

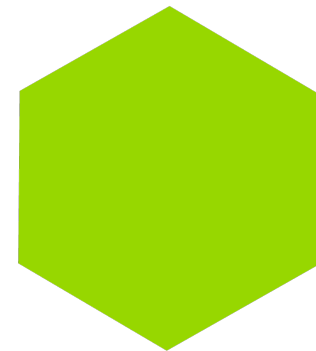


# SUPPORTING MUTUAL AID: WHAT THE EVIDENCE TELLS US



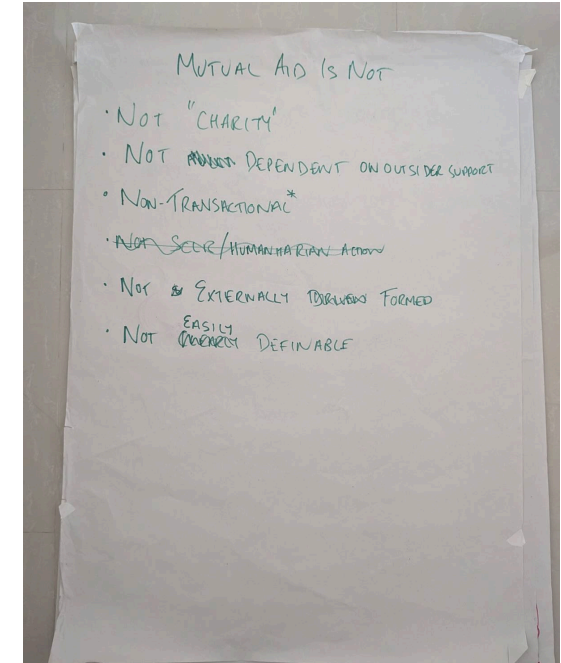
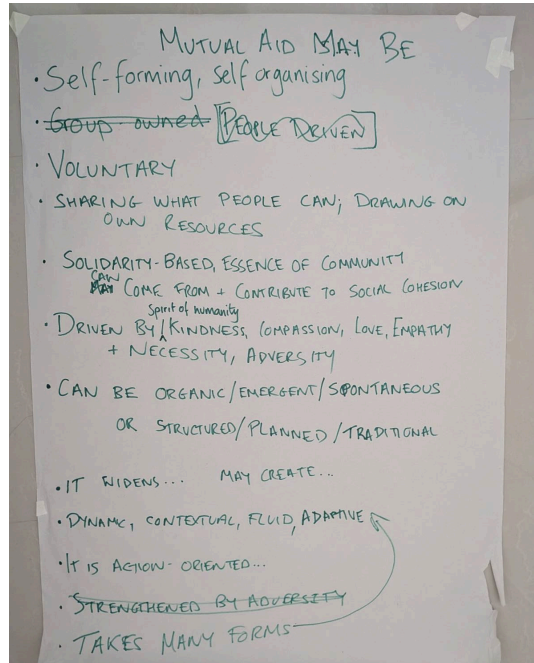
# WHAT IF...

Better connecting the international humanitarian system to already existing mutual aid efforts can be part of the solution





# WHAT IS MUTUAL AID

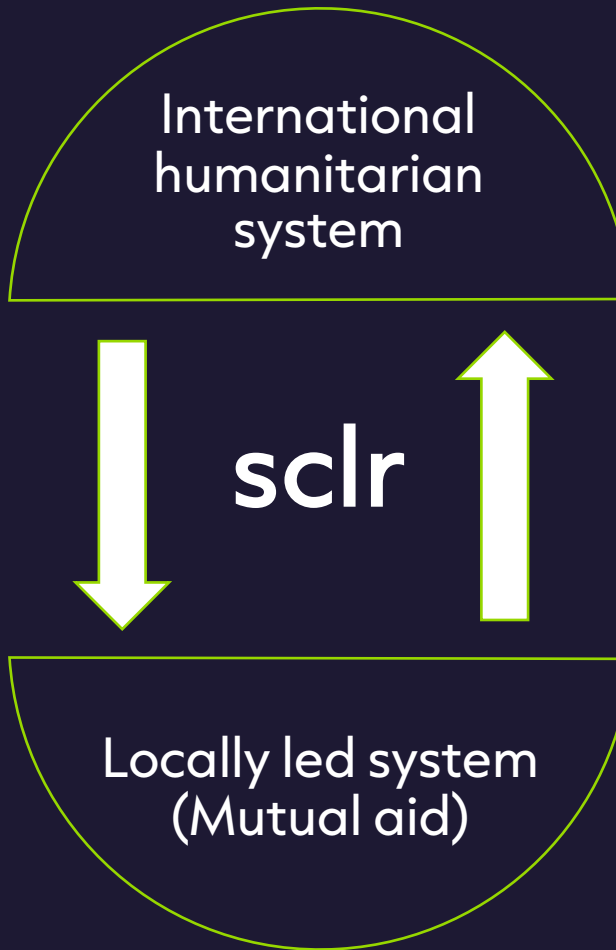


**Mutual aid** is self-forming, self-organised and voluntary ways in which individuals, families and communities support one another during crises, whether through spontaneous actions or more structured and traditional systems of mutual support.

**Mutual aid is not** charity, not dependent on outside support, and not transactional. It is not externally designed or easily defined, and does not follow a single humanitarian model or template.

# TWO DIMENSIONS OF ANALYSIS....

**1.**  
**Results**  
experienced by  
**mutual aid**  
groups

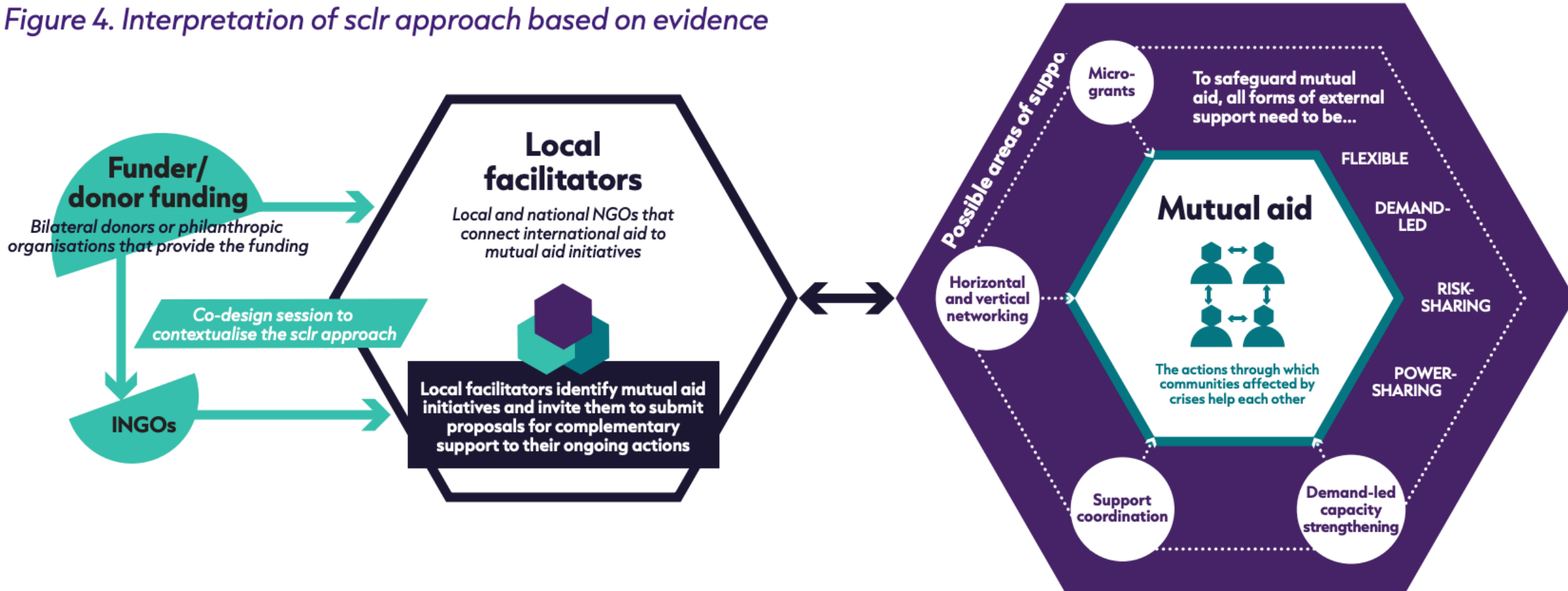


**2.**  
**Results**  
experience by  
those  
supporting  
**mutual aid**



# WHAT IS SCLR

Figure 4. Interpretation of sclr approach based on evidence



# A LARGELY UNEXPLORED EVIDENCE BASE...



## Starting assumption

- Little documented evidence
- Insights anecdotal

## Expanding the scope

- Targeted search for internal and non-traditional resources
- Included local and national-level materials

## Results

- 200+ documents collected (Learning briefs, Evaluations, Case studies, Reports)
- Covering 25 countries with mutual aid support

# THE FINDINGS

WE NEED HELP  
NESESITAMOS AYUDA ←

We Are

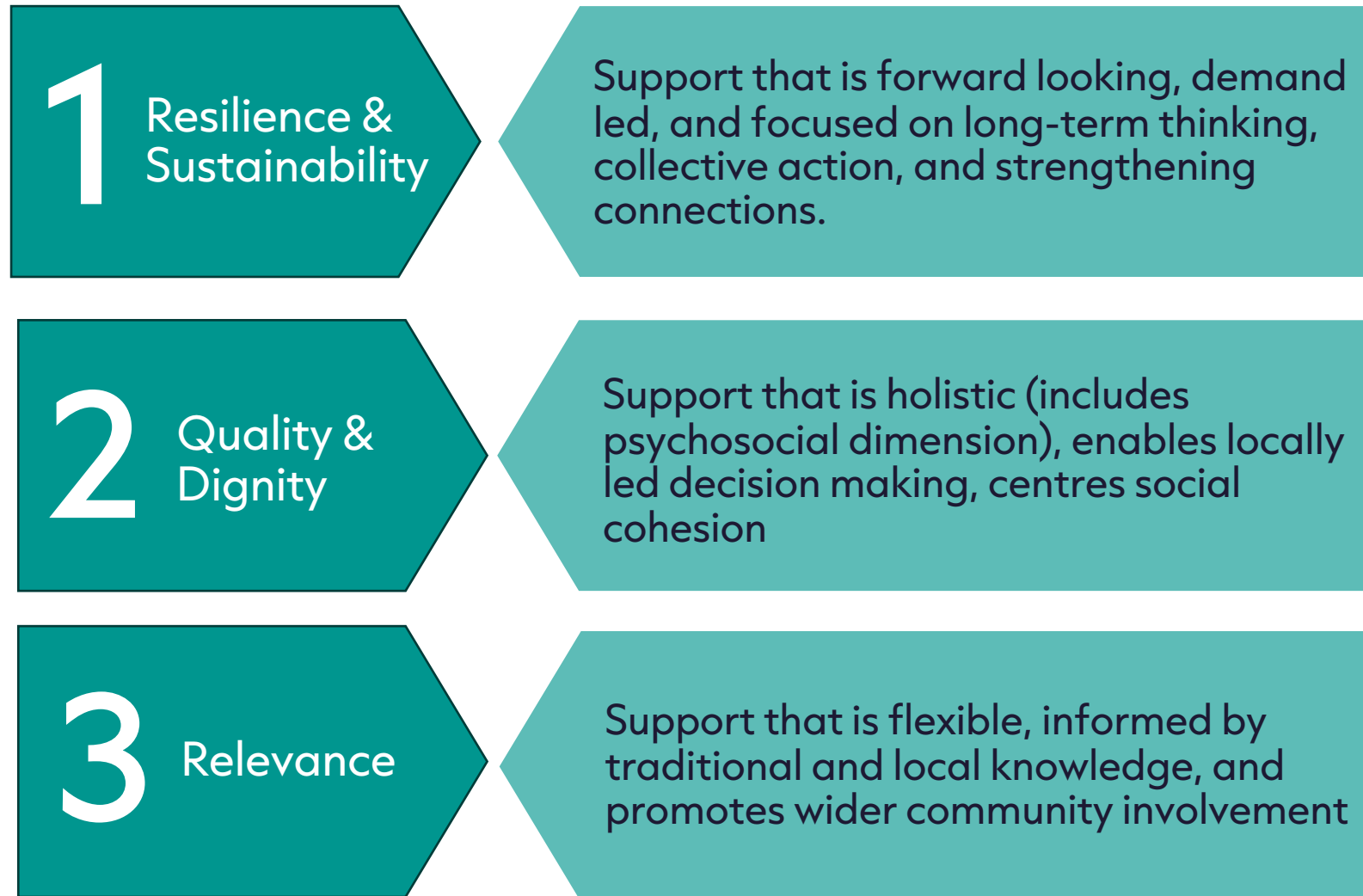
CHRISTIAN  
LITURGICAL  
LITURGICAL

DIMENSION 1.

**What are the results  
experienced by  
mutual aid groups?**

# KEY FINDINGS - FOR MUTUAL AID

## #1 Support can strengthen areas that mutual aid is inherently good at



Example: In India demand led preparedness support to address root causes of floods



Example: In Turkey increased social solidarity drives social cohesion



Example: In the Philippines support based on traditional system and work with local authorities

# KEY FINDINGS - FOR MUTUAL AID



## #2 Support can challenge common areas of concern with mutual aid groups...



# HOWEVER...



Despite the overwhelming positive evidence there were recorded cases of unintended consequences particularly when support reverted to top-down practices



Most of the data is self reported with potential confirmation bias

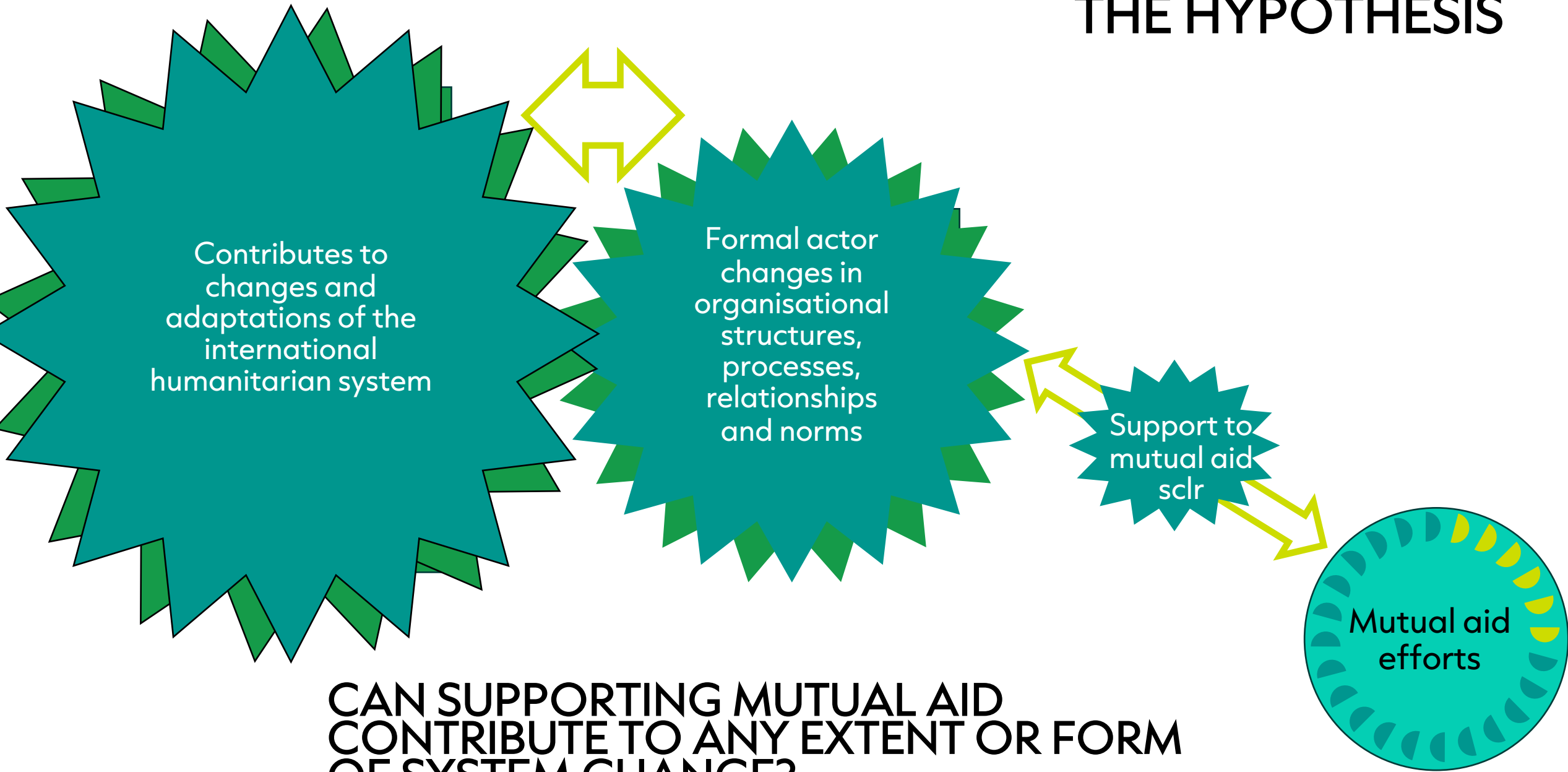


There remain key unanswered questions about scale and the potential risks

DIMENSION 2.

**What are the results  
experienced by those  
supporting mutual  
aid groups?**

# THE HYPOTHESIS



**CAN SUPPORTING MUTUAL AID  
CONTRIBUTE TO ANY EXTENT OR FORM  
OF SYSTEM CHANGE?**

## KEY FINDINGS – FOR SUPPORTERS

#2 Those supporting mutual aid have experienced changes in how they ...

**Learn**

Real time adaptations, de-learning, multidirectional learning

**Make decisions**

Changing roles, shared decision making

**Partner**

Trust based partnership, expanded networks

**Advocate**

Supporters become fierce internal and external advocates

# HOWEVER...



There is limited recorded changes on technical areas essential to advance localization such as: compliance and due-dilligence, capacity strengthening, and accountability.



Most recorded changes at the program or sclr level not enough evidence at the organizational or system level



Most evidence at the national level little from international actors

# Key take aways for donors & funders

The surge in attention and interest in supporting mutual aid is justified by the promising evidence.

This may not be just about better prioritising international funding, but also about changing how it operates.



How support is provided is just as important as how much support is provided.

Key unanswered question on how support can grow without undermining what makes mutual aid effective in the first place