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Community-Driven Reconstruction and Recovery: A Systematic Review of Successes and Challenges

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Article Type	Review Article
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Appendix A: Data extract from the selected articles

Author/s	Title	Aim	Quant	Quail	MM	location	Action type	Main Findings
1. Fearon, Humphreys, and Weinstein (2008)	Community-Driven Reconstruction in Lofa County	To evaluate the impact of IRC's (CDR)	Yes			Lofa Country	Partnership between community and IRC	CDR fostered social cohesion, promoted democratic attitudes, and boosted confidence in local decision-making
2. Fearon, Humphreys and Weinstein (2011)	Results from a field experiment in post-conflict Liberia	To investigate the role of CDR in social organisation	Yes			Post-conflict Liberia	Bottom-up	Strong capacity for organising social cohesion, social collaboration and social efficacy
3. Dawar and Ferreira (2021)	Local Perceptions on Post-Conflict Reconstruction Policies in Pakistan'	To evaluate the CDR (2015–2019) using local perceptions		Yes		Pakistan	Top-down	Interventions were centrally planned without proper participation or even considering local needs and grievances
4. Fearon, J. D., Humphreys and Weinstein (2009)	Evidence from a field experiment in post-conflict Liberia	To find if the outside intervention can contribute to social cohesion.	Yes			Liberia	Outside intervention	New local-level institutions can change social collaboration , with effects lasting beyond the program's conclusion
5. Humphreys, Sanchez De La Sierra and van der Windt (2014)	Social and economic impacts of Tuungane	To assess the impacts of a large randomised CDR in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).	Yes			Democratic Republic of Congo	Bottom-up under supervision of IRC	No evidence of positive changes in attitudes towards the roles and responsibilities of women because of the gender parity requirement
6. Kyamusugulwa and Hilhorst (2015)	Power Holders and Social Dynamics of Participatory Development and Reconstruction	To analyse the dynamics of power relations within a CDR programme in the Democratic Republic of Congo		Yes		Democratic Republic of Congo	Bottom-up	It reveals that, in some circumstances, elite control can be a way of ensuring the provision of public goods and that conflict between elites can benefit project outcomes
7. Koyabu (2005)	CDD and Women's Empowerment in the reconstruction of Afghanistan	To explore how CDD approach adopted in the reconstruction programmes has impacted on women's empowerment		Yes		Afghanistan	Bottom-up	The study reveals that the CDD has empowered women, men and the community

8. McBride and Patel (2007)	Lessons learned on CDR	To understand best practice and develop a coherent institutional model from relief to development.		Yes		4 countries: Afghanistan Azerbaijan RwandaKosovo	Top-down /partnership	CDR leads to the improvement of both reconstruction and livelihoods at local levels
9. Avdeenko and Gilligan (2015)	International Interventions to Build Social Capital: Evidence from a Field Experiment in Sudan	To find out which CDD programmes may (or may not) improve local political functioning	Yes			In Sudan	Bottom up	They find evidence in achieving local public service delivery, but no evidence CDD increased social capital
10. Crawford and Morrison (2020)	CLR Social Inclusion and Participation in Post-earthquake Nepal	To explores whether CLR can leverage progressive social change			Yes	Nepal	Partnerships between NGOs and local social movements	Findings indicate greater progress towards women's social inclusion than for other marginalised social groups
11. Casey, Glennerster, and Miguel (2012)	Healing the wounds: learning from Sierra Leone's post-war institutional reforms	To evaluate the success of one CDD project in Sierra Leone	Yes			Sierra Leone	Village development committees	Ethnic diversity does not appear to necessarily hinder local collective action. CDD does not appear to transform local institutions nor social norms
12. Beath, Enikolopov, and Beath (2013)	Do Elected Councils Improve Governance Outcomes? Experimental Evidence on Local Institutions	To examine outcomes of a village-level food aid distribution undertaken across the sample of 500 villages approximately four years after the creation of these councils	Yes			Afghanistan	Bottom-up Top-down	The results indicate that when democratic councils, rather than traditional leaders, manage the distribution the food aid targeting is improved, and the level of embezzlement is not changed.
13. Beath, Christia and Enikolopov (2015)	Assessing the Effects of	Summarises the results of an impact	Yes			Afghanistan	Top–down' programmatic	CDR has positive effect on access to drinking water and electricity, acceptance of democratic processes,

	Community-Driven Development	evaluation of CDD						perceptions of economic wellbeing and attitudes towards women
14. Rautanen and Koppen (2014)	Community-Driven Multiple Use Water Services	To examine community-driven multiple use water services			Yes	Nepal	Decentralised-bottom-up	The principles of decentralisation, participation and empowerment are likely to lead to more sustainable water services delivery
15. Hansen (2019)	Impacts of community driven development project on peacebuilding in Kyarinnseikgyi township	To assess the effects of the CDD approach and development toward the peacebuilding			Yes	Myanmar	Bottom-up and top-down	The evidence showed that the empowering and training made them confident in leading and coordination
16. Choi et al. (2020)	The Socio-economic Effect of CDD in Conflict-affected Regions: Evidence from Cambodia	To explore whether or not CDD project affects a village's social capital and economic outcomes in post-conflict Cambodia	Yes			Cambodia	Driven by local demand and based on the participation of community members.	CDD significantly strengthens the capacity of self-reliance, especially in vulnerable groups such as low-income, less educated, and ethnic and religious minority households
17. Ratner, Mam and Halpern (2014)	Collaborating for resilience: Conflict, collective action and transformation on Cambodia's Tonle Sap Lake	To modify the internal governance and strategy of engagement to emphasise constructive links with government and the formal NGO sector	Yes			Cambodia's Tonle Sap Lake	Networks and cross-scale linkages Community	The participatory stakeholder engagement can enable collective action and contribute to improvements in natural resource governance, even amidst ongoing resource conflict
18. Fearon (2006)	Evaluating CDR: Lessons from Post-Conflict Liberia	To assess the role of CDR in peacebuilding	Yes			Post-Conflict Liberia	Community representative	Positive impact on the level of community cohesion
19. Fearon, Humphreys and Weinstein (2015b)	How does development assistance affect collective action capacity? Results from a field	The article investigates the role of collective action in post conflict Liberia	Yes			Post-Conflict Liberia	Participation in community meetings/Community representatives	Enhanced communities' ability to coordinate to solve mixed gender problems

	experiment							
20. King (2013)	Can Development Interventions Help Post-Conflict Communities Build Social Cohesion?	To improve welfare and build social cohesion in post-conflict Liberia	Yes			Post-conflict Liberia	Participation in project to improve welfare and build social cohesion	Trust in national government declined in in the project communities if the project had not taken place
21. Vervisch (2011)	The solidarity chain: post-conflict reconstruction and social capital building on three Burundian hillsides	The article aims to exam the solidarity chain in post-conflict settings			Yes	Burundian hillsides	Involving in Livelihood Security Initiative Consortium (LSIC)	The main findings are twofold. First, it is argued that the distinction between bonding, bridging and linking social capital proves useful.
22. Kyamusugulwa (2013)	Local ownership in CDR in the Democratic Republic of Congo	The article aims to observe that where existing community networks played a positive role in post-conflict		Yes		Democratic Republic of Congo	Involved in all phases of inter- vention: identification of needs, planning and execution	Local ownership of a community driven reconstruction project can be enhanced in programmes that create a space for it, and where existing institutions favour it
23. Vervisch et al. (2013)	Social Capital and Post-Conflict Reconstruction in Burundi: The Limits of Community-based Reconstruction	To question CBR as a mechanism to re-build social capital after conflicts, particularly when direct livelihood support is provided		Yes		Burundi	Community Participation	Failure to prevent elite capture
24. Lyons, Smuts and Stephens (2001)	Participation, Empowerment and Sustainability: (How) Do the Links Work?	To investigate the relationship between participation, empowerment and sustainability		Yes		In South Africa	Partnership	The authors show that a relationship does exist and is contingent on several contextual factors, crucial to its success
25. Kyamusugulwa, Hilhorst and Jacobs (2018)	Accountability mechanisms in CDR in eastern Democratic	To enhance accountability between authorities and the population		Yes		In the Democratic Republic of Congo	village development committees/partnership	There is indeed a need for a more appropriate translation of abstract concepts such as accountability into the local context

	Republic of Congo	through CDR						
26. Higashida, Soosai and Robert (2017)	The impact of community-based rehabilitation in a post-conflict environment of Sri Lanka	To reveal the impact of and issues with CBR			Yes	In the Northern Province of Sri Lanka	Partnership	The authors find out that livelihood aid was the most common type of self-reported need
27. Burde (2004)	Weak State, Strong Community? Promoting Community Participation in Post-Conflict Countries	To explore the effects of community participation in school governance		Yes		In Post-Conflict Bosnia-Herzegovina	Partnership	The author finds out that there is lack of empowerment among participants, unchanged or increased social divisions, and a restructuring of the role of the state
28. Gaynor (2016)	The limits to community-based conflict resolution in North-East Congo	To find out what the role of local communities can achieve in post-conflict context		Yes		In North-East Congo	Networks of solidarity	The findings demonstrate that the greatest impact of community groups' activities is at individual rather than structural levels
29. Ferguson, Swan and Im (2020)	A Domains Approach to Perceived Problems and Solutions for Community Empowerment in an Urban Refugee Community in Kenya	To better understand how urban Somali refugees in Kenya describe community functioning		Yes		Somali refugees in Kenya describe	Participation	Verbose factors can impact the success of CDD initiatives, such as inter-group collaboration issues, value and belief variances
30. D'Exelle, Coleman and Lopez (2018)	CDR in Colombia	To investigate the potential community affects beyond these beneficiaries	Yes			Post-conflict Colombia	Bottom up	The authors find that collaboration increases after communication, and that it correlates positively with the proportion of co-operators before communication
31. Ho et al. (2015)	Effects of a community scorecard on improving the local health system in Eastern Democratic	To evaluate role of CDR project to increase accountability and responsiveness of service providers		Yes		Democratic Republic of Congo	Partnership	Community participation to improve quality of health services, and make them more responsive to users' needs

	Republic of Congo							
32. Beath, Andrew (2013)	Empowering Women through Development Aid: Evidence from a Field Experiment in Afghanistan	Analyse the effect on women's empowerment of a development programme.		Yes		Afghanistan	Mandated by Top down (mandated participation)	The results indicate that the programme has significant positive effects on the acceptance of female participation in local governance
33. McIntyre Miller (2019)	Through community eyes: the transition of international organisations from community aid to development in post-conflict	Aims to understand the role NGOs played from the viewpoint of 2 communities		Yes		Sierra Leone	Bottom -up	The primary challenge raised to NGOs' aid and assistance work was around a focus on perpetrators over victims
34. Strand et al. (2003)	Community Driven Development in Contexts of Conflict Commissioned by ESSD, World Bank	What characterises CDD and contexts of conflict?		Yes		Different post-conflict locations	Partnerships	CDD programmes have been particularly effective in establishing or expanding essential social services and physical infrastructure at the local level
35. Kyamusugulwa, Hilhorst and Van Der Haar (2014)	Capacity builders for governance: CDR	To find explanations for the lack of governance impact in CDR		Yes		Democratic Republic of Congo	Village committees	Governance effects are avoided rather than encouraged
36. Humphreys, Sánchez de la Sierra and Van der Windt (2019)	Exporting democratic practices: Evidence from a village governance intervention in Eastern Congo	To find what governance practices are employed by villagers and village elites and whether prior exposure to the CDR intervention alters these behaviours	Yes			Eastern Congo	Bottom up	Democratic practices do not lead to subsequent adoption of these practices
37. Bakonyi et al. (2015)	A Community Driven Governance Programme in Somalia/Somalilan	To assess whether the program increased citizen participation in decision-making			Yes	Somalia	Bottom up	The programme improved interaction of villagers with formal governing bodies and increased responsiveness of the Village Council and District Council

	d	and conflict management, and enhanced the capacity of village-level institutions to plan, manage, and advocate for community priorities.						
38. Van den Boogaard and Santoro (2021	Hybrid financing models, informal taxation and community-driven development: Experimental evidence from south-central Somalia	To explore whether matching grants effectively incentivise informal contributions to public goods			Yes	Somalia	Bottom up	The development partners may work with communities and community leaders without undermining state actors—and potentially actually strengthening the state's legitimacy
39. McRobbie (2010)	Livelihoods in Somalia	To evaluate community driven livelihood and food security initiatives			Yes	Somalia	Bottom up	Community-driven livelihoods contribute to improved income generation and food security of families in targeted communities in Somalia
40. Hamming (2011)	Stabilising Somalia through integrating community-driven safety with socio-economic development	To evaluate community- driven safety and development in Somalia		Yes		Somalia	Bottom up	Conflict management mechanisms are working better than they were one before the community-driven safety and development programme
41. Dasgupta et al. (2009)	Community Management of Rural Water Supply: Evaluation of User Satisfaction in Yemen	To guide the design of rural water and sanitation interventions	Yes			Yemen	Top-down and bottom up	Increased satisfaction with water supply frequency, duration, pressure, and reduced overcrowding at public stand posts.

MMAT checklist

	A	B	C	D	E
1	**Appendix 3: Data extraction form**		**SCREENING QUESTIONS**		
2		Author(s), Year	S1. Are there clear research questions?	S2. Do the collected data allow to address the research questions?	1.1. Is the qualitative approach appropriate to answer the research question?
3	1	Fearon, Humphreys, and Weinstein (2008)	Yes	Yes	N/A
4	2	Fearon et al. (2011)	Yes	Yes	N/A
5	3	Dawar and Ferreira (2021)	Yes	Yes	Yes
6	4	Fearon, J. D., Humphreys, and Weinstein (2009)	Yes	Yes	N/A
7	5	Humphreys, Sanchez De La Sierra, and van der Windt (2014)	Yes	Yes	N/A
8	6	Kyamusugulwa and Hilhorst (2015)	Yes	Yes	Yes
9	7	Koyabu (2005)	Yes	Yes	Yes
10	8	Wellman (2007)	Yes	Yes	Yes
11	9	Avdeenko and Gilligan (2015)	Yes	Yes	N/A
12	10	Crawford and Morrison (2020)	Yes	Yes	Yes
13	11	Casey, Glennerster, and Miguel (2012)	Yes	Yes	N/A
14	12	Beath, Enikolopov, and Beath (2013)	Yes	Yes	N/A
15	13	Beath, Christia, and Enikolopov (2015)	Yes	Yes	N/A
16	14	Rautanen and Koppen (2014)	Yes	Yes	Yes
17	15	Hansen (2019)	Yes	Yes	Yes
18	16	Choi et al., (2020)	Yes	Yes	N/A
19	17	Ratner, Mam, and Halpern 2014	Yes	Yes	Yes
20	18	Fearon (2006)	Yes	N/A	N/A
21	19	Fearon, J.D., Humphreys, M. and Weinstein, J.M.,(2015)	Yes	Yes	N/A
22	20	King (2013)	Yes	Yes	N/A
23	21	Vervisch (2011)	Yes	Yes	Yes
24	22	Kyamusugulwa (2013)	Yes	Yes	Yes
25	23	Vervisch et al. (2013)	Yes	Yes	Yes
26	24	Lyons, Smuts, and Stephens (2001)	Yes	Yes	Yes
27	25	Kyamusugulwa, Hilhorst, and Jacobs (2018)	Yes	Yes	Can't tell
28	26	Higashida, Soosai, and Robert (2017)	Yes	Yes	Yes
29	27	Burde (2004)	Yes	Yes	Yes
30	28	Gaynor 2016	Yes	Yes	Yes
31	29	Ferguson, Swan, and Im 2020	Yes	Yes	Yes
32	30	D'Exelle, Coleman, and Lopez (2018)	Yes	Yes	N/A
33	31	Ho et al. 2015	Yes	Yes	Yes
34	32	Beath, Andrew (2013)	Yes	Yes	N/A
35	33	McIntyre Miller (2019)	Yes	Yes	Yes
36	34	Strand et al. (2003)	Yes	Yes	Yes
37	35	Kyamusugulwa, Hilhorst, and Van Der Haar (2014)	Yes	Yes	Yes
38	36	Humphreys, Sánchez de la Sierra, and Van der Windt (2019)	Yes	Yes	Yes
39	37	Bakonyi et al., (2015)	Yes	Yes	Yes
40	38	Van den Boogaard and Santoro (2021)	Yes	Yes	Yes
41	39	McRobbie (2010)	Yes	Yes	Yes
42	40	Hamming, (2011)	Yes	Yes	Yes
43	41	Dasgupta et al., (2009)	Yes	Yes	N/A

MMAT checklist

	F	G	H	I
1	**1. QUALITATIVE STUDIES**			
2	1.2. Are the qualitative data collection methods adequate to address the research question?	1.3. Are the findings adequately derived from the data?	1.4. Is the interpretation of results sufficiently substantiated by data?	1.5. Is there coherence between qualitative data sources, collection, analysis and interpretation?
3	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
4	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
5	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
6	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
7	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
8	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
9	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
10	Yes	Yes		Yes
11	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
12	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
13	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
14	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
15	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
16	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
17	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
18	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
19	Yes	Yes	Can't tell	Yes
20	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
21	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
22	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
23	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
24	Yes	Can't tell	Can't tell	Yes
25	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
26	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
27	Yes	Can't tell	Yes	Yes
28	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
29	Can't tell	Can't tell	Yes	Yes
30	Yes	Can't tell	Yes	Yes
31	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
32	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
33	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
34	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
35	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
36	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
37	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
38	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
39	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
40	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
41	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
42	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
43	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

MMAT checklist

	J	K	L	M	N
1	**2. RANDOMIZED CONTROLLED TRIALS**				
2	2.1. Is randomization appropriately performed?	2.2. Are the groups comparable at baseline?	2.3. Are there complete outcome data?	2.4. Are outcome assessors blinded to the intervention provided?	2.5 Did the participants adhere to the assigned intervention?
3	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
4	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
5	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
6	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
7	Yes	Yes	Can't tell	Yes	Yes
8	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
9	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
10	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
11	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
12	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
13	Yes	Can't tell	Yes	Yes	Can't tell
14	Yes	Yes	Yes	Can't tell	Yes
15	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Can't tell
16	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
17	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
18	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
19	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
20	Yes	Can't tell	Yes	Yes	Yes
21	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
22	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
23	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
24	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
25	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
26	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
27	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
28	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
29	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
30	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
31	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
32	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
33	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
34	Yes	Yes	Yes	Can't tell	N/A
35	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
36	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
37	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
38	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
39	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
40	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
41	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
42	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
43	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

MMAT checklist

	O	P	Q	R	S
1	**3. NON-RANDOMIZED STUDIES**				
2	3.1. Are the participants representative of the target population?	3.2. Are measurements appropriate regarding both the outcome and intervention (or exposure)?	3.3. Are there complete outcome data?	3.4. Are the confounders accounted for in the design and analysis?	3.5. During the study period, is the intervention administered (or exposure occurred) as intended?
3	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
4	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
5	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
6	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
7	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
8	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
9	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
10	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
11	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
12	Yes	Yes	Can't tell	Yes	Yes
13	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
14	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
15	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
16	Yes	Yes	Can't tell	Yes	Yes
17	Yes	Yes	Can't tell	Yes	Yes
18	Yes	Yes	Can't tell	Yes	Yes
19	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
20	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
21	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
22	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
23	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
24	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
25	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
26	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
27	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
28	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
29	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
30	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
31	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
32	Yes	Yes	Can't tell	Yes	Yes
33	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
34	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
35	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
36	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
37	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
38	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
39	Yes	Yes	Can't tell	Yes	Yes
40	Yes	Yes	Can't tell	Yes	Yes
41	Yes	Yes	Can't tell	Yes	Yes
42	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
43	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

MMAT checklist

	T	U	V	W	X
1	**4. QUANTITATIVE DESCRIPTIVE STUDIES**				
2	4.1. Is the sampling strategy relevant to address the research question?	4.2. Is the sample representative of the target population?	4.3. Are the measurements appropriate?	4.4. Is the risk of nonresponse bias low?	4.5. Is the statistical analysis appropriate to answer the research question?
3	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
4	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
5	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
6	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
7	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
8	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
9	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
10	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
11	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
12	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
13	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
14	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
15	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
16	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
17	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
18	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
19	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
20	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
21	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
22	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
23	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
24	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
25	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
26	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
27	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
28	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
29	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
30	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
31	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
32	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
33	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
34	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
35	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
36	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
37	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
38	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
39	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
40	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
41	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
42	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
43	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

MMAT checklist

	Y	Z	AA	AB	AC
1	**5. MIXED METHODS STUDIES**				
2	5.1. Is there an adequate rationale for using a mixed methods design to address the research question?	5.2. Are the different components of the study effectively integrated to answer the research question?	5.3. Are the outputs of the integration of qualitative and quantitative components adequately interpreted?	5.4. Are divergences and inconsistencies between quantitative and qualitative results adequately addressed?	5.5. Do the different components of the study adhere to the quality criteria of each tradition of the methods involved?
3	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
4	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
5	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
6	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
7	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
8	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
9	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
10	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
11	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A
12	Yes	Yes	Yes	Can't tell	Yes
13	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
14	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
15	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
16	Yes	Yes	Yes	Can't tell	Yes
17	Yes	Yes	Yes	Can't tell	Yes
18	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
19	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
20	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
21	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
22	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
23	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
24	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
25	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
26	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
27	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
28	Yes	Yes	Yes	Can't tell	Yes
29	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
30	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
31	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
32	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
33	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
34	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
35	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
36	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
37	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
38	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
39	Yes	Yes	Yes	Can't tell	Yes
40	Yes	Yes	Yes	Can't tell	Yes
41	Yes	Yes	Yes	Can't tell	Yes
42	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
43	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A

MMAT checklist

	AD
1	The codes used were -1 for 'no', 0 for 'can't tell' and 1 for 'yes', then adding these for a total, and then determining their percentage of the best possible score for that
2	
3	L5
4	L5
5	L4
6	L5
7	L4
8	L5
9	L4
10	L4
11	L5
12	L4
13	L3
14	L4
15	L4
16	L4
17	L4
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19	L4
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29	L3
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31	L5
32	L4
33	L5
34	L4
35	L5
36	L5
37	L5
38	L5
39	L4
40	L4
41	L4
42	L4
43	L5

Community-Driven Reconstruction and Recovery: A Systematic Review of Successes and Challenges

Abstract

In post-conflict contexts, community-driven reconstruction (CDR) have gained attention for their potential to facilitate recovery and resilience-building. However, understanding the factors that enhance or hinder its effectiveness remains crucial for improving reconstruction efforts. This systematic review aims to examine factors that influence CDR on post-conflict settings. A systematic review of 41 peer-reviewed articles and grey reports from 2000-2024 in post-conflict settings identified key drivers, challenges, and outcomes associated with CDR. Results highlight the role of shared identity, collective action and resource mobilisation as pivotal for successful CDR. Conversely, challenges such as division societies, elite capture, weak accountability, sustainability issues and absent of empowerment strategies can potentially undermines social and collective resilience. This review highlights the need for a framework empowering local communities to lead reconstruction. Findings underscore the potential of CDR as a mechanism for sustainable post-conflict recovery and provide recommendations for enhancing community resilience through collaborative and inclusive approaches.

Key words: systematic review, post-conflict, reconstruction, governance, collective action, social cohesion

Introduction

Community-Driven Development (CDD) is a popular aid delivery approach that emphasises community control over decisions making and investment resources (Fearon et al., 2008). It emphasises engagement of beneficiaries in design and management of development projects (Kyamusugulwa, 2013). Scholars argue that CDD promotes inclusive development, empowerment, governance strengthen (Beath et al., 2013; Casey et al., 2011). Additionally, Fearon et al. (2011) highlight it role in enhancing collective action by fostering democratic attitudes and inclusiveness, while Mansur and Rao (2004) argue that it has significant potential to transform social relations. CDD produces two primary types of

results: “more and better-distributed assets and stronger, more responsive institutions” (Humphreys et al., 2014, p. 2). Over the past three decades, Community-Driven Reconstruction (CDR) emerged from CDD framework as strategy for post-conflict recovery (Bennett & D’Onofrio, 2015; Lizanne & Patel, 2007). CDR is recognised for its potential to support recovery efforts, rebuilding social cohesion and promote cooperation in conflict-effected communities (Koyabu 2005, World Bank 2006). Moreover, the United Nation identify CDR as a key component in broader disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration (DDR) programs, particularly in addressing the challenges of post-war reintegration (Del Castillo, 2008). However, applying the CDD approach to conflict contexts presents significant challenges, including the presence of returnee populations, ex-combatants and vulnerable populations as well as lack a history of good governance and breakdown in institutions (Van Leeuwen, 2010). Additionally, there is ambiguity regarding CDR’s goals and outcomes, particularly concerning the overlap between top-down and bottom-up approaches in reconstruction initiatives (William, 2020). Achieving CDR goals can also be challenging. In Sierra Leone, it failed to produce better outcomes because it could not alter people's preference for choosing residential locations based on ethnic composition. The evidence presented shows that CDR efforts are often influenced by deep-rooted issues such as ethnic-party loyalties and varying levels of prosocial preferences within communities, which can hinder cooperation and collective action. For example, Casey et al. (2012) note that ethnic identity heavily shapes voting behaviour, complicating efforts to implement inclusive governance structures. Similarly, Fearon et al. (2009) illustrate that while CDR programs in Liberia were generally positive, their effectiveness was tempered by differences in community members' willingness to cooperate.

Despite the growing body of literature on CDR, there is no dedicated systematic review specifically on CDR. While Samii (2023) examines CDR effectiveness in post-war settings, focusing on Afghanistan, and highlights both successes and limitations. King (2013) assesses CDR outcomes in conflict-affected regions, reporting mixed and often disappointing results, these contributions remain context-specific and fragmented. White et al, (2018) synthesise evidence on 23 CDD programs in various contexts, but their scope extends beyond post-conflict settings, making it less relevant to my review. Given these complexities, a systematic review dedicated to CDR is therefore essential to consolidate existing knowledge, identify patterns, and inform future research and policy interventions. This review aims to identify the key factors that determine the success or failure of CDR initiatives, particularly their role in promoting decentralisation, enhancing local governance, and fostering social

cohesion. In other words, the review will explore empirical evidence of "what works and what doesn't" in community-driven approach, particularly in its positive impact on communities affected by conflict. The review is guided by McBride and Patel's (2007) definition of CDR, which emphasises community ownership, governance, and accountability, providing a foundation for the subsequent analysis. Therefore, three key research questions guided this systematic literature review, RQ1: What does a systematic review of the literature reveal about the evidence on CDR in post-conflict settings? RQ2: What activities do CDR undertake during reconstruction operations? RQ3: What does a systematic review reveal about the effect of the CDR on post-conflict communities? This review follows Khan et al.'s (2003) framework, which outlines five steps for conducting a systematic review. It guides the review process by ensuring transparent and rigor through the systematic application of its components at each stage. After Step 1 "Framing questions for a review" had been completed, the further four steps were engaged in and are summarised below: 2) Identify relevant publications, 3) Assess study quality, 4) Summarising the evidence, and 5) Interpret the findings.

Identifying Relevant Publications

To search for relevant empirical studies, broad keywords and search terms were used in the search engines to capture relevant studies written in English on the topic of CDR or development in post-conflict settings, using all variations of relevant phrases. To include a broader range of studies, I focused on literature from 2000 to 2024 as CDR gained prominence in post-conflict recovery during the early 2000s, particularly through international development initiatives. This period captures evolving debates, policy shifts, and long-term program impacts. Study design and methodological terminology, as well as terms relating to research outcomes, were excluded to avoid bias. The search strategy includes three categories: population "who", event and intervention (See Table 1 for the search strategy).

Table 1: Search strategy

Who	'Community' OR 'leaders' OR 'women' OR 'youth' OR 'IDPs' OR 'ex-combatant' OR 'survivor' OR leader' OR 'refuges'
Events	'post-conflict' OR 'armed conflict' OR 'internal war' OR 'civil war' OR 'peace transition' OR 'ceasefire' OR 'truce'
Interventions	'Reconstruction' OR 'development' OR 'rehabilitation' OR 'community-led' OR 'community drive' OR 'empowerment' OR

	'collective action' OR 'rebuilding' OR 'reintegration' OR 'reconciliation' OR 'peacebuilding' OR 'peacekeeping' OR 'recovery' OR 'disarmament' OR 'demobilisation' OR 'reinsertion'.

Moreover, to identify the relevant publication based on the above broad keywords and search terms, I used academic databases and search engines such as illustrated in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Databases searched for the systematic review

1. ProQuest Accessibility Statement
2. ASSIA: Applied Social Sciences Index and Abstracts
3. EBSCOhost Academic Search Complete
4. Science Direct
5. EBSCOhost Research Databases
6. JSTOR digital library and platform
7. Scopus
8. Google scholar

Furthermore, bibliographies and reference lists of included articles were reviewed to identify additional relevant studies and journals not found in database searches. Including both primary studies and grey literature provides a broader and more comprehensive understanding of existing knowledge (Mahood et al., 2014).The grey literature search involved identifying relevant organisations, authorities, and stakeholders on Google, as well as reviewing evaluation reports, policy documents, and publications from databases such as UN Data and the World Bank Open Data. A full list of grey literature databases is provided in Table 3. Keywords from the earlier search strategy were also used to locate relevant reports and policies.

Table 3: Sources of grey literature searched for the systematic review

Name of Organisation	Website
1. The Yemen social fund for development	www.sfd-yemen.org
2. Saudi Development and Reconstruction Programme	www.sdrpy.gov.sa
3. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.	www.carnegieendowment.org
4. Congressional Research Service	www.crsreports.congress.gov
5. Scottish Centre for Conflict Resolution - SCCR	www.sccr.org.uk
6. The African Union Centre for Post-conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD)	www.peaceau.org
7. Centre For Conflict Resolution (CCR)	www.ccr.org.za

8. UN data	www.data.un.org
9. UNICEF, the United Nations Children's Fund	www.unicef.org
10. The K4D, knowledge, evidence and learning for development	www.k4d.info
11. UK Department for International Development	www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-international-development
12. UN World Bank Open Data	data.worldbank.org

Criteria for Inclusion and Exclusion

The inclusion and exclusion criteria were established to ensure an unbiased selection of the most relevant articles (Siddaway et al., 2019). Following Mahood et al. (2014), articles were selected based on explicit and reproducible methods (outlined in Section 3.5), with criteria clearly stated in Table 4. Human-generated hazards, such as war and civil unrest, were included, while naturally generated hazards, such as floods or earthquakes, were excluded. Consequently, papers focused on disaster recovery rather than conflict were excluded, as post-conflict security challenges differ from those in disaster recovery (Peters & Kelman, 2020). Despite efforts to gather a wide range of relevant publications, challenges in accessing resources may have led to the oversight of some articles.

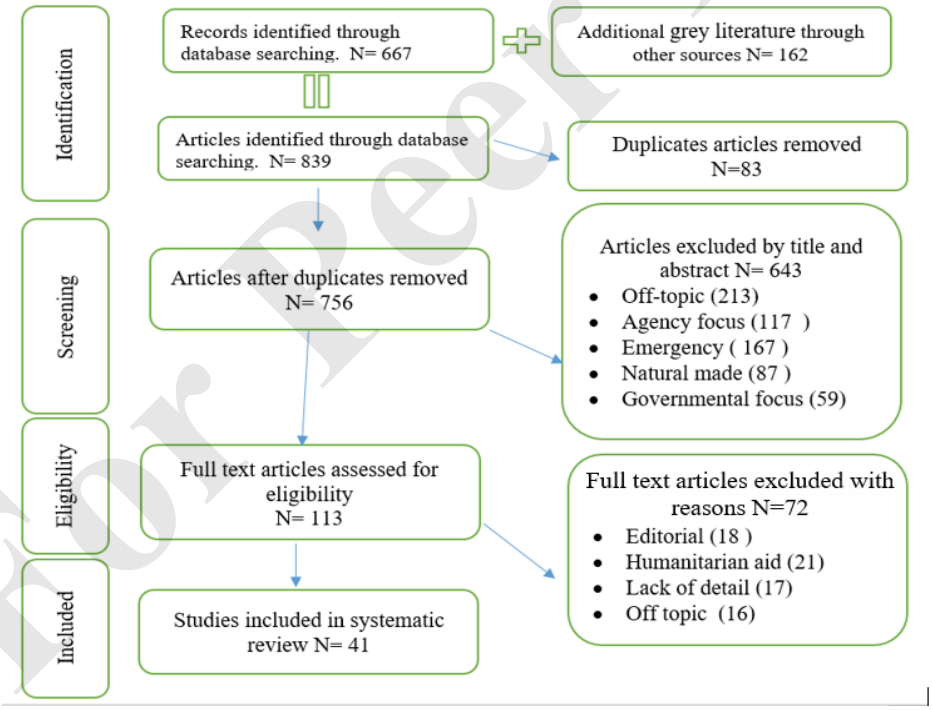
Table 4: Inclusion and Exclusion list of Systematic Review

Category	Inclusion	Exclusion
Hazard type	Human made	Natural hazard related to such as disaster, flood, earthquake, volcanoes
Research type	Qualitative and quantitative	Conceptual, narrative/anecdotal
Language	English language only	Language other than English
Stage	Transition to peace, post-conflict, recovery stage	Emergency or/and normal situation
Audience	Community members	Governmental Institutions
Period	From 2000 to 2024	Before 2000

Results

Consistent with the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines (Liberati et al., 2009), a flow diagram of the results displayed below in Figure 4. In the identification stage, 839 articles were discovered via database searches, including 677 peer-reviewed articles and 162 non-peer-reviewed articles. After removing 83 duplicate, 756 articles remained for eligibility screening. Among these, 643 were excluded during the review of title and abstract for the following reasons: 213 were off-topic (not about community-driven or led or participation); 167 focused on the emergency phase; 87 were conceptual considerations of preparedness or natural hazards; 59 were governmental focused; and 117 were agency-focused rather than community-focused. The full texts of the remaining 113 were carefully screened, resulting in the excluded 72 papers that did not meet the eligibility criteria due to reflecting an author's viewpoint, humanitarian aid-focused, or insufficient detail. In the end, 41 articles met the inclusion criteria and were fully analysed, as outlined in Appendix A.

Figure 4: PRISMA follow diagram



Descriptive of Included Articles

Grey literature accounted for seven papers (17%) of the sample. These included working papers (Avdeenko& Gilligan, 2015; Casey et al., 2012; Koyabu, 2005), concept papers (Bennett & D'Onofrio 2015), and evaluation reports on CDR (Dasgupta et al., 2009). Additionally, the sample included preliminary research insights from the Myanmar Institute of Politics and Public Policy (Hansen, 2019), a revised draft with lessons learned from an IRC-funded project (Lizanne& Patel, 2007), and a Columbia University presentation exploring the effects of community participation in school governance (Burde, 2004). The review also included 34 peer-reviewed articles (83%) that met the outlined criteria and were deemed relevant and valuable. Together, these sources provide a comprehensive understanding of CDR, balancing theoretical depth with practical evidence.

Country of Origin

Hemingway and Brereton (2009) recommend an international scope for systematic review. Most studies included in this review are conducted in post-conflict settings across various regions; including Africa, the Balkans, the Middle East, Northern Ireland, Asia and Latin America (refer to Fig. 5 for details). Sample sizes ranged from 26 participants (e.g. Halliday & Ferguson, 2016) to a maximum of 2500 households (e.g. Fearon et al., 2009), indicates a diversity of studies scales and contexts. The studies with smaller sample sizes were qualitative or exploratory studies, while the larger ones were quantitative and involve surveys. This point to a diversity in research methods, which might be both an asset (for capturing various perspectives) and a challenge (for comparing results). This range of study designs highlights the flexibility of CDR as a framework but also suggests that its outcomes may be highly context-dependent. The geographic and demographic diversity of the studies underscores the complexity of generalizing CDR findings, reinforcing the need to assess how local political, social, and historical conditions shape its implementation and impact.

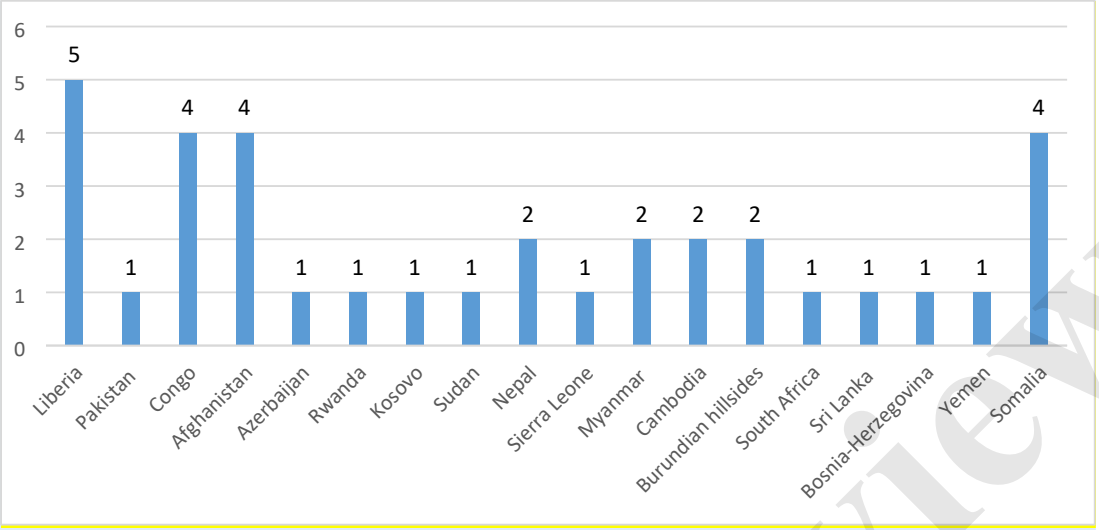


Figure 6: Study Country of Origin

Research Type

According to Patten (2016), empirical studies are based on observed and measured phenomena, deriving knowledge from actual experience rather than belief. The final corpus of 41 studies including 19 qualitative studies, 15 quantitative studies, and 7 mixed methods studies. The quality of the selected articles were assessed using the Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT) (Hong et al., 2018), developed for systematic reviews that include qualitative, quantitative and mixed-methods studies. It has two rounds of questions: the first round included two screening questions regarding the research question and the data collected. In the second round of questions, each study is assigned to one of five types (qualitative studies, quantitative randomised control trials, quantitative non-randomised studies, quantitative descriptive studies and mixed-methods studies), with five distinct questions answered for each study type. A further description of the tool and the results of this application can be found in Appendix B. Table 5 provides details of the study designs and methods, including the range of specific methods used. They varied from in-depth or semi-structured interviews to storey analysis. The first column represents the research design, the second represents the number of articles using each design, the third the methodology type, and the fourth the number of articles using methods.

Table 5: Details of research methods used across the studies.

Research design	Number	Method	Number

Qualitative studies	15	Baseline data	6
Qualitative – ethnographic	3	In-depth/semi-structured interviews	28
Grounded theory	1	Surveys	10
Randomised controlled trial	12	Focus groups	5
Non-randomized studies	2	Observation	2
Mixed methods	7	Case study	3
		Secondary data analysis	13

Qualitative Studies

Qualitative research represented the majority of studies (n =19), focusing on discovering and understanding participants' experiences and perspectives, as well as exploring the meaning, purpose and reality of CDR (Creswell, 2017). They used various methods, including semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions (FGD) and case studies, allowing for in-depth engagement with participants. The MMAT appraisal tool assessed their quality, confirming that they demonstrated clear research questions and collected method methods (e.g., in-depth interviews, group interviews, or observations) were appropriate for addressing the research problem. A key strength of these studies is their ability to provide rich, context-specific insights into how CDR unfolds in post-conflict settings. For instance, an ethnographic study by Kyamusugulwa et al., (2014) exemplifies the value of immersive research, as the author participated as an observer in the CDR program to investigate its governance impact. Such an approach enabled a deep understanding of the capacity-building component in 34 village committees across eight community development committees. Similarly, Kyamusugulwa (2013) strategically mitigated bias by interviewing both direct and indirect beneficiaries of CDR in the Congo.

However, qualitative research in this domain also presents challenges, particularly regarding researcher positionality and trust-building. For example, Dawar and Ferreira (2021) encountered local suspicion in Pakistan, which hindered open dialogue. Likewise, Koyabu (2005), who was involved in Afghan CDR as a development and gender expert, raises concerns about potential bias in the evaluation process. Such cases highlight the methodological difficulty of maintaining objectivity when researchers have pre-existing roles in the projects they study. Another limitation is the inconsistency in methodological transparency. Three studies failed to provide sufficient detail on their data analysis methods, making it difficult to assess the rigor of their interpretations. This lack of clarity affects the

comparability of findings across studies, as noted by McBride and Patel (2007), whose cross-country analysis of CDR in Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Rwanda, and Kosovo was inconclusive on whether CDR outcomes could be sustained in the long term. Despite these limitations, these studies collectively offer a nuanced understanding of CDR, capturing the lived experiences of affected communities and the social dynamics that shape reconstruction efforts. The diversity of methods, from ethnographic participation to thematic and content analysis, provides a comprehensive yet complex picture of how CDR is perceived and implemented.

Quantitative Studies

This section provides quality indicators for the 15 articles that employed quantitative research designs, including 13 randomised controlled trials and 2 non-randomised studies. These studies utilised data collection tools such as surveys, questionnaires, and interviews to test hypotheses and maximise objectivity, replicability, and generalisability of findings (see Table 5). The following two sections demonstrate how the MMAT appraisal tool was applied to the selected quantitative studies.

Randomised Controlled Trials

The 13 randomised controlled trials (RCTs) showed variations in quality. In some studies, participation were allocated to treatment and control groups based on chance (e.g. randomly selected by public lottery), ensuring comparability at the start. Random assignment allowed unbiased estimates of the programme's causal effect on outcomes in six studies. The authors were not involved in the intervention. However, in some cases, biases were evident. For example, in Sudan, Avdeenko and Gilligan (2015) were concerned that respondents might bias their response to survey questions. In Liberia, King (2003) revealed attrition between baseline and end line, raising potential bias, while Fearon et al., (2015) were participated and not blinded to the intervention, increasing the risk of researcher influence on the results. In Afghanistan, it was unclear whether Beath et al. (2013) were aware of the allocation of interventions to specific recipients, and their study suggested survey bias as it was not solely based on respondents' perceptions, raising concerns about measurement validity. In Liberia, Fearon (2006) and Casey et al. (2012) exposed treatment and control communities to real-world collective activities, but there was insufficient information on the appropriateness of randomisation and no clear evidence of comparability between groups at baseline, weakening the internal validity of the studies.

Non-Randomised Studies

Two non-randomised studies (Choi et al., 2020; D'Exelle et al., 2017) provided strong evidence for non-randomised controlled trials. They described the population, sample, inclusion and exclusion criteria, and reasons for participant's selection. For example, Choi et al. (2020) included a sample of 1,805 households from 60 villages in Cambodia, with 911 from 30 treatment villages and 904 from 30 control villages. D'exelle et al. (2017) compared beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of the CDR programme, who were comparable except for the funding received. To address potential bias, Choi et al. (2020) ran three models for each question: without controls, with controls, and with controls and district fixed effects, to check for confounding factors. They ensured that control households lived at least 5 km away from the treatment to prevent contamination. D'Exelle et al. (2017) controlled for confounding factors, such as social proximity correlating with CDR participation, using predicted cooperation in their analysis. Time-consistent confounding factors were addressed by including significantly different between treated and control samples as control variables. The full assessment of non-randomised controlled trials using the MMAT in Appendix B

Mixed Qualitative and Quantitative

This section examines the quality of seven mixed quantitative and qualitative studies (Rautanen & Koppen, 2014; Higashida et al., 2017; Hansen, 2019; Crawford & Morrison, 2020). According to the MMAT tool, these studies did not report how discrepancies were addressed when integrating qualitative and quantitative findings. However, the authors provided rationales for using a mixed methods to address the research questions and hypotheses. They demonstrated effective integration of both qualitative and quantitative components to meet the research objectives. For example, Crawford and Morrison (2020) used mixed methods to compare data from interviews and FGDs, and a survey on attitudes towards gender and caste. The shift from interviews to surveys likely aimed to gather more quantifiable data and identify trends across a larger population, which interviews alone might not have captured effectively. In these studies, data from different methods formed a complete picture for interpreting the results. In Sri Lanka, Higashida et al. (2017) used mixed methods to reveal the impact of community-based rehabilitation; however, the quantitative data from people with disabilities might not be representative of all the disabled people in the targeted area. Additionally, NGOs' views and programmes could have influenced the perspectives of the selected participants, and the study did not discuss the view of other actors, such as local government (see Appendix B for the full assessment of mixed methods).

Discussion

Data analysis followed Braun et al.'s (2023) reflexive thematic analysis guidelines, which involves critically reflecting on values, assumptions, expectations, choices and actions throughout the research process (Olmos-Vega et al., 2023). The analysis focused on different in post-conflict reconstruction interventions, including community-driven, led, based on partnership with, or led by INGOs. The key findings were extracted into a Word document for examination, followed by reading the data to generate and group themes. Themes were then organised into main and sub-themes based on their significance. The prospective themes were evaluated to alignment with the research goals, and the potential themes were compared to the dataset to ensure they produced a persuasive narrative addressing the review's aim. In the final step, each theme was refined and appropriate names were developed. This discussion section integrated the analytic narrative with data extracts, presenting five main themes (see Table 6) defining CDR activities. These themes correspond to the review questions and align with three main CDR factors: equity, inclusiveness, efficiency, and governance (Lawson, 2011). The activities aimed to support micro-level recovery, improve efficiency, build social cohesion, and enhance empowerment. Table 6 summarises the themes, the number of articles associated with them, and their potential impact on the respective communities.

Table 6: Reconstruction activities and the number of studies that reviewed them

Themes/Reconstruction activities	**Number**	**Have benefits and obstacles**	
		Potential Benefits	**Potential Obstacle**
Service and infrastructure	24	● Improve the public service ● Increase resilience ● Reduces intra-disputes ● Increases interpersonal trust	● Elite capture or dominance by one group may limit effective targeting
Economic welfare	28	● Promote inclusion of vulnerable populations ● Responds to community need ● Welfare improvement ● Improve Social cohesion	● Create division ● Costs for participants ● Elite or one group capture
Local governance	36	● Democratic practises ● Community decision-making	● Elite capture ● Undermine formal institutions through

		● Promote ● Accountability, transparency ● Responsiveness of local based org	the creation of parallel structures
Social norms	28	● Improve relationships ● Promote inclusion of vulnerable populations ● Reduced tension between groups	● Not appropriate for all communities ● lower participation rates
Political attitudes and state-building	18	● Cooperation with local institutions ● Enhance trust in formal institutions ● Citizen government engagement/CSOs	● Abdicate responsibility to local communities ● Undermine formal institutions through the creation of parallel structures

Access to Services and Infrastructure

The review shows that 24 studies explored strategies for addressing issues around public services and local infrastructure to increase resilience and psychosocial well-being. These studies credit CDR with successfully increasing the quantity and quality of local infrastructure, often cited as a top priority by local communities (McBride & Patel, 2007). For example, in Afghanistan, Beath et al. (2015) found that access to drinking water and electricity, as part of the CDD, reduced intra-village disputes and increased interpersonal trust among male villagers, but the study did not explain the types of local dispute resolution included. This omission raises questions about the actual mechanisms through which infrastructure projects contribute to social cohesion. Is it the direct impact of service provision, or does the process of collective decision-making matter more?

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Ho et al. (2015) found that partnership between local communities and the health system improved access to services, transparency and community participation. In area where central government influence is limited, the study suggests that divisions between healthcare providers and community members can be bridged through space for exchange and collaboration. However, it remains unclear whether frontline healthcare providers were seen as part of the state or society, which is a crucial factor in understanding the long-term impact of such partnerships.

In Nepal, Rautanen and Koppen (2014) emphasise decentralised, participatory approaches to water management, where communities as core stakeholders. This approach fosters ownership and resilience in Water User Committees, improving sustainability and

access to water. The project integrated community values, needs, and traditional knowledge into water services planning but recognising that political affiliations within civil society organizations and beneficiary groups may hinder social cohesion and collective responsibility. This case highlights an important tension—while decentralization can empower communities, it does not always overcome pre-existing social divisions. This raises the question: under what conditions does participatory governance actually translate into equitable outcomes.

In Liberia, Fearon et al. (2008) show that CDR improved access to education but offered weak evidence for increasing small asset holdings and employment. It shifted perception of local decision-making, promoting transparency, accountability and inclusiveness, values already supported by most community chiefs. Trust in leaders increased, but the programme had only slight impact on citizens' sense of personal efficacy and confidence in influencing community decisions through elections. The evaluation highlighted high baseline acceptance and some evidence of increased inclusion of marginalised groups, such as the poor and ex-combatants. Although the programme had a weak impact on reducing tensions, it showed that such tensions were less likely to escalate into violence. While this suggests that CDR fosters stability, the findings raise an important issue: should we expect CDR to transform power structures, or does it primarily reinforce existing leadership and decision-making practices.

However, some studies show that CDR interventions implemented a top-down, without proper participation or consideration of local needs and grievances, can be ineffective. For example, Dawar and Ferreira (2021) found that military interests and local influencers in Pakistan excluded people from decision-making in the CDR. Critics like Rautanen and Koppen (2014) argue that this approach is less likely to yield positive outcomes and fails to address the immediate needs of vulnerable communities. In Sudan, CDD accompanied infrastructure building, where local communities selected the infrastructure programme but had saw no effect of social capital (Avdeenko & Michael, 2015). Thus, while CDR interventions can address infrastructure needs and increasing access to basic services, it is important to ensure proper community participation and consideration of local needs and grievances (Kyamusugulwa, 2013). This suggests that infrastructure provision alone does not automatically foster social cohesion—active engagement in decision-making may be a crucial missing factor.

Improve Economic Welfare

There is consensus that reconstruction activities improve economic perceptions and optimism, especially for women. Of the 28 studies focused primarily on economic welfare activities (such as microfinance, livelihood and livestock) as a core component of reconstruction, nine investigated the integration of these activities within broader reconstruction efforts. The aim was to enhance communities' capacity to address welfare-challenges through income generation and small-scale projects. Wulandari et al.'s (2018) found that income was a significant predictor of well-being in post-disaster Sinabung, rather than social identification with the community. This finding indicates that social identity often plays a crucial role in resilience, economic stability may be a stronger determinant of well-being in certain contexts**.** For example, Bauer et al. (2016) highlight that financial stability is crucial for fostering other social factors like trust and cooperation, suggesting that financial stability may be essential before other social factors can contribute to overall community resilience and cohesion. In Liberia, access to livelihoods improved significantly; however, there was little evidence of gains in asset holdings or increased perceptions of welfare (Fearon et al., 2008). This suggests that while CDR may increase economic opportunities, the extent to which these translate into long-term improvements in asset accumulation remains unclear. CDR aims to increase perceptions of welfare but it also demonstrates a good impact on social cohesion (King, 2013b). Collins et al. (2014) provide evidence that the CDD project improved the quality and quantity of local public goods and enhanced overall economic welfare in treatment communities. Fearon (2006) suggests that Liberian communities exposed to CDR were more likely to act collectively to enhance their welfare. In Sierra Leone, Casey et al. (2012) examined a CDR programme, McRobbie (2010) evaluate the impact of Community-driven livelihood and Food Security Initiatives (CLFSI) in Somalia. Both studies found that community-driven programme effectively supplied smaller-scale public goods, improving the stock and quality of local public goods and economic welfare. This is significant as CDR supports micro-level recovery in post-conflict communities (Koyabu, 2005).

However, McRobbie (2010) notes that although there was an improvement in local public goods, it did not appear translate into household welfare improvement. It is worth noting that neither study aimed to demonstrate a positive impact on social cohesion. In contrast, in Cambodia, CDD facilitated the restoration of social cohesion, livelihoods and the empowerment of vulnerable groups (Choi et al., 2020). Fearon et al. (2009) indicate that positive changes in community cohesion after a civil war can occur quickly through external

intervention like aid assistance. This raises an important question if economic improvement necessarily lead to social cohesion, or can social cohesion be fostered independently of financial gains. For example, in Sri Lanka, Higashida et al. (2017) found potentially negative aspects of CDR aimed to foster social trust though economic welfare. Committee members were unmotivated to continue attending due to a perceived lack of financial benefits, highlighting livelihood assistance as frequently reported need in post-conflict settings. Nevertheless, this perspective does not fully elucidate the operation process of the livelihood assistance programme or the extent of beneficiaries' participate. Higashida et al. (2017) found that in Sri Lanka, such assistance led to demotivation among those who did not receive support, creating a gap between supported and unsupported clients. This aligns Anderson's (1990) study, which found that aid could benefit certain subgroups over others, leading to community division. Therefore, in line with Hamming (2011), it is crucial for CDR to adhere to the principle of "conflict sensitivity" or "do no harm" by synchronised safety and development projects in post-conflict settings. This demonstrates that economic incentives can be both a motivating and demotivating factor in community engagement, depending on how they are structured.

Improve Local Governance

The review reveals that the CDD/R aims to promote good local-level governance in post-conflict communities (Lawson, 2011). Out of 41 selected articles, 36 studies highlighted local governance as a key component of CDR, with 11 studies specifically investigating the impact of CDD/R programmes on local government. For example, in Liberia, the CDR strengthened democratic political attitudes and increasing trust in local decision-making procedures (Fearon et al., 2008). In Somalia, Bakonyi et al. (2015) found that community-driven governance (CDG) increased citizens' reliance on the community council and resolved leadership conflicts. Several studies show that CDR influenced social cooperation and support democratic practices even after the programme concluded (Fearon et al., 2008; Fearon et al., 2011; Humphreys et al., 2014). In Sierra Leone, CDD established community committees, bank accounts, and facilitated greater interaction between villages, local authorities and community leaders (Casey et al., 2012).

However, these studies did not fully explain how CDR challenges authority structures or elite capture. This raises crosiers about how sustainable the governance structures established through CDD/R once external funding and interventions are withdrawn. For example, Fearon et al. (2008) introduce mixed evidence on local governance attitudes; while

some evidence indicates that the programme reinforced democratic political attitudes and decision-making confidence, other survey results were less convincing in supporting for democracy. In the DRC, elite control was sometimes beneficial in delivering public goods, with conflicts among elites leading to increased accountability and resource allocation (Kyamusugulwa & Hilhorst, 2015). Likewise, in Liberia, elites supported the fund-raising for community-chosen projects (Fearon et al., 2015), but this could lead to elite capture, where elites prioritise their interests, which local governments have attempted to address through power-sharing (Higashida et al., 2017; Ho et al., 2015). Yet the conditions under which elite influence becomes harmful or beneficial remain unclear. In Afghanistan, Beath et al. (2013) found that democratic councils, not traditional leaders, manage food aid distribution, thought embezzlement remained. Fearon et al. (2015) found that exposure to participatory decision-making through CDR did not lead to democratic practices or accountable leaders. In DRC, community respected committee members but did not hold them accountable (Ho et al., 2015). Casey et al. (2012) noted that newly elected committees in Sierra Leone were inactive in monitoring, attributed to a lack of capacity building (Kyamusugulwa et al., 2018). In Myanmar, Hansen (2019) reveals that the capacity building increased committee members' confident in coordinating community work. In Somalia, CDG did not promote citizens' voice. Potentially due to elites capturing (Bakonyi et al., 2015). Nevertheless, CDR's democratisation process can improve the local governance quality. Beath et al. (2013) show that locally imposed changes in governance through CDR can result in tangible improvements, contrasting with literature suggesting limited effects on local institutions and collective action (Avdeenko & Gilligan, 2015). Findings vary across different countries, but there is limited comparative analysis on how political, economic, and cultural factors shape CDD/R success.

Change on Social Norms and Values

The review reveals that CDD/R not only aims to promote good local-level governance in post-conflict communities but also serves as a mechanism for influencing social norms and values by reshaping community interactions and decision-making processes (Lawson, 2011). Out of the 41 studies reviewed, 28 consider CDD/R as a crucial tool for change social norms to reinforce inclusion and cooperation. The evidence suggests that while some programmes generate meaningful long-term changes, others face structural and cultural barriers that limit their effectiveness. For example, in Somalia, a community-driven safety programme fostered conflict resolution and cooperation by applying social norms to safe weapon handling

(Hamming, 2011). Fearon et al. (2008) showed that CDR reduced the likelihood of violence by promoting the inclusion of the poor and ex-combatants and enhancing intergroup collaboration. These findings suggest that CDR can act as a stabilising force in fragile settings, where past conflicts have eroded social trust. In Colombia, CDR expanded cooperation beyond participants to include non-participating community members (D'Exelle et al., 2017), suggesting a diffusion effect where exposure to participatory processes influences broader social networks**.** Crawford and Morrison (2020) further noted that CDR fostered social cohesion by including marginalised groups. Afghanistan saw improved collaboration across diverse groups and increased female participation in governance, reflecting shifts in norms (Beath et al., 2015). This highlights an important dimension of CDR's impact—not only does it strengthen community bonds, but it can also serve as a vehicle for integrating historically excluded populations.

Evidence from Liberia highlighted not only greats social cooperation and mobilisation in CDR-exposed communities, but also that the program's effects were not uniform, with less impact in women-only areas (Fearon et al., 2011). In Somalia, participation by women and youths remained low, though interaction with clan authorities increased, improving their ability to articulate demands (McRobbie, 2010). However, in Afghanistan, CDR significantly improved attitudes toward female participation in governance (Beath et al., 2013). This contrast between Afghanistan and Somalia illustrates how contextual factors—such as governance structures, existing social hierarchies, and cultural resistance—mediate the effectiveness of CDR in challenging restrictive norms**.** The review suggests that in some cases, CDR interventions can directly challenge patriarchal structures, though success is contingent on broader institutional support and local acceptance**.**

In Sierra Leone, Casey et al. (2012) found little evidence of CDD's influence on women's and youths' participation or broader social norm changes. Similarly, Avdeenko and Gilligan (2015) reported that, despite self-reported improvements, CDD had no measurable impact on pro-social preferences or social networks in Sudan. While self-perceptions of change may exist, they do not always translate into measurable shifts in social behaviour or relationships. The case of Rwanda highlights the complex relationship between identity-based divisions and collective action, demonstrating that CDR initiatives must navigate historical tensions to foster sustainable social change (Moss, 2016). This discrepancy underscores the challenge of applying a one-size-fits-all approach to social norm change, as gender dynamics and societal hierarchies shape participation and outcomes.

Nevertheless, McBride and Patel (2007) observed that CDR brought together diverse ethnic and religious groups in settings like Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Rwanda, though the reintegration of ex-combatants was not explicitly demonstrated. This raises questions about the limits of CDR in addressing deeper social fractures—while it may facilitate cooperation, it does not automatically resolve long-standing grievances. Intergroup collaboration, community capacity, and the alignment of norms, values, and beliefs (Ferguson et al., 2019), are crucial factors that determine whether CDR fosters long-term social transformation or merely induces temporary behavioural shifts. Overall, while CDD/R programmes show potential for positive social norm change, their impact varies across groups. The divergence in outcomes suggests that success depends on more than just programme design—it is also influenced by pre-existing social structures, the degree of community buy-in, and the presence of institutional support.

Political Attitudes and State Building

The pivotal aspect of CDD/R activities lies in their capacity to empower local communities in shaping political attitudes and contributing to state building efforts. Of the 41 studies, 18 underscored the significance of CDD/R in fostering trust, collaboration, and political attitudes. For example, CDD initiatives in Afghanistan increased voting participation in the 2020 parliamentary election (Beath et al., 2015), and in Liberia, a CDD initiative positively affected trust in the national government (Fearon et al., 2009b). These findings align with evidence that CDR can improve perceptions of the state (Avdeenko & Gilligan, 2015)**.** However, contrasting views suggest CDD/R's influence may be more limited or mixed. Casey et al. (2012) argue that CDD has limited influence on promoting cooperative political attitudes between communities and governments, while Bakonyi et al. (2015) found that increased interaction with local institutions does not always enhance community voice or satisfaction with state institutions. Rautanen and Koppen (2014) highlighted that creating parallel systems can hinder vertical cooperation. This tension between the positive and negative effects could be a central theme to explore further why do some studies highlight positive outcomes (e.g., improved trust in the state) while others point to limitations, such as increasing political tensions or creating parallel systems. Is the impact of CDD/R dependent on the specific context or the way it is implemented?

A recurring theme in the literature seems to be the necessity of government involvement for CDD/R initiatives to succeed in state-building. For example, Koyabu, (2005) highlights that collaboration with state agencies can increase local trust in government.

Community-driven initiatives in Somalia fostered cooperation between communities and the police and expanded collaboration with district governments (Hamming, 2011). While Burde (2004) argues that INGOs replacing state functions can create gaps. Similarly, Van den Boogaard& Santoro (2021) advocate for collaboration between INGOs, local leaders, and formal institutions to strengthen both governance and state legitimacy. This tension could be unpacked to explore the ideal relationship between local, national, and international actors in CDD/R efforts. This raises question of whether CDR initiatives could be more effective if they operated outside the state system, or is state partnership crucial for long-term sustainability. Lizanne and Patel (2007) and others argue that transitional governments, rather than NGOs, were key to overseeing CDR efforts, especially in places like Afghanistan, Kosovo, and Rwanda. This suggests that state-driven models of CDR might be more effective than NGO-driven ones in some contexts. Lizanne and Alyoscia (2008) also note that transitional or interim government bodies, rather than NGOs, often initiated and oversaw CDR in countries like Azerbaijan, Kosovo, Rwanda, and Afghanistan, strengthening state authority during transitions. Exploring the dynamics between these two approaches could add depth to the discussion.

Conclusion and Research Priorities

The review on CDR in post-conflict contexts indicate mixed results across areas like service delivery, infrastructure, economic welfare, local governance, social norms, and political attitudes. However, these findings represent only a segment of the broader CDR literature, highlighting the need for further research on post-conflict reconstruction. While studies mainly address CDR in post-conflict settings, there is limited knowledge of how CDR functions in regions experiencing both conflict and disaster, as seen in Nepal, call for further inquiry. Economic welfare improvements through CDR focus on small-scale public goods, but the broader impact on community welfare remains underexplored. Addressing this gap could provide insights for designing CDR and suggest financial stability as essential for resilience and cohesion, underscoring the need for conflict-sensitive, context-specific approaches to avoid exacerbating existing social tensions. Despite some challenges, CDR approaches typically align with local needs, resulting in high beneficiary satisfaction. However, the effects on demographic groups, especially women and youth, and the potential adverse effects on gender and youth equality remain insufficiently explored. Strengthening collective action and social capital is vital for sustainable reconstruction, but the review reveals a gap in strategies linking community empowerment directly to physical

infrastructure reconstruction. This synthesis of literature informs the current research on how CDR initiatives influence social norms, inclusivity, and collective action in post-conflict communities. Social identities, rooted in historical, ethnic, and cultural factors, can create divisions that hinder cooperation, potentially exacerbating tensions and undermining CDD/R goals. The review also examined CDR's role in improving local governance, showing its potential to enhance democratic practices, increase trust in decision-making, and empower communities. However, gaps in the literature include challenges like elite capture, limited capacity building, and ineffective monitoring. Despite varying outcomes, there is evidence that CDR can positively impact local governance when implemented effectively. Future research should address these gaps by exploring strategies to reduce elite control, improve community participation, and strengthen local institutions, contributing to more transparent and accountable governance processes. Additionally, it is essential to consider the social measures of communities in post-conflict settings. Although the review offers insights into CDR's impact on political attitudes and state-building, further research is needed to understand how CDR programs affect the relationship between communities and the state. Designing these programmes with a nuanced understanding of local dynamics and incorporating strategies to promote inclusivity and bridge social divides is crucial for achieving more effective and sustainable outcomes.

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Statements and Declarations

This study is a systematic review of existing literature and does not involve human participants. Therefore, ethical approval and informed consent were not required. The author declare that they have no competing interests. This research was part of PhD research with No funding was received for this study. All data used in this study are available from publicly accessible sources. The list of reviewed articles is provided in the references.

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