

Terms of Reference: Participatory Action Research (PAR) Facilitator

Role Title: PAR Facilitator – Participatory Action Research Process

Location: Ethiopia, Tsore and Sherkole Refugee camps, Assosa zone of Benishangul Gumuz region

Duration: July 2026 – December 2027

Contracting period: The PAR facilitator would need to be recruited by 8th July 2026.

Background to the project

Across diverse humanitarian and protracted crisis contexts, young people face intersecting challenges in accessing education,¹ securing livelihoods,² and exercising agency in decisions that affect their futures.³ These challenges are particularly acute for displacement-affected youth, whose wellbeing and aspirations are often **sidelined** by programming that fails to recognise their **capacities as social actors**.⁴

NRC's *Pathways for Better Education and Livelihoods* programme responds to this gap by strengthening education systems, youth participation, and livelihood opportunities, while piloting an innovative *Grassroots Youth Education and Livelihoods Funding Mechanism*.

¹ Claudia Mitchell et al., 'Youth Agency in Times of Crisis: Exploring Education and Conflict in Mali through Participatory Visual Approaches', *Frontiers in Education*, 2022, <https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/education/articles/10.3389/educ.2022.959225/pdf>; Nicola Jones et al., 'Disrupted Educational Pathways: The Effects of Conflict on Adolescent Educational Access and Learning in War-Torn Ethiopia', *Frontiers in Education*, 2022, <https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/education/articles/10.3389/educ.2022.963415/pdf>; Miracle Ebubedike et al., 'Ethics for Educational Research in Regions of Protracted Armed Conflict and Crisis', *Community Development Journal*, 2023, <https://academic.oup.com/cdj/article-pdf/58/1/102/48744297/bsac040.pdf>.

² Helen L. Robinson, 'Uncertain Futures: Youth and Their Self-Reliance within a Protracted Refugee Situation. A Case Study of Dzaleka in Malawi' (2019), <https://studenttheses.uu.nl/bitstream/handle/20.500.12932/35557/thesis%20final.pdf>; Anna Louise Strachan, *Youth Transitions into Adulthood in Protracted Crises*, 2015, <http://www.gsdrc.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/1293-Youth-transitions-into-adulthood-in-protracted-crises.pdf>.

³ Michael G. Wessells, 'Promoting Voice and Agency among Forcibly Displaced Children and Adolescents', *Journal on Migration and Human Security*, 2021, <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/23315024211036014>; Mitchell et al., 'Youth Agency in Times of Crisis: Exploring Education and Conflict in Mali through Participatory Visual Approaches'.

⁴ UNHCR, *UNHCR Global Youth Report 2020–2022* (2022), <https://www.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/2023-06/unhcr-youth-report-2020-2022.pdf>.

This mechanism supports community-based organisations, youth entrepreneurs, and outreach actors through flexible funding and mentoring to implement locally led initiatives.

The role of the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) in this project is to work alongside the Ethiopia Country Office to carry out PAR and a formative and learning-orientated evaluation of the Grassroots Youth Education and Livelihoods Funding Mechanism. Both of these activities are designed to ensure the mechanism is not only evidence-informed but also grounded in the lived realities and aspirations of the young people and communities it aims to serve. The PAR process and evaluation will be centred on principles of co-creation reflexivity, and equity. IDS will work closely with the NRC country team, PAR facilitator, youth-led groups to co-design and implement action research cycles.

The **scope** of this research and evaluation focuses on strengthening of *The Grassroots Youth Education and Livelihoods Funding Mechanism* to be achieved by generating **context-specific insights** and supporting **real-time learning** and adaptation. This includes two interlinked components:

1. An evaluation of the funding mechanism
2. The co-design, implementation, and evaluation of PAR processes in Ethiopia.

Together, these will assess how effectively the funding mechanism enables displacement-affected youth to access education, participate meaningfully in their communities, and pursue income-generating opportunities.

The **purpose** of the research is to build understanding of where and how the mechanism supports **positive change pathways**, where it encounters structural or relational barriers, and how it might be adapted to improve its reach and impact. Each action research group (ARG) will **design and test** its own Theory of Change (ToC), creating **nested learning processes** that can also help validate and challenge the overall programme ToC. Through these interconnected processes, the research will contribute to the broader goals of the *Pathways for Better Education and Livelihoods* programme: centring local knowledge, supporting youth agency, and improving community-based education and livelihoods initiatives.

Purpose of the Role

The PAR Facilitator (PF) will support and guide Action Research Groups (ARGs) through all phases of the participatory process, ensuring inclusive engagement, rigorous data generation and analysis, and actionable outcomes that inform NRC's strategic adaptation.

The following table provides a summary of main activities to be carried out by the PF. The PF is responsible for facilitating 2 ARGs within their country. All meetings with ARGs are

in person and typically 3 hours long. The PF will join a monthly online check-in with IDS throughout the project.

Activity

1. Inception and preparation

Co-design research methodology and ARG Terms of Reference with IDS and NRC Focal Point.

Participate in the recruitment of 2 ARGs in country (approx. 16 members each: 8 young people, 4 community members, 4 local actors).

Agree timetable and logistics for IDS field visits (July 2026 and Jan 2027).

2. Training and capacity building

Attend 4-day PAR and formative evaluation training workshop delivered by IDS (July 22 – 30th 2026), alongside selected CO staff.

Co-facilitate introductory ARG sessions alongside IDS during field visit, for both in-country ARGs.

Attend online outcome harvesting training with IDS and NRC (Phase 5, Sept–Oct 2027).

3. ARG facilitation (in person — 2 ARGs in country)

Phase 1 — Trust-building: Rivers of Life, community mapping, bodymapping

Phase 2 — Data generation and analysis: peer storytelling, additional data sources, thematic analysis, problem tree

Phase 3 — Theory of Change and action planning: ToC development, action planning and refinement.

Phase 4 — Action, reflection and adaptation: minimum 1 meeting per every 3 weeks across both in-country ARGs (March–August 2027), plus between-meeting support.

Phase 5 — Outcome harvesting and collective analysis: outcome harvesting training and collective process analysis

4. Key informant interviews (KIIs)

Contribute to development of KII tools (December 2026).

Conduct in-person KII interviews during Phase 3 IDS field visit (Jan–Feb 2027).

Conduct further in-person KII interviews during Phase 5 (Sept–Oct 2027).

5. Coordination, insights sessions and reporting

Monthly online check-in meetings with IDS throughout (approx. 18 months).

Attend and contribute to online insights sessions with IDS and NRC (Sept 2026, Dec 2026, March 2027).

Contribute to end-of-year workplan and logistics planning for 2027 field visit.

Contribute to draft evaluation report and participate in validation of findings with NRC and local actors (Nov–Dec 2027).

We estimate that the Level of Effort to be between 70-80 days of work.

Key Responsibilities

- Form, support and facilitate ARGs
- Participate in inception workshop and ongoing coaching and technical assistance provided by IDS, as part of the initial capacity development phase.
- Facilitate trust-building, fostering group cohesion and a safe, collaborative environment, particularly in contexts affected by displacement or conflict.
- Ensure that ethical consideration and safeguarding requirements are met during project.
- Support participatory data generation and analysis, guiding groups in the use of creative and dialogical methods (e.g., storytelling, body mapping, stakeholder mapping, problem tree analysis) and integrating NRC and local data sources as appropriate.
- Ensure that all PAR activities are well documented.
- Assist groups in developing a Theory of Change and practical action plans, ensuring the use of participatory tools and alignment with NRC support structures.
- Oversee and encourage group-led implementation, reflection, and adaptation cycles, promoting the involvement of new stakeholders where relevant.
- Support each ARG to prepare high quality documentation and synthesis of learning, and to contribute their learning at cross-country and programme-level.
- Coordinate and contribute to the synthesis and outcome harvesting phase, helping groups systematically review processes and outcomes and prepare inputs for country and global workshops.
- Participate in IDS-facilitated action learning sets with both national and global research teams, for peer-to-peer exchange, and adaptive learning.
- For the developmental evaluation component of the research, carry out an end of programme outcome harvesting workshop to identify what has changed (or not) since the beginning of the programme, and how we can attribute such changes (or not) to the programme.
- Carry out up to 10 key informant interviews and two focus groups to inform evaluation.

Required Experience and Skills

- Expert(s), with a minimum of 5 years of experience in participatory action research, facilitation, and group processes, preferably in contexts of displacement or conflict.
- Strong interpersonal and communication skills, with the ability to foster trust and manage group dynamics sensitively.
- Proven ability to guide participatory analysis and creative data collection methods.
- Familiarity with Theory of Change development, action planning, and outcome harvesting approaches.
- Excellent organisational, documentation, and adaptive learning skills.

Reporting and Supervision

The PF will report to the NRC Ethiopia Focal Point and will work closely with IDS and NRC teams, providing regular updates and contributing to project learning and adaptation mechanisms.

Deliverables

Date	Deliverable
July 2026	ARG Terms of Reference finalised
July 2026	2 ARGs recruited in country
July 22-30 th 2026	Participation in 4-day IDS training workshop
July 2026	Introductory meeting facilitated with each ARG (possibly with IDS)
August 2026	Phase 1 Meetings facilitated with each ARG
September 2026	Phase 2 Meetings facilitated with each ARG
September 2026	Contribution to early insights session (with IDS and NRC)
October 2026	Phase 2 Meetings facilitated with each ARG
November 2026	Phase 2 Meetings facilitated with each ARG

Date	Deliverable
December 2026	KII tools reviewed and approved
December 2026	Contribution to end-of-year reflection and 2027 workplan
Jan–Feb 2027	Phase 3 Meetings facilitated with each ARG
Jan–Feb 2027	KII interviews completed
March 2027	Phase 4 Meetings facilitated with each ARG
March 2027	Contribution to online insights session (with IDS and NRC)
Apr–Aug 2027	Minimum 1 meeting per 3 weeks facilitated with each ARG
Sept–Oct 2027	Participation in online outcome harvesting training (with IDS and NRC)
Sept–Oct 2027	Outcome harvesting workshop facilitated with each ARG
Sept–Oct 2027	Phase 5 Meetings facilitated with each ARG (collective analysis of PAR process)
Sept–Oct 2027	KII interviews completed
Nov–Dec 2027	Input to draft evaluation report provided
Nov–Dec 2027	Participation in validation of findings with NRC and local actors
December 2027	Final report on PAR process submitted

Application process and requirements

Applications should include the following:

- CV and cover letter with at least two samples of previous work undertaken and led by the service provider.
- A proposed budget detailing service provision fees. All budgets and final quotations should be made in PDF files.
 - We expect budgets to include travel costs (only within-country travel will be considered), subsistence costs, wage costs plus any additional material costs anticipated.

Submission by 22nd June to Tina Nelis at t.nelis@ids.ac.uk