



## Leveraging the Potential for Group Cash Transfers

*A complementary report to the Group Cash Transfer: Guidance and Tools (pilot version)*

Prepared by Key Aid Consulting for DCA and CaLP  
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# Leveraging the potential of Group Cash Transfers

## About the Group Cash Transfers guidance, tools and report

The package consists of several related materials: 1) Guidance for group cash transfers (GCTs); 2) GCT tools; 3) GCT glossary; 4) a report on Leveraging the Potential for Group Cash Transfers; and 5) a tip-sheet on engaging beyond CVA actors.

## Authors

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## Acknowledgements

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The review group further provided insights and guidance, and included Justin Corbett, consultant/Local2Global Protection (L2GP); Sarah Ward, independent consultant; Mark Laichena, Give Directly; Baboucar Badji, David Delgado, and Salvatore Farfaglia, ICRC; Shreeju Shrestha, Oxfam; Claudia Puschner, Chris Ball, Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe, and Gurudatta Shirodkar, IFRC; Melissa Velasques, Unbound; Sasa Marusic, NRC; Nils Carstensen, DCA/L2GP; and Simone di Vicenz, Christian Aid.

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## Frontpage photo: © Unbound

An Unbound mothers group meets with a facilitating staff member at a refugee camp in Trichy, India. Originally from Sri Lanka, the women have lived in the camp for several years. Utilising a GCT from Unbound's Agents of Change initiative, the group recently installed a community water tank.

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<sup>1</sup> See [Annex 2](#).

# Abbreviations

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ABHC	Area-Based Humanitarian Coordination
CaLP	Cash Learning Partnership
CBO	Community-Based Organisation
CoP	Community of Practice
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
CTL	Counterterrorism Legislation
CVA	Cash and Voucher Assistance
DCA	DanChurchAid
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GCT	Group Cash Transfer
ICVA	International Council of Voluntary Agencies
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
KI	Key Informant
KII	Key Informant Interview
L2GP	Local to Global Protection
LNAs	Local and National Actors
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MPC	Multipurpose Cash
sclr	survivor and community led response <sup>2</sup>
SoWC	The State of the World's Cash
TAG	Technical Advisory Group
UN	United Nations

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<sup>2</sup> As actors developing and working with this approach does not want to term sclr as a universal term, but generally want engaged actors to term this to their context, the preference is to not capitalise 'sclr' as a fixed abbreviation.

### Definition of Group Cash Transfers (GCTs)

GCTs as a term was decided upon based on a brainstorming with review group members for this guidance, and through discussions with the CaLP TAG GCT Working Group. While the GCT approach is also referred to as community cash, this term led to discrepancies in understanding who the grants targeted.

GCTs consist of providing resources in the form of cash transfers to a selected group of people from an affected population to implement projects that benefit either a sub-section of the community or the community at large.

Actors engaged in the GCT approach are free to call GCTs whatever term they find most relevant to their context. The term "GCTs" will however be included in the Cash and Learning Partnership's (CaLP) Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) glossary (there is an ongoing revision of CaLP's glossary).

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### Purpose of the document

This report is an accompanying document to the GCT Guidance and Toolkit.

The report identifies internal and institutional barriers to using and scaling GCTs, along with mitigation measures. These were identified through an online survey, literature review and interviews with key informants that engaged humanitarian, development, and localisation actors, as well as donors. Overall, this document intends to leverage the potential of GCTs to be used as a component of CVA by highlighting what works, what is recommended, and what are the perceived areas of improvement.

# 1 Introduction

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Over the past decade, the use of Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) has grown to meet the needs of crisis-affected households. The State of the World's Cash (SoWC) 2020 Report by the Cash Learning Partnership (CaLP) emphasised the continued increasing use of CVA globally, as 17.9% of all international humanitarian assistance in 2019 was delivered through CVA.<sup>3</sup>

At the same time, CVA actors increasingly recognise localisation as a priority with, "...a growing consensus on the importance of localisation within CVA."<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, several actors consulted on the SoWC report worried that CVA was inadequate in shifting power to Local and National Actors (LNAs) and that critical gaps in community engagement still exist.<sup>5</sup> Then in 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, international agencies, including INGOs and UN-agencies, faced significant challenges to deliver humanitarian activities. This in turn resulted in a significant shift towards supporting LNA-led responses and initiatives at local levels, including LNAs' uptake in CVA.<sup>6</sup> Whether this new LNA-focused approach, including their direct funding, is sustainable is yet to be seen.

One CVA transfer modality that supports LNA-centric interventions are **Group Cash Transfers (GCTs)**, since GCT processes are primarily facilitated by LNAs in order to most effectively engage affected populations. GCTs are a means to support groups and communities in responding to priority needs, while strengthening beneficiaries' dignity and resiliency. This report thus seeks to highlight the specific challenges and opportunities of using and scaling up GCTs, to be implemented alongside individual and household CVA.

The GCT approach is not just about localisation and transferring resources to LNAs however;<sup>7</sup> it also focuses on moving away from nearly exclusively distributing cash to households and individuals, to also provide cash to groups to support community-led responses. In both pre – and post-covid-19 scenarios, agencies engaged in CVA demonstrated greater buy-in – at least in theory – for community-led approaches to respond to the needs of crisis-affected communities. To date, CVA

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<sup>3</sup> Jodar et al., 2020.

<sup>4</sup> CaLP SoWC 2020, p. 19.

<sup>5</sup> See also: Smart, 2020.

<sup>6</sup> Metcalfe-Hough, 2020; see also [the Emergent Agency focus site](#) under Oxfam Blogs, and The New Humanitarian series on [The Future of Aid](#).

<sup>7</sup> The Grand Bargain Workstream 2 on localisation calls for strengthening more locally-driven humanitarian assistance with [63 signatories](#) committed to supporting a shift in power and resources to LNAs (*More Support and Funding Tools for Local and National Responders* | IASC, n.d.). However, progress on the commitment to provide 25% of global humanitarian funding directly to LNAs by 2020 was not achieved. Local to Global Protection (L2GP) reported in 2019 that "...Grand Bargain donors in 2018 allocated an estimated 14.2% of their total funding flows to local and national actors – directly or through intermediaries. On average, these governments are estimated to give 0.2% in direct funding (no intermediary), 1.6% via country-based pooled funds and 12.4% via UN agencies, INGOs or Red Cross/Crescent organisations." (Els, 2019). For more details on the localisation agenda, see [Grand Bargain Workstream 2: Localisation](#).

actors have only engaged in providing GCTs to a limited extent however, despite CaLP's official definition of CVA including 'community recipients.'<sup>8</sup>

For this report, the authors consulted facilitating agencies and CVA actors who are – or are embarking on – community-led responses. These agencies highlighted the significant efforts needed to shift to community-led responses, and to empower citizens at the grassroots level to define, design, lead and implement projects that are normally driven by external actors. Although the GCT approach in itself is not considered '*the participation revolution*,'<sup>9</sup> it may be a step towards realising the benefits of having local populations lead responses based on their priorities.

While this report does not seek to replicate the already-documented failed attempts of the humanitarian system to localise aid,<sup>10</sup> its findings, together with the supporting guidance for GCTs, demonstrate the importance of broadening the scope of localising CVA strategies for community-led responses. Most notably, localising CVA by also including GCTs can promote a broader awareness and actual shift of power and agency to affected populations as well as a transition away from nearly exclusively distributing cash to households and individuals.

### The case for GCTs<sup>11</sup>

In its essence, the GCT approach seeks to transfer decision-making power and agency to affected communities (typically delimited by geographical location) or community groups,<sup>12</sup> to enable them to better respond to their own needs and priorities. The primary transfer modality for GCTs is cash transfers for selected groups to implement projects that benefit a sub-section of the affected population, or the members of the supported groups and their families, depending on the context. Accompanying interventions may also be implemented – such as psychosocial recovery, women's leadership, reaching last-mile affected populations, networking across groups, mitigating risks and potentially addressing root causes of the crisis situation – to maximise the benefits of the transfer of power and agency that GCTs enable. Hence, GCTs represent more than just providing cash to groups; they aim to expand the benefits of crisis-affected communities' collective agency.

GCTs have been used by various humanitarian and development actors globally as a response to sudden and slow onset natural disasters, in both conflict and post-conflicts, and in development and resilience programming. The approach is most thoroughly developed and documented by a Community of Practice (CoP) centred around 'survivor and community-led crisis response' (sclr), led

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<sup>8</sup> The CaLP glossary defines Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) as: all programmes where cash transfers or vouchers for goods or services are directly provided to recipients. In the context of humanitarian assistance, the term is used to refer to the provision of cash transfers or vouchers given to individuals, household or community recipients, not to governments or other state actors. (Emphasis added by report authors). The Cash Learning Partnership, [Glossary of Terms](#).

<sup>9</sup> 'Participation Revolution' refers to the 6<sup>th</sup> workstream of the Grand Bargain, which focuses on including people receiving aid in making the decisions that affect their lives. See: *A Participation Revolution: Include People Receiving Aid in Making the Decisions Which Affect Their Lives* | IASC, n.d.

<sup>10</sup> Konyndyk & Worden, 2019; Jodar, 2020; Metcalfe-Hough et al., 2020; Metcalfe-Hough, 2020; Jodar et al., 2020.

<sup>11</sup> Some parts of the following paragraphs are text from the GCT Guidance and Tools. Pilot version. Key Aid Consulting 2021.

<sup>12</sup> E.g. self-help groups, community-based organisations, community committees and other formal and informal structures.

by the [Local to Global Protection](#) (L2GP) initiative. This CoP considers GCTs/group micro-grants<sup>13</sup> to be one component of sclr.

In practice, GCTs are small unrestricted grants, typically within the range of \$200-\$,7000 and with an average value between \$2,000 and \$3,000,<sup>14</sup> which are distributed to one or several groups within a crisis-affected area. GCTs can function as a stand-alone intervention, which is directly delivered through either LNAs or international agencies. However, GCTs are most often seen as a complementary modality to other CVA or other humanitarian responses, as they provide a value-add that strengthens crisis-affected populations' participation and mutual-aid efforts<sup>15</sup>

### Structure of the report

This report is structured around the findings from two rounds of Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with actors routinely using community-led responses, GCTs and/or CVA (27 total KIIs with 42 key informants (KIs)). Data collection also relied on an online survey (53 total participants) that was shared through the CaLP network and the sclr CoP, and a desk review of relevant literature (e.g. grey literature, organisational and academic reports). The detailed [methodology](#), [online survey results](#) and full [bibliography](#) are available in the annexes.

The findings of the data analysis also informed the development of the "Group Cash Transfers Guidance and Tools," which aim to guide actors interested in understanding and implementing GCTs.

The following sections do not provide a detailed analysis of all available data, and hence the report does not make many direct references to specific sources. Instead, this report provides a synthesis of the most critical and common findings in order to make concrete recommendations for agencies interested in GCTs. These recommendations have been triangulated across the various sources of collected data.

The report first describes the most commonly identified challenges and barriers to the uptake and scaling of GCTs in the humanitarian sector, including a review of internal/organisational barriers, external/institutional barriers, and perceived risks. For each key finding, the report offers recommendations, mitigation measures, and opportunities to increase the conduciveness of the GCT approach.

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<sup>13</sup> GCTs are called 'group micro-grants' in the sclr CoP.

<sup>14</sup> GCT is different from both small grant programmes (e.g. \$10,000-\$40,000) and micro-loan programmes.

<sup>15</sup> Mutual aid refers to solidarity-based and cooperative actions or support in which community members join to engage in common actions rather than focus on individuals or leaving individuals to take care of their own needs.

**Key definitions<sup>16</sup>**

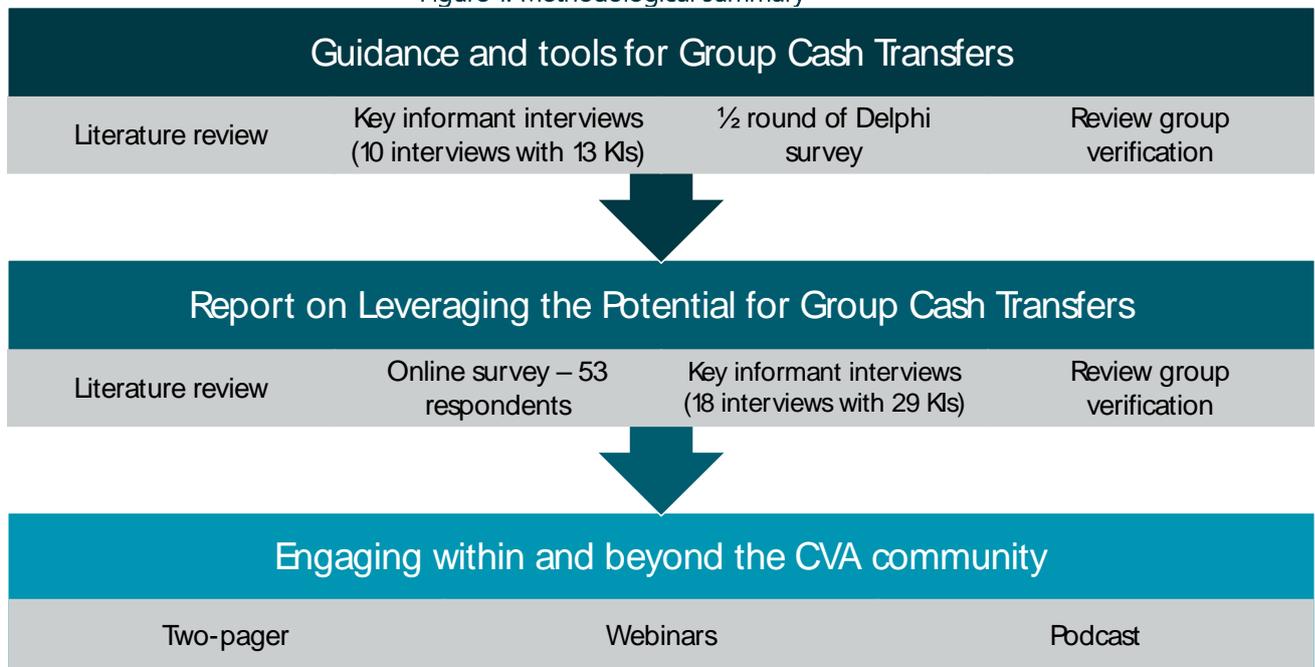
**Organisational barriers:** e.g. internal systems related to finance, procurement and logistics, and monitoring & evaluation that can prevent the transfer of resources and responsibilities to community groups; limited capacity in terms of staffing, training and resources; and coordination challenges.

**Institutional barriers:** e.g. limited funding; lack of donor support for specific approaches (in the case of GCT and localisation, this may be a lack of acceptance for shifting control or power to communities); regulation, reporting requirements and upward accountability standards; government barriers in countries of implementation (e.g. legal challenges to transferring funds to non-registered community groups); restrictions related to counterterrorism compliance; and resistance in the CVA CoP to use GCT.

**Community-led response:** The GCT approach is structured around community-led responses where affected populations are empowered and supported with financial inputs to take the lead on responding to the needs in their communities. Community-led response refers to interventions and initiatives that are designed and implemented by a collective of people who have a common goal or shared problems they wish to address together. The addressed concerns may range from sudden onset crises to long-term resilience projects.

## 2 Summary of the methodological approach

Figure 1: Methodological summary



See [Annex 1](#) for the detailed methodology used.

<sup>16</sup> Source: Key Aid Consulting, Inception Report for the Group Cash Transfers project

## 3 Findings and Recommendations

This report elaborates on the perceived and objective challenges, risks, and barriers to the GCT approach. In doing so, it focuses on both internal and external challenges, as well as risks that actors engaging in GCTs may have faced or expect to face in the future. The goal of the data analysis was to understand the systems and structures that impact the possibility of transferring more control to crisis-affected populations to lead their own responses. Moreover, an analysis of opportunities and enablers for the uptake and scaling of the GCT approach is embedded within the recommendations.

### 3.1. Internal and organisational challenges and barriers

Some of the greatest challenges to using and scaling GCTs are related to changing organisational procedures, systems, cultures, and mindsets that confront business as usual.

The humanitarian actors engaged in KIs and the online survey reported various internal challenges to scaling GCTs, but overall, the data suggested that there is willingness to learn about how to implement the approach. The reported level of uncertainty about using GCTs was relatively low, with only 20% of respondents considering a lack of buy-in from their organisation's operations department, senior management, LNAs, and donors to be a problem. However, the majority of respondents came from International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs) that are already invested in CVA.<sup>17</sup> The data still generally indicated a need for specific internal advocacy efforts in INGOs, UN agencies international agencies and LNAs, particularly to re-think approaches for strengthening community-led responses, to get the full buy in and support of financial and procurement staff, and to get a commitment from senior management and the strategic levels to work with GCTs. The following recommendations relate to these aspects.

#### Recommendation 1: Renegotiate organisational relationships and meaningfully shift power and agency to crisis-affected communities

##### Changing mindsets to support new types of programming

Engaging in a GCT approach undoubtedly requires some learning and un-learning for both international agencies and LNAs, and to some extent also for crisis-affected populations. The learning path includes, among others, renegotiating relationships between the different actors and creating new narratives about their roles. For example, a local NGO in relation to crisis-affected population is primarily taking a facilitating role whereas the community groups are the implementers of activities. For the same reasons, INGOs need to increase their trust in LNAs managing these

<sup>17</sup> According to the online survey, 19-23% of respondents reported a lack of buy-in (see [Figure 7](#)) as a key barrier. However with 83% of respondents coming from organisations specialised in CVA and an overrepresentation of INGOs, this may have impacted these percentages.

processes and in community groups' abilities to respond to needs in their communities in a transparent and accountable manner.

The CoP engaged in GCTs stressed the importance of seeing GCTs as a complementary approach to other forms of humanitarian assistance. Thus, the recommendation to renegotiate relationships and shift power and agency to communities is not to be equated with abandoning existing practices and systems, and existing compliance measures for CVA should remain in place.

KIIs and the online survey reported that one of the greatest internal challenges was the need to train programme support staff, including finance, procurement and logistics.<sup>18</sup> However, the respondents generally noted that they have the capacity to design, implement and monitor GCTs, which suggests that a change in mindset is equally important by way of training.

The agencies engaged in GCTs emphasised the need for flexibility and a certain level of risk willingness, which was also corroborated in the literature<sup>19</sup> as essential for an effective community-led response. There is a need for both international and national agencies' staff, including those who work in programme, operational support and management, to recognise that the numerous holistic needs of crisis-affected populations can neither be structured according to sector, nor met through siloed or externally-led approaches. Hence, advocacy at different levels is often necessary to ensure support from senior management (including boards), finance, and procurement. There may be specific contextual concerns to using GCTs in remote management settings, such as access to monitoring. However, the GCT approach is also an opportunity to provide support in areas that externally-led humanitarian assistance cannot reach.

The overall message from actors already engaged in GCTs was that the perceived internal barriers to GCTs are largely manageable, particularly with the wider support (e.g. from management) from within their own agencies. For instance, if mainstreaming CVA in humanitarian assistance is already a part of the organisational strategy, GCTs can be tied directly to this. Furthermore, actors promoting the GCT approach can, in line with their organisation's commitments (e.g. to the Grand Bargain), clarify their linkages to localisation, the participation revolution, the nexus and resilience efforts. Furthermore, if the CaLP network is successful in supporting actors to use GCT guidance and tools, prevailing barriers – such as 'lacking tools' and 'limited competencies, capacities and relations' – should be easily overcome (see [Figure 7](#)).

## Shifting power relations and facilitating community-led responses

The more challenging barriers to GCTs are related to the innovative nature of the approach that tests organisational willingness to handover control to groups of activists or agents of change, as well as the organisational capacity to facilitate community-led responses in crisis-affected areas. Hence, one requirement for LNAs<sup>20</sup> in their transition to supporting GCTs is to involve staff with the

<sup>18</sup> The online survey found that 90% of respondents (N=53) stated to have sufficient (43%) or partially sufficient (47%) capacity to design, implement and monitor GCTs (see [Figure 6](#)). The highest internal challenges related to training needs for programme staff (79%) and support functions (60%) (see [Figure 7](#)).

<sup>19</sup> Ringgaard & Ottosson, 2015

<sup>20</sup> These requirements may be similar for international actors directly implementing projects.

required capacities to facilitate community groups in leading the responses. This staff may include people who are well versed in certain types of development programming that use community-led approaches, or facilitating agencies may need to invest in training existing staff. INGOs, UN agencies and local government agencies can also benefit from strengthening their skills in community facilitation, participatory approaches, and do no harm systems that support local accountability and balance humanitarian standards with the local context and any applicable local standards.

Furthermore, most LNAs will also need to adjust their mindsets to realign to these new approaches. A good example comes from the L2GP report on the scdr pilot in Gaza in 2019, where a community mobiliser stated that: *"We were not convinced that communities are capable to lead or to implement community cash grants. Actually, we used not to trust them."*<sup>21</sup> Both in the context of Gaza and as reported elsewhere,<sup>22</sup> the shift from thinking of affected populations as recipients to activists or agents of change increases the crisis-affected populations' sense of empowerment. Their ability to then act can create new narratives about dignity and ownership, and lead to psychosocial benefits.<sup>23</sup>

As another component of this power shift, LNAs will have to convince donors/funding partners that they have systems in place to handle risks and are equally able to do so as international actors and through this also push back on certain conditionalities set for them. These claims can be substantiated through realistic self-assessments, where facilitating agencies demonstrate how they are able to support community-led responses, but also show that they are aware of the thresholds of when to request support.<sup>24</sup>

Lastly, LNAs play a significant role in creating awareness and helping to shift the affected populations' mindsets towards requesting new forms of assistance that fit local systems, e.g. of mutual aid efforts. For example, humanitarian actors reported that crisis-affected communities without knowledge of the possibility of GCTs will not request this type of support but will rather state that they prefer household-level assistance (if they are even asked). Meanwhile, people who are used to receiving household and individual assistance may have difficulties understanding the reason why humanitarian actors shift their assistance towards groups rather than individuals. This gap may create misunderstandings and even fear among affected populations that GCTs will mean less support for them; LNAs need to deal with these perceptions in their community via engagement activities.<sup>25</sup> Clearly, increasing the crisis-affected population's awareness and understanding of GCTs and community-led response models will likely stimulate the demand for GCTs, and create a bottom-up push to renegotiate existing relationships. Hence, the GCT approach presents an opportunity to renegotiate all relevant existing relationships, from crisis-affected populations and activist groups, to LNAs, to international actors.

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<sup>21</sup> Jarar et al., 2020

<sup>22</sup> Jarar et al., 2020, Anteguiza and Corbett, 2018, Grundin and Saadeh, 2018, Klls.

<sup>23</sup> See, for example, Thomas et al., 2020 on the importance of aid narratives and their impact on dignity.

<sup>24</sup> ICVA, 2020.

<sup>25</sup> This is further supported by the online survey: 36% of affected populations prefer other forms of assistance, and 38% of affected populations are unfamiliar with or unable to effectively access/use GCTs (see [Figure 10](#)).

## Recommendation 2: Adjust international agencies' compliance requirements and make regulatory measures more flexible for local actors

### Challenges related to internal systems and compliance

For international agencies, shifting the power includes relaxing their requirements of LNAs. Often, these partnerships have focused more on “upward accountability” in the name of donor compliance, as well as the international agencies’ policies, implementation strategies, and wanting to have more control on the achievable outcomes.<sup>26</sup> KIs reported that softening these controls is contrary to international agencies’ normal ways of working, which impacts both the willingness to “let go” and the knowledge of how to actually do so.<sup>27</sup>

To some extent, the lack of flexibility to change procedures, systems and compliance requirements within international agencies remains rooted in externally-led and controlled aid delivery systems. The most significant reported challenges were related to financial compliance, particularly, heavy procurement regulations and requirements for tender processes and formal documentation. Financial and procurement-related requirements may differ depending on the GCT’s transfer value, where the higher the amount, the more cumbersome the processes. Setting a lower cap on the maximum amount per group may therefore be a way to tackle at least some compliance barriers.

Agencies’ requirement of compliance protocols and almost exclusively relying on upward accountability significantly impact the potential for scaling GCTs. As already highlighted, loosening compliance measures are not synonymous with forgoing accountability and transparency. However, international and facilitating agencies can shift the focus of compliance measures, in order to establish simpler procedures for processes and documentation. These would ease the restrictive burden on GCT-supported groups, and support such groups to establish their own mechanisms of horizontal accountability within their communities. This analysis is widely supported in the literature on localisation and people-led responses, which highlight that aid agencies should be equally *“accountable for addressing shortcoming in the participation and satisfaction of the people they serve.”*<sup>28</sup>

The key is for facilitating agencies to ask themselves, “accountability of what, and to whom” and to then reduce the upward accountability requirements accordingly. The data collected for this report shows a consensus that horizontal and downward accountability are the foundation for successfully implementing GCTs. In order to achieve this shift, facilitating agencies are encouraged to engage in internal advocacy to get buy-in from their finance and procurement departments. The GCT guidance and tools provide some simple formats that can be used as they are (e.g. financial reporting, documentation of procurement, and monitoring), or that can be amended to as needed. The guiding documents and formats can be a starting point for advocacy activities as well. This

<sup>26</sup> Antequisa & Corbett, 2018; Ringgaard & Ottosson, 2015.

<sup>27</sup> See further information in Corbett, n.d.

<sup>28</sup> Konyndyk & Worden, 2019.

internal advocacy should be paired with donor advocacy in order to facilitate broader shifts and fewer top-down measures, which is further discussed in the following section.

## 3.2. External and institutional challenges and barriers to GCT

Institutional donors also appear to have limited appetite for shifting aid models due to their standards and compliance measures. The findings in this section mostly draw on interviews with actors engaged in GCTs, and from a few donors. The donors engaged for this report were largely interviewed on a ‘hypothetical’ basis, i.e. about whether they would be willing to fund GCTs.

**Recommendation 3: Advocate to donors<sup>29</sup> on how to adjust compliance measures, and strengthen the evidence base to back up these arguments**

### The hindrance of donor requirements and short programme cycles

Many actors engaged in GCTs considered institutional donor policies and short humanitarian programme cycles to be important barriers.<sup>30</sup> Although these actors also reported an increasing openness and interest from a variety of institutional donors for the GCT approach, some significant challenges remain. The most difficult donor requirements were largely related to:

- Donors’ lack of understanding of the GCT approach, and consequent limited willingness to support GCTs. However, donors should not be seen as a homogenous entity, and an increasing openness to revising the humanitarian assistance processes was noted, especially in donors’ programme departments.
- Donors’ financial policies and regulations restrict the possibility of transferring cash to certain groups, or prohibit certain amounts of cash from being transferred to individual group members.
- Donors’ financial policies also prevent community groups from being able to take the lead on procurement processes (as this is linked to financial accountability).
- Accountability processes focus on “upward accountability” to donors (as discussed in the previous section).
- Donor requirements on the use of financial delivery mechanisms especially impact opportunities to deliver GCTs in rural and remote areas, where groups are unlikely to have access to bank accounts or related technology.
- Due diligence and Counterterrorism Legislation (CTL) may restrict donors in supporting agencies that in transferring funds to non-registered groups (particularly due to own government legislations impacting the use of humanitarian and development funding).

<sup>29</sup> Donors here include institutional donors, as well as UN agencies and INGOs who may be acting as funding partners for local and national NGOs.

<sup>30</sup> See [Figure 10](#) where 40% and 28% of survey respondents cited the lack of donor understanding and willingness to support GCTs and lack of donor willingness to fund GCTs.

In addition to these challenges, some donors tend to consider GCTs as a resilience or development approach, and have difficulties in seeing their potential as life-saving assistance in conflict settings. These perceptions likely act as a barrier to considering GCTs alongside other modalities in emergency programming. Hence, facilitating agencies should increase their advocacy efforts about GCTs' potential use in crisis responses, including both sudden-onset disasters and conflict. Existing and new groups are seen to self-mobilise to respond to disasters, for example in response to flooding,<sup>31</sup> while some actors have used GCTs for peacebuilding efforts and to strengthen social cohesion.<sup>32</sup>

GCT actors called for increased openness in the communications between donors and funded organisations/facilitating agencies, particularly in relation to shifting allocated funds when contexts change. For example, facilitating agencies noted restrictions (both their own and donors') that led them to withhold on making specific asks to donors on the potential to shift already approved project activities to new types of activities. A typical shift could come around as contextual understanding changes; for example, in the realisation that groups have already mobilised to respond and that GCTs could effectively be used alongside other CVA modalities. More donor flexibility in these situations would allow GCTs to become part of an integrated approach, or to be used when reassigning funds to community-led responses. Meanwhile, having guidance and greater acceptance of GCTs across the CVA CoP (including CVA donors) should increase GCT's integration in humanitarian actors' contingency and response plans.

While the findings above highlight the necessity of focusing on the benefits of using GCTs in emergency responses to increase donor support, the intention is not to dispute the benefits of GCTs in resilience programming. Rather the findings emphasised the potential of GCTs to increase the resilience and sustainability of projects, in both emergency and non-emergency contexts, by increasing community ownership of activities. However, GCT actors highlighted both a lack of funding and short programme cycles as a hindrance to strengthening resilience and addressing the root causes of crises. For example, projects are either forced to exit or to keep a narrow focus on basic needs. GCT actors of course acknowledge that this is an issue throughout the humanitarian sector and do not necessarily consider this more problematic for GCT projects.

The authors of this report identified a few ways that GCT actors may be successful in negotiating with donors to gain support for the approach. One idea is to include GCTs as a component of a larger project (as is generally encouraged). Another is to pilot GCTs using softened restrictions for risk management, as it is safer to fail in this type of project.<sup>33</sup> Using either of these approaches

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<sup>31</sup> Anteguisa and Corbett, 2018.

<sup>32</sup> For example, SaferWorld, PeaceDirect, Myanmar Red Cross Society, ICRC, DCA, Ecoweb, YMCA, and Unbound.

<sup>33</sup> There may be situations where it is possible to distribute the GCTs through individuals (i.e. each group member) who commit to contributing the funds to the group project, although this is discouraged. This process would follow programme design features of more common CVA approaches and likely decrease the amounts to fall under any potential CTL threshold.

should be coupled with donor advocacy – including to their finance departments – on funding GCTs directly to eventually address their funding gap.<sup>34</sup>

## Building an evidence base through flexible funding

The most successful approach for initiating GCT programming to date is for international agencies to enter with their own flexible funds to implement GCTs through LNAs. This way, international agencies can ensure the necessary level of flexibility in how the funds are used and create the foundation for further exploring GCTs. Examples of using this approach have generated learning, which in turn has been used in donor appeals. Nonetheless, the evidence base is not yet strong or wide enough to support sufficient advocacy efforts with different levels in donor agencies. For example, in Myanmar where several organisations work with some form of GCTs, one actor<sup>35</sup> reported an experience where interest from a donor’s technical advisor was met with pushback from finance and compliance staff, which led the donor to eventually reject funding the GCT project.

It is important that actors with available and flexible funding work to strengthen the GCT evidence base. Typically, the focus of documentation collected for donor advocacy is on impact and outcome-level data, however, related to GCTs, donor concerns and interest for documentation seem to be as much on processes and accountability measures as elaborated above. Hence, in developing advocacy plans for engaging with donors, facilitating agencies need to build the evidence on the appropriateness of GCTs, and to profile their risk and accountability management capacities alongside impact-level data. Furthermore, this evidence base should also demonstrate that it is the communities who request GCTs as a type of support, to illustrate community acceptance and buy-in.<sup>36</sup> Lastly, this growing body of evidence should be shared and used across agencies for advocacy, including ones that have not yet engaged in GCT programming.

## Recommendation 4: Advocate for Area-Based Humanitarian Coordination as the relevant coordination structure to support GCTs and community-led responses

### Area-Based Humanitarian Coordination (ABHC)

As for any other humanitarian response, coordination efforts play a vital role in GCT programming. However, interviewed/surveyed actors engaged in GCTs and other community-based approaches consistently noted the gaps in current coordination mechanisms, particularly in terms of effectively engaging LNAs and the pitfalls of focusing on sector priorities. Various challenges already severely impact the coordination of CVA (when this coordination is even included in the existing structures),

<sup>34</sup> Corbett, n.d.

<sup>35</sup> Other actors similarly reported to primarily engage with donors at the strategic level and foreseeing the need to change the focus of advocacy to more programmatic levels.

<sup>36</sup> See also the [L2GP research and resource library](#) for resources that illustrate the impacts of sclr, for example around dignity, empowerment, resilience and ownership of the sclr approach.

and in particular for multipurpose cash (MPC), which is coordinated across sectors. These difficulties in turn impact the effectiveness of humanitarian responses.<sup>37</sup> Furthermore, the fact that these structures are dominated by UN agencies and large INGOs in some contexts limits the voice and leadership of LNAs, which largely undermines the role of local service providers, private sector actors, and local authorities.

This report recommends that actors interested in using GCTs advocate for an uptake in ABHC models.<sup>38</sup> ABHC systems are organised to deliver holistic responses and are centred around crisis-affected populations, rather than sectors or organisational mandates. This way, ABHC structures align to the fundamental purpose of the GCT approach: e.g. to truly live up to the central [Core Humanitarian Standard commitments](#) of placing people at the centre of humanitarian programming, and to recognise that affected people's needs and priorities are multisectoral.

In the same vein, ABHC entails that, for example needs assessments properly reflect the existing capacities of crisis-affected groups to respond to their own needs, in addition to available and accessible networks and resources within their locality. Setting up ABHC undoubtedly requires restructuring the systems and processes inherent in the humanitarian system, and increasing the influence of crisis-affected communities on the interventions that targeted them.

The GCT guidance further explores how to unlock local coordination mechanisms, including facilitating horizontal and vertical linkages between supported groups and local structures and services (e.g. health clinics), as well as creating stronger relationships with local authorities. This in turn should improve affected communities' ability to hold duty bearers accountable to their responsibilities, for example pushing for government agencies to staff the local health clinic or repair a road affected by natural disasters.

## Coordinating with local government

Coordinating with local governments should not only facilitate the implementation of GCT-funded projects, but also should help to build their acceptance of, and support for, using GCTs. The level of coordination needed depends on the context, and facilitating agencies should be sensitive to power dynamics in their engagement. Hence, this coordination should include a mapping of all relevant stakeholders, and an analysis to inform how to engage at different levels, from keeping them informed to actively working with government stakeholders.

Government restrictions on GCTs are largely seen in areas affected by conflict or in contexts with general limitations on CVA. GCT actors reported to have been generally successful in advocating with local authorities to overcome such government restrictions. Similar to affected populations, local authorities are often quick to understand the potential and benefits of the GCT approach. Furthermore, national governments' increased uptake of cash when implementing social protection programmes during the COVID-19 pandemic may have also positively impacted CVA restrictions.

<sup>37</sup> Jodar et al., 2020; Smart, 2020; Jeremy Konyndyk et al., 2020.

<sup>38</sup> Jeremy Konyndyk et al., 2020

## Recommendation 5: Find a balanced and locally relevant approach to working with sectoral standards

### Considering locally relevant standards

The GCT approach has an exceptional capacity to meet inter-sectoral needs according to the affected populations' stated priorities. While there is no disputing the need for general minimum humanitarian standards, e.g. protection mainstreaming and the Core Humanitarian Standards, sector standards such as those identified in the [Sphere](#) handbook are not always easy or as relevant to apply to GCTs. Actors engaged in community-led approaches highlighted the need to balance adherence with standards with creating space for local people to be involved in decision-making, and local understanding of what is necessary. Again, the purpose is not to abandon existing standards, but to balance the expectations and requirements of both LNAs and supported groups.

Meanwhile, facilitating agencies should consider how to work with groups that suggest initiatives that are beyond their organisations' mandates or sectoral expertise. Allowing a broad focus in GCT programming should be seen as an enabler for increased collaboration between supported groups and LNAs, international agencies or individuals who have the expertise needed to assist the groups. Facilitating agencies should focus on utilising existing resources, knowledgeable persons, and services in communities to support capacity strengthening efforts for groups where needed. Surprisingly, only a few GCT-experienced KIs mentioned that the requirement to maintain a sectoral focus came from their donors, which may explain why these actors had the opportunity to engage in GCTs in the first place.

### 3.3. Understanding risks to using and scaling GCT

The data shows a high variety of risk perceptions for using GCTs, albeit they primarily come from humanitarian actors and institutional donors, rather than LNAs. Among these are the classic (mis)perceptions or reticence around corruption risks, risks of duplication or lack of collaboration, and safety and protection risks for supported groups (security, gender), as well as for staff of facilitating agencies, especially in areas with no accessible financial services. Other perceived risks are related to power dynamics, including the diversion of funds by community leaders, the centralisation of power, and the risk of conflict between groups, between supported groups and other groups, or with individuals who do not receive any direct assistance.<sup>39</sup>

## Recommendation 6: Separate perceived risks from objective risks – and increase international agencies and donors' willingness to support GCTs

### Strengthening risk management capacities

<sup>39</sup> See [Figure 11](#): Five key risks of GCTs.

Risk management and risk sharing (i.e. not just transferring risks to downstream partners) is gaining traction in international debates.<sup>40</sup> Part of these discussions touches upon the need for humanitarian actors to increase their risk willingness to engage in new types of programming that can eventually help improve humanitarian assistance.

As with [CVA](#) and general humanitarian programming, many of the aforementioned risks can be mitigated through programme design. To some extent, risk perceptions related to misappropriation and corruption are more about a lack of awareness than an actual risk. Furthermore, the risks of working with LNAs should not necessarily be any different (or higher) than the corruption risks when working with international agencies.

All programming presents risks, and thus facilitating agencies still have to conduct a level of risk analysis as part of their GCT programme. Ideally the risk analysis is done directly in coordination with – or led by – affected communities. The GCT approach has an increased focus on downward accountability (from the facilitating agency to supported groups and affected communities) and on horizontal accountability (from supported groups to their communities). This is achieved through mechanisms that are contextually relevant and support risk mitigation, identification and handling in for example countering corruption risks or tensions between groups and other community members, for example, through establishing local transparency mechanisms used to document groups' project activities and purchases in a way that is accessible to all members of communities.<sup>41</sup>

Both international agencies as funding partners and institutional donors have responsibilities related to risk management, particularly in strengthening partnerships and supporting LNAs in managing risks – and in increasing their understanding of residual risks (i.e. the level of change in risk levels after the implementation of certain mitigation measures). The motivation is that a more strategic focus on LNA's risk management capacities can further increase their access to obtain and scale direct funding.

To that end, the GCT guidance and tools support facilitating agencies to mitigate specific risks that might be present in the context of utilising GCTs. The effect of having concrete steps in place to minimise risk and thus increase quality implementation should also increase humanitarian agencies' appetite to utilise GCTs.

## Recommendation 7: Coach supported groups to be inclusive in the design and implementation of GCTs, and to overcome access and operational barriers

### Gender equality and social inclusion

The GCT guidance outlines measures to facilitate gender mainstreaming, mitigate risks of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) associated with CVA (linked to unequal access to and control over resources),

<sup>40</sup> Metcalfe-Hough, 2020; Metcalfe-Hough et al., 2020.

<sup>41</sup> See [Figure 12](#), where the online survey respondents indicated programmatic activities that were the most critical to ensuring accountability to communities with respect to GCTs.

and to mainstream protection and do-no-harm in GCTs. The uptake and scaling of GCTs should avoid the error that many other humanitarian projects make of simplifying gender to mean women and girls, and, in turn, that gender, protection and inclusion can be “solved” solely through women’s groups or groups focused on disability inclusion, for example.

As in any other humanitarian response, GCT-facilitating agencies need to recognise that a crisis affects people of diverse identities (gender, age and other social identities) differently.<sup>42</sup> In some cases, there is a need to raise awareness within communities that status quo is a problem. Furthermore, where relevant, awareness must be followed up with capacity support to ensure that GCT-supported groups and activists are able to address the issues of their communities’ most marginalised members.

Ensuring that women, girls, individuals with diverse sexual orientations and gender identities and expressions, and persons with disabilities can take on leadership roles in crisis settings is a positive goal in and of itself. However, it may not be a starting point to enforce inclusion on supported groups. Instead, agencies can encourage and support groups to think about inclusion, for example through strengthening the capacity of men and boy-led groups to be more inclusive and be champions of initiatives that address inequality and vulnerabilities.

It may not be fair to expect groups’ proposals to be inclusive of gender and other social identities at the start, given cultural norms, but groups should be committed to inclusive processes and outcomes through capacity strengthening. If handled correctly, there are opportunities to challenge the cultural stereotypes that women, girls, individuals with diverse sexual orientations and gender identities, and persons living with disabilities are merely more vulnerable during a crisis, and rather to help them be seen as leaders in the recovery.

### Recommendation 8: Strategically use the GCT approach to mitigate risks related to women and girls’ double burden<sup>43</sup>

A potential risk for women and girls engaging in GCT-supported groups is increasing their burdens and responsibilities, given the context’s prevailing gender norms and roles. This may not only lead to additional stressors for crisis-affected women, but could also create conflict at the household level and exacerbate GBV. Facilitating agencies should not assume that GCTs always create a double burden for engaged women and girls, but rather ask crisis-affected women and girls how the

<sup>42</sup> Ringgaard & Ottosson, 2015; Grundin & Saadeh, 2018.

<sup>43</sup> Double burden refers to the fact that in many countries, and due to traditional gender roles, women and girls are responsible for several household chores including cooking, childcare, caring for sick or elderly people, unpaid and domestic labour, and buying groceries, in addition to potentially paid labour. When women and girls engage in economic empowerment projects or are targeted as recipients of humanitarian assistance, there might be an additional burden laid on them if they are expected to engage in certain activities, to show up for distributions, or even in new types of livelihood activities. There is a risk that adding additional chores and responsibilities impact women and girls’ ability to carry out other burdens, and for some, the risk of intimate partner violence increases. The risk of double burden for women and girls must never be an excuse to not target women; rather facilitating agencies should consider how to engage men and boys in supporting household chores and sharing the domestic and unpaid work.

structures of the GCT approach can best support them (e.g. flexible timing, fewer restrictions, engagement of men and boys in certain activities, etc.).<sup>44</sup>

Short-term and/or stand-alone GCTs will not be sufficient on their own to shift gender norms. However, GCTs as part of integrated and long-term interventions, facilitated by LNAs and led by the communities themselves, do have the potential to support such a transformation through women and girls' participation in change agency. While emerging evidence on GCTs demonstrate that the approach itself creates space and opportunities for rethinking traditional gender roles, facilitating agencies can support this through proactive efforts to shift gender norms and further creating an evidence-base on GCTs' impact on gender roles. An integrated gender and protection analysis should be conducted by the facilitating agency and then updated throughout the programme, and linked to outcome monitoring that also measures the effectiveness of risk mitigation mechanisms and inclusion strategies.

### Recommendation 9: Facilitating agencies should commit to strengthening the capacities of existing and new groups, and to establishing local accountability measures

#### Strengthening capacities of groups and local accountability systems

As the GCT approach aims to transfer power to crisis-affected communities, facilitating agencies must also commit to strengthening the capacities of groups that receive GCTs. These efforts may be especially needed for financial management and locally-led accountability systems – and can create a foundation for these groups to successfully implement future projects (with or without GCT funding).

The tools included in the GCT guidance focus on putting people and communities affected by a crisis at the centre and provide a basis for considering local accountability measures. It is crucial, that tools and processes are adapted with the relevant context in mind, which is best secured by involving affected communities in decision-making on adaptations and processes. Of the GCT tools and processes established, the following are the most critical to support locally-led systems of accountability (which will inherently strengthen capacities):

- Any assessments of the context and potential crisis are primarily led by community members and volunteers, supported by the facilitating agency.
- The group cash transfer project proposals are assessed by community representatives and decision-making is primarily led from within affected communities rather than by a facilitating agency.
- Affected communities are encouraged to establish grievance mechanisms if not already available; this could be through traditional and existing structures (e.g. traditional leaders,

<sup>44</sup> Inspiration for gender risk analysis related to group projects can be found in the Savings Groups literature, for example: Rickard & Johnsson, 2018.

faith leaders, women's groups etc.) or new structures emerging as GCTs are introduced. In reality, facilitating agencies currently still generally take the lead in establishing and running complaints and feedback mechanisms. It is critical that mechanisms to handle sensitive complaints remain in place, but there is also a need to start thinking about how local structures can increasingly be engaged to ensure that these mechanisms are locally and contextually relevant, as well as sustainable.

- The supported groups commit to publicly announcing processes, results, and expenditures for their projects – the community is encouraged to hold supported groups accountable through community-led grievance mechanisms and direct engagement between groups and members of the affected populations.
- Financial reporting can be shared in a transparent manner for all community members to access this.
- Monitoring is led by community members and volunteers, with the support of the facilitating agency.
- Supported groups can use the results of peer monitoring and outcome monitoring to regularly communicate data on the GCT projects to other community members as well as for groups to advocate for funding from other sources.
- Groups can engage in direct collaboration as well as learning activities with other groups to strengthen locally-led responses.
- Groups can engage directly with duty bearers to advocate for support, e.g. capacity, in-kind, financial or taking on responsibility to continue group activities.

Further details on the tools, ways of communication and transparency to truly transfer power to communities are available in the GCT guidance and tools.

## 4 Conclusion

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There is a clear potential for LNAs, international agencies, and donors to leverage existing and promising new practices to further increase the scale and uptake of GCTs as part of CVA programming. These practices have fed into the GCT guidance and tools, as well as this report. After a thorough analysis, this report has identified 9 recommendations on how to address barriers associated with upward accountability and compliance, among others, through changing organisational mindsets.

The GCT guidance and tools should be a source for learning and understanding the approach. They can also be used as inspiration for fundraising, starting a dialogue with and between LNAs, and for advocacy purposes.

This report has not considered all future potentials of GCTs in depth. For example, some actors, including donors, raised the possibilities of considering GCTs within social protection programmes as part of integrated interventions, for which CVA programming has an increasing potential. Linking GCTs to social protection should be further explored in future initiatives and research.

Another area that is not addressed in this report and the guidance is the potential of GCTs to support social cohesion and to address the root causes of crises. Addressing root causes is part of the sclr approach and can be further explored through following the entirety of that approach (sclr goes beyond GCTs, for example, in continuously working with LNAs on capacity strengthening efforts). However, while social cohesion and conflict transformation are new frontiers in humanitarian response and research, it seems relevant to consider how to integrate these aspects more strongly in GCTs, including through measuring qualitative GCT outcomes and supporting activities.

There are already emerging initiatives and strategic ambitions for CVA to support localisation strategies, for example, through the establishment of the sub-workstream on Cash and Local Partnerships within the Grand Bargain Cash Workstream. The changing strategic ambition for localisation and CVA should indeed enable establishing new relationships with local responders and, through this, also improve the quality and harmonisation of humanitarian programming.<sup>45</sup> However, GCT programming is as much about supporting the participation revolution as it is about localisation efforts. This is manifest in the capacity of the approach to transfer power to crisis-affected populations. Therefore, it is critical that while encouraging LNA's uptake of GCTs as a subset of CVA, there is an understanding that the complexity of change rests in ensuring that these actors are able to facilitate stronger inclusion of crisis-affected populations, and are also willing to further hand over power to community groups.

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<sup>45</sup> Jodar, 2020, Metcalfe-Hough, 2020, Konyndyk & Worden, 2019, Jodar et al., 2020.

## The 9 recommendations for GCTs

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Recommendation 1: Renegotiate organisational relationships and meaningfully shift power and agency to crisis-affected communities

Recommendation 2: Adjust international agencies' compliance requirements and make regulatory measures more flexible for local actors

Recommendation 3: Advocate to donors on how to adjust compliance measures, and strengthen the evidence base to back up these arguments

Recommendation 4: Advocate for Area-Based Humanitarian Coordination as the relevant coordination structure to support GCTs and community-led responses

Recommendation 5: Find a balanced and locally relevant approach to working with sectoral standards

Recommendation 6: Separate perceived risks from objective risks – and increase international agencies and donors' willingness to support GCTs

Recommendation 7: Coach supported groups to be inclusive in the design and implementation of GCTs, and to overcome access and operational barriers

Recommendation 8: Strategically use the GCT approach to mitigate risks related to women and girls' double burden

Recommendation 9: Facilitating agencies should commit to strengthening the capacities of existing and new groups, and to establishing local accountability measures

## Annex 1: Methodology

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This study used a mixed-method approach, relying on both primary and secondary sources through a desk review, Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), an online survey, and the Delphi technique.<sup>46</sup> The data was collected to meet the objectives of the study, as organised into challenges. These challenges were:

- **Challenge 1:** Map the state of Group Cash Transfers (GCTs) and how GCTs have been used to date.
- **Challenge 2:** Develop standards, operational guidelines, and tools to support the uptake, design, implementation, and monitoring of quality GCTs.
- **Challenge 3:** Leverage the potential of community cash grants by identifying internal and institutional barriers to using and scaling GCTs.
- **Challenge 4:** Make the case for GCTs.

The study commenced with the preparation of an inception report, which was reviewed by designated CaLP Technical Advisory Group (TAG) members on GCTs. This step served to clarify the objectives of the study, define its scope, and identify the methods and tools to use. The agreed-upon scope for the study includes:

- **Population:** General population covering all genders, ages, education levels, income levels, health statuses and abilities.
- **Intervention:** Projects conducted by any humanitarian, development, academic, or private sector actor that use CVA in communities in a manner that enables crisis-affected populations to lead the response.
- **Context:** Urban, peri-urban, rural; as well as refugee camps, host communities, IDP settings; in disaster zones.
- **Actors:** Local NGOs, INGOs, UN agencies, members of the Red Cross/Crescent movement, private sector actors, and Government actors.
- **Outcome:** Lifesaving, resilience, preparedness, localisation, and/or social outcomes. It also includes examples related to institutional and organisational outcomes (e.g. related to donor support or internal systems).
- **Study type:** Published after 2005 in English, as academic research, grey literature, project document, M&E report, training material, guidance and tools.

Upon finalising the inception report, the Key Aid Consulting team commenced with the literature review for the agreed-upon scope.

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<sup>46</sup> The Delphi method entails the deployment of a questionnaire to a group of experts who anonymously reply and subsequently receive feedback in the form of a statistical representation of the "group response," after which the process repeats itself. The goal is to reduce the range of responses and arrive at something close to an expert consensus.

## Literature review

The literature review was conducted iteratively and covered challenges 1, 2 and 3. The search for sources was conducted via platforms such as [Local to Global Protection \(L2GP\)](#), [The Cash Learning Partnership \(CaLP\)](#), Google Scholar, Google search, [Overseas Development Institute \(ODI\)](#), [Seep Network](#), [From Poverty to Power](#), [International Council of Voluntary Agencies \(ICVA\)](#), and the [Center for Global Development](#). Key informants and working group members also shared documents directly with the consultants throughout the study.

The consultants further used **backward** and **forward citation searches**, where the bibliographies of included documents were used to identify additional studies, and through manual searching of relevant studies that cited literature that had already been included, using Google Scholar respectively.

## Key Informant Interviews (KIs)

The consultants worked with the GCT working group and shared announcements in D-groups and the sclr CoP to identify people to interview. The selection of KIs was done purposefully, targeting the people best able to contribute to the topic of GCTs based on their prior experience with GCTs and CVA, and their influence on GCT programmes.

The first round of KIs aimed to fulfil the objectives of challenge 1, e.g. to map the state of GCTs and how GCTs have been used to date. **9 KIs** were conducted with 13 key informants. Out of the 9 KIs, 3 were conducted jointly, with each of the 3 interviews having multiple<sup>47</sup> KIs with complementary expertise from the same organisation.

The second round of KIs focused on the objectives of challenge 3, e.g. to identify internal and institutional barriers to using and scaling GCTs. The consultants conducted **18 KIs** with a total of 29 KIs representing local NGOs, localisation actors, INGOs, and donors. In the same manner as the first round of KIs, interviews were conducted with either individual KIs or with multiple<sup>48</sup> individuals with complementary expertise. KIs for this stage were identified via the working group's recommendations, as well as through a snowball method. Throughout the first and second rounds of KIs, the consultants also identified case studies to use in the GCT guidance document – reflecting GCT best practices, as well as challenges and barriers.

## Delphi technique

Following the creation of a long list of promising practices towards the design, implementation and monitoring of GCTs via the first round of KIs and literature review, the consultants developed and deployed a Delphi survey in KoBo Collect. The purpose of this survey was in to narrow down and

<sup>47</sup> Out of the 3 joint KIs that were conducted, 1 was composed of 3 KIs, while the remaining 2 KIs were paired interviews with 2 KIs each.

<sup>48</sup> For the second round of interviews, out of the 5 joint interviews, 2 were conducted with 4 KIs representing different stakeholders in same context, 1 was conducted with 3 KIs, and 2 were conducted as paired interviews with 2 KIs in the same interview.

validate the identified promising practices, as well as to create ownership among contributors and ensure collaborative evidence harnessing.

The 19 participants in the Delphi survey were drawn from of KIIs, as well as GCT working group, which was formed in advance to the survey deployment. The consultants originally planned to conduct two rounds of the Delphi survey to reduce the range of responses and to arrive at a consensus defined as  $\geq 70\%$  of agreement between experts on the content and phrasing of the promising practices. However, due to the first round's low response rate (10 total responses), it was decided in consultation with the working group to forego the second round. The reason for the low response rate was that the consultancy was unable form the initially planned group of 30 experts, as well as the fact that the online survey had already been deployed, which might have resulted in response fatigue.

The consultants triangulated the responses from the first round of Delphi survey with the literature review and KIIs to feed into this consultancy's deliverables, including the guidelines, tools and this report.

### Online survey

In order to address challenge 3's objective of identifying internal and institutional barriers to using and scaling GCTs, the consultants developed an online survey based on the findings of the literature review and the initial KIIs. The online survey was deployed via KoBo Collect, and participants were identified either through announcements in D-groups and the sclr CoP, or were initial KIIs that expressed interest in participating. In total **53** participants covering a range of actors, geographical areas, and specialisations took part in the online survey (see [Figure 2](#), [Figure 3](#), [Figure 4](#), and [Figure 5](#) for background information on online survey participants).

### Data analysis and write-up

Data analysis was conducted iteratively throughout the data collection process to inform the development of the guidance and tools, as well as to identify what further data needed to be collected.

Data was coded and analysed in a Microsoft Excel coding sheet that was developed specifically for this study. It captured data related to outcomes, processes (following the humanitarian programme cycle), key challenges, enablers, recommendations, and potential issues related to support systems. Following the analysis for each challenge, the GCT guidance and tools were developed. The consultants then drafted this report.

A review group consisting of **21** experts was set up to ensure the quality of the deliverables, identify gaps, and receive recommendations on process of conducting this study. Selected review group members were representative of different geographical areas and GCT-related expertise, including CVA, Gender, Emergency response, Resilience programming, and WASH. Members of the CaLP TAG GCT working group were automatically included as part of this review group, while a call for expressions of interest was made through various D-groups for additional members. KIIs with relevant GCT experience were also invited to be members of the review group.

## Annex 2: Online survey results

### Background

Figure 2: Number of online survey respondents by type of organisation

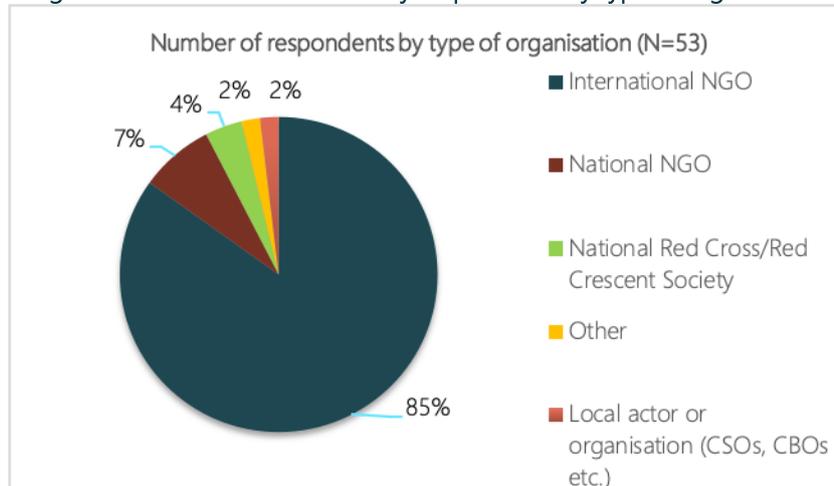


Figure 3: Number of online survey respondents by role

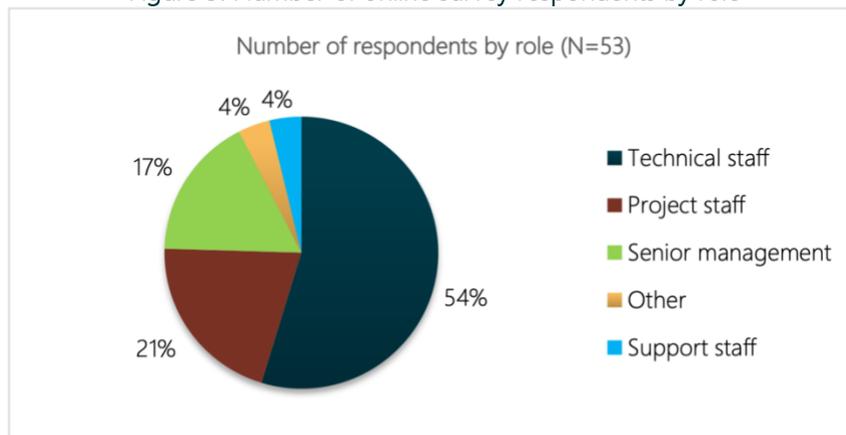


Figure 4: Number of online survey respondents by location

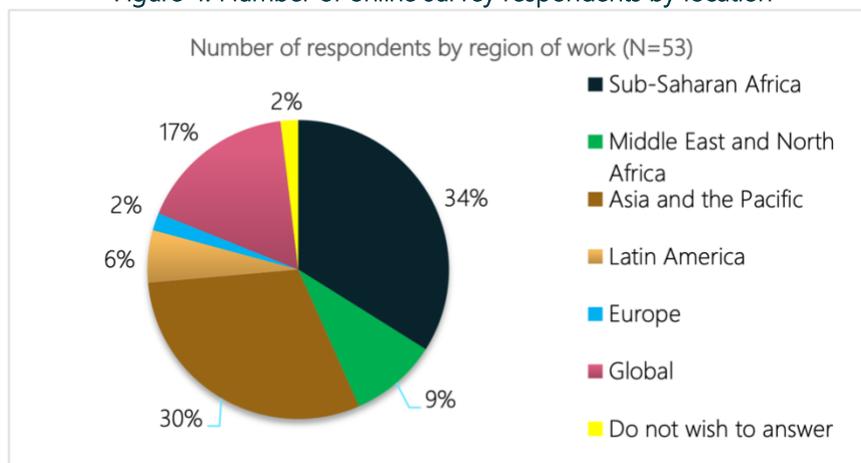


Figure 5: Online survey respondents' organisational specialisation



Internal and organisational challenges and barriers

Figure 6: Capacity to design, implement and monitor GCTs

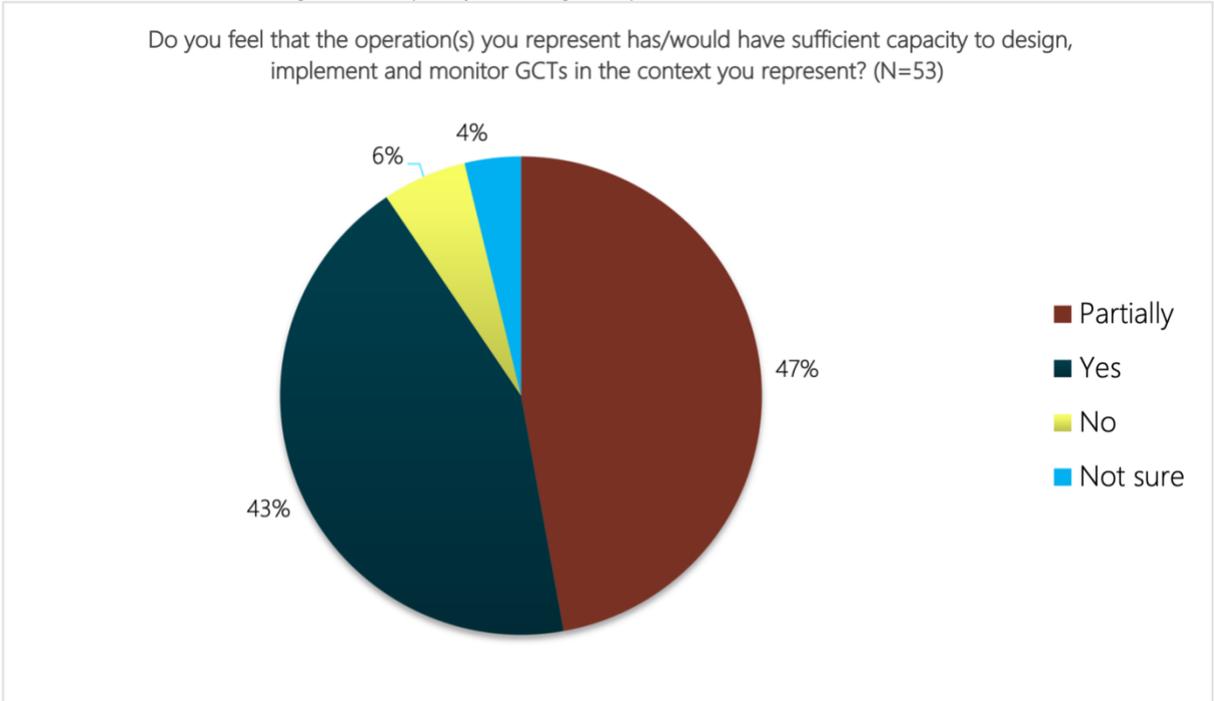


Figure 7: Internal and organisational challenges and barriers to Implements GCTs

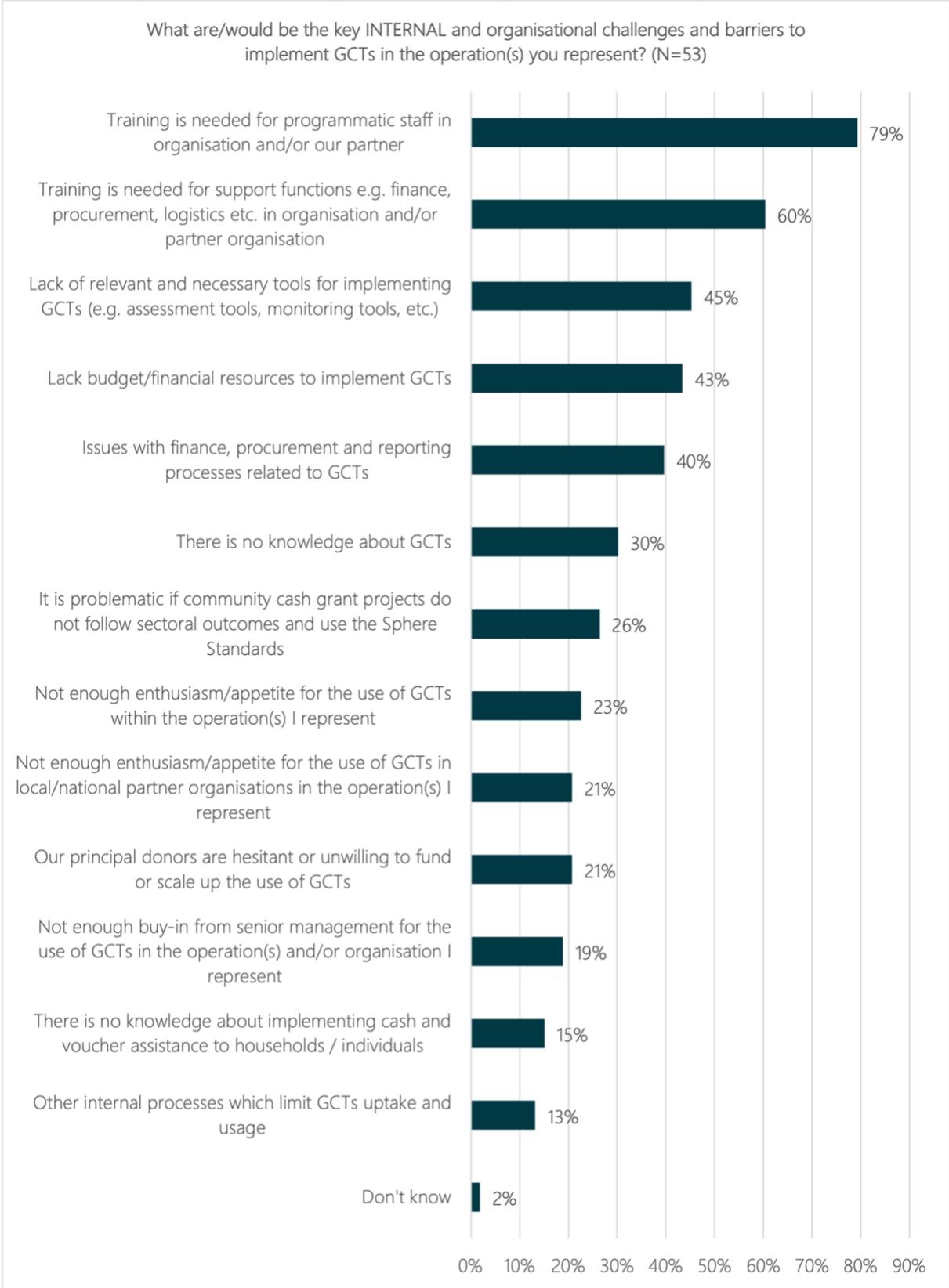


Figure 8: Key barriers related to programming

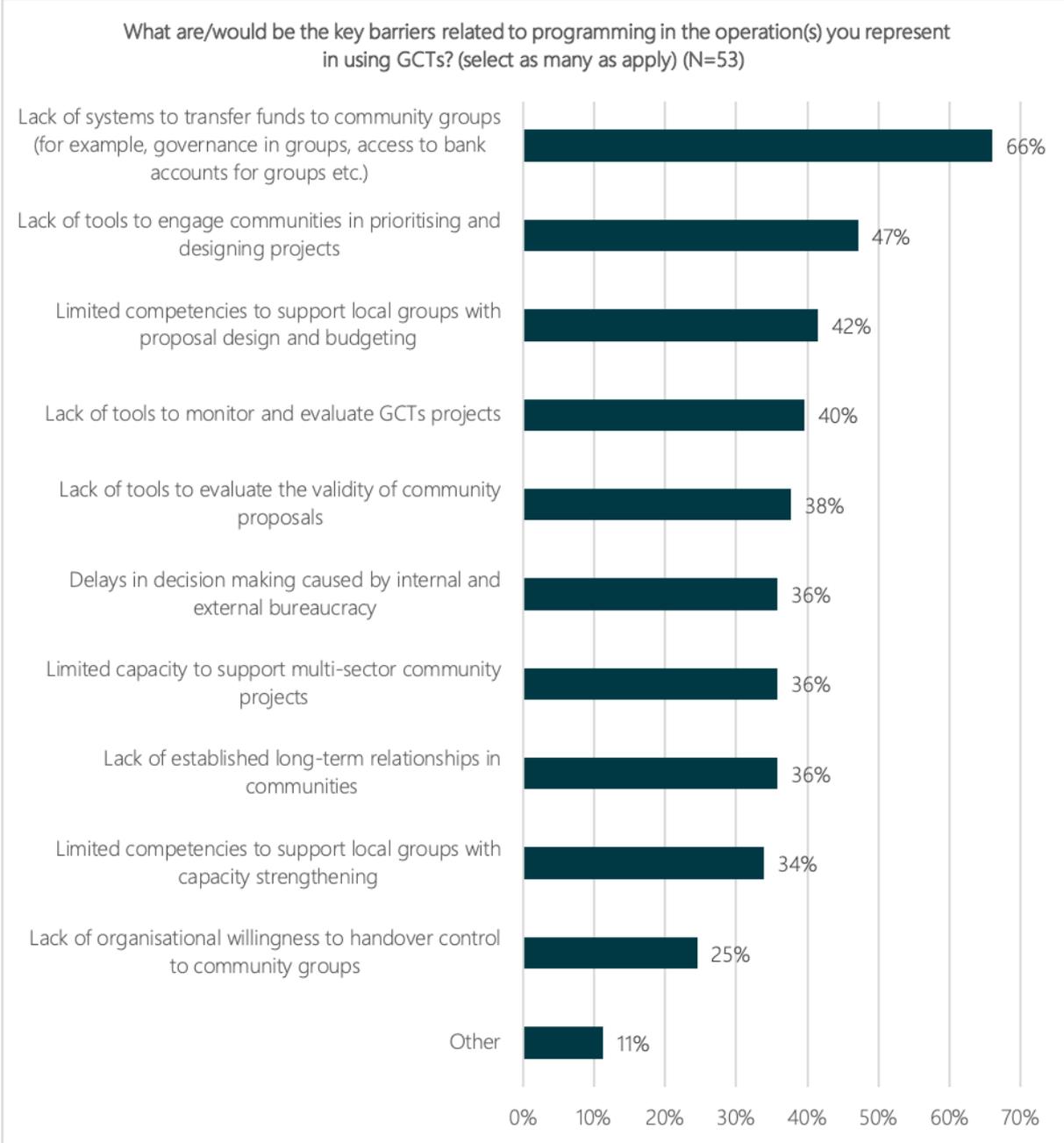
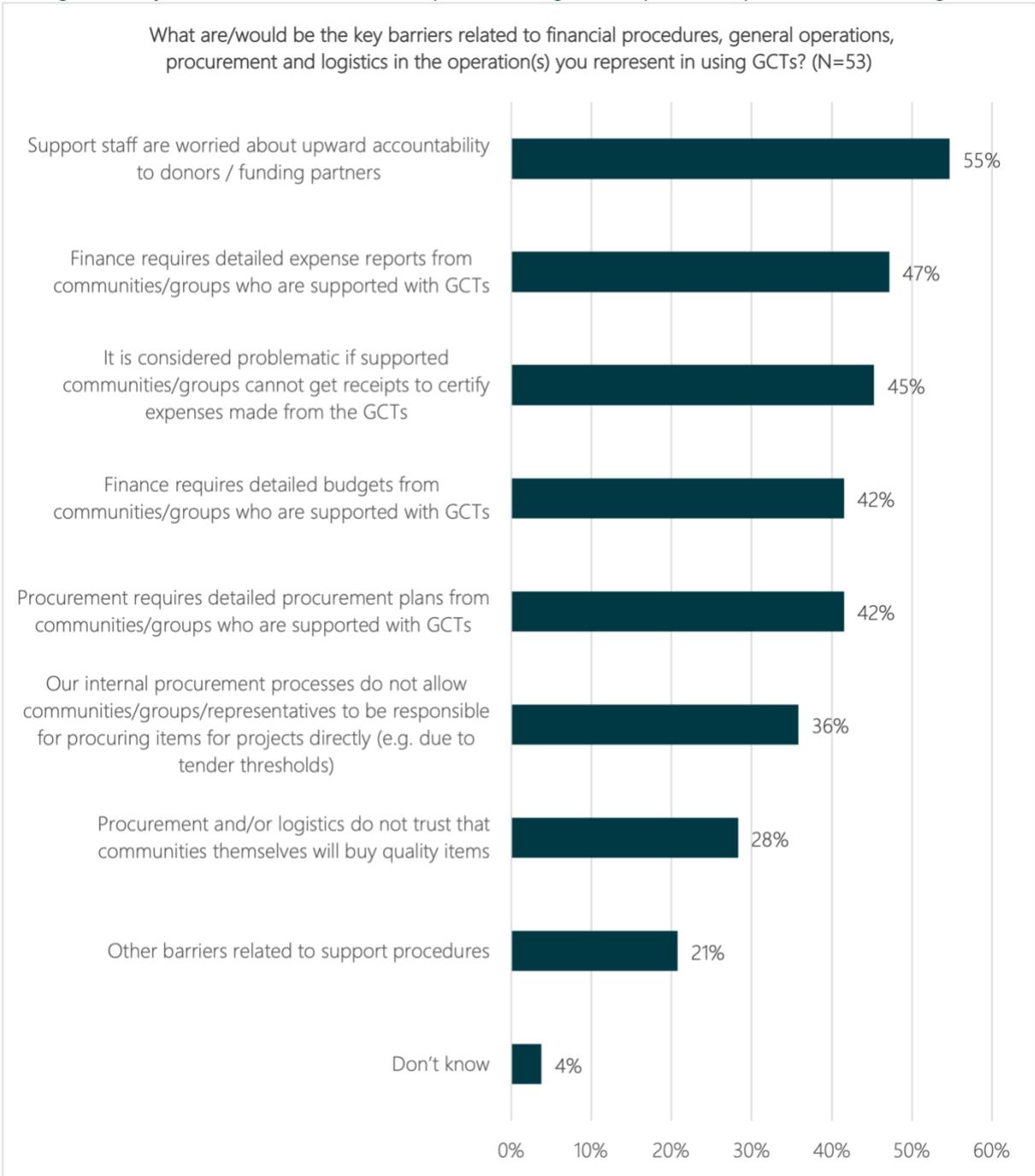
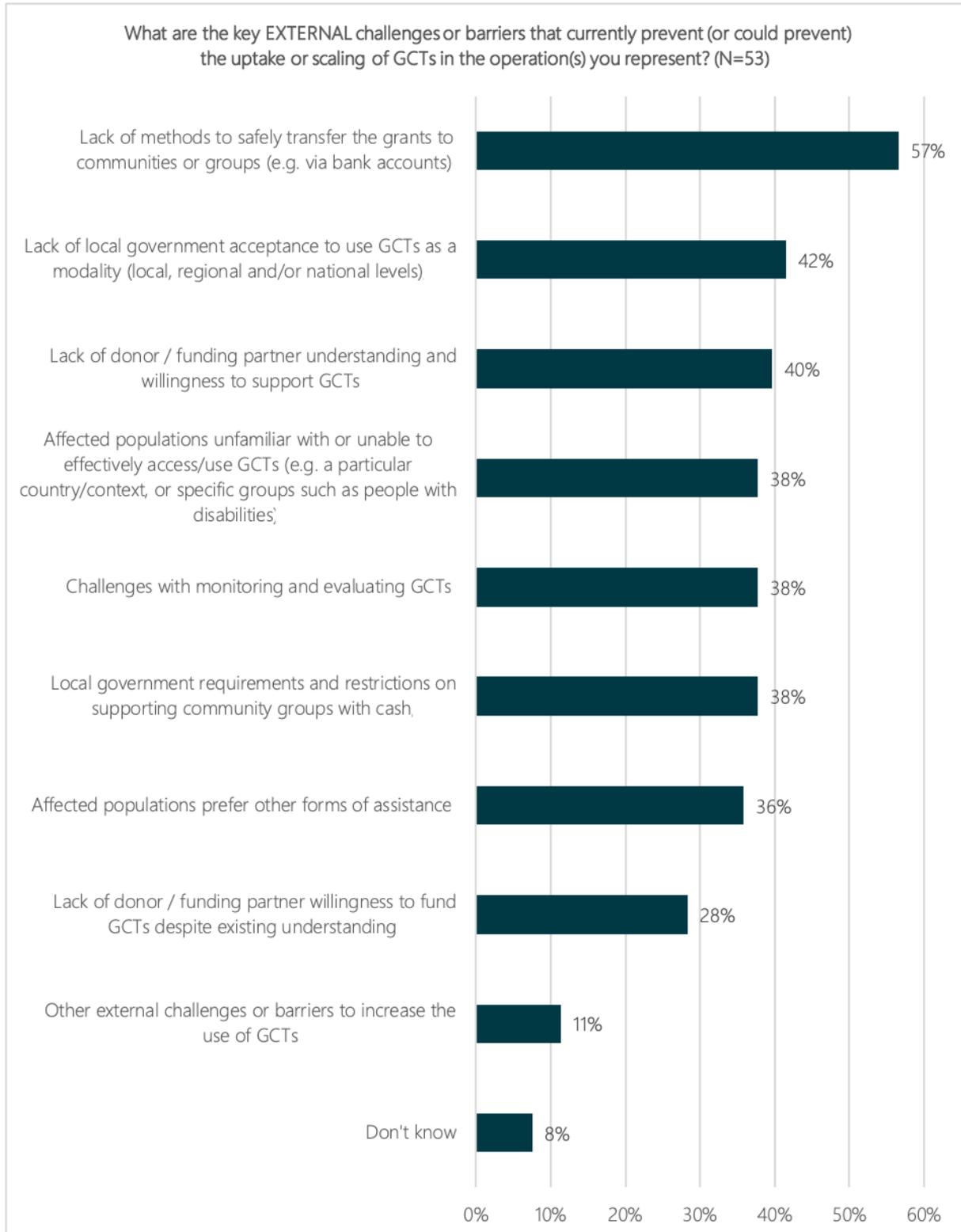


Figure 9: Key barriers related to financial procedures, general operations, procurement and logistics



## External challenges

Figure 10: External challenges or barriers that currently prevent or could prevent the uptake or scaling of GCTs



## Understanding risks to using and scaling GCTs

Figure 11: Five key risks of GCTs

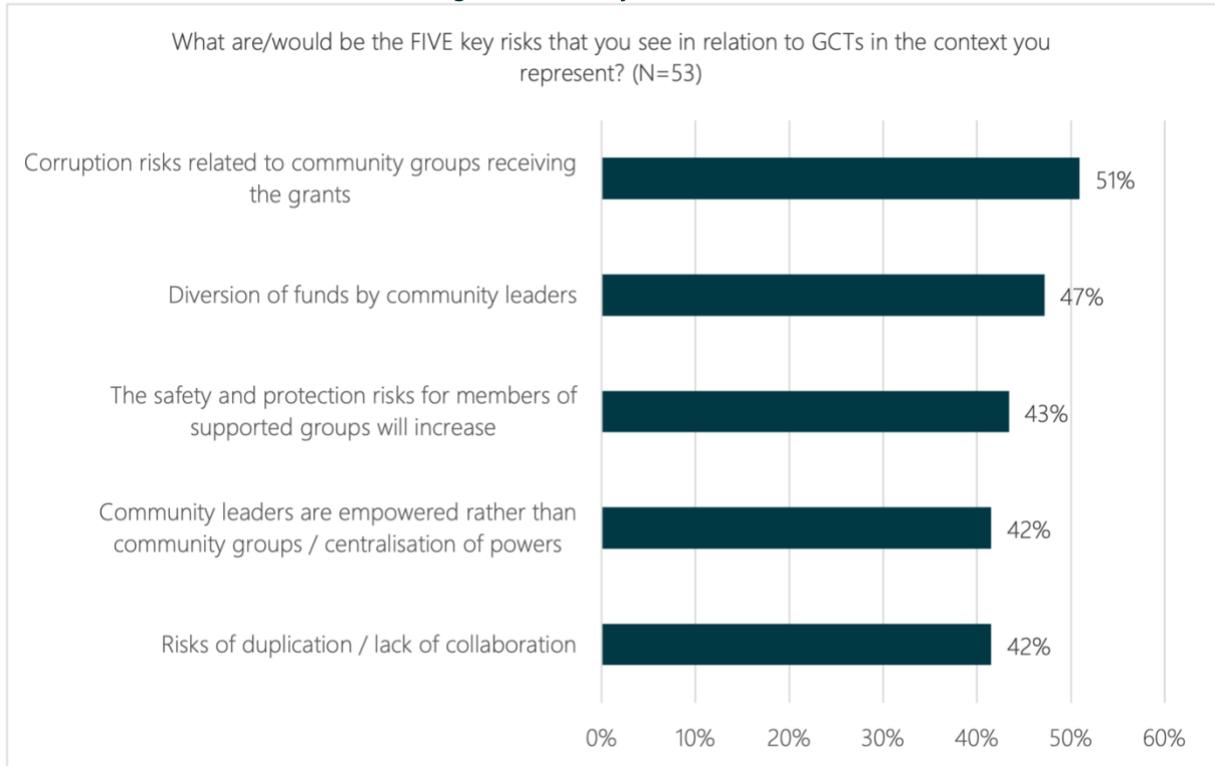
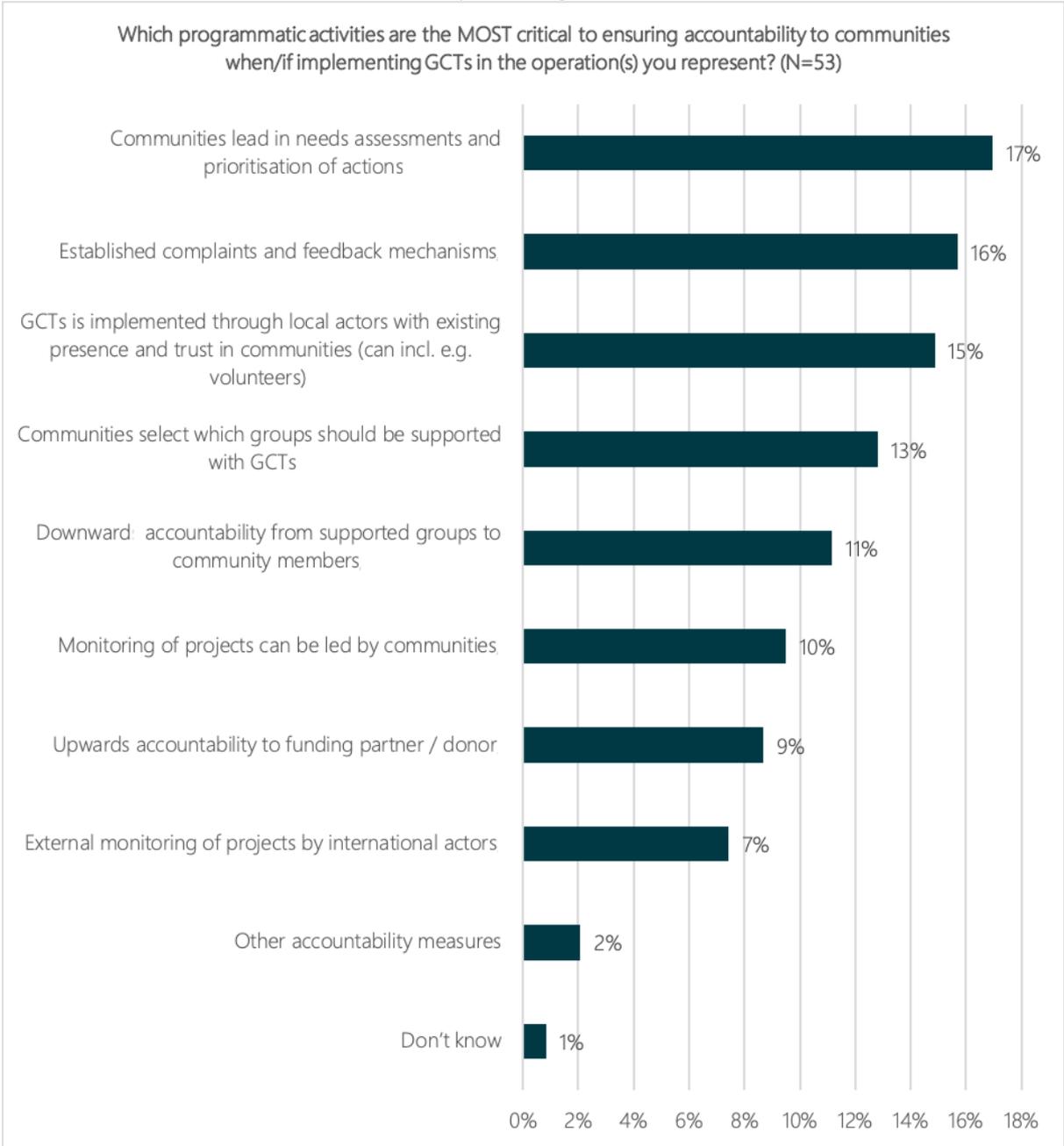
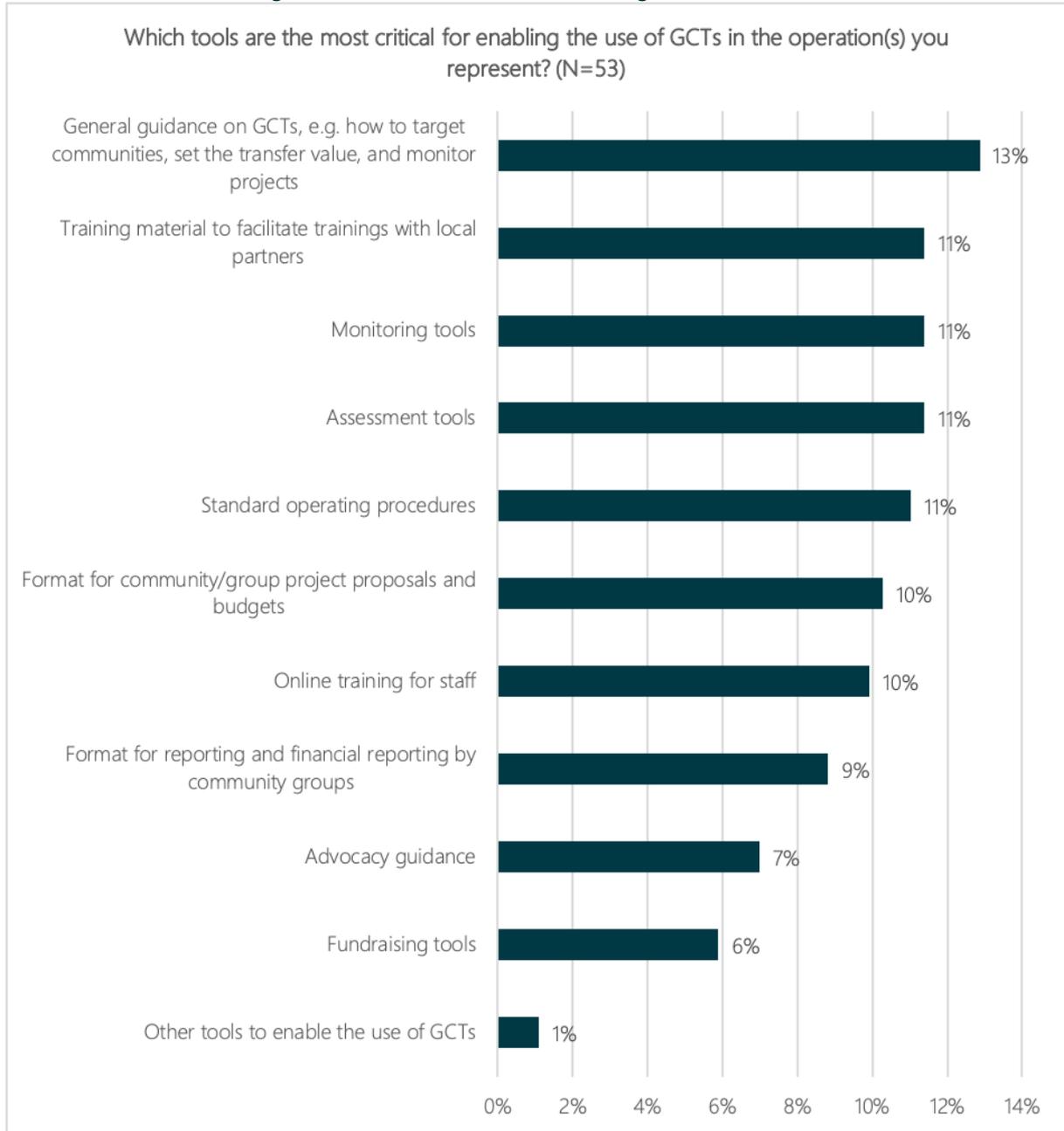


Figure 12: Most critical programmatic activities to ensure accountability to communities when/if implementing GCTs



## Relevance of this study

Figure 13: Most critical tools for enabling the use of GCTs



## Annex 3: Bibliography

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