER TYPES OF RESOURCE TRANSFER ARE INVALUABLE FOR SUCCESSFUL TRANSITIONS.

NGOs/CSOs interviewed as part of SAS made clear that different types of support and resource transfers can all be useful, depending on the context and the specific need. This can help avoid a financial 'cliff edge,' whereby a newly formed local organization loses all forms of financial support overnight. As an example, when INGOs are unable to provide continued funding, or when they are conscious of the risks of creating post-transition financial dependency, some consider interest free loans instead of grants.

Although Interpeace was no longer able to provide financial support to CEPAD from its own unrestricted funding after the transition, CEPAD had successfully attracted several key donors to fund parts of its work. Nevertheless, Interpeace has been able to provide other types of support, for instance loans to cover the upfront costs of delivering USAID contracts and contributing to the construction of Peace Houses across Timor-Leste. One of CEPAD's current donors recognized the importance of Interpeace's continued support post-financial disengagement. They also noted that INGOs are generally weak in this area: "… when contracts end, relationships end." CEPAD continues to face challenges with financial sustainability, especially for covering its core costs.

- As part of the transition from economic development program to Bosnian foundation, Mercy Corps provided Partner with an initial loan to get started, which was later written off as a donation to Partner's equity. In 2018, Partner had KM78 million (US$46,500,000) in equity, over which it has full control, and MIX Market, a global database of microfinance institutions, has assigned Partner a four-star rating.
- SAS has also documented cases where INGOs have been able to organize asset transfer as part of the transition process, in lieu of direct funding.
- Prior to its departure from Georgia, Oxfam HQ purchased a modern office space for BRIDGE, part of which could be rented out to help cover significant core costs that many Georgian NGOs struggle to access.

In other cases, it is not necessarily the volume of funds that matters most, but the level of flexibility in how NGOs/CSOs are able to use INGO-provided funds. This is particularly important in cases when local organizations are not able to access other sources of core funding given the entrenched financial structures of the development sector.

- In the Mennonite Church Canada's partnership with PeaceBuilders Community Inc (PBCI) in the Philippines, the partnership was flexible from the outset. When it came to PBCI's decision to set up Coffee for Peace, a social enterprise designed to foster less reliance on funding from the Mennonite Church, a budget was allocated for 'social contributions' such as traveling to communities and bringing food to share, important to building relationships with communities but for which receipts were not always possible. It may seem a small point, but it was symbolic of the high levels of trust in the relationship.
- The Mennonite Central Committee generally has a flexible approach to funding, and country teams face few restrictions on what they are able to fund and develop with partners – for instance, they are able to fund both program expenses and non-program (such as administrative) costs. Funding is provided to partners according to need, ensuring both operational and programmatic support is covered. In India, MCC Project Officers arrange quarterly visits with partners as part of their overall accompaniment model to identify where further support might be needed.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

INGOs: Where possible, provide core funding to sustain the early development stages of a new local entity; if not possible, ask the local partner what types of assets or funding arrangements would be most beneficial, and provide access to international donor funding networks.

NGOs/CSOs: Be open to different types of financial and non-financial support and openly communicate this to international partners.

Donors: Provide general support grants to assist with the core costs of transition to get local ations on their feet.

RELEVANT SAS TOOLS AND RESOURCES

Financial sustainability issue paper and practical guidelines

How to: Accessing unrestricted funding

8. TRANSITION IS AS MUCH A BEGINNING AS IT IS AN ENDING: POST-TRANSITION RELATIONSHIPS CAN CONTINUE IN MANY DIFFERENT FORMS.

SAS does not advocate for all partnerships, whether formal or informal, to continue in order for a transition to be considered successful. In many cases, the continued involvement of an international organization, even in a light touch manner, will not be needed; this is a decision to be made by the actors most affected by the transition (local staff and other stakeholders). SAS documented many cases where a post-transition partnership or some form of continued collaboration between an INGO and NGO/CSO has been highly valued by both international and national actors. In all of SAS's case studies on organizational transitions, partnerships continued in some form, even in cases where financial support was phased out. This was a two-way process and took many forms, both formal and informal.

- Two staff members from Mercy Corps sit on Partner's board in Bosnia and Herzegovina to engage in mutual learning. The Mercy Corps board members have no singular influence over the strategic direction of Partner; the continued engagement is intended as a means of continued solidarity and support.
- As a final step in the transition, Oxfam Georgia and BRIDGE signed a partnership agreement. It delineates opportunities for future cooperation, exchange and mutual support in four areas: knowledge exchange and learning; advocacy and campaigning (with BRIDGE participating and contributing to Oxfam's global campaigns and influencing work); humanitarian

response (in which Oxfam may support BRIDGE through capacity strengthening, humanitarian support personnel or joint fundraising) and resource mobilization (through sharing relevant funding opportunities and contacts).

KEY TAKEAWAYS

INGOs/donors: Think pro-actively and creatively about the different ways of continuing to support local partners post transition, based on their stated needs.

NGOs/CSOs: Decide whether post-transition collaboration would be useful, and if so communicate what type of engagement the local organization would prioritize.

Donor: Explore ways to fund dedicated periods of relationship-building during and even after transitions.

RELEVANT SAS TOOLS AND RESOURCES

Capacity development in responsible transitions issue paper

Guidelines for Joint-Learning and Mutual Capacity Strengthening Before, During and After Transition

Responsible transitions and partnerships: issues at stake and practical guidelines

CONCLUSIONS

SAS has sought to contribute to a limited but growing body of evidence on how responsible transitions can promote locally led development. The project has shown that successful, responsible transitions address both technical and procedural aspects alongside relational and partnership-based ones. A procedurally perfect transition that does not address fundamental issues of power and legitimacy is incomplete. Overall, we found that transitions most able to promote locally led development:

1.	**Build trust and solidarity**
2.	**Create a joint vision**
3.	**Promote local leadership**
4.	**Address power imbalances**
5.	**Craft adaptable transition plans**
6.	**Plan for overlap**
7.	**Provide resources**
8.	**Continue collaborations**

At a few moments throughout SAS we have encountered some skepticism about how 'local' an entity that transitions away from an INGO truly is. But in the cases studies we examined, new local organizations were established to fill a gap left by an INGO departure, or to change course based on shifting local priorities, and were fully locally owned and run. We opted to distinguish between exits and transitions to emphasize the importance of INGOs transferring ownership, responsibility, and resources to local entities.

ENDNOTES

1. See the SAS Thought Piece on Legitimacy and Power in Transitions, January 2020 for further detail, https://www.stoppingassuccess.org/resources/legitimacy-and-power/
2. The SAS literature review identified several models for aid exits and transitions: Full closure model, Localization model, Devolved programme model, and Accompaniment model. Insert link. INTRAC, an NGO that focuses on strengthening the effectiveness of civil society, actively promotes research and planning on exits and transitions within the international aid sector. It uses a range of terminology to describe approaches to exit, including: handing over, phasing out, transition, winding down, wrapping up, moving on, spin-offs – https://www.stoppingassuccess.org/resources/sas-literature-review/
3. For more detail on what SAS means by 'authentic local ownership,' please see Responsible transitions and partnerships: issues at stake and practical guidelines, January 2020, insert link.
4. SAS recognizes that some organizations have not entered well, and we provide guidelines on how to adjust programming during a program cycle to encourage locally led development in our 'Program Cycle' one pagers -- insert link.
5. Timor-Leste: CICR to Belun, Stopping As Success, April 2019, p.6, https://www.stoppingassuccess.org/resources/belun-cicr/.
6. Burundi: PADCO to Ikibiri Coalition, Stopping As Success, December 2018, p.4, https://www.stoppingassuccess.org/resources/padco-ikibiri-coalition/.
7. Morocco: CARE Morocco's transition: from local to global, Stopping As Success, November 2018, p.7, https://www.stoppingassuccess.org/resources/care-morocco/.
8. Timor-Leste: Interpeace to Centre of Studies for Peace and Development (CEPAD), Stopping As Success, April 2019, p.7, https://www.stoppingassuccess.org/resources/cepad-interpeace/
9. Kenya: Nuru International to Nuru Kenya, Stopping As Success, August 2018, p.13, https://www.stoppingassuccess.org/resources/nuru-kenya/.
10. Burundi: CARE Burundi to GLID, Stopping As Success, December 2018, p.8, https://www.stoppingassuccess.org/resources/glid-care-international/.
11. Bosnia and Herzegovina: Mercy Corps to Partner Microcredit Foundation, Stopping As Success, August 2019, p.9, link.
12. India: Plan International to Plan India, Stopping As Success, DATE, PAGE, https://www.stoppingassuccess.org/resources/partner-microcredit/.
13. Timor-Leste: Interpeace to Centre of Studies for Peace and Development (CEPAD), Stopping As Success, April 2019, p.10, link https://www.stoppingassuccess.org/resources/cepad-interpeace/.

ANNEX 1: TYPES OF CASE STUDIES

	Organizational Transition	Programmatic Transition
Devolution Transitions	• CARE France to CARE Morocco • CARE Thailand to Raks Thai Foundation • Plan International to Plan India • ActionAid India to ActionAid Association • SOS Children's Villages International to SOS Colombia • Nuru International to Nuru Kenya	• WorldVision to Iloilo City TB Task Force, Philippines (SMT program) • Winrock International to Co-management Organizations, Bangladesh (CREL program)
Phase over transitions	• PADCO to Ikibiri Coalition, Burundi • CARE Burundi to GLID • Interpeace to CEPAD, Timor-Leste • CICR to Belun, Timor-Leste • Oxfam Georgia to BRIDGE • Mercy Corps to Partner Microcredit Foundation, Bosnia • Mennonite Central Committee to PeaceBuilders Community Inc, Philippines	• Catholic Relief Services to ECADIS, Guatemala (SEGAMIL program) • International Rescue Committee to Congolese communities, DRC (Tuungane program) • Trickle Up to Community Network for Integrated Development, Guatemala • Mennonite Central Committee India

ANNEX 2: CASE STUDY LESSONS LEARNED

Case Study	Description of Study	Leassons Learned
CARE Burundi to Great Lakes Inkingi Development (GLID)	This case study is an example of a dual transition: an INGO, CARE, transforming its role from direct implementer to catalyst, alongside the establishment of a Burundian entity, GLID, to carry forward some its work. The transition is meant to ensure that the two organizations work in a complementary, reinforcing way.	1. INGOs should model the principles of integrity, transparency, accountability, and diversity, putting into practice robust systems to institutionalize them. 2. In certain contexts, the political neutrality of NGOs can be important to sustaining locally led organizational development. 3. Tested and adaptable programming is a strong factor in creating sustainability. 4. Programming that aligns with government priorities as well as the long-term needs of the population strengthens sustainability. 5. Ongoing, non-competitive collaboration between INGOs and newly formed entities can benefit both parties. 6. A transition/exit plan should be the result of an inclusive, participatory process. 7. A plan serves to define the parameters of INGO accompaniment and can be a tool to help manage expectations and relationships. 8. Strong leadership that models principles and people-centeredness sets an example internally for staff (and future leaders), while creating social capital externally. 9. A transition entails a living, breathing, growing relationship with certain expectations that should be managed.
PADCO to Ikibiri Coalition, Burundi	This case study is an example of an INGO transition that triggered the creation of a local entity. While Burundian staff drove the creation of the Ikibiri Coalition, PADCO assisted the transition by providing both moral and technical support.	1. Coupling robust and carefully managed systems with the values of integrity, transparency, diversity, and inclusivity, helps build team cohesion. 2. Principled, people-centered, and courageous leadership and can leave a lasting impact. 3. Programming that is community-driven is more likely to be sustainable in difficult political environments. 4. Meaningful post-exit support is still possible even in the absence of a specific plan to create an independent local entity to continue development intervention.

Case Study	Description of Study	Leassons Learned
Nuru International to Nuru Kenya	This case study is an example of a phased transfer of ownership and responsibility from INGO Nuru International to Nuru Kenya, including the exit of all international staff. Post-transition, Nuru Kenya is managed entirely by Kenyan staff, although it continues to receive financial support from Nuru International.	1. Listen to the community before programming. 2. Reconsider project timelines. 3. Be aware that in times of repression, the choice of sector matters. 4. Planning and implementation is a process of exit. 5. Provide room for failure and learning. 6. Allow accountability to flow both ways. 7. Learn how to let go.
CARE France to CARE Morocco	CARE Morocco's organizational evolution is an example of a transition from the local to the global. The transition entails a local association (which received financial support) gaining membership of an international confederation in order to increase its independence and financial autonomy, as well as to contribute to global objectives and strategy.	1. Developing a vision as well as a concrete plan from the outset is crucial to ensuring a seamless transition. 2. Local leadership and clear communication are essential for inspiring staff to support the transition. 3. While CARE France offered key support during the application process, the process of transition was a locally led effort. 4. The locally led development movement has the potential to "localize the global," ensuring global structures and processes take into account local priorities.
ActionAid International to ActionAid Association, India	This case study is an example of a transition from an INGO to a national entity – in this case, the transition from INGO ActionAid International to the fully Indian entity, ActionAid Association.	1. It is worthwhile INGOs considering a transition in their overall partnership approach role when assessing their mission and relevance. 2. Strengthening civil society and people's movements can be enabled by further decentralization, even within a local entity. 3. A strong and inclusive board can be critical during a transition. 4. Feedback from all stakeholders during a transition process can enhance perceptions of local ownership. 5. Supporting locally led development does not necessarily mean supporting CSOs, CBOs, and NGOs. 6. A successful transition is not simply a technical or programmatic exercise, with a start and end date. 7. A decentralized structure may be a useful model for INGOs and NGOs to consider. 8. Complementing, rather than duplicating, ongoing government initiatives that enhance citizen's rights can support state systems while also promoting an organization's vision.

Case Study	Description of Study	Leassons Learned
Plan International to Plan India	This case study describes the transition of an international entity within India (Plan International) into a locally led organization (Plan India). The transition was triggered by a worsening operating environment for international actors, and driven by a desire to achieve financial sustainability and an autonomous identity.	1. Ensure complete alignment of two organizational leaders. 2. Set up a new senior management team (SMT) with prior transition-related experience. 3. Appoint a Transition Manager. 4. Streamline back- and front-end processes. 5. Emphasize teamwork. 6. Create a dynamic and active board. 7. Make use of cross-country learning. 8. Communicate the need for transition. 9. Create a positive narrative of change.
Mennonite Central Committee to Indian partners	Rather than having a clearly defined exit or transition, MCC India's approach is based on a steady transfer of funding, ownership, and responsibility over the course of a long-term partnership. This "accompaniment model" ensures efforts are genuinely locally led, embedding a mindset of transition from the outset.	1. Good ("dedicated, dynamic") leadership is critical among partners. 2. Language matters: the way funding is framed can bolster a sense of true partnership. 3. Strategies and projects should, without exception, be developed with communities. 4. International and national partners should consistently question notions of ownership and "sustainability." 5. Expecting mutual transformation is critical for healthy partnerships.
Mennonite Church Canada to PBCI/ Coffee for Peace, Philippines	The transition in this case study refers to the steps taken by PBCI to achieve financial independence from its key partner and funder, the Mennonite Church Canada, following the creation of the revenue-generating Coffee for Peace social enterprise.	1. The partnership between PBCI and the Mennonite Church (including its NGO arm, MCC) goes beyond a traditional donor/recipient relationship, and this has been central to its success. 2. An investor, as opposed to a donor model, is helpful in overcoming unequal power dynamics in the aid sector. 3. Transitions can take place even when international funds are available, and do not necessarily have to be externally driven. 4. Securing the trust of communities in conflict-affected contexts is particularly important. 5. The conscious effort of members of the Mennonite Church and staff from MCC to adopt simple lifestyles when living in Mindanao engenders trust. 6. The Mennonites' policies and practices favor local ownership.

Case Study	Description of Study	Leassons Learned
CARE USA/ Thailand to Raks Thai Foundation	The indigenization of the Raks Thai Foundation from CARE Thailand is an example from a global to a national entity, as well as an example of a reverse transition, whereby the Foundation re-incorporated as a member of the CARE confederation in 2003, giving the group equal status to other CARE members	1. Strong community-based leadership is critical. 2. Double standards are not helpful. 3. Local brand identity is very important for new entities. 4. Local funding does not necessarily become any easier to access once an entity is localized. 5. Diverse funding streams may be needed at the outset, given a paucity of available local funding.
Interpeace to CEPAD, Timor-Leste	The partnership between Interpeace and CEPAD is a case of progressive financial disengagement, with the former having contributed for many years to the organizational development of the latter. The financial transition began around 2014 and was fully completed by September 2016. Interpeace provides ongoing support in other areas.	1. Strong leadership is an important factor when creating and sustaining an NGO that can operate successfully when financial support from an INGO partner ends. 2. Adopting bottom-up, locally led models from the outset – as opposed to time-bound, top-down projects – contributes to a more sustainable transition process. 3. It can be challenging for organizations who are reluctant to accept funding from their governments to achieve financial sustainability when INGOs withdraw funding. 4. NGOs that do not accept funding from every available international source are better able to operate sustainably over the long term. 5. It is possible for INGOs to find creative ways of continuing to support locally led organizations and initiatives after transitions have concluded.
Center for International Conflict Resolution to Belun, Timor-Leste	This case study is an example of a local organization – Belun – being gradually established over the course of a five-year USAID project. In this case, the project was implemented by an international academic institution, CICR of Columbia University. This process of "Timorization" entailed systematic capacity development alongside a phasing out of international support and leadership.	1. Entrance matters just as much as exit. 2. Planning for transition to local ownership from the outset increases the prospects of sustainability. 3. Accompaniment works. 4. Democratic organizational governance builds ownership. 5. Prioritizing internal policies makes a difference. 6. Exiting does not mean saying goodbye forever.

Case Study	Description of Study	Leassons Learned
SOS Children's Villages International to SOS Colombia	The case of SOS Colombia is an example of a devolution from an INGO central body to its local country office. The transition has involved shifting financial responsibility onto primarily domestic rather than international sources.	1. Although decisions to devolve may come from outside the country, the transition process can still be led by the local entity. 2. Local entities are not just able to survive a transition, but can thrive. 3. Association with the INGO can be beneficial to the local entity after an exit. 4. A shift away from international funding toward domestic sources can lead to more contextually relevant programs.
Mercy Corps to Partner Microcredit Foundation, Bosnia and Herzegovina	This case study is an example of an organizational transition, whereby an INGO project was transitioned into an independent, self-sustaining Bosnian entity. Given that it took place 18 years ago, this retrospective analysis allows for a comprehensive overview of the transition's outcomes and successes.	1. Having a vision for transition from the outset, driven by internal advocacy, contributes to a successful outcome. 2. Dedicated, capable, and visionary national staff can drive the transition. 3. Early financial support can provide a much-needed boost and facilitate longer-term sustainability. 4. Capacity development is highly valued by national staff. 5. Strong governance from the start can bolster organizational development. 6. Maintaining a mission-driven focus can sustain transition over the long-term.
Oxfam Georgia to BRIDGE	This case study is an example of a transition from an Oxfam national office in Georgia to a Georgian NGO, BRIDGE – Innovation and Development. The transition process was gradual, taking place over four years between 2014 to 2018.	1. Establishing a spin-off organization in parallel to ongoing work can help significantly in transition success. 2. Direct involvement of dedicated and competent local staff in all aspects of decision-making is key to building ownership and buy-in. 3. Transparent transition processes are important for gaining buy-in from national staff and partners. 4. Providing customized and broad-based support can support the development of new, locally owned organizations. 5. Spin-off organizations should establish a well-functioning and trusted governance structure in order to ensure accountability and oversight.

Case Study	Description of Study	Leassons Learned
Winrock International to Co-management Organizations, Bangladesh (CREL program)	CREL an example of a programmatic transition involving a transfer of ownership and responsibility from an international organization – in this case, Winrock International, and its national partner organizations, including CODEC – to a local government entity, in this case the Bangladesh Forest Department. CREL adopted a co-management approach throughout the program. This included setting up two types of entity at the local level – co-management committees and co-management organizations – which have been sustained since the program's exit.	1. Organizational sustainability should be understood within the context of the social, financial, political, and legal system in which it exists. 2. Continuous consultations with national partners and local communities is imperative. 3. It is better to work with available local instruments, such as co-management, rather than imposing external ones. 4. Equal partnerships should be created with national NGOs in order to gain both trust and buy-in.
World Vision to Iloilo City TB Task Force, Philippines (SMT program)	The Social Mobilization on Tuberculosis (SMT) project case study is an example of a programmatic transition, whereby World Vision contributed to the creation of a Filipino umbrella entity called the Iloilo City TB Taskforce Federation Inc. Despite facing challenges when the funding came to an end, the Federation successfully lobbied for a policy shift that led to direct government support, allowing the work to continue.	1. It is more effective to work with pre-existing structures than to create parallel ones. 2. It is important to nurture partnerships and relationships at all institutional levels. 3. Exits can be thought of as an ongoing process rather than an end goal. 4. National staff and champions within an international organization are important to driving local programs.
International Rescue Committee to Congolese communities, DRC (Tuungane program)	Tuungane is an example of an INGO programmatic transition driven by the end of a donor funding cycle. This report outlines how IRC shifted programming priorities in the final phase of Tuungane in preparation for closedown, including working more closely with governance structures already existent in eastern DRC.	1. Planning for exit is challenging in a context of a time limited development program that may or may not be extended. 2. In highly participatory CDD programs where all key decisions lie at the community-level, not being able to participate in the decision to exit or end the program can cause tension. 3. Processes and practices, such as accountability mechanisms, often last longer than products, such as buildings and other infrastructure. 4. Where feasible, transition funding for communities to continue activities beyond the program's exit could help to soften the cliff-edge.

Case Study	Description of Study	Leassons Learned
Catholic Relief Services to ECADIS, Guatemala (SEGAMIL program)	This case study is an example of transition of project activities from Catholic Relief Services (CRS) to community organizations in Guatemala. It focuses on the example of the creation and strengthening of Integral Human Development Field Schools which aim to improve food access.	1. Inclusivity lays the groundwork for sustainability. 2. Strong leadership is key to sustainability of outcomes. 3. Building trust over time, rather than around a single project cycle, is a critical first step to sustainability. 4. Investments in institutional capacity strengthening can cascade through local partnerships. 5. Programs can benefit from distinct sustainability and exit plans.
Trickle Up to Community Network for Integrated Development, Guatemala	This case study is an example of a transition in which an INGO phased over ownership of a program to an informal entity. Trickle Up supported the creation of La Sabiduría savings group, working intensively with a group during an initial phase then gradually and purposefully providing space for the group to function independently.	1. Trickle Up initiates programs with a plan to graduate groups from the start. Their intensive selection process targets those who among the extreme poor, building the capacity of savings groups participants then providing them space to learn and grow. 2. Strong dedication to core methodology enables groups to learn the approach and then replicate the approach with others in community. 3. Savings group members drive the process for themselves. They select their own leadership, decide on which productive activities to pursue, and purchase shares of the group depending on their own ability. While the savings and loan process is central to VSLAs, individuals continue to participate in VSLAs for a variety of reasons.