Summary Report
Grand Bargain Workstream on Local and National Responders
Workshop to Support Coordinated Localization Research
30 November 2017, Geneva

Background

Thanks in part to the attention and momentum devoted to the issue of localization of aid due to its inclusion in the Grand Bargain, a substantial number of organizations are undertaking or considering research projects to examine various questions related to local humanitarian action. The co-chairs of the Grand Bargain's Workstream on Local and National Responders convened this workshop, intended as the first in a series of dialogues to bring together organizations with existing projects or plans in order to:

- identify synergies, gaps and opportunities for collaboration
- discuss mutual objectives and how to use what has been/ may be produced
- discuss processes to ensure strong sharing and learning

Participants were identified through the Workstream and included some two dozen representatives of NGOs and NGO networks, UN agencies, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, think tanks, donors and academic institutions (see Annex 1).

The difficulties of categorization and terminology

Participants were encouraged to share information with each other about their respective projects. The group made an initial attempt to categorize the various projects in order to better identify synergies and areas of potential cooperation, looking at categories such as finance, partnership, coordination, etc. However, it was quickly agreed that such a pigeon-holding exercise is not particularly helpful, as it obscures the strong inter-connectedness of the various aspects of the localization and the fact that most projects necessarily aim to address more than one.

Definitions and terminology were acknowledged as an ongoing area of debate. Should localization definition be the one of the Grand Bargain, which is clear and measurable or should it go beyond? What is the final goal of localization? **Groupe URD** asked this question to civil society in Haiti, finding that the goal was not about speed, effectiveness, quality, but whether the organizations will be organizationally sustainable to be present in another emergency. **Australian Red Cross** asked the question in the Pacific and were told it should be defined as "*a process of recognising, respecting and strengthening the independence of leadership and decision making by national actors in humanitarian action, in order to better address the needs of affected populations.*"

Areas of current or planned research

Capacity strengthening was an important focus for almost every project presented at the workshop. Connections were seen between capacity and complementarity, partnership, and finance. Among the elements being studied by various partners were:

- Accompaniment and coaching (**CRS, Oxfam, UNICEF**)
- How capacity is understood in the humanitarian sector and what capacity exists among local, national and international actors in specific contexts **(ODI)**.
- What local organizations really need and want concerning their capacity (**UNHCR**)

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- How inclusive partnership models can strengthen the capacity of civil society in sustainable ways (**UNICEF**, **WFP)**
- How to use local knowledge and good practice within learning **(HLA)**
- How to strengthen domestic fundraising capacity **(IFRC)**
- How localization is perceived and implemented by state and non-state actors involved in humanitarian aid, in different conflict scenarios (**ISS**)

Financing is at the heart of the Grand Bargain's commitments. Among the questions being studied:

- Does more direct financing of local actors by donors work better? **(Australian RC, UNICEF, START, CRS).**
- Do pooled funds ensure better quality financing arrangements for local actors? **(IFRC, CARE, Charter4Change, OCHA, DI, Local2Global)**.
- How can the financing of local actors be measured? (**DI, Local2Global)**
- What are the main regulatory and policy barriers to increased and higher quality financing for local actors? **(IFRC)**

It was noted that there have already been some findings on the question on whether more direct funding of local actors would work better, which may be surprising in light of the major debates in the Grand Bargain Workstream. **Australian RC's** recently completed study on localization in the Pacific found that stakeholders felt that the need was not necessarily for more direct financing but for greater recognition of their autonomy in their dealings with intermediaries. Somewhat similar findings have emerged from consultations of local actors by **UNICEF, START and CRS**.

Local leadership and coordination mechanisms also featured in many of the projects including the following:

- The **Gates Foundation** is studying local humanitarian leadership, including indigenous communities in 2 countries, both from a qualitative and quantitative point of view.
- **Oxfam** is studying local leadership and faith actors, partnerships in conflict settings.
- **HLA** is studying decentralized disaster risk management in Kenya.
- **UNICEF (Global CP AoR)** has developed a conceptual framework for localisation in coordination and is working with country coordination groups to use this framework to accelerate their support for localisation.

Partnership was likewise addressed by many of the research projects (e.g., **Missed Opportunities**: ECHO-funded accelerating localization project, **CRS** Ukraine, **Gates Foundation**, **UNICEF AOR**)

Complementarity between international and local actors, **particularly in conflict**, was a major theme of a number of the projects (British RC, ICRC, UNICEF, ODI).

Gender and localization was a major focus of research undertaken by CARE.

Measurement systems were identified as a gap. How we define success? How do we measure it? What are the qualitative indicators needed? The **Gates Foundation** is supporting NEAR to develop a referential measurement system for localization.

Country case studies

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Nearly all of the projects had some specific focus on a small number of countries.   They included the following (while some projects have yet to decide on their focus countries):

Africa

- Burundi (WFP)
- Democratic Republic of Congo (ODI)
- Kenya (HLA)
- Ethiopia (ISS, DEEP/GMI)
- Malawi (CARE)
- Mozambique (Oxfam)
- Nigeria (Missed Opportunities, UNICEF)
- Sierra Leone (ISS)
- Somalia (British RC & ICRC, Oxfam, UNICEF, ICVA)
- South Sudan (Missed Opportunities, Oxfam, ISS)
- Sudan (WFP, Oxfam)
- Uganda (Oxfam)

Americas

- Dominican Republic (WFP)
- Colombia (British RC & ICRC)
- Haiti (ISS)
- Peru (Oxfam)

Asia-Pacific

- Afghanistan (ISS)
- Bangladesh (Oxfam, DEEP/GMI, ODI)
- India (CRS)
- Indonesia (CRS)
- Nepal (Missed Opportunities, iSS)
- Pacific Region (Aus RC)
- Pakistan (WFP)
- Myanmar (Missed Opportunities, ISS, UNICEF, ICVA)
- Solomon Islands (Care)
- Vanuatu (Care)

Europe

- Ukraine (CRS)

MENA

- Iraq (Oxfam, ICVA)
- Jordan (CS)
- Lebanon (CRS, Goupe URD)
- Libya (Groupe URD)
  Yemen (British RC & ICRC)

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What is Missing?

Participants also discussed what they saw as potentially important research questions, some but not all of which are at the centre of projects as currently planned. Suggestions included:

Complementarity

- What is the optimal range of roles of international actors within the localization agenda? How should they be addressed in Humanitarian Response Plans and cluster plans?
- What is the new business model for INGOs and how can large INGOs be incentivised to shift to more coaching and mentoring roles?
- What do local actors call themselves - do they see themselves as humanitarians?

Capacity and leadership

- How can retention of staff within local organizations be improved?
- Why have decades of capacity development not yielded more sustainable results?
- How can capacity development for humanitarian action be made sustainable between major emergencies?
- How can mentoring/coaching be provided in an emergency setting in light of the press for immediate action and security issues?

Policy and politics

- What are the risks for a more localized aid sector? What are the risks if the sector fails to localize?
- What are the internal blockages to deliver on localization – e.g., business models, attitudes?

Measurement

- Would it be possible to develop a common measure of capacity?
- What indicators can we use to demonstrate the benefits of locally led humanitarian action longitudinally?

Principles

- Are there any differences between international and national responders when it comes to applying humanitarian principles?
- Do existing "principles of partnership" adequately encompass the needs/realities of local actors?

Financing

- How many transaction layers commonly intervene between donors and local responders? How much money is wasted in transfers before it gets to local partners?
- Is the problem a lack of availability of funding for local actors or is it absorption capacity?
- Can we demonstrate that localization is effective (cost efficient)?

Next steps

- It was agreed that participants would share concepts and ongoing updates about their research products on a dedicated online researchers' platform to be established by IFRC.
- It was agreed to have periodic update teleconferences to encourage continued sharing.

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- Participants agreed to share important dates with the IFRC for placement on a common calendar to be made available on the Grand Bargain website.
- Participants would contribute to fleshing out "missing issues" list (described above), consider including relevant questions in their own projects and also encourage others to taken them up.
- It was agreed that there is a strong need to locate and encourage research by local responders themselves as well as academics and think tanks from the global south.   It was suggested to connect with World conference on Humanitarian Studies in this regard.
- It was suggested that Localization Workstream webinars be used as an opportunity to share resources and findings, and seek feedback, bring in networks, coordination systems etc., find systems to amplify.
- It was suggested that the Localization Workstream continue to try to bring this work together and ensure that research feeds into policy processes.

Participants

Amanda Schweitzer	Catholic Relief Services
Anthony Nolan	UNICEF
Carlos Meija	Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
Christian Els	Local 2 Global
David Fisher	IFRC
Fatima Sherif-Nor	UNHCR
Frederique LeHoux	Care International
Helen Asnake	DEPP Learning Project
Jane Backhurst	Christian Aid
Jérémie Labbé	ICRC
Jeremy Wellard	ICVA
Jonas Lossau	WFP
Kate Latimir	British Red Cross
Kirsten Hagon	IFRC
Laura Jump	Humanitarian Leadership Academy (HLA)
Luminita Tuchel	Development Initiatives
Lydia Poole	Humanitarian Outcomes
Petra Righetti	Oxfam
Randa Hassan	OCHA
Regina Gujan	Switzerland / Swiss Development and Cooperation Agency
Roanne Van Voorst	Int. Institute of Social Studies
Roger Bracke	IFRC
Smruti Patel	Global Mentoring Initiative (GMI)
Tara Gingerich	Oxfam
Veronique Barbelet	ODI
Véronique de Geoffroy	Groupe URD