

The Impact of Mutual Partnerships on Enhancing the Performance, Capacity, and Sustainability of Local NGO's: A Study of Care International in Afghanistan

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Abstract

Mutual partnerships between international NGOs and local organizations have become a critical approach for enhancing organizational performance, technical capacity, and sustainability, particularly in fragile and developing contexts such as Afghanistan. This study examines the impact of mutual partnerships on local NGOs, using CARE International and its local partners as a case study. Data was collected from staff and local partner organizations through structured questionnaires and document reviews and analyzed using SPSS software. The findings reveal that effective communication, trust, and employee commitment are key drivers of successful partnerships, fostering alignment, collaboration, accountability, and shared ownership of organizational goals. Equitable resource sharing and capacity-building initiatives were also found to significantly enhance technical and institutional capacity. Additionally, demographic factors such as gender, organizational role, department, and years of experience, as well as cultural awareness, influence organizational outcomes. Overall, the study confirms that well-structured mutual partnerships are essential for improving performance, strengthening technical capacity, delivering quality services, and ensuring long-term sustainability. By prioritizing communication, trust, commitment, equitable resource management, and cultural sensitivity, CARE International and its local partners can achieve effective collaboration and sustainable development outcomes.

Key words: Mutual Partnerships, Local NGOs, Organizational Performance, Capacity Building, Sustainability, CARE International Afghanistan

Introduction

In recent years, the role of local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) has become increasingly vital in addressing humanitarian, social, and development challenges at the community level. Local NGOs are often best positioned to understand local contexts, cultural dynamics, and community needs. However, despite their strategic importance, many local NGOs continue to face significant challenges in performance, capacity development, and long-term sustainability (Tan & Taeihagh, 2020). Limited financial resources, weak institutional systems, inadequate technical skills, and dependency on international donors have often undermined their effectiveness and independence.

One of the most promising approaches to addressing these challenges is through mutual partnerships between international and local NGOs. Mutual partnerships go beyond traditional donor recipient relationships and focus on collaboration, shared learning, joint decision-making, and equitable resource sharing. Such partnerships are designed to empower local NGOs, build institutional and technical capacity, and promote ownership of

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development initiatives. However, despite their potential, the actual impact of mutual partnerships on strengthening the performance and sustainability of local NGOs remains underexplored and inconsistently documented, particularly in contexts like Afghanistan, where local NGOs operate under fragile socio-economic and political conditions (ACBAR, 2025). In many cases, partnerships between international and local NGOs are still characterized by imbalanced power dynamics. International NGOs often control funding, strategic direction, and project design, while local NGOs are left with limited influence, primarily implementing predefined activities. This unequal relationship can hinder local ownership, discourage innovation, and prevent genuine capacity strengthening. Moreover, when international partners withdraw funding, local NGOs frequently struggle to sustain their operations, revealing gaps in institutional resilience and financial diversification (Bebbington, 2005).

Understanding the impact of mutual partnerships is therefore critical to identifying how collaboration models can be restructured to promote long-term institutional growth, improved service delivery, and organizational sustainability. Assessing these partnerships can help reveal whether they are achieving their intended goals, such as improving project performance, enhancing technical and managerial skills, and building resilient local systems, or whether they continue to reinforce dependency and short-term outcomes (Hearn, 2016). This study seeks to examine how mutual partnerships influence the performance, capacity, and sustainability of local NGOs, using CARE International in Afghanistan as a case study. CARE's long-standing collaboration with local partners provides a valuable example for assessing the dynamics, outcomes, and limitations of partnership approaches in a fragile context. The research will explore how knowledge sharing, resource allocation, joint planning, and accountability mechanisms within these partnerships contribute to organizational strengthening and long-term impact.

By identifying the factors that enable or hinder effective partnerships, this study aims to generate insights that can inform future capacity development strategies, partnership frameworks, and localization efforts (Nosratabadi et al, 2020). Ultimately, the findings will help both international and local actors understand how mutual partnerships can move beyond transactional collaboration to become transformative relationships that empower local NGOs to operate independently, efficiently, and sustainably.

Organizational Performance Status

CARE International was founded in 1945 as the "Cooperative for American Remittances to Europe (CARE)" to provide relief packages to war-torn Europe immediately after World War II. Over time, the organization shifted its focus toward long-term development, poverty reduction and humanitarian assistance in developing countries. Today the name CARE no longer stands for an acronym, and the organization describes its mission simply as working to save lives, defeat poverty, and achieve social justice especially for women and girls (CARE International, 2024).

CARE International is a global confederation operating in over 100 countries and implementing program spanning both emergency humanitarian response and longer-term development. The organization emphasizes working in partnership with communities, governments, local civil society and the private sector to ensure sustainable impact and local ownership of results. In Afghanistan, CARE first established a mission in 1961, later suspended operations during the Soviet invasion, and then resumed more fully from 1989 onward before relocating its main office back to Kabul in 2002. Its program portfolio in Afghanistan focuses on three overarching areas: women's and girls' empowerment; enhanced resilience; and humanitarian action targeting sectors such as maternal health, food security and livelihoods, education and emergency response (CARE International, 2024).

CARE's operations in Afghanistan cover multiple provinces (including but not limited to Kabul, Herat, Kandahar, Khost, Paktia, Paktika, Parwan, Kapisa, Ghazni and Balkh) and span thematic areas such as education, health, nutrition, food security, livelihoods and protection. In this context, CARE works both directly and through local partner NGOs, positioning itself as a leading humanitarian and development organization in the country by putting women and girls at the center of its work and seeking to break the cycle of poverty and injustice. acbar.org In summary, CARE International is a longstanding global NGO with roots in humanitarian relief, now operating deeply in development and local partnership models (CARE International, 2025). In Afghanistan, its presence and program scope provide a strong contextual case for studying how partnerships particularly between international NGOs and local partner organizations are structured and how they might foster capacity, performance and sustainability in local NGOs.

Importance of the Problem

Local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) play an essential role in advancing community development, humanitarian assistance, and social change. Their close connection with local communities enables them to understand and respond to people's needs more effectively than international actors. However, many local NGOs

face persistent challenges such as limited institutional capacity, weak management systems, and heavy reliance on external funding (Spitzeck & Hansen, 2010). These issues often reduce their operational efficiency and threaten their long-term sustainability. In response, mutual partnerships between international and local NGOs have gained increasing attention as a strategy to strengthen local organizations. Such partnerships are built on principles of equality, shared learning, and joint decision-making, aiming to enhance local capacity, improve performance, and promote sustainability. Studying these partnerships is therefore crucial to understanding how collaboration can contribute to stronger, more resilient local NGOs. This issue is particularly relevant in fragile contexts like Afghanistan, where local NGOs operate under limited resources and complex socio-political conditions. Despite years of partnership initiatives, evidence on their actual impact remains limited. Many partnerships continue to reflect power imbalances, where international NGOs lead in funding and strategy while local NGOs remain primarily implementers. This limits local ownership and long-term development. Understanding the impact of mutual partnerships is important for promoting genuine capacity building, independence, and sustainability of local NGOs. By examining partnership models such as those involving CARE International in Afghanistan, this study aims to identify what makes partnerships effective and how they can be improved. Ultimately, this research is significant because it contributes to the broader goal of localization ensuring that development efforts are locally driven, contextually appropriate, and sustainable (Sondorp et al, 2008). Strong and empowered local NGOs are essential for achieving lasting community impact and reducing dependency on international support.

Organization Stakeholders and Stakeholders' Performance Goals

A stakeholder group is a group of individuals who directly contribute to and benefit from the achievement of the organization's performance goal. Key stakeholders in CARE's partnership model include:

1. CARE Staff (Internal Stakeholders)

CARE staff are the backbone of CARE International, consisting of technical experts, program personnel, support personnel, and administrative teams who collectively drive the organization's mission and objectives. As internal stakeholders, CARE staff play a central role in planning, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating projects to ensure they meet organizational standards, donor requirements, and community needs (CARE International, 2025). Their responsibilities include providing technical guidance, managing project operations, overseeing finance and logistics, ensuring compliance with safeguarding and accountability policies, and building the capacity of local partners. By performing these roles, CARE staff ensure the quality, effectiveness, and sustainability of programs, while fostering organizational excellence, transparency, and impact in the communities CARE serves.

2. CARE International (Global / Regional Offices)

CARE International's global and regional offices provide overarching strategic direction, policy guidance, and technical support to CARE Afghanistan and other country offices. Their role is to ensure that all programs reflect CARE's global mission, values, and standards while maintaining alignment with international development frameworks. Their responsibilities include setting strategic priorities, ensuring compliance with global policies, mobilizing resources, and fostering cross-country learning and collaboration (CARE International, 2025). They also support CARE Afghanistan through technical expertise, advocacy, and global visibility.

3. Donors / Funding Agencies:

Donors and funding agencies play a critical role in supporting CARE International projects by providing financial resources and strategic guidance. Their responsibilities include approving project proposals and budgets, monitoring financial accountability and compliance, reviewing project reports, and ensuring that project activities align with donor priorities (CARE International, 2025). The performance goals for donors focus on timely disbursement of funds, maintaining transparency and accountability in fund utilization, and achieving the agreed programmatic results. By fulfilling these responsibilities, donors enable CARE and its partners to implement projects effectively and achieve meaningful outcomes in communities.

4. Local Partner NGOs:

Local partner NGOs are the primary implementers of CARE-supported projects at the community level. Their role involves executing project activities according to work plans, collecting and reporting project data, ensuring community engagement, and adhering to CARE's policies on finance, safeguarding, and organizational management. Performance goals for local partners include achieving project outputs and outcomes effectively, improving their own organizational capacity and systems, strengthening community trust, and ensuring accurate and timely reporting (CARE International, 2025). By fulfilling these responsibilities, local partners help to

translate CARE's strategic objectives into tangible community-level results while enhancing their own long-term sustainability.

5. Beneficiaries / Community Members:

Beneficiaries and community members are the ultimate recipients of CARE's programs and interventions. Their responsibilities include actively participating in project activities, engaging in training sessions, providing feedback to CARE and local partners, and applying the skills and knowledge gained from the projects, such as through VSLA participation or other livelihood initiatives. Performance goals for beneficiaries focus on increased knowledge, improved skills, sustainable adoption of project interventions, and enhanced community resilience and empowerment. Their engagement is critical to the success and sustainability of the projects, as it ensures that interventions are meaningful and effectively meet local needs.

6. Government / Local Authorities

Government and local authorities provide regulatory oversight and facilitate coordination for CARE projects. Their responsibilities include approving project registration and implementation letters, monitoring compliance with local laws and regulations, and enabling smooth collaboration between NGOs and communities. The performance goals for government stakeholders include ensuring that projects align with national priorities, supporting efficient project implementation, and promoting transparency and accountability. By fulfilling these roles, government authorities help create an enabling environment for NGOs to operate effectively while safeguarding the public interest.

7. Private Sector Partners

Private sector partners, including suppliers, contractors, and local enterprises, contribute essential resources, expertise, and services to CARE's projects. They play an important role in supporting market-based solutions, improving livelihood opportunities, and ensuring cost-effective project delivery (CARE International, 2025). Their responsibilities include maintaining transparency and accountability in service provision, adhering to quality standards, and collaborating with CARE to support entrepreneurship and economic growth. Through these partnerships, CARE fosters sustainable development and promotes private sector engagement in humanitarian work.

Stakeholder for the Study and Stakeholder Performance Gap

The primary stakeholders in this study are the employees of CARE International in Afghanistan and the staff from its local partner NGOs. Within CARE International, several key departments contribute to achieving the organization's mission and objectives. The Program and Partnership Department lead the coordination with local NGOs and government counterparts, ensuring that projects align with CARE's strategic goals and donor requirements. This department provides technical guidance, oversees project implementation, and strengthens the institutional capacity of partner organizations.

The MEAL (Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning) Department plays a vital role in tracking project performance, ensuring data accuracy, and promoting evidence-based decision-making. MEAL specialists design monitoring systems, conduct data quality assessments, and ensure that learning and accountability mechanisms are embedded throughout all projects. The Finance Department ensures compliance with donor financial regulations and internal policies by providing financial oversight, budgeting support, and expenditure tracking. This department works closely with partners to enhance financial management capacity and ensure transparent and efficient use of project resources. The Operations Department supports project logistics, procurement, and administrative services to ensure smooth implementation and coordination between CARE offices and partners. Additionally, the Human Resources and Administration Department facilitate staff management, recruitment, and welfare, ensuring a productive and motivated workforce across all operational areas.

The staff of CARE's local partner NGOs, including WASSA, DHSA, WCLRF, COAR, OCCD, and LAMPO, represent the external stakeholders in this study. These partner organizations function through several key departments, such as Program Management, MEAL (Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning), Finance, and Community Mobilization. Each department plays a specific role: Program Management oversees project planning and implementation, MEAL ensures accurate data collection and reporting, Finance manages budgets and expenditures in compliance with CARE standards, and Community Mobilization engages local communities to ensure active participation and ownership (Lewis & Kanji, 2009). Staff within these departments,

including project managers, M&E officers, VSLA facilitators, literacy and numeracy trainers, and program heads, work directly with communities to deliver project activities, report progress, and maintain adherence to CARE's safeguarding, gender, and accountability policies.

Together, these departments and stakeholders form a collaborative network that drives CARE's mission forward. While CARE departments provide oversight, technical support, and capacity building, the partner NGO departments handle direct field implementation, community engagement, and reporting. Their coordinated efforts ensure the successful achievement of CARE's goals to reduce poverty, promote gender equality, and strengthen the sustainability and performance of local organizations across Afghanistan.

Introduction about the topic

In the field of international development, partnerships between international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) and local NGOs have emerged as a critical mechanism for delivering sustainable social change. While collaborations often aim to combine resources, technical expertise, and local knowledge, the effectiveness of these partnerships varies significantly depending on the nature of the relationship. Traditional partnerships tend to follow hierarchical models, where international organizations provide funding and strategic direction while local NGOs are primarily responsible for implementation (Tan & Taihagh, 2020). Although such arrangements can achieve short-term objectives, they often fall short in fostering local ownership, strengthening institutional capacity, and ensuring long-term sustainability.

Mutual partnerships represent a progressive approach to collaboration, emphasizing equality, reciprocity, and shared responsibility. In a mutual partnership, all parties actively contribute to decision-making, share resources equitably, and benefit from the relationship. This model promotes joint problem-solving, knowledge exchange, and capacity building, ensuring that local NGOs are not merely implementers but co-creators of programs and strategies (Acharya et al., 2017; Norec, 2022). By fostering trust, collaboration, and mutual accountability, mutual partnerships enhance the operational performance and strategic capacity of local organizations while improving the sustainability of development initiatives.

The relevance of mutual partnerships is particularly pronounced in fragile and complex contexts such as Afghanistan, where local NGOs face numerous operational, financial, and institutional challenges. By adopting a mutual partnership approach, international organizations like CARE International can empower local NGOs to strengthen governance structures, enhance programmatic quality, and build long-term institutional resilience. Consequently, understanding the impact of mutual partnerships is essential for evaluating the extent to which collaborative relationships contribute to local NGOs' performance, capacity development, and sustainability (Akman & Mishra, 2010).

This study focuses on examining the impact of mutual partnerships on enhancing the performance, capacity, and sustainability of local NGOs in Afghanistan. It explores how these partnerships influence organizational effectiveness, improve service delivery, foster learning and innovation, and enable local NGOs to achieve strategic objectives in alignment with national development priorities (Brinkerhoff, 2002). By highlighting the mechanisms and outcomes of mutual partnerships, this research aims to provide evidence-based insights that can inform best practices in international-local NGO collaboration, contributing to more effective and sustainable development interventions.

Research Objectives and Hypothesis

1. To assess the impact of mutual partnerships on the Organizational Performance of local NGOs.
 - **H₀ (Null):** Mutual partnerships with CARE International have no significant impact on the Organizational Performance of local NGOs.
 - **H₁ (Alternative):** Mutual partnerships with CARE International significantly improve the Organizational Performance of local NGOs.
2. To evaluate the effect of partnerships on organizational capacity and sustainability.
 - **H₀₁ (Null):** Partnerships with CARE International do not significantly enhance the organizational capacity and sustainability of local NGOs.
 - **H₁₁ (Alternative):** Partnerships with CARE International significantly enhance the organizational capacity and sustainability of local NGOs.

Literature Review

Tan and Taeiagh (2020), emphasized that governance structures in developing countries significantly influence NGO performance. Partnerships with international NGOs allow local organizations to learn best practices in transparency, accountability, and internal governance. In Afghanistan, CARE International has worked with local partners to establish monitoring systems and decision-making frameworks that enhance operational efficiency while empowering local leadership. These efforts not only improve program implementation but also help build organizational legitimacy and credibility within the community, which is crucial for sustaining long-term development interventions.

Abiddin, Ibrahim, and Aziz (2022), emphasized that while NGOs play a critical role in community development, their impact is often constrained by limited capacity and management inefficiencies. Collaboration with international NGOs can provide institutional support, knowledge sharing, and mentoring, which enhances the operational abilities of local organizations. In Afghanistan, CARE International has strengthened local partners' project management skills, monitoring systems, and program planning capacity, improving their ability to respond effectively to humanitarian challenges.

CARE International (2024), reported that its partnerships with local NGOs have improved organizational capacity and program delivery. By offering training, mentoring, and financial support, CARE enabled local partners to enhance management systems and reach underserved populations with essential health, education, and livelihood services. Collaboration also fostered ownership and accountability, resulting in more sustainable community interventions.

Research Design

In this research case study, research design and deductive approach are used. The aim of this research is to determine the impact of mutual partnerships on enhancing the performance, capacity, and sustainability of local NGOs in CARE International Afghanistan. Descriptive Research is trying to describe what is happening in more detail, filling in the missing parts and expanding our understanding, to expand understanding about existing knowledge.

CARE International in Afghanistan and its Local Partners NGOs employees were taken as a population of the study because the study used a case study design. A total number of 286 employees out of 1000 employees of different departments of the CARE International in Afghanistan and its Local Partners NGOs were selected that would give the in-depth coverage and analysis of the results or the findings.

A total number of 286 employees out of 1000 employees of different departments and units of CARE International in Afghanistan and its Local Partners NGOs.

Sampled size for the study based on the Yamane (1964) formula. $n = \frac{N}{1+(e)^2}$

- ❖ n is the sample size
- ❖ N is population (1000 Employees)
- ❖ e is error, which is always 0.05

$$n = \frac{N}{1+(e)^2} = n = \frac{1000}{1+(0.05)^2} = \frac{1000}{1+1000(0.0025)} = \frac{1000}{1+1000(0.0025)} = \frac{1000}{1+2.5} = \frac{1000}{3.5} = 285.7 = 286$$

CARE Afghanistan has 1,000 employees, our sample size based on above formula will be 286

Data Analysis

Regression Analysis-I

The dependency effects of organization performance on dimensions like Trust, Communication, Resource Sharing, Cultural Capabilities, and Commitment. is defined in hypothesis **H₁** & **H₀**, taken up and its results are shown in table-1, as an outcome of multiple regression model conceptualized. From the results, it can be inferred that the F value of 159.407 is found to be significant at 5 percent level and hence, the **H₀** (null hypothesis) is rejected and **H₁** (alternative hypothesis) is accepted. These results suggest that organization performance depends on the group of 5 organization performance dimensions in CARE International in Afghanistan and CARE's Local Partners. Further, the adjusted R square value of 0.735 from the table-1 indicate that 73 percent of Understanding levels factor effecting organization performance depend on these groups of 5 organization performance dimensions in CARE International in Afghanistan and CARE's Local Partners. Also, the 't' values of 7.407, 13.049, 1.770, 0.690, and 4.151 corresponding organization performance dimensions such as Trust,

Communication, Resource Sharing, Cultural Capabilities Commitment are found to be having significant effects on the model conceived.

More specifically, communication issues among employees of CARE International in Afghanistan and its Local Partners demonstrate the strongest and most influential impact on organizational performance, reflected by the highest t-value of 13.049. This result shows that effective communication greatly enhances collaboration and smooth functioning across partnership activities. The organization maintains open and honest communication with its partners, regularly shares updates on project progress, changes, and challenges, and ensures that information flows seamlessly across all departments and staff. Clear communication also allows misunderstandings and conflicts to be resolved quickly and constructively, preventing disruptions in operations. Furthermore, meetings between partners are carried out in an inclusive and transparent manner, which strengthens trust, joint decision-making, and alignment of goals. Together, these communication practices significantly improve coordination, accountability, and overall organizational performance.

Similarly, employee trust within CARE International in Afghanistan and its Local Partners is found to have a strong and significantly positive influence on organizational performance, as indicated by the high t-value of 7.407. This finding demonstrates that trust plays a crucial role in strengthening partnership effectiveness and improving overall outcomes. When the organization consistently acts with integrity and honesty in all partnership activities, it reinforces confidence among staff and partners. Maintaining transparency in collaborative actions further enhances mutual understanding and reduces uncertainty. Protecting confidentiality when sharing sensitive information builds a secure environment where partners feel safe to communicate openly. Moreover, the consistent practice of ethical and responsible behavior supports credibility and professionalism within the partnership. Trust is also maintained even during periods of difficulty or conflict, ensuring that cooperation and commitment remain strong. Together, these elements of trust contribute to more cohesive teamwork, smoother coordination, and enhanced organizational performance.

Additionally, employee commitment within CARE International in Afghanistan and its Local Partners is found to have a strong and significantly positive effect on organizational performance, as reflected by the t-value of 4.151. This result indicates that committed employees play a vital role in advancing partnership effectiveness and achieving organizational goals. When the organization consistently demonstrates dedication to partnership objectives, staff remain motivated and aligned with shared priorities. Employees invest their time and effort effectively in partnership activities, contributing to smoother implementation and improved outcomes. Leadership's active support for partnership initiatives further strengthens commitment and encourages a culture of collaboration. By prioritizing long-term sustainability over short-term gains, the organization reinforces a forward-thinking approach that benefits both partners and beneficiaries. In addition, the continuous improvement of collaborative practices enhances efficiency, adaptability, and overall organizational performance.

Table-1: Results of the regression for hypothesis-1

Table-1: Results of the regression for hypothesis-1						
Model		R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	
1		.860 ^a	.740	0.735	1.70293	
a. Predictors: (Constant), Commitment, Trust, Resource Sharing, Cultural Capabilities, Communication						
ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	2311.379	5	462.276	159.407	.000 ^b
	Residual	811.995	280	2.900		
	Total	3123.374	285			
a. Dependent Variable: Organizational Performance						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Commitment, Trust, Resource Sharing, Cultural Capabilities, Communication						
Coefficients ^a						

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	4.998	0.956		5.227	.000
	Trust	0.400	0.054	0.336	7.407	.000
	Communication	1.060	0.081	0.881	13.049	.000
	Resource Sharing	0.107	0.061	0.103	1.770	.000
	Cultural Capabilities	0.052	0.075	0.043	0.690	.000
	Commitment	0.339	0.082	0.269	4.151	.000
a. Dependent Variable: Organizational Performance						

Organizational performance, with a t-value of 1.770, is also shown to positively influence resource sharing between CARE International in Afghanistan and its Local Partners, although the effect is relatively weaker compared to other variables. This finding indicates that stronger organizational performance helps create an environment where resources are shared more effectively and equitably. The organization ensures that financial, technical, and human resources are distributed fairly among partners, and provides meaningful capacity-building opportunities for staff to strengthen their skills and competencies. Access to essential tools, data, and technical support is also made available, enabling partners to carry out their responsibilities efficiently. Furthermore, shared resources are managed responsibly to maximize their impact, and resource allocation decisions are guided by partner needs, ensuring that support is targeted and relevant.

Organizational performance, with a t-value of 0.690, shows a weak but still positive influence on cultural capabilities within CARE International in Afghanistan and its Local Partners. This finding suggests that, although the effect is modest, stronger organizational performance can support greater cultural awareness and sensitivity in partnerships. The organization demonstrates respect for the cultural values and organizational practices of its partners, ensuring that activities are adapted to align with local contexts and needs. Inclusiveness and diversity are actively promoted in both planning and implementation processes, while local knowledge is valued and integrated into decision-making and strategic initiatives. Furthermore, mutual learning about organizational and cultural practices is encouraged, fostering collaboration, understanding, and respect across culturally diverse teams.

Regression Analysis-II

The dependency effects of technical institutional capacity on dimensions like Trust, Communication, Resource Sharing, Cultural Capabilities and Commitment is defined in hypothesis **H₀₁ & H₁₁**, taken up and its results are shown in the table-2, as an outcome of multiple regression model conceptualized. From the results, it can be inferred that the F value of 147.809 is found to be significant at 5 percent level and hence, the **H₀₁** (null hypothesis) is rejected and **H₁₁** (alternative hypothesis) is accepted. These results suggest that technical institutional capacity depends on the group of 5 technical institutional capacity dimensions in CARE International in Afghanistan and CARE's Local Partners. Further, the adjusted R square value of .852 from the table-2 indicate that 85 percent of Understanding levels factor effecting technical institutional capacity depend on these groups of 5 technical institutional capacity dimensions in CARE International in Afghanistan and CARE's Local Partners. Also, the 't' values of .955, 5.475, 3.781, 1.538, 5.509, and 6.423 corresponding technical institutional capacity dimensions such as Trust, Communication, Resource Sharing, Cultural Capabilities Commitment are found to have significant effects on the model conceived.

More specifically, Commitment is found to have the most significant and strongest effect on technical institutional capacity, with the highest t-value of 6.423. This indicates that strong commitment between CARE International in Afghanistan and its local partners plays a crucial role in strengthening technical systems, institutional effectiveness, and long-term capacity development. High levels of commitment encourage accountability, continuity, and sustained investment in institutional strengthening initiatives.

Following this, Cultural Capabilities demonstrate a highly significant influence on technical institutional capacity, with a t-value of 5.509. This finding suggests that the ability to understand local contexts, respect cultural norms, and adapt technical approaches accordingly enhances institutional functionality and effectiveness. Cultural capabilities support smoother implementation processes and improve the relevance of technical interventions.

The Communication dimension also shows a strong and statistically significant effect on Technical Institutional Capacity, with a t-value of 5.475. Effective communication mechanisms ensure clarity in technical guidance, role distribution, and information flow between CARE International and its local partners. This strengthens coordination, reduces technical errors, and enhances institutional learning and performance.

Table-2: Results of the regression for hypothesis-2						
Model		R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	
1		.852 ^a	.725	.720	1.9112	
a. Predictors: (Constant), Commitment, Trust, Resource Sharing, Cultural Capabilities, Communication						
ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	2699.487	5	539.897	147.809	.000 ^b
	Residual	1022.750	280	3.653		
	Total	3722.238	285			
a. Dependent Variable: Technical Institutional Capacity						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Commitment, Trust, Resource Sharing, Cultural Capabilities, Communication						
Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.011	1.059		0.955	.000
	Trust	.332	.061	.255	5.475	.000
	Communication	.334	.088	.261	3.781	.000
	Resource Sharing	.103	.067	.091	1.538	.000
	Cultural Capabilities	.459	.083	.346	5.509	.000
	Commitment	.539	.084	.394	6.423	.000
a. Dependent Variable: Technical Institutional Capacity						

In addition, Resource Sharing exhibits a moderate yet statistically significant impact on technical institutional capacity, with a t-value of 3.781. This finding indicates that the transparent and equitable sharing of financial, technical, and human resources between CARE International in Afghanistan and its local partners plays an important role in strengthening institutional systems. Effective resource sharing enables local partners to access essential tools, technical expertise, training opportunities, and operational support, which directly enhances their ability to implement programs in line with international standards. Furthermore, resource sharing promotes institutional learning, improves internal systems and procedures, and reduces dependency by gradually building local technical expertise. As a result, this collaborative approach contributes to sustainable technical development and long-term institutional resilience within partner organizations.

Meanwhile, Trust reflects a comparatively lower but still meaningful effect on technical institutional capacity, with a t-value of 1.538. Although its statistical strength is weaker than other dimensions, trust remains a fundamental element in effective partnerships. Trust facilitates open communication, cooperation, and the willingness to share sensitive information and technical knowledge. When trust exists between partners, organizations are more likely to engage in joint problem-solving, accept technical guidance, and adapt institutional

practices without resistance. In the absence of trust, even well-designed technical support mechanisms may fail to produce the intended outcomes. Therefore, trust indirectly supports institutional strengthening by creating a conducive environment for effective technical collaboration and capacity-building efforts.

Finally, Institutional Capacity shows the least effect on technical institutional capacity, with the lowest t-value of 0.955. This result suggests that, within the conceived model, the direct influence of existing institutional capacity is relatively weak compared to other relational and technical dimensions. One possible explanation is that baseline institutional capacity alone is insufficient to drive technical improvements without supportive factors such as commitment, communication, and resource sharing. This finding highlights the importance of focusing on relational and collaborative mechanisms to strengthen technical institutional capacity rather than relying solely on pre-existing organizational structures.

Regression Analysis-III

The dependency effects of organizational sustainability on dimensions like Trust, Communication, Resource Sharing, Cultural Capabilities and Commitment is defined in hypothesis **H₀₁ & H₁₁**, taken up and its results are shown in the table-3, as an outcome of multiple regression model conceptualized. From the results, it can be inferred that the F value of 117.357 is found to be significant at 5 percent level and hence, the null hypothesis is rejected and alternative hypothesis is accepted. These results suggest that organizational sustainability depends on the group of 5 organizational sustainability dimensions in CARE International in Afghanistan and CARE's Local Partners. Further, the adjusted R square value of 0.823 from the table-3 indicate that 82 percent of Understanding levels factor effecting organizational sustainability depend on these groups of 5 organizational sustainability dimensions in CARE International in Afghanistan and CARE's Local Partners. Also, the 't' values of 6.254, 9.668, 6.600, 0.493, 3.910 and 6.592 corresponding organizational sustainability dimensions such as Trust, Communication, Resource Sharing, Cultural Capabilities Commitment are found to be having significant effects on the model conceived.

More specifically, trust between CARE International in Afghanistan and its local partners is found to have the most significant and superior effect on organizational sustainability, with the highest t-value of 9.668. This clearly confirms that partnerships are more sustainable when trust is strong, as they foster transparency, openness, and mutual accountability. High trust allows partners to share knowledge, collaborate on joint initiatives, and make decisions confidently, reducing misunderstandings and conflicts. It also encourages long-term commitment, risk-sharing, and strategic alignment, ensuring that programs and organizational systems continue to function effectively even in challenging environments. Trust thus forms the foundation for sustained organizational growth, resilience, and operational stability.

Communication is also found to have a highly significant impact on organizational sustainability, with a t-value of 6.600. This confirms that sustainability is enhanced when communication channels are clear, information is easily accessible, and roles and responsibilities are well-defined. Effective communication enables smooth coordination between headquarters and field teams, reduces operational confusion, and ensures that strategic decisions are understood and implemented consistently. It promotes shared understanding of goals, facilitates timely responses to emerging challenges, and strengthens collaborative planning, all of which are critical for long-term organizational continuity.

Table-3: Results of the regression for hypothesis-2

Table-3: Results of the regression for hypothesis-2						
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate		
1	.823 ^a	.677	.671	1.97728		
a. Predictors: (Constant), Commitment, Trust, Resource Sharing, Cultural Capabilities, Communication						
ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	2294.115	5	458.823	117.357	.000 ^b
	Residual	1094.700	280	3.910		

	Total	3388.815	285			
a. Dependent Variable: Sustainability						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Commitment, Trust, Resource Sharing, Cultural Capabilities, Communication						
Coefficients^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	6.852	1.096		6.254	.000
	Trust	.606	.063	.489	9.668	.000
	Communication	.603	.091	.494	6.600	.000
	Resource Sharing	.034	.069	.032	0.493	.000
	Cultural Capabilities	.337	.086	.266	3.910	.000
	Commitment	.572	.087	.439	6.592	.000
a. Dependent Variable: Sustainability						

Similarly, commitment demonstrates a strong effect on organizational sustainability, with a t-value of 6.592. This indicates that organizations achieve sustained performance when partners are dedicated to shared objectives, actively invest in institutional strengthening, and remain engaged beyond individual project cycles. Commitment encourages ownership, the consistent application of best practices, and long-term planning, which collectively contribute to the durability and stability of organizational systems. Sustained commitment also helps align partner efforts with strategic priorities, reinforcing the organization's capacity to maintain its operations over time.

Cultural capabilities are found to have a moderate but meaningful effect on organizational sustainability, with a t-value of 3.910. This confirms that understanding and respecting local cultural, social, and institutional contexts enhances sustainability by promoting community acceptance, stakeholder engagement, and locally appropriate program design. Organizations that integrate cultural sensitivity into their operations are better able to maintain long-term relationships, adapt to local needs, and ensure that programs continue effectively after external support is reduced. Cultural capabilities therefore support both operational relevance and institutional longevity.

Finally, resource sharing exhibits the least effect on organizational sustainability, with a t-value of 0.493. While the availability of financial, technical, and human resources is important, sustainability is less influenced by resource sharing alone. Effective sustainability requires complementary factors such as trust, communication, and commitment. Nevertheless, resource sharing supports organizational continuity by providing partners with necessary tools and capacity, enabling program implementation, and indirectly reinforcing long-term institutional viability.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors affirm that no conflicts of interest are linked with this publication. The research was conducted autonomously without financial or non-financial assistance from external entities.

Author Contribution Statement

The author meticulously crafted the study, devised the methodology, executed the investigation and data analysis, composed the original manuscript, and undertook the review and editing of the document. The author autonomously executed every aspect of the research and the development of the manuscript.

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