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What are the Incentives for learning in the development sector? Lessons from studying the relationship between local delivery partners in India and their funding avenues.

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<u>Abstract</u>

As the very nature of development is to create change, this necessitates a complex and evolving environment, in which to be effective, organisations must be committed to directing these changes with valuable learning. This study examines the incentives for learning in the development sector, analysing the influence on them of the relationship between delivery partners and their funding streams. It was hypothesised that traditional funding relationships can have detrimental effects on the learning of recipient organisations through characteristics such as accountability, competition, demands and monitoring and evaluation. Qualitative methods and analysis were applied through semi-structured interviews conducted with two local, delivery organisations in India, followed by coding and thematic analysis. The interpretation of the results and a comparison with reviewed literature on the topic, identified affective components of funding relationships, which through further discussion brought to light the key influencing themes of trust, communication and stability. Most predominantly, trust was identified repeatedly in the resources and data as a key component of influence in the funding relationship, with its embedded importance observed throughout the remaining topics of discussion.

<u>Acknowledgements</u>

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Introduction

It is now widely accepted across many fields that the active process of learning is essential to the success of an organisation. However, the incentives for learning vary greatly between sectors. One of the major differences between the for profit and non-profit fields is their interactions and relationships with the suppliers of the financial resources that sustain them. This paper will attempt to examine how the funding they receive effects the learning of development organisations.

The understanding of *learning* varies between people, organisations and funders, with different interpretations leading to different applications. This can include variations of who is able to participate or contribute to learning, what structure it takes and which level of the organisation it is driven from and attributed to. For the purpose of this paper, learning will be considered as a process, which can take place through all levels of an organisations, of planning, collecting and analysing information, which then informs future actions and decisions, and forces evaluations of assumptions (Bloch and Borges, 2002; Argyris and Schön, 1996; Edwards, 1997). More formal learning such as trainings, meetings and reflections contribute to organisational learning, but we can understand more about the effectiveness by looking at the wider culture in which learning is taking place (Hailey and James, 2002; Roper and Pettit, 2002).

The very purpose of *development organisations* is to develop or create change, making improvements which then inform the context. This drive for continual change fosters an environment which is complex and unpredictable; it is this nature that demands investment in learning from development organisations (Edwards, 1997; Roper and Pettit, 2002; Hailey and James, 2002). Organisations outline their mission to meet community's needs, but as some needs are met and others become more pressing, the ability of the organisation to adjust their response accordingly is critical. This is not however simply about flexibility or resources, but about skills in collecting and analysing relevant information, then developing and applying appropriate solutions while challenging the norm; the key elements of effective learning (Solomon et al, 2002; Senge, 1990; Argyris and Schön, 1996).

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Many concepts which promote organisational learning have seen increased investment, such as accountability, participation, and monitoring and evaluation (M&E), of which all are in some way influenced by funding avenues (Winters, 2010; Coates and David, 2002). Despite their rise, throughout the development sector information is still not utilised, with less knowledge sharing, environments of trust and horizontal power; all critical players in effective organisational learning. It is not being claimed that learning does not happen, of course there is some input which motivates decisions, however it has been shown that improving this process can further progression towards an organisations mission (Reith, 2010; Kaachur et al, 2016; Hirschmann, 2003; Bloch and Borges, 2002).

Figure 2- Stakeholders

External Stakeholders

National Government | Funding Organisations

Advocacy Groups

Internal Stakeholders

Development Sector

Employees | Project Participant's

Volunteers

The Organisation

Civil Society | Field Staff | Founder | Host Country

Management | Office Staff

The Board

Local Government | Partner Organisations

Local Communities

So, what are the incentives for development organisations to be effective learners? Facilitating learning increases the efficiency and effectiveness with which delivery organisations meet the needs of the communities that they aim to serve. Additionally, it improves the tools, systems and procedures used allowing more efficient use of resources. Staff morale develops leading to increased loyalty, collaborations and trust, building capacity, knowledge and overall effectiveness of the organisation (Hailey and James, 2002). Competition for funding however, has increased pressure on delivery organisations to learn effectively in order to successfully demonstrate impact; although it has been suggested that this could be due to skills of reporting rather than actual impact (Vincent and Byrne, 2006; Ebrahim, 2005; Edwards 1997; Rauh, 2010).

Whilst different, the learning process of individuals is vital in contributing to the wider learning of an organisation, and vice versa, with both needing to continually engage in the pursuit of knowledge (Argyris and Schön, 1974; Roper and Pettit, 2002). The benefits of learning can be seen through the range of stakeholders, from the people participating in projects, to improving the core policies of an organisation, and onwards to the external environment of donors and the wider sector (see Fig 1). Therefore, we can assume that all actors in the funding chain have some influence over others, variant on their specific relationships. The giving of money has power attached which allows influences on many aspects of a recipient organisation (Reith, 2010; Scott-Villiers, 2002). The public can hold governments or public funded organisations to account, private donors can do the same to their recipient organisations, in turn they can do so to international NGOs and intermediaries, who direct funds to local NGOs or delivery organisations, and finally financial resources end in project implementation (See Fig 2). The power relationships between each stage in the chain are however in no way equal or weighted by the importance, effectiveness or commitment to their work, with significantly more upwards accountability (Winters, 2010; Elbers, 2011; Powers et al, 2002).

This paper aims to discuss the incentives and barriers to learning, linked to the relationship between delivery organisations and those directly above them in the funding chain. Although the term funding organisation will be used throughout, this is meant as an avenue through which funding is channelled, including but not restricted to organisations directly providing grants. A delivery partner is known as any local level NGO, community or faith-based organisation and any other groups which may receive financial resources to directly implement a development project. In order to control variables within the research, the two participating organisations both work for women's rights, although one has a technology focus and the other is advocacy driven. These were selected from partners suggested by the organisation hosting the research. Global Giving are uniquely positioned as an international non-profit organisation, hosting an online platform for fundraising whilst being invested in the improvement of learning in their partnerships, therefore the research will refer mainly on non-government grants. For additional controls and practicalities all organisations were based in India, although in quite different states, some distance apart. India has

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not only been a target for many women's rights projects but is also a hub of activity for Global Giving, hosting their largest number of partners.

Based on the assumption that effective organisational learning is beneficial for all actors in development, the research began by hypothesising that traditional, more rigid forms of funding relationships, restrict the culture of learning within their delivery partners with the effects observed in many areas of the organisations. It was expected that the data would provide evidence to support this. Research was conducted with two local level organisations, then coded and analysed using themes identified through a review of the literature, both then provided the foundations for the thoughts addressed in the discussion section.
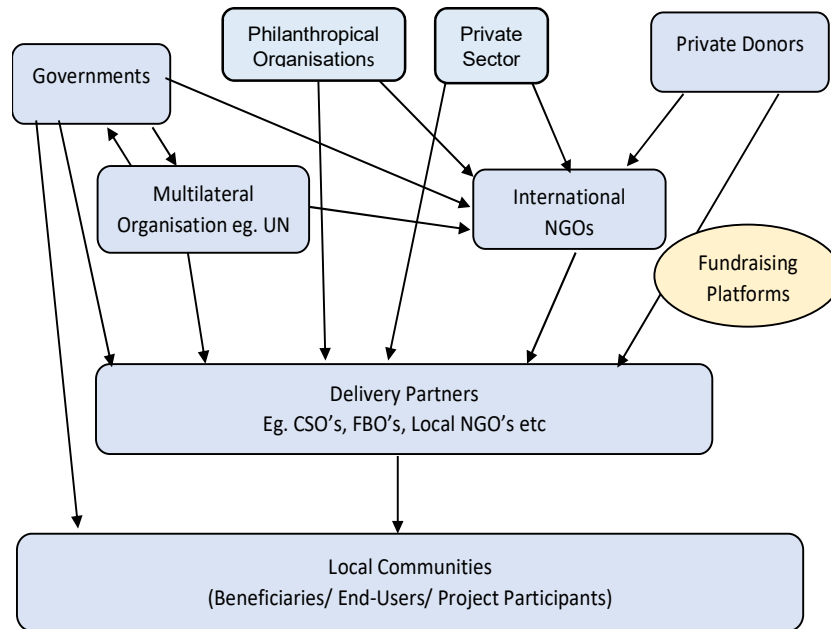

Figure 2- The funding chain (not exhaustive)

Literature Review

Although organisational learning has been popular in the corporate sector for some time, it only began gaining prominence in the non-profit sector in the early 1990's (Scott-Villiers, 2002). This research aims to establish the current organisational learning status of development organisations, with emphasis on the unique incentives and motivations. A review of the development literature shows increased importance for concepts such as accountability, trustworthy relationships, participation of stakeholders and evaluations of reporting systems. With focus on the relationship between delivery organisations and those above them in the funding chain, the ideas conveyed through the resources will be presented in five groups. Firstly, with the internally situated culture of learning and tool of monitoring and evaluation, which out of all the ideas may be the ones which delivery organisations themselves have the largest control over. Then expanding the focus to look at the actual process of influence through accountability and participation. Moving on to look at wider topics including the demands placed on delivery partners by their funding organisations, finishing with sector wide competition and partnerships.

The very nature of *development* has always been to create change. All organisations in the sector have a mission to bring about a transformation, and in doing so inherently demand their own commitment to active organisational change and development (Scott-Villers, 2002). Due to these continual and encompassing transformations, development work is complex, uncertain and involves constant learning, unlearning, reflection and adaptation to steer the direction of the change towards success (Roper and Pettit, 2002; Edwards, 1997; Vincent and Byrne, 2006). Whilst this environment should therefore be a catalyst for innovation, efficiency and accountability, it unfortunately fosters desperate competition for unstable funding, leading to the disproportionate placement of power, ineffective use of resources, mistrust and decreased accountability to those claimed to be served (Rauh, 2010; Reith, 2010).

Whilst organisational learning has its beginnings in the quite different for-profit sector with the work of Chris Argyris and Donald Schön (1974, 1978, 1996) and Peter Senge (1990), they can still provide a good introduction and foundation for much of

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the following research, through identifying the universal ability of not just individuals, but organisations to learn, and how and why it should be facilitated. Argyris and Schön first distinguished between learning which accepts information (single-loop) and that which questions it (double-loop) (See Fig 3), identifying the benefits for individuals and their organisations if active learning is facilitated (1974), alongside the importance of theory in action, allowing learning to be reapplied (1978). Influenced by his teacher Chris Argyris, Peter Senge promoted the concept of the 'learning organization', highlighting the role systems and structures should play, whilst emphasising the need to build capacity through all levels of the organisation (Senge, 1990). One of his proposed themes, the decentralisation of leadership, is echoed in many of the resources discussed below. Although these theories provide a useful introduction to the subject, the complexity, style of competition and values-led approach of the non-profit sector means the usefulness of their application is limited (Hailey, 2000; Osbourne, 2007; Power et al, 2002).
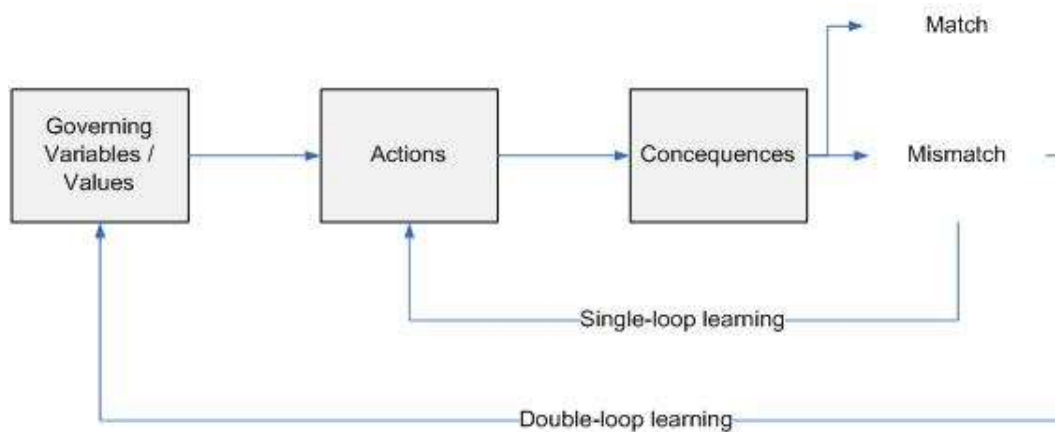
Figure 3. *Single and Double-Loop Learning (Argyris, 1999)*

2.1 Learning Culture

Successful learning is critically inherent to the effectiveness of a development organisation. The question then becomes, what fosters or inhibits organisational learning? Acknowledgement and discussion around the influence of an organisation's culture has been receiving increased attention. Although funding organisations are external stakeholders to their delivery partners (Fig 1), they still have influence over their culture. How an organisation perceives and handles *mistakes* reflects their culture for learning. Mistakes, which Argyris and Schön (1996) describe as "a mismatch of outcomes to expectations" (p32), are a prime opportunity

for delivery organisations to learn. If those mistakes are viewed as failures, by being seen as against the organisation for highlighting weaknesses or with staff being blamed, isolated and reprimanded by management, then not only are the opportunities to learn lost, but the projects, programmes, staff and organisation suffer too (Chambers, 1997; Oswald and Taylor, 2010; Bloch and Borges, 2002, Argyris and Schön, 1996; Dierolf et al, 2002).This fosters an environment of overly positive rather than realistic reporting through all levels of the organisation and beyond to donors, with delivery organisations feeling pressured to provide high impact information rather than admit 'mistakes'.

For an organisation to acknowledge their mismatches there needs to be an environment of trust, both internally and externally; an idea which is addressed many times throughout the reviewed literature. End-users and staff need to feel that they won't suffer if they speak out about mistakes or challenges, but also that their doing so will be valued and contribute to positive changes (Edwards, 1997, Hailey and James, 2002). At the other end of the funding chain, larger international development organisations are fearful of public reaction to stories reported by the media, possibly hindering transparency. The scenario is similar for delivery organisations reporting to donors, with the threat of discontinued funding on one hand and increased alignment to community needs on the other. By increasing the voice of staff and end-users, creating safe spaces and having learning leaders in positions of management, organisations can facilitate cultures of learning. Funding organisations can enhance the learning opportunities of their delivery partners by committing to longer-term funding, building better relationships and by placing value on partners knowledge (Scott-Villiers, 2002; Solomon et al, 2002; Hailey and James, 2002; Edwards, 1997, Dierolf et al 2002, Oswald and Taylor, 2010; Vincent and Byrne, 2006). Leaders who not only prioritise organisational learning, but who are also committed to the learning of individual staff members and more importantly, themselves, are significantly more likely to facilitate learning in an organisation. This does however require humility and honesty in order to be reflective and somewhat critical of themselves and their work, alongside respect and openness to inputs from others, possibly in 'lower' positions than them (Edwards, 1997; Hailey and James, 2002; Kaachur et al, 2016). Whilst many internal systems can contribute to a culture of learning within an organisation, such as recruiting staff with commitment to learning, tailored content and method of

training and reflective appraisals to support learning from mistakes, there was little reference to them in the literature.

2.2 Monitoring and Evaluation

For funding organisations to collect legitimating impact information monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems are used. These tools include establishing objectives and goals of outputs and outcomes to be achieved by projects. By controlling funding, donor organisations direct the formulation of these targets, increasing the alignment with their own values. The current trend is for shorter term funding, with a desire for quick results and high impact. But creating real lasting change in a society takes time and is difficult to demonstrate over such short periods. Donors therefore have a preference for short-term outputs such as how many lives saved, rather than long term outcomes such as capacity building, to the detriment of delivery organisations, communities and the overall development sector (Osbourne, 2007; Wallace et al, 2006; Ebrahim, 2003; AbouAssi, 2012; Bloch and Borges, 2002; Hearn and Buffardi, 2016) and especially to advocacy work (Coates and David, 2002; Parks, 2008). Directing funds to short-term, high impact outputs also increases the struggle of NGOs to cover the costs of core activities such as salaries of long-term staff and office rent; leading to high staff turnover, making recruitment, training and retention of skilled staff difficult, alongside dramatically minimising the organisations ability to facilitate, maintain and embed learning (Wallace et al, 2006; Elbers, 2011; Van Der Heijden, 1987).

Donors hierarchal power means that with each funding avenue comes an alternative monitoring and evaluation format which delivery partners are expected to accommodate (Roper and Pettit, 2002). Funding organisations believe that this process increases learning, through supplying information and enforcing reflection, however in reality, many delivery partners see M&E as a chore (Kaaachur et al, 2016; Power et al, 2002; Solomon et al, 2002; Reith, 2010). Processes which are designed and led by the implementing organisation themselves, allowing them to be adapted to their specific resources, circumstances and values, whilst also providing useful knowledge and impact information, are more effective. The data can then be relayed to funding organisations in a more appropriate format, preventing the need for collating and configuring information specific to donor requirements and the

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diversion of staffs' time and resources (Elbers, 2011; Hirschmann, 2003; Scott-Villiers, 2002). Although funding organisations have a preference to work with local level delivery partners who employ local people from rural communities, they ironically also require all reports to be completed in English; this is easier for the donor to quickly understand the information, but greatly increases the difficulty level and time required for much smaller delivery organisations with fewer resources, demonstrating the most simple of demands imposed by donors relating to M&E (Reith, 2010). If funding organisations improve trust in their delivery partners, it will increase their participation and ownership over M&E processes, demonstrated to produce more effective learning opportunities for all (Rauh, 2010; Power et al, 2002; Scott-Villiers, 2002).

Informal learning is continuously happening in development organisations, M&E is about trying to capture that learning, but it is also essential that systems for learning are embedded through all aspects of the organisation and supported by an overall culture of learning, including the environment and space to be critical (Torres and Preskill, 2001; Vincent and Byrne, 2006). When an M&E system is integrated into an organisation, not only is value given to the information it produces, but it is more importantly placed throughout the process itself, where rich learning can occur (Elbers, 2011; Senge, 1990). Otherwise, vast amounts of information can be collected and reported back to donors, but little learning and therefore minimal positive changes can be made from it; there is a clear lack of effective double-loop learning (Edwards, 1997; Argyris and Schön, 1996; Roper and Petit, 2002; Kaachur et al, 2016). ActionAid's Accountability, Learning and Planning System (ALPS) demonstrates the rewards of decentralising M&E, increasing participation from the bottom-up, establishing a guiding set of principles and supporting flexible and adaptive reporting mechanism (Scott-Villiers, 2002).

2.3 Accountability and Participation

Two prominent themes of influence in the literature were those of accountability and participation. Both external factors influence the learning of a development organisation through the formation of direction, methods, guidelines and targets. Accountability is the act of one-party judging the success of another party in meeting a set of standards, and applying sanctions if it is deemed they have not (Grant and

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Keohane, 2005). This grants the judging party a certain power over the remaining actor. In the for-profit sector consumers maintain maximum power to hold companies to account, with the freedom to redirect their business elsewhere If they are unsatisfied. Seeing as development organisations existence is to improve the lives of disadvantaged civil society, we would assume that the majority of accountability would take place in this direction, with a proportionate amount also pertaining to avenues providing essential funding (Power et al, 2002; Oswald and Taylor, 2010). However, this accountability is skewed with pressure on delivery organisations to prioritise meeting funding organisations standards before those originating from the communities they aim to serve (Winter, 2010; Oswald and Taylor, 2010; AbouAssi, 2012; Elbers, 2011; Kaachur et al 2016; Rauh, 2010, Roper and Pettit, 2002; Ashman, 2000; Scott-Villiers, 2002). With increased accountability upwards in the funding chain comes increased bureaucratic power causing NGOs to yet further adhere to conditions in order to secure funding. This often results in objectives, aims, resources and timelines of projects and programs being set by donor agencies decreasing the influence and control of the implementing organisation over the work they are carrying out. Delivery organisations feel less able to identify and make suggestions for improvement due to their lack of voice and the rigid guidelines within which they have to operate, minimising the uptake and application of learning opportunities in the field and wider organisation and ultimately delaying progression (Ebrahim, 2005; Elbers, 2011; Reith, 2010; Lister, 2001). When accountability is disproportionate like this, funding organisations receive unfair levels of praise and reprimand, decreasing ownership and responsibility within delivery level NGOs leading to lack of interest for learning and developing.

Downwards accountability is lacking not only from funding organisations to delivery partners, but also from both to the communities they serve. This lack of accountability appears to go hand in hand with participation. Delivery organisations who facilitate the voice of end users in the community and not only listen and value the inputs, but actually learn and implement changes in accordance, are viewed more positively by their stakeholders and believed to hold more legitimacy. When this level of participation is prominent, the implementing organisation is less likely to adjust their goals and objectives to those of donors, staying faithful to their internal values and yet further improving their perceived legitimacy (Hailey, 2000; Korten,

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1990; Power et al, 2002; Whaites, 1996; Winters, 2010; Hearn and Buffardi, 2016).
Bottom-up learning has been increasingly incorporated into the development sector
due to its demonstrable improvement in serving the needs of the community. It
does this through valuing and applying knowledge gained through increased
opportunities of participation (Power et al, 2002; Scott-Villiers, 2002, AbouAssi,
2012). The shift began in the early 1990s with organisations such as ActionAid
championing learning and implementing changes led by participation (Scott-Villiers,
2002). Many organisations are working to decentralise power by increasing
participation, allowing driving ideas and solutions to originate closer to the recipients
and therefore increasing effectiveness in meeting their needs (Dierolf et al, 2002;
Senge, 1990).

2.4 Donor Demands
Delivery organisations based in developing countries rely on overseas development
aid to work towards their mission. Those funding avenues are generally international
and far placed organisations meaning that despite the power of their money, funders
absolutely rely on local organisations to actually deliver development projects on
their behalf and therefore legitimise their purpose (Reith, 2010; Rauh, 2010).
Regardless of this mutual dependency, delivery NGOs hold a significantly smaller
proportion of the power in the relationship and by accepting funding can experience
effects which are not beneficial or desirable (Van Der Heijden, 1987; Coates and
David, 2002; Elbers, 2011, Bornstein, 2003). As the finances are critical for the
sustainment of delivery organisations and their work, there is increased pressure to
agree to demands, which due to their place of creation often prioritise the vision of
actors higher in the funding chain (Rodrik, 2006; Mkandawire, 2005). By focusing on
pursuing donor's agendas, vital information regarding the actual needs of the
communities can be overlooked and in such a highly competitive market, recipient
organisations are compelled to adhere by their need to secure funding for survival
(Reith, 2010). This obedience can direct organisations away from their internal
values and mission and align them with donors, creating similarities between
recipients of funding avenues, increasing alliance and dependence, and decreasing
the voice of delivery organisations and communities (Rauh, 2010). This is particularly
damaging for advocacy organisations as they not only need to appear independent,
but if a funding organisation claims responsibility for financing the policy change of

another country's government, this could be deemed interfering and have negative repercussions. Alongside the lack of legitimisation through impact data, these provide enough deterrent against supporting this type of work (Coates and David, 2002; Parks, 2008, Van Deer Heijden et al, 1987). The Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) of the 1980's provide a drastic example of the coercion within funding agreements, including imposed directionality and increased decision-making power of funding bodies (Rodrik, 2006; Mkandawire, 2005; Whaites, 1996).

Despite the pressure on delivery organisations and their relatively poor room for negotiation, they are not necessarily completely submissive. In the literature it is proposed that NGOs can select or reject which funding to accept, attempt to negotiate or exit from agreements where the circumstances are not beneficial or can even decide to window-dress information to appear more in line with donors demands (AbouAssi, 2012; Elbers, 2011). This is easier when organisations can report impact showing support for commitment to their own mission. Funding which is not accompanied by any stipulations is rare and not particularly favoured, as partnerships between organisations with comparable missions is preferred, creating value in the mutual exchange of information and reducing the need to realign. Organisations who have an increased commitment to learning are less likely to accept funding which would cause them to divert from their mission, as it would negatively impact their ability to learn and meet the needs of the community they serve. Ironically, this loyalty is appealing to funding organisations and over time the delivery partner may find themselves attracting, rather than searching for funding offers, providing them with increased freedom to choose which funds to accept or reject and minimising their need to bend to donor's demands (Edwards, 1997; Elbers, 2011; Roper and Pettit, 2002). Whilst these circumstances were highlighted in nearly all the consulted literature, there was lacking discussion regarding similar requirements placed on donor organisations from their funding sources, such as governments or multi-lateral organisations; for example, the need for United Nations (UN) funding to demonstrate contribution to the sustainable development goals (SDGs) (Reith, 2010). However, this paper does not have the scope to discuss this further.

2.5 Competition and Partnerships

Development is a competitive market and as mentioned previously, funding agencies hold the power. Whilst in the for-profit sector competition would normally lead to increases in accountability, efficiency, innovation and transparency, almost the opposite is true in the development sector. Donors are expected to maintain the flow of funding and with numerous implementing partners to choose from, they will be selected based on alignment to the donor's mission, ability to demonstrate and document achievement, and sometimes as simple as successful relationships between individuals in each organisation (Reith, 2010). Sector wide, as NGOs adapt to donor's priorities they become increasingly similar, minimising the scope of development work and room for innovation; for the recipient organisation it leads to decreased belief from the community and other possible donors. Additionally, delivery organisations often attempt to do too much. In desperation to finance their survival, they not only adjust their programs but create whole new ones in line with donor's visions; often irrelevant of the community's expressed needs or their own capabilities or resources. This then reinforces their reliance and obedience to the funding provider (Scott-Villiers, 2002; Rauh, 2010; Reith, 2010).

Donors preference for clear and quick results leads to short term funding of projects, leaving delivery organisations with unstable funding and again increasing desperate competition for funds (Rauh, 2010; Osbourne, 2007; Van Der Heijden et al, 1987). If longer relationships are established then participation of delivery partners and beneficiaries increases, trust is built and freedom for learning is achieved (Elbers, 2011; Vincent and Byrne, 2006; Osbourne, 2007). Development partnerships can be vertically between funding organisations and delivery partners but are essential *between* delivery organisations too. As learning is necessary for success in the development sector, partnerships are then crucial, ensuring the easy flow of information and knowledge between organisations, increasing learning and saving precious time and resources by preventing unnecessary repetition and mistakes. Additionally, increased trust fosters an environment supportive of critical reflection, leading to realistic reporting, sustainable funding and overall improved learning. The importance of trust is acknowledged repeatedly through the literature, due to its ability to increase effectivity in meeting community needs, developing staff, improving the efficiency of organisations and providing longer term legitimacy to

donors (Bloch and Borges, 2002; Coates and David, 2002; Hailey and James, 2002; Reith, 2010; Dierolf et al, 2002). Increased competition for funding is preventative of this as delivery organisations attempt to have the edge over competitors (Oswald and Taylor, 2010; Roper and Pettit, 2002). This competitive nature is especially damaging for advocacy NGOs, as not only is collaboration between organisations essential in establishing successful movements towards change, but it is also extremely difficult to attribute the success of any advocacy movement to a single organisation, meaning competitive edges are not only limited but the benefits of funding one organisation in a movement is automatically rippled on to others. Additionally, as advocacy agencies are often trying to change government policies, it is even more critical that they remain true to their core values as opposed to their funders- which could include governments. If funding organisations feel this stance as acting against the government, then they also may avoid providing funding (Coates and David, 2002; Parks, 2008; Van Der Heijden et al, 1987).

2.6 Suggestions

Discussions around the organisational learning specifically of development NGOs has increased in importance. More has been understood about the way learning is integrated into the systems, processes and tools at the core of the organisations, and the way these and many other aspects of learning are affected by the relationships with funding organisations. Whilst there is a good amount of literature available on the subject there is clearly room for further research, with concepts such as ownership given little thought. Development is currently seeing a rise of alternatives to the traditional funding avenues. Philanthropical organisations such as the Gates Foundation, have the freedom to fund as they chose with no actor before them in the funding chain, intermediaries such as Global Giving channel, rather than provide funding changing their meaning to stakeholders, and social businesses are profit making but value driven organisations with varying accountability. In the extremely complex and ever-changing world of development it has become essential for all actors to understand their effect on the learning of their delivery partners.

<u>Methodology</u>

My recent roles in monitoring and evaluation have naturally progressed to focus on learning and capacity building, spurring interest in this area specifically. Mostly working with grassroots level organisations has provide exposure to their perceived effects of funding avenues, especially on learning. It had been expressed that not enough is being invested in learning, but that doing so would be useful and after discussing this further with academics and professionals in the international sector, the sentiment was echoed. Furthermore, consensus on how to maximise the usefulness of this research for the sector, created the focus specifically on the relationship between funding avenue and delivery partner.

Through the literature review themes of accountability, participation, conditionality, competition and monitoring and evaluation systems generated question ideas and later provided guidelines for coding of the interviews. The criticality of learning to the success of development organisations, staff, communities and the sector inclusively was emphasised and issues specific to advocacy organisations were introduced, but not extensively elaborated. The unique effects of intermediaries were excluded altogether, supporting the direction of this research. A guiding question was developed to identify the incentives for development organisations to learn, and key players identified (see fig 2), with this research concentrating on funding avenues and delivery organisations. It was hypothesised that traditional funding relationships in development do not encourage effective learning. Ethical implications and research limitations were considered, resulting in the use of qualitative interviews, supported by observations and a small set of quantitative questions to perform a cross-sectional and immersive study.

By choosing to use mixed, but mainly qualitative methods to interview, interact and observe participants in an environment natural to them, it was logical to adopt an interpretivist philosophy. This was continued through to the qualitative interpretation of the data using thematic analysis, whilst acknowledging that the results are of particular environments, circumstances, people and place in time and therefore are not completely generalisable (Saunders, 2012). A research partnership with Global

Giving was established due to their position in the funding cycle and commitment to learning.

3.1 Global Giving

Originally registered in the USA in 2002, and the UK in 2008, Global Giving (GG) One was formed in 2017. As an international intermediary organisation rather than a strictly fund giving organisation, they provide a fundraising platform for more than 20,000 projects in 170 countries. While they do provide some grants in emergency situations, their main purpose is to provide grassroots level organisation and projects access to an increased field of donors. GG state an investment in learning not only within their own organisations and their delivery partners, but also the effects of their partnership on that learning. In recent years they introduced an incentive system known as GG rewards, aimed at encouraging delivery partners to develop their capacities and providing increased opportunities and support for learning. The system increases the status of the partner in line with their participation in learning activities such as reflections and online trainings. For any task completed, points are allocated, which see the organisation progress through the status of partner and leader to superstar (GG, 2016). Once a superstar they will have increased visibility in marketing campaigns, higher possibility of corporate introductions and overall improved likelihood of donations.

Meetings with the global director of impact and communications and UK director of programmes and operations established the parameters of the research including the geographical focus in India. Further discussions with the only GG member of staff in country, identified the value to work with two GG delivery partners. After participating in a week-long GG training program in Kochi, India to learn about the organisation's values, structure and mission, organisations were approached, one which utilises and receives more funding through GG's platform than the other. This was an attempt to draw contrasts and comparisons between the two

It was felt that conducting the research in country would be hugely beneficial on both sides; interacting with the organisation, understanding their structure and how they operate within that, becoming familiar with their projects and programmes and developing relationships, alongside providing them with assistance, guidance,

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support and advice useful in reflecting on their organisations learning culture. The two organisations selected were the Centre for Women's Development and Research (CWDR) in Chennai and El Shaddhai in Goa, however unfortunately El Shaddhai were unable to participate in the study very late on. As a result of this, I conducted an additional online interview with the founder of an organisation I had previously worked with in Delhi, called Feminist Approach to Technology (FAT). As this fortunately led to both participating organisations having a focus of women's rights, alongside their geographic proximity, better management of the variables was enabled.

3.2 Centre for Women's Development and Research (CWDR)

CWDR was founded in 1993 by a group of women activists and is now directed by Renuka Bala. Based in Chennai, the capital of Tamil Nadu, they focus mainly on advocacy, declaring in their mission a desire to facilitate "a women's movement to achieve human rights for all women" (CWDR, 2018). Working in over 100 of the city's slums and surrounding villages, they run three main programmes. Manushi is a trade union group for the high number of women having little rights as domestic workers; Snehidhi was established to support adolescent girls with life skills and vocational training, recently branching into sponsoring students. Whilst the organisation focuses mainly on advocacy, they also provided support during the 2015 Chennai floods. From this the Maithri program was established, facilitating the most vulnerable (usually single) women in the community to construct a network, providing a support system and creating income generating opportunities. The organisation prides itself on working at grassroots level, with a number of staff having worked their way up from participants in the projects. There are only a few permanent office staff managing accounts, admin, fundraising and operations, with a further two coordinators managing around 50 to 100 slums and numerous resource staff each. In total they have raised over £137,000 for 6 projects through the GG platform over the past 13 years and have earnt superstar status, despite this they still find themselves lacking funding (GG, 2018a).

3.3 Feminist Approach to Technology (FAT)

FAT operates primarily from Delhi since being founded by Gayatri Buragohain in 2008. By working towards empowering women through technology, the organisation

aims to challenge the norms of the technology sector by pressing for the incorporation of women as equal partners. Their Young Women's Leadership programme consists of underprivileged adolescent girls attending activities weekly or daily, completing tasks such as computer training, film making, English classes and sexuality awareness. Alongside this the Jugaad Lab program compromises of less hours, slightly younger disadvantaged girls and an increased focus of hands on technological innovation (FAT, 2018). The main bulk of FATs current staff and interns have previously been project participants themselves since a recent restructure, with a commitment from the organisation to be ran by and for the girls.

As FAT was a late participant in the research time was not spent with them in this instance but had been previously, with good working relationships established, familiarity with projects and programmes, and an understanding of how dedication to their mission shapes the structure and core values. Since joining four years ago, they have raised over £7500 for four projects through GG's platform, they have a corpus fund and are funded mostly by organisations approaching them, providing some contrasts to CWDR (GG, 2018b).

3.4 Qualitative Research

As the topic area is complex, qualitative methods were adopted to capture descriptive reflections and experiences and minimise the loss of depth and diversity when analysing. To balance the qualitative data a group of quantitative ranking questions were included to enable a cross check for the level of subjectivity in the analysis. Whilst a comparison between the qualitative interviews and a quantitative analysis of monitoring and evaluation reports would have been interesting, this was not possible due to time, resource and ability constraints (Bernard, 2006; Saunders, 2012).

Whilst interviews provided most of the data, observations were recorded too, providing rich contextual understanding and therefore motivating field level data collection. The initial aim was to conduct action research by actively working with the organisation not only to obtain data, but also to identify and overcome some of their practical organisational issues. It was hoped this would additionally alleviate some of the probable cultural differences (Bernard, 2006; Court and Abbas, 2013; Saunders,

2012). By interviewing only a small number of staff from each organisation, I hoped to minimise negative impact to the organisation caused through diverting time from usual tasks. Of the remaining methods I considered, focus groups would have provided answers which were influenced by others in the group, making it harder to analyse the effects through the different levels, and questionnaires would have produced a larger quantity of answers with less detail. Both would also have required more individuals to participate.

3.5 Application

To gain a further understanding of GG's approach and structure, I was invited to attend a one-week training program for their India field travellers; a group of volunteers participating in field visits of GG's delivery partners. During that week, I was provided information for the two agreed upon organisations and contacted them through email. I introduced myself and described the core of my research, also emphasising that I was not working for GG in the hope to eliminate any bias reporting. When I arrived at CWDR on the agreed date, the director completed the consent form and we discussed further my research and professional experience, as well as the projects, programmes and workings of the organisation. I also attended a union meeting in one of the slums to gain some perspective of their work. As I was unable to interview the director of FAT in person, the consent form and introduction to the research idea was all completed by email.

Whilst I planned to complete between four and eight interviews of around 90 minutes with staff from all levels in each organisation, only three were conducted in total mainly due to time constraints. A spectrum of data would have enabled comparisons of funding effects on learning throughout the organisation. As the research was neither purely deductive or inductive, I developed a basic set of questions (Appendix 1) considering the different representatives and themes. This then allowed me to gain an understanding of the interviewee's perception of the donor, management, staff and project participants, influence, understanding and commitment to learning. Semi-structured interviews were the most appropriate method, by using open-ended questions to allow for complex topics to be answered, variation of question order and structure, rapport building and as the interviews would be conducted in English (which would be the second or third language of the research participants) hopefully

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allow for better communication and understanding (Bernard, 2006; Saunders, 2013). Additionally, this method lends itself well to an interpretivist approach, pursuing information and encouraging relevant narratives which otherwise would be excluded. Finally, I had very limited time to actually engage with the organisation before the interviews took place, therefore I needed to utilise time around the established questions to build working relationships and make participants feel comfortable, hopefully also minimising cultural differences (Court and Abbas, 2013; Gobo, 2011).

As the interviews were to be semi-structured and descriptive, they were all recorded via a smart phone application, allowing full engagement in conversation and eliminating information recall concerns. Question cues were provided via laptop and interviews were conducted one to one, in a partially formal setting. To support this, observations and thoughts were recorded and reflected on daily, facilitating the identification of possible themes (Bernard, 2006). All interviews were later transcribed and along with the observations, coded and interpreted using thematic analysis.

3.6 Analysis

The motivation for this research was as an exploratory and explanatory study, to not only gain insights about the current funding relationship, but also to identify the effects of differences within it, for example variables in levels of support, power and innovation between restricted and unrestricted funding. When conducting mainly qualitative data collection and analysis, it was important to identify a tool to allow understanding in a flexible and manageable, but not statistical manner, whilst also ensuring the complex meanings, stories and perspectives were not lost; therefore, thematic analysis was carried out (Saunders, 2012). This effectively allowed for an interpretivist philosophy to be maintained, for example by emphasising the influence of values in the construction of the data. It was important also to acknowledge the subjectivity of the research, understanding that the participants answers were each relevant to themselves in that time, place and situation, understood and perceived as a result of their social construction of the world, therefore not necessarily easily generalised or repeated. Parallelly, understanding that throughout the research, from the choice of topic, through the formulation of the task and the participants understanding, to the analysis of the data and beyond, all are subjective to the

values and interpretation of the researcher (Denzin, 2001, Heyl, 2005; Song and Parker, 1995).

Themes of investigation arose naturally throughout the process, from formulating the hypothesis and questions to collecting, interpreting and analysing information. Once the data had been collected and transcribed, these broad themes were used for coding of the narratives, highlighting patterns which led to the more distinct classification of themes. Therefore, whilst the same themes were used to code the reviewed literature, interview transcripts and observations, when alternative patterns appeared more dominant in the collected data, these were adopted for interpretation of the results. Contrasts and comparisons could then be looked at between themes and patterns to understand the data, draw conclusions and consider explanations and variables (Bernard, 2006; Saunders, 2012). Throughout the analysis process, results were referred back to the hypothesis and research questions originally posed, in attempt to give truer answers.

3.7 Challenges

The main change to the planned research was the inclusion of a different organisation. Although time was not able to be spent with FAT, previous interactions allowed for a quality interview to still be conducted. Alongside this I had a major health complication which dramatically impacted my physical ability to collect data, meaning that the immersive nature and action research that I was hoping to achieve was all but completely lost. Staff time constraints made it impossible to conduct further interviews through the different levels of FAT, whereas language was an issue at CWDR with translations being provided by the directors' husband, therefore producing distorted data. These were the main factors contributing to fewer interviews being conducted; three for CWDR and one for FAT (although of the three conducted at CWDR, one unfortunately asked post interview for the results not to be included in the research).

Whilst the interviews provided some good data, improvements could be made. Changes would include ensuring the availability of an independent translator and committing to a longer time physically conducting research. Interviewing the desired number of participants would have been valuable and an extension would be to

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include participants from a variety of positions in the funding cycle, such as state donors or philanthropic organisations. The quantitative results provided little benefit other than a cross reference for subjectivity and participants perspectives. Otherwise, I felt that recording the interviews as opposed to taking notes, was essential and hugely benefited the research, as well as the semi-structured format which allowed for richer, more relevant information to be unearthed.

The choice to focus distinctly on an organisation at a time, spending numerous days developing a relationship and understanding, is not dissimilar to an organisational case study, however whilst this is something to aim towards, it was not achievable within the constraints of this research. A credible and worthy extensions would be to implement the action research approach, including the use of monitoring and evaluation reports and discussions with alternative donors with varying funding styles.

Results

The research was conducted to gain understanding of the learning incentives of delivery organisations and identifying the influence on that of the relationships with funding channels. It was hypothesised that when funding is restrictive the learning of the delivery partner will suffer. There were some challenges whilst carrying out the research, most prominently the unexpected deterioration of the researcher's physical health, which meant that the quantity of research and the quality of the interactions were greatly reduced. However, this enabled increased energy to be directed to the analysis and interpretation of the data, resulting in more focused, but possibly less generalisable conclusions. The themes identified within the literature review were upheld for coding the results, which was useful in further building the understanding of key concepts and drawing comparisons. Of the themes identified, all were addressed in the field research too and whilst there were similarities between the different participants, there were also differences which will be reflected on. This section of the paper will present the results of the research through the identification of the key ideas of trust, communication and stability, and begin to analyse their relation to the research questions and hypothesis. Then the following discussion section will reflect on each idea's placement in correlation to the themes presented in the literature review.

The possible research organisations were narrowed to working for women's rights within India; this geographic and cause focus aimed to control variables and facilitate more authentic comparisons. When planning the research, the level of interaction each organisation had with GG was originally identified as the main variable, however after conducting and reviewing the results, other distinct variables appeared. Through the literature review we could see that the effects of the analysed relationship were noticeably different for organisations with a mission of advocacy (Van Der Heijden, 1987; Coates and David, 2002; Parks, 2008). One of the research organisation (CWDR) has an advocacy focus, whereas whilst the other (FAT) carried out advocacy work this was not their driving purpose. This will be treated as a secondary variable, demanding consideration whilst interpreting and analysing the results alongside two other notable differences; the percentage of secure and

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sustainable funding- which can be both an influencer and an outcome of effective learning- and their understanding of learning as either a culture or formal activities.

4.1 Trust

The most prominent idea discussed throughout not only the data collected, but also the literature review was that of trust (For example Argyris and Schön, 1996; Solomon et al, 2002; Osbourne, 2007; Reith, 2010; Coates and David, 2002; Oswald and Taylor, 2010). Trust has a wide scope, involving and affecting all actors, at all levels in the funding chain. We can observe the positive effects for learning when trust is present and negative when it is omitted. Its effects are observed in all the remaining ideas presented here, reinforcing its overarching importance. As a result, it is mentioned in response to a variety of the interview questions.

In both organisations the founders take up the position equivalent to CEO as well as the main funding point of contact. They therefore value the effects of personal relationships with employees of funding avenues in building trust for securing funds. CWDR experienced difficulties with a funder who had been elusive and delayed releasing funds and Renuka described how it was added to by the continuous changes of staff. Alternatively, when detailing CWDR's longest partnership, Renuka described how they advised "don't worry" (Sec 20, Bala, 2018) and extended the project deadlines during the 2016 Indian demonetisation. The funding organisation also demonstrated understanding and trust in Renuka when she was suffering with serious health problems in 2007. These characteristics of the partnership likely contribute to the 20-year continuation of funding, and in turn fostered the grounds to effectively learn and develop a project. The FAT founder, Gayatri explained that "I am a person who is either liked or not liked by funders, also those who don't like me will not fund me" (Sec 1, Buragohain, 2018). She continued to describe the mixed reactions from funding avenues when she informed them about a positive change of direction for the organisation, with some funders who "listen" (Sec 1, Buragohain, 2018) and continue to support and others who didn't. Respect as a component of trust is explicitly linked to effectiveness of work in that "where the funders have respected my ideas and …respected the inputs received from FATs team and the community, we have worked well" (Sec 2, Buragohain, 2018). Flexible funding is directly identified as a result of an enriched relationship between the funding avenue

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and the whole organisation, described through their immersive involvement during field visits "when funders come to visit, we don't just sit with the director and tell him that we do this ABCD. We do every meeting with the girls (project participants) so that the funders can see the impact" (Sec 8, Buragohain, 2018).

		Renuka	Staff	Gayatri
		CWDR	CWDR	FAT
1	How much are staff invested in their own professional self-development?	9	9	9
2	How much is the organisation invested in staff development?	10	10	10
3	How easily does the organisation adapt and respond to the changes?	9	9	9/10
4	How easily does the organisation overcome challenges?	8	9	8
5	How easily is information or knowledge shared?	10	10	8
6	How much influence do staff have in making changes to projects and programs?	5	9/10	7
7	How much influence do project participants have in making changes to projects and programs?	5	10/8	7
8	How much influence do management have in making changes to projects and programmes?	10	10/8	7
9	How much influence do donors have in making changes to projects and programmes?	5	0/0	4
10	How useful as a tool for learning do you feel M&E reports are?	10	9/9	6
11	How much do donors facilitate learning within the organisation?	6	X	6
12	How much do GG facilitate learning within the organisation?	5	x	0

Figure 4- Quantitative Questions and Answers (from 0-10, with 10 being the highest)

Another level of trust was demonstrated in the interviews with the CWDR staff where they described how by spending time developing relationships with the project participants and their families, they were able to increase support and engagement for the activities; this sentiment was also echoed by Renuka (Sec 13, Bala, 2018; Sec 7, CWDR Staff, 2018). Additionally, they acknowledged that when working in communities outside of their home area it takes more time to build up trust and therefore participation and engagement of the people (Sec 7, CWDR Staff, 2018). Renuka expressed her level of trust in the staff when describing how each one is "responsible to look after the programme at the local level" or cluster level, but then explained "I monitor the coordinators.. I have some cross check and I discuss everything openly" (Sec 11, Bala, 2018). Despite acknowledging the benefits of trust between themselves and the communities, the staff don't specifically highlight the need to experience trust within the other levels of the organisation, although in

response to the quantitative questions they did give the highest overall marks, demonstrating belief in the organisation (See Fig 4; CWDR Staff, 2018).

Throughout all the interviews there was little discussion specific to the relationship between funding streams and delivery partners, regarding the benefits of an environment which welcomes critical reflections and perceives *mistakes* not as failures, but as opportunities to learn (Argyris and Schön, 1996). This may simply be due to the desire not to express perceived failures to an outsider, could be the interpretation of mistakes as something addressed internally but not externally or explicitly, but could also be a reflection of their avoidance. A highly trusting relationship is required to foster the open admission of mistakes and a core culture of learning, to then build from them effectively. Renuka did detail how in weekly staff meetings, they have space to share any challenges and seek assistance towards overcoming (Sec 8, Bala, 2018). She explained how "if some issues are there that they are unable to get solutions (to), so they come here and research with us and we take the steps to solve these problems" (Sec 1, Bala, 2018), showing encouragement to acknowledge and address possible *mistakes*. In the quantitative questions, both staff and the founder of CWDR gave the highest possible scores for knowledge sharing within the organisation and all interview participants gave maximum scores for the organisation's investment in the development of the staff, showing a perception of excellent commitment to learning (See Fig 4). Gayatri from FAT described how the complementary roles of supervisor and mentor are for staff to express personal and professional concerns within the organisation. Additionally the project participants "do a lot of giving feedback to each other..and evaluating each other" (Sec 11, Buragohain, 2018). In a comparison of the quantitative results, FAT claimed more overall bottom up participation (See Fig 4).

When trust is missing from a delivery partner and funding avenue relationship, it restricts the freedom and flexibility of the organisations and the implementation of their work. One of the most obvious places it is shown is through the planning, and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) processes. The FAT founder told of the demanded strict adherence to work plans for specific funded projects, describing the difficulty to make changes or improvements "sometimes you feel in the midway that this is not working, we need to change our strategy and then we have to go back to our funder

for permission….quite often it is a painful process, you don't want to go through it unless it is absolutely important" (Sec 13, Buragohain, 2018). This stringent focus is echoed within organisations too. CWDR's founder outlined how they "very strictly" (Sec 8, Bala, 2018) implement their M&E, delivering salaries only once they are in receipt of staff's weekly reports which must include photographic evidence and participants lists (Sec 8, Bala, 2018). Both the staff and founder of CWDR rated the usefulness of the M&E process considerably high in the quantitative questions (See Fig 4).

Despite funding organisations reported inability to facilitate appropriate project adjustments, both organisations described the funding benefits of successfully reporting impact back to them through M&E (Sec 8, Buragohain, 2018; Sec 21, Bala, 2018). CWDR provided an example of adaption in response to the Chennai flood, where newly flowing relief funds enabled temporary redirection of their focus. Whilst this demonstrates the ability of donor organisations to respond to situations by changing the direction of funded projects, it occurred under exceptional circumstances (Sec 14, Bala, 2018). In the complex and ever-changing environment of development, when one need is met it adjusts the priority of other needs; rigidity in the absence of trust can hinder an organisation's ability to respond appropriately to such changes and prevents the truthful and open reporting of projects, minimising learning opportunities.

The negative impacts of donor rigidity and demands may encourage the idea that unrestricted funding would be a beneficial step forward for delivery organisations, due to its freedom, flexibility and ability to cover core costs. For funding streams to alleviate some of the stipulations attached to funds, usually a relationship based on trust needs to firstly be established or recognised. Both organisations were able to relay experiences of less restricted funding. CWDRs founder described using unrestricted private donations to firstly respond to the Chennai floods, then purchase computers and provide a training project, previously suspended due to lack of finances (Sec 22, Bala, 2018). The founder of FAT however, illustrated that it would be "superbly" beneficial to have more core grant and less restricted funding, describing how it would have allowed the organisation to progress "much faster", do

"much more" and "more creatively" due to a dedication to their clear mission (Sec 20, Buragohain, 2018).

Both organisations acknowledged that funding directed through GG is largely unrestricted in the sense that it can be used in any way to work towards an identified project, although sharing updates is expected. Despite acknowledging its usefulness, no relationship of trust was identified with the organisation, neither was any notable effect on learning. FAT ranked GG's facilitation of the organisations learning as the lowest possible in the quantitative data (See Fig 4). This could be due to the lack of personal and engaging relationships or GG's position as a funding avenue as opposed to a provider, divulging their ownership of the funds and minimising the value of their trust in delivery partners. Both founders expressed the importance of engagement accompanying funds, stating that "if funders just give money and do not support, that also doesn't work" (Sec 20, Buragohain, 2018) and asserting that "both are very important" (Sec 22, Bala, 2018).

4.2 Communication

Reporting real impact requires effective communication within development partnerships, which is connected to the presence of trust; with improved communication comes improved trust and vice versa. Good communication plays a role in the development of successful relationships, useful M&E and improving adaptability to community needs. The CWDR staff and founder both describe how the purpose of their weekly meetings is to communicate their successes and challenges (Sec 8 and 15, Bala, 2018; Sec 8, CWDR Staff, 2018). Additionally, staff report the use of social media platforms to share information with each other, decreasing replication and increasing opportunities for learning (Sec 8, CWDR Staff, 2018). Renuka describes how information is passed from the bottom up, as the staff communicate to her suggestions expressed by the project participants (Sec 16, Bala, 2018). FAT also detail internal knowledge sharing with weekly and other informal meetings, where team members address an idea or problem then expand the communication to other levels of the organisation. Additionally, at their annual planning meeting members of staff from all levels "talk about what we want to do for the whole year.. everyone shares their ideas" (Sec 13, Buragohain, 2018) demonstrating participation through communication and facilitation of learning.

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The sharing of knowledge also happens to and from the organisations themselves and their external partners (See Fig 1). As previously mentioned, sharing impact information with funding organisations is a major role and trust builder of delivery partners. Gayatri from FAT detailed how when the organisation was able to demonstrate their impact "we became more popular within the donor community, the *right* donors have approached us" (emphasise added, Sec 16, Buragohain, 2018) showing not only the benefit of securing funding, but of engaging in quality partnerships. The need of information to not only flow in the opposite direction too, but to be simultaneous was acknowledged; "If funders just give money and do not support, that also doesn't work… they need to learn from each other" (Sec 20, Buragohain, 2018). This was echoed by the CWDR founder too (Sec 21, Bala, 2018) and again by the explanation that organisations with a clear mission have a responsibility "to educate their donors about where they want to go and why" (Sec 1, Buragohain, 2018). In another dynamic still, FAT's founder described how their donor relationships and funding was increased through actions of their first funder, The Global Fund for Women who "constantly spoke about us in different donor platforms" (Sec 17, Buragohain, 2018) showing how knowledge can be shared between donors. Additionally, partnerships between grantee organisations were promoted, highlighting the value of sharing knowledge and opportunities for learning (Sec 21, Buragohain, 2018; Sec 28, Bala, 2018).

Formal learnings such as trainings are one of the most obvious forms of knowledge sharing within the partnership. The value of these vary, with suggestions to increase the participation of delivery organisations through regular surveys "with grantees asking if they are looking for any kind of support from the donor" (Sec 21, Buragohain, 2018). This misalignment was demonstrated by CWDR's founder, Renuka, describing her struggle to find trainings focused on issues other than HIV and Self-Help Groups (Sec 28, Bala, 2018). Whilst Gayatri reported that "some of them are really very useful, but some of them are really a wastage of time" (Sec 20, Buragohain, 2018) and that the physical trainings that GG do are "totally useless, it is just for someone to know about Global Giving", providing increased support for grantee driven content. Additionally, the delivery methods for training were questioned, with the explanation of how limited capacities for disseminating information hinder its impact (Sec 21, Buragohain, 2018).

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One direct issue of communication is of language. In both organisations it was explained how the locally employed staff had better relationships with the communities they work in and significantly more emotional attachment to the cause of the organisations, although they were not specifically 'qualified' for the position to begin with and due to their lack of English skills are unable to complete donor reports (Sec 13, Bala, 2018; Sec 14, CWDR Staff, 2018; Sec 10, Buragohain, 2018 and observations). This leads to the reports being useful for management and donors and the process being useful for the staff (Sec 26, Buragohain, 2018), and is a hinderance to participating in GG's online trainings (Sec 26, Bala, 2018). In both interviews with CWDR, the programme to provide sponsorship for girls through education was mentioned, despite it appearing to not directly align with their mission, it was driven by bottom-up learning from the communities expressed needs (Sec 9, CWDR Staff, 2018). Sustaining funding for it is now a reason the organisation is "facing a lot of problems" (Sec 27, Bala, 2018) and staff are finding that spending time and effort "sharing this information with outside organisations helps with adolescent girls to get some sponsorship" (Sec 8, CWDR Staff, 2018).

4.3 Stability

The stability of funding was commonly discussed by the founders of both organisations and has been mentioned previously, for example the uncertainty and instability when impact cannot be demonstrated, or external relationships are poor. This can cause anguish in organisations, "desperate organisations need money and desperate organisations would say 'oh, if this is giving money then I should take it'" (Sec 3, Buragohain, 2018; also, Sec 16, Buragohain, 2018) pushing them into accepting money to pursue work they do not want to complete. Delivery organisations feel pressure to maintain projects which their communities see as important, irrelevant of secured funding, which leaves the organisation in a vulnerable position (Sec 23, Buragohain, 2018). Gayatri described how this cause driven and mission focused approach affects stability of funding "we have been very choosy with funding, we do not accept funding if we are seeing that we have to change our priorities" (Sec 26, Buragohain, 2018). Alternatively, desperation for funds can create intense competition between grantee organisations, trapping them in a vicious unstable cycle (Sec 7, Buragohain, 2018). The willingness of donors to change which focus areas they support was described by Renuka regarding the rise

of funding Self Help Groups in India "NGOs apply for (those) projects and they close their mouths about the issues… they jump into that, wherever they find funding available they change their criteria, change their objectives and everything" (Sec 17, Bala, 2018). This causes organisations to sway from their mission, pushing them to take on a wider scope of work and further stretching resources (Sec 3, CWDR Staff, 2018; Sec 1, Bala, 2018), creating a barrier so that "while you want to learn you may not have the energy and time to invest in learning" (Sec 12, Buragohain, 2018). Whilst desperation for funding has a negative causal relationship with gaining funding, the opposite is also true, as demonstrated in the interview with Gayatri "when we started the work of the particular project..automatically the funding will come" (Sec 24, Buragohain, 2018; Also Sec 16, Buragohain, 2018) and also with Renuka (Sec 24, Bala, 2018). Additionally, in the quantitative results the founders of both organisations ranked funding organisations ability to change projects and programmes as low and their effect on the organisations learning as average, possibly reflective of the minimal adjustments demanded in funding partnerships where the missions of both parties are in closer alignment (See Fig 4).

One major recent trend of funding is the preference for short term grants, whilst continuing to expect the accompaniment of high impact. This demand for quick results as "funders often want in 5000INR change a person's life kind of thing" (Sec 16, Buragohain, 2018), place delivery organisations in an unsecure position, fostering desperation and increasing competition for grants. It can be especially difficult for advocacy organisations such as CWDR, to demonstrate short term impact when the nature of the work is to bring about long-term changes in behaviours, attitudes and the law (Sec 5, Bala, 2018). Although some funding streams will be renewed by donors, often "they don't want to commit" (Sec 17, Buragohain, 2018) and commonly avoid putting the agreement in writing allowing them to "withdraw any grant cycle that they feel we haven't done enough" (Sec 17, Buragohain, 2018). This pursuit of fast, high impact results produces further instability to cover core costs, such as purchasing a building or fixing a leaking roof, decreasing flexibility (Sec 20 and Sec 26, Bala, 2018). Short term funding creates circumstances so that "when the project is over then everything stops" (Sec 9, Bala, 2018), including the loss of staff through the end of funded contracts. The difficulty in retaining knowledge and learning despite the high staff turnover is proving to be a

difficulty sector wide, including justifying investment in training and capacity building activities (Sec 14, Buragohain, 2018, Sec 5, Bala, 2018). Shorter funding partnerships also allow less time for successful relationships to develop between the funding and receiving organisations with negative effects, as mentioned previously.

The key ideas presented here appear through all three interviews in some form. The many similar perceptions and experiences of trust, communication and stability have been compared and some differences addressed, with links beginning to be made to their influence on learning. The data can be seen to deliver significant support to the hypothesis so far and provides some explanation to the research questions posed.

Discussion

A comparison between the literature and results presents a range of parallels and disparities. Most of the patterns identified in the research appear to provide support for the original hypothesis that the traditional method of funding partnerships is detrimental to the learning of delivery organisations. However, there are also a handful of outlying factors which offer interesting points for discussion. This section of the paper will present an interpretation of the findings and facilitate surrounding discussions, whilst also suggesting opportunities to learn from the research going forward.

The most predominant idea repeatedly identified throughout both the literature and the results, was of trust, with its influence felt through all the remaining identified topics. Mutual trust between funding avenues and delivery partners allows for realistic reflections to take place on a personal and organisational level, providing acknowledgement of *mistakes* and opportunities to learn (Sec 11, Buragohain, 2018; Chambers, 1997; Oswald and Taylor, 2010; Bloch and Borges, 2002, Argyris and Schön, 1996; Dierolf et al, 2002). Bottom-up participation is increased, facilitating more effective responses to the needs of communities (Sec 8 and 9, Buragohain, 2018; Edwards, 1997; Hailey and James, 2000; AbouAssi, 2012; Power et al, 2002). This shared communication of short-falls builds the capacity and morale of staff and the organisation, improving collection and retention of knowledge, alongside enabling more meaningful impact to be reported through effective monitoring and evaluation systems (Sec 14 and 16, Buragohain, 2018; Rauh, 2010; Osbourne, 2007; Roper and Petit, 2002; Argyris and Schön, 1978). Stability is gained through the trust to form longer-term agreements with less conditions, increased flexibility and freedom, facilitating building expertise (Sec 8, 13 and 18, Buragohain, 2018; Dierolf et al, 2002; Edwards, 1997; Elbers,2011; Hailey and James, 2002; Oswald and Taylor, 2010; Scott-Villiers, 2002; Solomon et al, 2002; Vincent and Byrne, 2006). When trust replaces competition between delivery organisations the sharing of knowledge improves, minimising unnecessary repetition (especially of mistakes) and allowing more efficient use of resources (Sec 21, Buragohain, 2018; Oswald and Taylor, 2010; Osbourne, 2007). In the below discussion, the significance of trust can be observed within the further common themes of communication, stability and

accountability. However, trust is not the only essential factor as will be discussed. For example, if the ultimate display of trust is considered as completely unrestricted funding, similar to the approach of many church organisations, it still falls short of achieving maximum success by excluding critical aspects such as tailored knowledge sharing and partnership, which increase valuable opportunities for learning (Sec 20, Bala, 2018; Sec 4, Buragohain, 2018). Despite the less restricted nature of the funding channelled through GG, neither interviewed organisation expressed preference for it. As GG provides little tailored support or interaction with their partners including in response to reports, it may be difficult for trust to be built between the two.

Some unanticipated results appeared when analysing both the literature and the collected data. Firstly, there was a higher than expected appreciation of the demands placed on funding avenues by their donors. Through the interviews this was conveyed almost as empathy, with an understanding of a shared pressure (Sec 18, Bala, 2018; Sec 22, Buragohain, 2018). In the literature Reith (2010) describes the pressure on donors to maintain the flow of funding in the development sector. One reason these may have been unexpected is the lack of interaction between the researcher and actual funding organisations, minimising consideration of their view point. A further study into the relationships and specifically demands between funding avenues and their donors to establish the pressures throughout the funding chain, may therefore be useful. Additionally, research involving philanthropical organisations such as the Gates foundation would be valuable. Their lack of upwards accountability gives them a distinctive position within the funding chain, providing an advantageous comparison. Analysing learning within these types of organisations would be advocated for, as their incentives and motivations are unique and so therefore are the influences on their delivery partnerships. If the lack of hierarchal demands and accountability on philanthropical organisations indicates increased flexibility of investment and a 'less to lose' approach, this may foster higher levels of trust, facilitating greater learning of delivery partners and overall demonstrating higher impact faster, possibly leading to a rise in prominence. Furthermore, Social businesses offer another perspective, as while they may have no funding partners, they juggle downwards accountability to their consumers due to the pressure to create profit, against the beneficiaries with whom they work; providing further

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alternative incentives and influences on learning. Obviously considering a single partnership within the chain as this study has done, has its limitations in understanding and explaining the effects on the wider development sector, especially of further hierarchal pressures.

Additionally, there is a continued appreciation for the knowledge and expertise that funding organisations can provide, especially when it is driven by the needs of delivery partners rather than funders (Sec 20, Buragohain, 2018; Osbourne, 2007). The local NGOs interviewed do not perceive their funding avenues as solely that, but also as teachers and assistants whom they can go to for personal and professional support, guidance and information (Sec 20, Bala, 2018; Sec 4 and 20, Buragohain, 2018). At first this could be seen as a difficulty for donors, to find the balance between offering and pushing information, but in actuality the difference isn't the amount or method of knowledge sharing, it is the motivation for it, placing a critical importance on bottom up accountability and participation. Ideas in the development sector for minimising adjustments to donor demands include Development Impact Bonds, where an investor provides finances to a project and if agreed targets are met, the host government returns the funds with profit (Center for Global Development, 2018). However, this seems to dismiss the importance of support for capacity building and knowledge sharing within the partnership, which if not addressed could prove detrimental. Furthermore, there have been experiments with funding organisations, rather than specific projects, placing trust in the organisation to utilise the finances where needed. Whilst this initially appears quite beneficial it will need certain conditions in which to succeed, including the recipient being an established organisation and a partnership of trust having been previously built, for example with DFID's Programme Partnership Agreements (PPAs) (DFID, 2013). Even after fulfilment of these circumstances, it is not clear how structures to share knowledge would be established, as it may be more than a single project of expertise that is being required.

In the interviews, the lack of explicit reference to the differences of formal and informal learning was also unforeseen. It is important to note the differentiation between the two, as it is plausible that a focus on the more formal methods of training and appraisals reflects an environment motivated by efficiently achieving

short term targets, rather than embedding learning within the deeper culture of an organisation, as the identification and appreciation of informal methods might have been indicative of. It was perceived that the research organisation who referred to the formal processes more often when asked about their learning, also have increasingly stretched resources, lower funding security and less stability.

Hirschman (2003) presented a perspective of ownership differing to the consensus that its indicative of accountability (Winters, 2010). He proposed that ownership could be the "new conditionality" (p241) as it is suggestive that recipient organisations have taken the donors demands and internalised them as their own; even if they haven't completely adopted them, delivery partners understand that donors want them to convey them as their own (Hirschmann, 2003). Whilst there was little discussion of ownership in the interviews and observations, the concept of trust was addressed extensively and has an inherently close relationship with ownership. The lack of explicit reference may be a sign that the interviewed NGOs believe they have ownership of their work, or that even if they don't, it is not a substantial problem. As both organisations clearly state their commitment to apply only for appropriate funding, their values will then align with those of the funding avenue. Increased similarity between the funding and recipient organisations of their *real* motivations would produce fewer alternative demands from the donor and more true ownership for the delivery organisation. The emphasis of actual drivers is important as motivations which appear to be those of the recipient but are actually a reflection of the funding organisation, increase diversion from the delivery partners true mission, devaluing their knowledge, stretching their resources and decreasing their legitimacy and stability. If a donor adjusts their focus this will cause misalignment with the recipient organisations mission. CWDR attributed donors shift from advocacy and India to other causes and countries as one possible reason they were experiencing instability in funding (Sec8, Bala, 2018), this may be a reflection of their commitment to their mission. In the literature, AbouAssi (2012) suggests that external funding is not necessary for advocacy activities, however whilst this may be applicable to organisations where advocacy is not their only work, it must also be relevant only to organisations with stable core funding. Somewhat surprisingly, core funding was addressed significantly more in the literature than the interviews. Whilst allocations in funding proposals and office financing were referenced, the proximity

to the negative consequence of minimal or no core funding led to the expectation that it would be a more prominent topic of discussion with the delivery partners (Sec 18, Buragohain, 2018; Sec 20 and 26, Bala, 2018). Despite the lack of explicit reference, topics directly related to this such as short-term funding and retention of staff were discussed at length. Whilst in these circumstances the situation Elbers (2011) painted of delivery organisations "living hand to mouth" (p720) does not appear to be true, the necessity of at least some core funding in securing an environment facilitative of learning if highlighted. Therefore, we can assume that once an organisation covers their core funding costs it is no longer an area warranting time resources, creating the freedom to focus on the actual delivery of project work, overall emphasising the effectiveness of investing in the core funding of desperate, mission-led organisations.

Whilst leader's commitment to learning is identified as valuable in the literature (Senge, 1990; Hailey and James, 2000; Kaachur et al, 2016), it was almost completely excluded from the interviews. Whilst questions around the topic were left out of the basic set created for the interviews, it has appeared to be an idea which could warrant further investigation. Both organisations described increasing participation of staff and as only one interview was conducted from outside of the organisation's highest leaders, it may partly explain the lack of emphasis on the perception of learning assistance and influence leaders offer. The founders of both organisations demonstrated a commitment to learning, however one was increasingly willing to reflect critically and discuss mistakes. They appeared to have a more holistic and embedded personal approach and the influence was clearly perceived within the organisation. However, this opinion could have been formed as a result of increased exposure to and a stronger relationship with that organisation and leader. The structure of an organisation could also alter the level of impact a leader may have on the learning culture, with increased bureaucracy enforcing systems and procedures rather than participation nourishing the environment of learning demonstrated by the leader. Movement towards a culture of learning accompanied by a committed learning leader at the helm, facilitates an atmosphere of trust, communication and bottom up participation.

The concept of knowledge sharing features in both the literature and collected data, mainly focusing on the exchange between the funding avenues and the delivery partner, however there was some mention of sharing within other levels of the funding chain, such as between NGOs. Whilst less dominant than anticipated, both organisations highlight the importance of sharing information between themselves and funding organisations (Sec 21, Buragohain, 2018; Sec 28, Bala, 2018). The benefits of improved knowledge sharing between non-funding-based relationships could be significant and local NGOs are in a uniquely fitting position to the rake benefits. If networks of local organisations developed the trust to communicate with each other it would not only decrease unnecessary repetition, maximise resources, increase awareness of funding prospects and learning opportunities, cultivate local expertise and improve the efficiency of the organisation, but the effect could be rippled on to other organisations in the community, district, country and even the international sector inclusively. To realise this a foundation of mutual trust is essential but made difficult when competition between delivery partners for sustaining funding is so high; organisations do not want to give others the competitive edge over themselves (Edwards, 1997; Oswald and Taylor, 2010; Osborne, 2007). If delivery partners could offer advice to each other regarding their experiences of currently available funding, it may increase the possibility of better matches between the missions of funding avenues and delivery partners, alleviating some of the demand for adjustment and facilitating richer knowledge sharing. Decreasing the competition and increasing the trust between delivery partners could also minimise the influence of western ideals imparted through funding channels (Roper and Petit, 2002). Whilst the holistic benefits might be critical for local NGOs, they may be less desirable for donors, as through expanding their non-funding networks delivery organisations may depend less on the knowledge sharing from their funding avenues, possibly decreasing their power.

This research highlights the benefits of increased knowledge sharing between funding channels and local NGOs, however Crewe and Harrison (1998) suggest a limitation that despite the "sense of equality.. It does not alter the structurally inequal relationship" (p74), highlighting the embedded nature and maintenance of power in funding channels. When the level of knowledge sharing between funding and receiving organisations is equal, it contributes towards an environment of trust.

Currently funding avenues know significantly more about their delivery partners than vice versa; if the exchange were mutual local NGOs would have increased negotiating power when considering who with and how to establish funding partnerships (Fowler, 1992). Whilst there may be limitations, the benefits of increasing levels of knowledge sharing would be felt by actors throughout the field, especially in facilitating trust. GG are in a perfect position to see improvements from enhancing the networking channels of their vast number of local delivery partners, especially as many have similarities in location, objectives and resources, but even more so as whilst GG provide basic trainings, one of their limitations is in providing more tailored, bottom up driven assistance for example regarding specific values or local challenges- eliminating a decrease in GGs power which organisations providing tailored knowledge might experience. This could also be a motivation for delivery organisations with a strict commitment to their mission, to rather invest time in other funding avenues that can provide tailored support over GG.

An interesting expansion of this research could be to compare the difference between traditional and other funding partnerships. This paper presents the view of usually larger, international funding avenues and the smaller, local, grassroots level organisations that they partner with, however an interesting comparison to this structure would be that of ActionAid for example, who rather than partnering with separate organisations, actually implement delivery work themselves through local offices and in-country headquarters. Whilst this decreases competition for funding it is still observed between the projects within the organisation, however this does facilitate substantially easier knowledge sharing and improved space for critical reflection. Nonetheless, the limitations of participating within only one major partnership may have overall detrimental effects on the amount of new opportunities to learn.

After analysing the results in relation to the original research question and hypothesis, incentives to learning were identified for delivery partner organisations. Attention should be paid to the holistic role of trust as a facilitator and an outcome, concreting its cyclic influence and overall embedded significance. Firstly, through bottom up participation, improved communication and trust, enriched learning facilitates better *response* to the ever-changing needs of the communities served,

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contributing to the organisations mission and providing legitimacy. Secondly, as a consequence of the first point, improved communication and an environment facilitative of critical reflection, it becomes easier to achieve, demonstrate and report real *impact*, helping to secure funding and provide legitimacy. This impact increases the likelihood of longer term, more relevant partnerships and allows for improved use of resources, increasing the *stability* and continuity of work within the organisations. This minimises the effects of intense competition and desperation for funding, provides greater progress towards the organisations mission, strengthens the likelihood of funding partnerships with closer aligned values and continues efficient resource allocation. Through improved communication, knowledge sharing and reported impact, greater *networks* can be established leading to enhanced assistance and knowledge, facilitating less unnecessary repetition and more efficient use of resources. Again, through the sharing of knowledge and improved response to community needs, not only does the *efficiency* of the organisation improve but the benefits can be experienced throughout the sector, enabling better progress to happen quicker. It is important to identify these main incentives to understand the motivations and barriers to learning in the development sector. Avenues through which development funding flows to delivery organisations directly affects all these incentives. By establishing longer, more relevant partnerships with foundations of mutual trust, and supporting the universal flow of knowledge and support, funding avenues are critical in elevating learning to benefit the whole development sector. If the learning in the development industry can be improved, then naturally so should the level of progression.

This research has strived to go beyond what has come before by examining the effects of learning specifically influenced by the relationship between a funding avenue and their delivery partner. Whilst there are similarities between this and other studies such as the prevalence of qualitative tools and analysis, no previous studies have been found to effectively answer the proposed research question. Although it is acknowledged that due to generalisations made and the choice to focus on one level of the funding chain, the results of this paper are not necessarily true of the whole sector, effort has been made to consider the wider perspectives when analysing and presenting the results. Hopefully some of the issues discussed here will contribute to

improving the application of learning in the sector, especially within the funding avenue and delivery partner relationship.

Conclusion

This research has sought to establish the learning incentives for delivery organisations in the development sector and the way that funding avenues influence that learning. Collecting data primarily from three interviews and reviewing the literature, then conducting a comparison between the two reveals that when a delivery partner demonstrates higher commitment to their own mission and pursues funding from avenues with closer alignment to that mission, it can have positive repercussions for the learning of the organisation. This is achievable through providing space to critically reflect, improving reporting of impact, increasing sharing of knowledge inside and outside of the organisation, extending funding and utilising bottom up participation.

The choice to mainly focus on one partnership within the funding chain also provides the main limitation of the study. Its narrow focus restricts the scope for application of the results, largely omitting influences on learning within different development partnerships, and not necessarily those attached to funding. Additionally, as a result of the chosen participant organisations and the researcher's previous experiences, this research has principally conveyed the perceptions of delivery level organisations. To attempt to comprehend the full influence of funding relationships on learning, perspectives of both sides of the partnership would need to be considered. Furthermore, the simple number of research interviews was minimal and failed to appropriately represent the range of influences felt through different levels of the organisations.

Overall the importance of trust is the most prominent finding throughout the results. It is critical in establishing better partnerships between staff, the organisation and external partners, lasting a longer time and providing more collaboration, in turn providing increased opportunities for learning and development. Additionally, improving communication such as enhancing knowledge sharing and reporting is critical for effective learning and is facilitated by the presence of trust. The significance of stability is demonstrated through preference for longer term funding, enabling the capacity building and retention of staff, efficient management of resources and space for developing richer relationships with funding partners.

The qualitative methods used are well suited for this research. The semi-structured interviews allowed the natural exploration of interesting and relevant topics which may otherwise not have been discovered and the qualitative analysis ensured the retention of depth and scope. However, there are limitations to be noted. Firstly, due to various reasons, less time was spent with the organisations decreasing the number of interviews conducted. The impact of this is especially felt through the narrow range of the collected data, with just one interview from outside of the organisations' founders. Secondly, despite attempting to manage the variables through selecting two organisations with similar missions, locations and cultures, the differences between organisations with and without an advocacy focus was underestimated and not initially recognised as crucial. To enable a truer comparison, organisations implementing closer aligning work would have been beneficial. Additionally, interviews directly with funding organisations themselves, specifically ones who provide funding to both the participating organisations, would be significantly useful. To enhance this, an analysis of the monitoring and evaluation reports sent to those donors from the delivery partners would also provide insight.

Therefore, future research in this field would benefit from understanding the perceptions of trust held in organisations higher in the funding chain, including their own assessments of the impact of effective communication and stability. To expand from this, similar studies but with participation of social businesses and philanthropical organisations would provide rich comparison. Their unusual positioning in the development funding chain gives them alternative incentives for learning. Additionally, as new ideas are developing including networks of knowledge sharing within the sector and approaches to differently distribute accountability and ownership, these should be scrutinised allowing recognition of their effects on organisational learning.

With the current emphasis for learning continuing in the development sector, it is hoped that this paper will make a useful contribution. For delivery partners, to feel reassured that an openness and dedication to learning, alongside commitment to clear values and a mission motivated by the needs of the community, can be greatly beneficial. For funding organisations, to reflect critically on their investment in trust, communication and stability, not only outwards to their delivery partners, but within

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their organisations as well. For Global Giving and other fundraising platforms, it is hoped that they will give thought to the suggestions made, including facilitating knowledge sharing between their delivery partners and considering ways to develop relationships enriched with trust. For the overall sector, striving towards embedding trust within all aspects throughout is hoped for.

Whilst this research may not be generalisable across the board in the development sector, nor is it exhaustive, it provides support to the hypothesis and offers an answer to the original research question. By presenting examples claiming that funding organisations *do* have influence on the learning of their delivery partners, this paper hopes to instigate critical reflections throughout the individuals and organisations in the sector specifically around the levels of trust, communication and stability, with anticipation of actions to bring about a shift to learning in the culture of development organisations.

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Appendix One

Basic Interview Questions

Management

1. How does your organisation respond to the needs of the participants?
   a. How does it collect information? What process happens for changes to be made? Can you give an example?
2. Once information is collected is it shared? How?
3. Does the organisation encourage or facilitate the learning of the individual staff members?
   a. How? (eg.is time given, training provided, reflection facilitated, group discussions, one to ones, rewards and incentives, reviews etc)
4. Are individuals within the organisations committed to their own self learning?
   a. Is it seen as part of their job?
5. How much influence do individuals have in the running of the organisation? Eg. Changing programs/ projects/ visions/ missions/ objectives etc?
6. When a staff member leaves, does the organisation lose the information and knowledge they have learnt too? Or is it retained in some way?
7. Do staff give reasons for leaving? If so, what?
   a. How has the organisation responded to that?

Funding Related Questions

1. How does the organisation decide which funding to apply for? Do any funders approach the organisation? (adjustments, conditions etc, do they influence choice?)
2. What are your main funding revenues? Are they long term/ progressive/ restricted?
3. How are the organisations admin, staff and overhead costs covered?
4. How would you describe the relationship between your funders and you? Who has influence? What resources are shared?
5. Apart from the financial benefit do you think there is any other benefit for CWDR from the relationship with their funders? If so what?
   a. What (if any) benefits do your funders receive by funding your organisations?

6. Are there any restrictions or challenges from the relationship with your funders?

7. How do the benefits or challenges through a crowd funding platform such as Global Giving, compare to those found in the direct funder relationships?

8. What would your ideal relationship with a funder look like?

Delivery Staff

1. Does the organisation encourage or facilitate the learning of the individual staff members?
   a. How? (eg.is time given, training provided, reflection facilitated, group discussions, one to ones, rewards and incentives, reviews etc)

2. Are individuals within the organisations committed to their own self learning?
   a. Is it seen as part of their job?

3. How does the organisation adapt and respond to the needs of the participants?
   a. How is information collected information? What process happens for change? Can you give an example?

4. How does the organisation overcome challenges?
   a. How is information collected information? What process happens for change? Can you give an example?

5. What opportunities are there for sharing information and knowledge within the organisation?

6. How much influence do individuals have in the running of the organisation? Eg. Changing programs/ projects/ visions/ missions/ objectives etc?

7. Asides from the financial benefit, do you think there are any other benefits from the relationship the organisation has with funders?

8. What does the organisations gain/loose from the M&E reports are that funders ask to be completed?

9. How do you think funding organisations could better support CWDR? (eg, training, advice, guidance, etc)

Final Interview Questions

Renuka (CWDR)	Staff (CWDR)	Gayatri (FAT)
	1.There was someone supporting her to learn the skills to work in the field? Is that what she means? *Ok, so are Individual within the organisation committed to their own self learning? Like do they think that they should always be trying to learn more, to develop more, like do they think that part of their job, do they think that is something they should be doing?*	
2. *Do you think that the more that you train the staff, the more likely they are to stay with the organisation? Do you think that it increases how much..* *Because you said to me before that you have a high staff turnover-*	2. *Ok, so how does the organisation adapt and respond to the needs of participants? So participants like the women in the programs, so how does the organisation respond to their needs, because their needs are always changing yea?*	2. *And so the capacity that they were trying to build it wasn't helpful to you as an organisation?*
3. And they haven't told you why it is taking so long? Which country?	3. *So she manages one area? how many women from each slum?*	3. *Yea, but I think that is a really common thing, this really high staff turnover, because they can't find funding for staff, I think that's a really common thing. Ok, let me ask you these questions- ok, so how does your organisation respond to the needs of the project participants, means like the L3 girls.*
4. What is this project for? You did it before and now you are doing it again?	4. *oh so they have leaders within the domestic workers? And so is the leader decided by the women or by the organisation?*	4. *Like some of these qus are probably might be things that I already know, but I am going to ask them anyway so that I have got them specifically for this, ok, it's not just that my brain is empty and I forgot everything, I mean it's possible, that could happen!* Don't worry. *So the girls that are the participants, if they wanted to make a change to the way that the program is run, how would that happen, they would need authority, they would need to discuss it, like what would happen?*

5. So you are going to do the same project but in a different area? Or same area as before?	5. *How does the organisation overcome challenges? Like always is any project or any prog there is some challenges, nothing is ever simple*	5. *Ok, so they, once info is collect, like about, that sounds quite formal, but once they ask people what they want to do or how they feel about something or whatever, then they share it with each other informally, or they have these meetings where they share it with each other, or it's a mixture of both or?*
6. So the project for the reproductive health that you were doing, you were doing some sort of education for adolescent girls? What was the project for?	6. *So if she is facing some challenges, she would inform you's of the challenges that she is facing, and you would support her, or how would the system work? If she feels like she is facing some challenges, what can she do about that?*	6. *How do you think the organisation facilitate the learning or individual staff members? Like is it just that time is given, training is given, are reflections encouraged or facilitated, are there group discussions, 1 to 1s, like whatever?*
7. you did that because they asked, did the girls say it was something that they wanted you know about or they wanted to change?	7. *So when you started the project with the boys and she was saying it was very hard to get the boys to attend, then at the meeting or something she told you or something and then..*	7. *Ok, so how much do you think that the individual within the organisation are committed to their own self learning?* *So do you think that the individuals at FAT, the staff individual within FAT think that it is part of their job to continue learning and growing?*
8. *And then so the field staff they come here once a week for a meeting (every Tuesday) So they speak to each other and they tell each other what they are doing?*	8. *What opportunities are there for sharing knowledge and information within the organisation?*	8. *How much influence do the individuals have in the running of the organisation, so for example, the staff individuals in the projects, programs or the vision and mission or objectives of a project?* *So, then the individual within the organisation, they understand that although they might not have absolute decision making power, I mean with regards to changing a project or programme or something, that they have got some influence, they can express what they think or what they feel and that might change something*
9. *And if someone hasn't done the work that they should do, then what happens?*	9. *How much influence do individual have in the running of the organisation? Like the staff, so how much influence do the staff have on changing projects or programs or objectives or*	9. *So, when a staff member leaves do you think that all of what they have learnt, or all of the knowledge that they have gained from their work, do you think that it leaves with that individual?*

	things like that?	
10. So *the co-ordinator, so it's the field workers that run the projects, that run the activities and the coordinator they support the field workers?*	10. *Ok, so I just want to know what she thinks, asides from the financial benefit does she think there is any other benefits for the organisation from funders?*	10. *I feel like maybe I shouldn't ask this. Do staff give reasons for leaving, if so what and how does the organisation respond to that?*
11. *But the organisation does both, it's doing the activities the actual delivery work, and its doing the advocacy and lobbying. It's doing both yea?*	11. *What does she think is gained or lost from the ME reporting?* Does she think they are beneficial, or do they take up too much time, or what does she think they could be better, or what?	11. *So then the next questions are like funding related, so how does the organisation decide which funding to apply for, do any funders approach the organisation and say that they want to fund them specifically and do you find that there are lots of restrictions or conditions that funding organisations place on you, and is there a difference between maybe some funders who place less conditions and some funders who place more conditions?*
12. *So do the centre coordinators, do they speak English?*	12. *Does she think that there is anyway that she could be supported better?*	12. *So are they mostly Indian funders, or are they foreign funders?* *So, is most of your funding long term funding then?* *Ok, but you do get repeat funding?*
13. Difference between graduates and community members as staff	13. *She said before that if the women like helped her out more or took on more responsibility, she said something about that before?*	13. *Ok, and so most of your funders do you find that they place these conditions on you, or- is it mostly unrestricted or restricted?* *Yea, ok, so if most of you funding is restricted to the projects then, how do you fund your overhead costs- like your staff, your admin, your office all of the other things that funders don't like to fund.*
14. *So, I just want to understand, if something happens in a project and something needs to be changed, like if you need to change the activities you have planned, or how you deliver them, how would that process happen?*		14. *So do you think that, If you were to have more core grant funding and less restricted funding do you think that would be beneficial or not?*
15. *So would the centre coordinator come to you and*		15, *Ok, so if you were to receive unrestricted funding- Ok, do you*

say oh there is a problem, this has happened?		*think that you gain anything from your funders that's not financial, like support or some kind of capacity building, or advice, information, knowledge sharing or something? That kind of 1 question, then do you think that you would lose that if you had unrestricted funding or do you think that that is something which would need to be included, or what, how would you do that?*
16. *And the ideas for any new program it comes from the women in the slums? Or does it come from the coordinator sees something and thinks this would be a good project, or would the women say oh we would like to find out more about this?*		16. *So, I wonder what do you think that the interaction should be then? If the capacity buildings or trainings can be too much, but there needs to be some engagement and some interaction, would it just be like a more informal, fluid engagement then? Like an as and when kind of thing? Like support when it is needed or?*
17. *So how do you select who you apply to funding for? Or do you just find someone that relates to what you are doing and you apply? Or do you pick funders based on like this one is more flexible or this one is more long term?*		17. *So this is my next questions- What do you think that the funders learn from the organisations that they are funding, not just what they learn, but what do they receive back from them- obviously the funder is giving the delivery organisation money for doing something, what do they get back for giving that money?*
18. *What do you think the reason is that you have less funding now than you did before then? Because you said that you have less funding now than you did? Why do you think that is?*		18. *Yes, it's difficult, I think that's what we have learnt. Ok, so then, the other questions I have got are quant….* *Sorry- 1 more thing.* *So all of this with what funders get and what you get from funders, how do you think that a crowd funding platform like GG fit in to that? Because obviously they don't have restricted funding, you can say what the project is, but then you can kind of fund it how you want to fund it, and also they try and provide these kind of trainings, I wonder how effective*

		those trainings are, are they useful? Like the obviously have this kind of incentives system to do the trainings, I wonder if it works, if its beneficial? Like do you think that unrestricted funding works, I don't know, what do you think?
19. So *what do you think Is the difference between the relationship that you have with that LT funder and the relationship that you have with ST funders?*		19. *You don't think you get any new donors from GG? I guess obviously what they believe themselves is that because they have all these corporate connections and have this name and they have all these contacts, that they believe that they can give you access to more donors,*
20. *Do you think that they support you? That they help you to do your work? Like apart from that they give you money, do you think that they do something else to support you with the work? I mean do they give you guidance or advice? Or do they share any knowledge with you?*		20. *This is obvious I spent lots of time speaking to the GG side and finding out how they are really invested in learning and they really want to do this training and capacity building and listen to the needs of their delivery partners. But I think this is a common thing that people just see it as a use of time and they don't really see the benefit of them training and stuff that are online, because obviously the more trainings that you do the higher up your status becomes, so you'll be more visible, but people just see it as, 'oh if we do all these trainings we will become more visible, we will get more money' it isn't 'oh we really need to know about marketing so we will do this training on marketing' Like that kind of training seems to be a bit wasted, like I don't know how .*
21. *So what do you think the benefit is for donors by funding projects? Obviously, they are giving money to fund the projects, but what do they get back?*		
22. *So if funders could give*		

more unrestricted funding, you know where they just gave some money and they said 'like, we trust you, you do what you want to do with the money' do you think that that would be better?		
23. *So is that still running now? Ok, because then you will have to pay someone to work, to train the girls as well?*		
24. *So the difference between normal grant funding and crowd funding like GG the platform, like what so you think the benefit is of doing that crowd funding, where the money is obviously less restricted, but I don't know, do you think it's harder to get those funds, do you have to put in more effort?*		
25. *You do quite a lot on GG*		
26. *So that is the project that you have on GG?*		
27. *I mean they provide different kinds of trainings and things that they think will help organisations, I just wonder how useful people think that they are? Because they have this theory that they want organisations to learn more, they want to help organisations to become better organisations, so they have made these trainings, that are online, to help with different things, then that is why they ask organisations to complete these different trainings, then they will become superstar- but I wonder how well that system works, like do people just watch the video and say they have done it and it doesn't really make much difference. Does it help?*		
28. *So the training is better if someone is there to the training with them rather than if it is online?*		

Appendix Two

Written Admin Consent Form for the Participation in Research Study

Research Question: What influence do funding avenues have on the organisational learning within delivery partners?

Researcher: Kirsty Brettell

Course: MSc International Development

Institute: University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, Scotland. UK.

Location of Research: India

Statement of Confirmation:

I confirm that the researched *Kirsty Brettell* has explained the meaning of informed consent to me.

I understand that I am consenting on behalf of the below organisation to participant in the study, and that the involvement is voluntary. I confirm that the researcher *Kirsty Brettell* has explained to me the purpose of the study, alongside the procedures and time commitment.

I understand and consent to the below organisation's participation in the research, with the agreement that verbal consent will also be obtained from any staff member within the organisation choosing to participate in the research.

Organisation: …………………………………………………………………….

Date: …………………………………………………………………………

Name: …………………………………………………………………………….

Signature: ………………………………………………………………………