Localisation in Coordination- Q&A

What is localization?

Page 22 of the WHS Report refers to a collective commitment to promote responses that are both "as local as possible" and "as international as necessary[1]." Localisation is a process in which the humanitarian response is re-configured to meet this collective commitment.

Two excellent summaries have also been prepared by ICVA and HPG: https://www.icvanetwork.org/system/files/versions/ICVA_ODI_Localisation_paper.pdf

SDC and Local2Global: http://www.local2global.info/wp-content/uploads/L2GP_SDC_Lit_Review_LocallyLed_June_2016_final.pdf

1. Does localization mean that the humanitarian response must be localized or locally-led?

Not necessarily. Localisation requires us to promote a humanitarian response that is <u>as local as possible</u>. Sometimes – where this is possible – the response should be locally led and locally delivered. But there are many considerations that we have to take into account when determining what is possible. At times, local actors may be overwhelmed by the scale or complexity of the humanitarian crisis. There may also be issues related to technical and/or institutional capacity, access or resources. There may also be other reasons why local actors are unable or unwilling to adhere to humanitarian principles (particularly if the actors are party to a conflict, are perpetrating human rights violations or are compromised by their (perceived or actual) political or other affiliations. In these cases, the international community would respond – <u>as much as necessary</u>.

At all times, however, local and international actors should all continuously review their involvement and contributions, and ensure that they remain in line with the principle – as local as possible, as international as necessary.

We should also always bear in mind that that what is possible, or necessary, will likely change over time, depending on the context – such as when there are changes in capacity, access and resource availability.

2. What is the role of the coordination system in localization?

Finding the right balance between what is as local as possible, as international as necessary may be perceived differently by different actors and the coordination system is well placed to help the

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[1]http://www.agendaforhumanity.org/sites/default/files/resources/2017/Jul/WHS_Commitment_to_Action_8September2016.pdf

humanitarian community to reach a consensus on what is "the right balance." This requires several things from the coordination leadership teams:

- To continuously assess what is possible; and what is necessary; and ensure that the humanitarian response strategy reflects this;
- To model an appropriate balance in their own leadership and decision-making structures;
- To identify and share opportunities to promote localization; and advocate for these to be realized.

3. Why is it important for the coordination system to promote localization?

The global commitment to localization is based on the assumption that locally led and locally delivered responses – where possible – offer the best opportunity to maximize reach, quality and sustainability.

Many of the promising examples of localization have, so far, been limited to small scale pilot initiatives, and the coordination system is uniquely placed to support these to go to scale (as this system guides humanitarian actors on when, where and how to deliver humanitarian responses). The coordination system is also in a position to act as a semi-neutral broker, to help local and international actors find and agree on the best way forward.

To some extent, localisation is also inevitable (for example, the donor community is becoming increasingly diversified and disruption by technological advances will continue to change the way in which resources and capacities are made available[2]). It is therefore prudent for the humanitarian system to proactively support local actors to prepare for, and effectively utilise this opportunity.

4. What is the evidence that proves localization works?

The global commitment is based on the collective experience of many humanitarian organisations and humanitarian experts who agree that locally led and locally delivered services have the potential to be most effective, when there is sufficient local capacity, local resources and the ability to adhere to humanitarian principles. Elhadj As Sy (Secretary General of the IFRC) noted that local actors are the first to respond. O'Brien (Head of OCHA) has also observed that aid delivered by local NGOs is often "…faster, cheaper and more culturally appropriate…[3]"

There are also so wonderful examples of how localization can led to good protection outcomes – the START Network (www.startnetwork.org), the NEAR Network (http://www.near.ngo/) and the

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[2] For more on this, see Wall, I., & Hedlund, K. (2016). Localisation and Locally-Led Crisis Response: A Literature Review. Global2Local. Available at http://www.local2global.info/resources

[3] For more on the value of localization, see:
https://www.icvanetwork.org/system/files/versions/ICVA_ODI_Localisation_paper.pdf

Local2Global initiative (http://www.local2global.info/) have all documented some of these on their websites.

It is true, however, that much of the evidence for this is anecdotal or based on assessments of pilot projects and one of the priorities for the Child Protection Area of Responsibility (and the broader Protection Cluster) is to better document how localization can be used to strengthen the humanitarian response.

This piece by HPG and ICVA provides a more detailed review on why localisation is important: https://www.icvanetwork.org/system/files/versions/ICVA_ODI_Localisation_paper.pdf

5. Who/What is a local actor?

There is no simple definition for this, and many actors in different contexts have interpreted this differently. In general, the CP AoR interprets local actors as government, civil society, academia and private sector from within the relevant country; and that country's diaspora community. More detailed work on definitions has been done by the IASC Humanitarian Financing Task Team, and can be found in the footnote below.

This paper is not yet published, but you can reach out to the CP AoR (anolan@unicef.org) for a more detailed discussion on this, in the meantime.

6. How can the Global CP AoR support me in moving more towards localisation in my country?

The Education Cluster and the CP AoR (on behalf of the Protection Cluster) are currently implementing a localisation initiative. Some specific outputs in 2017 will include:
- Self-assessment tools for CP Coordination Groups on the Principles of Partnership
- An orientation webinar for all interested coordinators in December (date to be announced)
- An orientation module for coordinators to use in-country, to develop a contextualized Action Plan
- A sample Action Plan from Nigeria (based on an in-country analysis and action plan development process)
- Training for Government Child Protection Coordination Focal Points in West Africa (completed)

Additionally, the following are being prioritized in 2018:
- In-country support visits and remote support for coordinators who would like to develop country-level Action Plans, or incorporate localization into HRP or CPWG Strategies/revisions
- Guidance for coordinators on working with Governments
- Training for Government Child Protection Coordination Focal Points in at least one additional region

- Decentralising the Global Helpdesk – establishing 4 language based Helpdesks (French, Arabic, Spanish and English) which will be based in local organisations or UNICEF offices in countries affected by humanitarian crises

For more information on this, please contact the CP AoR (anolan@unicef.org)

Some important background:

7. What is the World Humanitarian Summit?

The first -ever World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) took place in Istanbul, Turkey, on 23 and 24 May 2016. It brought together some 9,000 participants representing 180 Member States, over 700 local and international NGOs, the private sector and other stakeholders. The Summit mobilized support and action for the Agenda for Humanity, and catalyzed major changes in the way we address humanitarian need, risk and vulnerability. At the Summit, stakeholders made more than 3,500 commitments to support the implementation of the Agenda for Humanity, and launched dozens of initiatives and partnerships to help deliver the changes needed. Some of the major change initiatives launched at the Summit include the New Way of Working to bridge the humanitarian - development divide; the Grand Bargain on improving humanitarian efficiency and effectiveness; and a major push by all stakeholders to empower local humanitarian actors and reinforce local systems.

For more information:
https://www.worldhumanitariansummit.org/sites/default/files/media/WHS%20Commitment%20to%20Action_8September2016.pdf

8. What is the Grand Bargain?

The Grand Bargain is an agreement between more than 30 of the biggest donors and aid providers, which aims to get more means into the hands of people in need. It includes a series of changes in the working practices of donors and aid organisations that would deliver an extra billion dollars over five years for people in need of humanitarian aid. These changes include gearing up cash programming, greater funding for national and local responders and cutting bureaucracy through harmonised reporting requirements. It also commits donors and aid organizations to providing 25 per cent of global humanitarian funding to local and national responders by 2020, along with more un-earmarked money, and increased multi-year funding to ensure greater predictability and continuity in humanitarian response, among other commitments.

For more information: http://www.agendaforhumanity.org/initiatives/3861

9. What are the Principles of Partnership?

These Principles were developed in 2007 and endorsed by 40 leaders of humanitarian organisations from the UN, NGOs, the Red Cross and Red Crescent movement, the International Organization for Migration and the World Bank and provide a framework to improve partnerships between the diverse

humanitarian community. In particular, these Principles are designed to promote more equal, constructive and transparent partnerships between international and national partners.

For more information: https://www.icvanetwork.org/principles-partnership-statement-commitment

10. Who else is working on localisation?

The Global Grand Bargain Localisation Workstream is bringing together partners from all over the world, to share good practices, lessons learned and provide guidance on how we can collectively strengthen our humanitarian responses. More information is available here: https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/more-support-and-funding-tools-local-and-national-responders

There are also a number of other interagency forums and networks, some of which are listed below:
- The Near Network: http://www.near.ngo/
- The Start Network: https://startnetwork.org/
- The Charter for Change: https://charter4change.org/

Many countries also have NGO Consortium or representative bodies. Where possible, we should encourage them to join our coordination groups, as they also have a role to play in policy and advocacy around localization.

11. The Grand Bargain indicates that funding should be as direct as possible. What is "as direct as possible"?

This has been the topic of significant debate. Devex has provided a summary of their perspective on how this debate has rolled out: https://www.devex.com/news/dispute-over-grand-bargain-localization-commitments-boils-over-90603.

The Localisation Workstream has prepared a definitions paper which outlines who are considered "local" actors and what funding is considered "direct". This includes funding which is passed from a donor straight to a local organization; or funding from an aid agency which is mobilized directly from private donors and passed straight to a local organization.

What constitutes "as directly as possible" remains open to interpretation, as it will depend on the context (access, partner capacity etc).

See the following for more information: https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/categories_for_tracking_direct_as_possible_funding_to_local_and_national_actors_003.pdf

12. Why haven't we been successful at localization to date?

This is a difficult question and there is no universally agreed answer. From the perspective of the CP AoR, there are a few important lessons learned:

1. Going to scale – we often assume that good practices will automatically be scaled up. In reality however, this is not always the case. It also requires us to take the political context into account (the country context, and also the political context in relation to the humanitarian system itself). We need to anchor programmes in the humanitarian architecture – so that the right strategies are prioritized in the national plan or HRP and prioritized in project sheets and other funding proposals. We also need to improve information flow between global, national and sub-national levels and ensure that individual agencies strengthen their systems for institutional memory.

2. Structural challenges – these will take some time; and a lot of political will. For example, donors may want to work more directly with local actors, but they often don't have the necessary staff to manage so many small direct agreements. For some international organisations, the incentives are not yet in place to encourage CEOs and Directors to prioritise localization initiatives – for some agency heads, overseeing the shrinking of their organization might be perceived to be poor performance, rather than successful transition to localization.

13. What are the different partnership models that UN and INGOs could use when they collaborate with national NGOs?

There are a number of ways in which international organisations could partner more effectively with local organisations (and many already are!). Some examples are below. Whatever the type of partnership, it should ideally be compliant with the Principles of Partnership (https://www.icvanetwork.org/system/files/versions/Principles%20of%20Parnership%20English.pdf).

1. Coaching partnerships: This would involve intensive support, with specialists working alongside the local partner for an agreed set of time to assist them to develop an agreed set of competencies, skills or organizational systems.

2. Mentoring partnerships: This would involve regular, defined specialist support (which could be provided onsite or remotely) and is focused on helping to review implementation, support problem solving and brainstorm ways of improving a program or organizational system.

3. Joint implementation: This would involve both the international and national organization hiring staff (ideally using the same ToR and conditions of service) and work alongside each other, to jointly achieve common targets or goals. They can attend common staff meetings etc and both partners are responsible for their own targets; and collectively for the combined results.

4. Long term, strategic partnerships: From the CP AoR perspective, these are the "gold standard." They involve agreeing on a long term engagement strategy with a local partner, focused on mutually agreed goals, rather than a single project. They are also structured around the results that both partners want to achieve, rather than a budget. In this type of partnership, there may be periods where there is no funding, or limited funding, but the international partner continues to commit to providing whatever support is possible (e.g. regular coaching discussions, joint monitoring etc) whilst both sides continue to try to mobilise funding.

If interested in examples of these different types of partnership, please contact the CP AoR Helpdesk and we can help put you in touch with relevant partners.

14. There is a lot of emphasis on institutional capacity building. How can international partners support this?

At present, a majority of international partners invest in assessment of their local partners to identify risk; and investments in compliance monitoring. Whilst this is critical in managing risk, it is not sufficient for many local partners who are seeking to strengthen their institutional systems. There are several practical steps that international partners can take to strengthen the institutional capacity of their local partners:

1. Support local partners to develop their own institutional capacity strengthening plan, based on their own strategic priorities. This allows them to have a more coherent plan and to maximize the use of limited resources from multiple partners.
2. Work together with other international partners to align support and reduce the administrative and transactional costs on the national partner.
3. Ensure that partnership agreements more explicitly link capacity assessments, partnership agreements, partnership budgets and mutual monitoring systems and processes.
4. Explicitly reference the recommendations that the international partner will assist the national partner to address. This makes is easier to hold both partners accountable for meeting these commitments.
5. Ensure that budgets explicitly address the capacity strengthening commitments.
6. Draw on coaching and mentoring strategies, in addition to centralized training efforts.
7. Provide unearmarked funding, which national organisations can use to invest in their own institutional and individual staff development.

15. How can the coordination group monitor and measure progress in localization?

The following tools are available from the CP AoR Helpdesk:
1. <u>Module for Coordination Group Self-Assessment</u>: This is split into 2 half day sessions and will enable you to take your coordination groups through a self-assessment process to bring the group to a consensus on their localisation priorities and possible solutions in advance of the next HRP.
2. <u>Localisation dashboard</u>: This doesn't require the collection of any new information but rather, analysing and presenting existing data to the coordination group, to facilitate a more informed discussion about localisation.
3. <u>Partnership Assessment tools</u>: There are two tools, based on the Principles of Partnership (which many coordination group members have formally signed on to). The first is for cluster members to provide feedback on the extent to which the coordination group is modelling the principles of partnership; and the other enables the coordination leadership team to better understand the nature and quality of partnerships that exist between your members. At the moment, these are paper-based and require manual data entry – but the global CP AoR can do the entry and analysis whilst the online versions are being developed.

For more information on localization and what the coordination groups can, contact your Global Helpdesk.