

CASE STUDY 1: A national partners expands access to health services

This national partner delivers imperative health services and awareness raising activities in five IDP camps and 10 remote villages in non-government-controlled areas of Kachin State.

Prior to the grant received from HARP-F, the partner sourced funding from cross-border funds and through foundations and student groups in Australia and America. The amount of funding previously received was typically small while the needs were intensifying in NGCA. HARP-F's funding which was relatively bigger and provided opportunity for the organization to expand its services and serve thousands more women and adolescents in conflict affected areas. In particular, through the programme, the partner could train 25 community workers and serve 1000 individuals.

Albeit rolling out projects in hard-to-reach areas, the organization implemented all projects directly prior to the COVID-19. The pandemic challenged the organization to re-structure its program and approach to delivery. The partner turned to community volunteers and health workers to provide services to the community. The program was then orchestrated by the local staff at the head office and regular meetings were conducted between KWAT staff and the community volunteers to provide support and regular trainings. During more stringent lockdowns, information was shared using the internet in villages where mobile internet networks are functional and through mobile phones in villages where internet access is restricted. It is important to be mindful that these changes would have been difficult to materialize with very few trained community workers - sizeable funding from HARP-F facilitated this approach of reliance on trained community workers. Presently, with the third wave spreading like wildfire, monitoring also had to be taken online. Trained community staff became the eyes and ears of the program, contributing to the successes and continuity of the program.

HARP's flexibility and support was monumental to the success of the program. HARP's flexibility and support during the whole process of learning encouraged innovative approaches and shared accountability. HARP-F's staff in Kachin were swift in responding to the needs of project staff and project staff received invaluable mentoring and coaching through the field offices. HARP's field team were all qualified local staff who better understood the context and the constraints encountered by the organizations and could provide constructive and practical solutions. As a result of the trainings and support, the partner now has its own comprehensive financial system from which the information needed by donors could be extracted effortlessly.

The program provided with many lessons. Firstly, the partner learnt the importance of working with the right and flexible donors who can comprehend the challenges faced by the local organizations on the ground. In Myanmar, there are only a handful of local organizations that are extremely professional and can provide with detailed paperwork. Most organizations are founded simply to provide much needed support in restricted areas. Therefore, donors like HARP-F who are flexible and can strengthen the capacity of the local organizations is crucial. Secondly, the importance of localization for sustainability of the programs became even more apparent during times of such crisis. Programs that are implemented using local resources also provides better value for money as well. In the future, the partner plans to take a step back to provide more space to community-based organizations to provide vital needs in their own communities. The partner's role will shrink to providing back stopping support and capacity strengthening technical trainings to these organizations instead.