



REGIONAL CONFERENCES ON LOCALISATION OF AID: SUMMARY REPORT

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This document includes highlights of participants' discussions during the Conference, which do not correspond to recommendations of the Co-Conveners. The views, designations and recommendations that are presented in this summary do not necessarily reflect the official position of Workstream Members and Co-Conveners (IFRC and the Government of Switzerland).

Executive Summary

The Grand Bargain Localisation Workstream convened a series of conferences for Africa, Middle East and Asia Pacific Regions between July and August 2019. The regional conferences brought together local and national humanitarian actors, donors, and international aid agencies in Addis Ababa (Africa regional conference), Amman (Middle East regional conference) and Jakarta (Asia Pacific regional conference) in dialogues on the opportunities and challenges of localisation, as well as developments at the global level, including the joint initiatives of the Workstream. Feedback and inputs on the global guidance products being developed to promote localisation were also gathered and at the end of each conference, individual and collective actions and recommendations to advance localisation were identified.

Below is a summary of the key messages and proposed actions in all three Conferences that participants came up with.

Key messages	Proposed actions
<p>It is important to foster broader awareness at the regional and country level. Multi-stakeholder dialogues on the Grand Bargain and the localisation agenda should be continued and focus on how to advance implementation.</p>	<p>Region/Country Level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aim for greater representation of local actors in relevant regional and country-level discussions • Conduct further multi-stakeholder dialogues at country level on topics such as how GB signatories walk the talk of localisation, local actors' accountability, risk sharing, and explore developing corresponding strategies. • Expand and share the documentation and evidence base on good practises and impact of existing localisation.
<p>Capacity strengthening/sharing needs to be strategic and supported with adequate long-term resources</p>	<p>Global, regional and country levels</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop/replicate capacity building/strengthening strategies and approaches that are framed around capacity sharing and built on the complementary capacities and competencies of humanitarian actors. Promising models include twinning, coaching, and long-term, not exclusively financial partnerships . • Link up with and tap into experience of development actors for capacity strengthening, using nexus considerations as an opportunity for collaboration • Encourage/Further support capacity strengthening methodologies for local actors that have locally-set agenda and priorities • Increase investment on institutional development
<p>Genuine, transparent and long-term partnerships between local and international actors are those that build and deepen trust, complementarity and mutual accountability</p>	<p>Global level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support trust-building initiatives that can be embedded in formal project relationships. Such long-term/strategic, institutional partnerships would ideally be based on the shared objective of localization that delivers principled and effective humanitarian aid and more importantly accountability to affected populations • Risk management and sharing strategies should be further tested and explored.

	<p>Regional and country levels</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where relevant and appropriate, and mindful of principled humanitarian action and civil society space, encourage and support host governments to set up enabling policy and regulatory frameworks to facilitate the work of local actors and foster dialogue with civil society organisations, supported by appropriate regional mechanisms. • Where they do not exist, GB signatories and local actor networks to develop their own formal accountability framework and mechanism that take into account different accountability dimensions (vis-à-vis community, donors, government, etc.) • Develop a “partnership health” check and monitoring framework
<p>Most local actors are dependent on short-term funding that are oftentimes not flexible and predictable. Information on funding opportunities and participation to/in decision making forums by local actors remains limited.</p>	<p>Region and country levels</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote spaces for inclusive conversations and advocacy on humanitarian financing issues. • Support efforts towards diversification of funding sources, with emphasis on the development of local/domestic resource mobilisation and exploration of national and public donation revenue streams. • Build on and amplify initiatives on collaborative approaches to humanitarian fundraising, including pooled funds, funding consortia, etc.
<p>The voices, contributions, and concerns of women in humanitarian work remain largely invisible and marginalized. Gender-responsive localisation requires an intersectional, and inclusive approach</p>	<p>Global, Regional and Country levels</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct researches and develop pilots on gender-responsive and inclusive humanitarian programming to inform a more strategic agenda and framework, operational considerations • Invest in women humanitarian leadership development and support efforts to enhance the participation and role of women’s rights organisations/women-led organisations in humanitarian coordination, decision-making, and funding bodies at different levels. • Advocate for more focused and substantive funding to women’s organisations and women-led organisations
<p>Whilst recognising that some progress has been made to increase representation of local actors in humanitarian coordination mechanisms and decision-making platforms, practical barriers remain to amplify local voices specially at global level.</p>	<p>Global, regional and country levels</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote standardised, systematic approaches to representation of local actors in national and international humanitarian coordination mechanisms, • Engage regional bodies to support localisation, particularly with regards to local actors’ leadership in coordination mechanisms • Strengthen/Support national and regional networks and platforms on localization to promote information sharing and joint advocacy

Contents

BACKGROUND	5
THE REGIONAL CONFERENCES	6
THE GRAND BARGAIN AND LOCALISATION WORKSTREAM: AN OVERVIEW	7
GLOBAL DEVELOPMENTS	8
Grand Bargain annual independent report - 2019	8
Demonstrator Country Missions –	8
Highlights and Learning	8
Thematic Researches and Guidance Notes Development	10
Accelerating localisation through partnerships	11
Country-level financing solutions for local actors	12
Localisation in protection coordination	12
Gender-responsive localisation and humanitarian action	13
REGIONAL AND NATIONAL EXPERIENCES: OVERVIEW OF PRESENTATIONS	14
PRIORITY ISSUES AND PLANNING PROPOSALS BY CONFERENCE PARTICIPANTS	15
Understanding the Grand Bargain and localisation agenda	15
Capacity strengthening	16
Partnership and complementarity	17
Financing	18
Gender-responsive localization	19
Coordination	20
CONFERENCE ORGANISATION AND MANAGEMENT	21

BACKGROUND

Localisation has gained currency and urgency in recent years, especially since the May 2016 World Humanitarian Summit which saw the launch of the Grand Bargain¹, a set of ten top-level commitments signed by major donors and humanitarian organisations to reduce the cost of humanitarian aid and make it more effective. Under the heading of ‘more support and funding to local and national responders’ Grand Bargain signatories committed to, ‘making principled humanitarian action as local as possible and as international as necessary’ while continuing to recognize the vital role of international actors, in particular in situations of armed conflict.

In the past three years, significant efforts have been undertaken at international, regional, and local levels by Grand Bargain signatories, led by a network working under the aegis of the **Grand Bargain Localisation Workstream** (*Workstream 2: More support and funding tools for local and national responders*) to realise these commitments. Particular attention has been paid to the themes of capacity strengthening, financing, partnership, coordination, as well as gender issues. To take stock of ongoing efforts, and bring the dialogue to the regional level, a series of regional conferences were organised by the workstream in the summer of 2019.

The objectives of the regional conferences were:

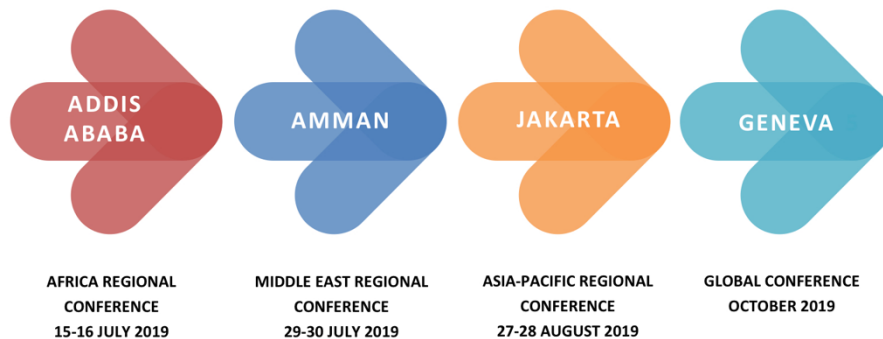
1. Share recent developments in global processes, research findings, and progress on localisation;
2. Facilitate a dialogue between different stakeholder groups in the region on the opportunities and challenges of localisation;
3. Ensure perspectives from the region help guide planned global guidance products and other initiatives to promote localisation, and;
4. Initiate and/or support ongoing discussions and planning for individual and collective action in the region on localisation.

The regional conferences brought together local and national humanitarian actors, donors, and international aid agencies in Addis Ababa (Africa regional conference), Amman (Middle East regional conference) and Jakarta (Asia-Pacific regional conference) in dialogues on the opportunities and challenges of localisation, as well as developments at the global level, including the joint initiatives of the Grand Bargain Localisation Workstream.

¹ The full text of the Grand Bargain can be found on <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/grand-bargain-0>

THE REGIONAL CONFERENCES

Three regional conferences were held between July and August 2019. The first one, the Africa Regional Conference, was held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 15th-16th July 2019. It was followed by the Middle East Regional Conference held in Amman, Jordan from 29th-30th July 2019. The final conference, the Asia-Pacific Regional Conference, was held in Jakarta, Indonesia from 27th-28th August 2019. A concluding Conference is being planned to be held in Brussels in October 2019.



The three conferences were attended by more than 300 individual participants from 41 countries and representing more than 90 organisations. More than a quarter of the participants represented local/national organisations from the different countries/regions. About 20% were from Red Cross and Red Crescent societies. International NGOs accounted for another 20% of the participants. The remainder of the participants came from UN agencies, donor agencies, and governments.

All the regional conferences were structured in the same way, i.e., mainly sharing and learning from global and regional/national experiences on the first day and prioritising issues and proposing action points for the way forward in the region and beyond. In total, the three conferences included 48 presentations in five plenary sessions and 54 breakout sessions.

THE GRAND BARGAIN AND LOCALISATION WORKSTREAM: AN OVERVIEW

The Grand Bargain: commitments in 10 areas



The Grand Bargain is composed of ten top-level commitments in areas as illustrated above. At its core is a *quid pro quo* understanding that humanitarian organisations, on the one hand, commit to greater transparency, reduced costs, and more collaborative work (such as joint needs assessments) while the donors, on the other hand, commit to reduce earmarking of humanitarian funds, move towards multi-year funding modalities, harmonise reporting requirements and simplify funding mechanisms. These commitments are expressed in the common effort to promote greater local participation and leadership in humanitarian work and the humanitarian-development nexus.

The localisation dimensions of the Grand Bargain include four key dimensions, i.e., **partnership** (removing barriers to quality partnership and incorporating capacity strengthening into partnership agreements), **capacity strengthening**, **coordination** (enhanced participation of local actors in international humanitarian mechanisms), and **allocating more funding directly to local actors**.

The localisation workstream, mentioned earlier, has worked to clarify “localisation”-related terms and concepts, promoting coordination and dialogues among humanitarian actors at different levels, the conduct of the demonstrator country missions to assess progress, the conduct of thematic researches that are expected to result in a set of guidance notes, and the series of regional workshops on localisation of aid.

GLOBAL DEVELOPMENTS



Grand Bargain annual independent report - 2019

[Presented by Wendy Fenton, HPN Coordinator and Senior Research Fellow, Humanitarian Policy Group, Overseas Development Institute]

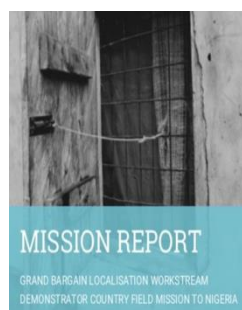
The report, the third so far, suggests that overall, substantive progress is being made on the operationalisation of the Grand Bargain. Notably, there is first evidence of some positive shifts in norms and operational practice including first steps towards more country-level engagement and furthering gender dimensions in humanitarian work.

The report suggests that the adoption of a strategic approach to addressing remaining challenges and building on opportunities and scaling up success will contribute to the maximisation of the potentials of the Grand Bargain.

On localisation, there are significant developments including a visible normative shift in thinking towards more support and funding for local and national responders. However, challenges remain as progress remains uneven, with high transaction costs for, as yet, relatively limited returns, and progress mostly at the technical level while the necessary political dialogue to resolve critical challenges remains limited. No system-wide shift in operational practice has taken place yet.

According to the annual independent report, achieving localisation in practice will require:

- Radical shifts in policy and operations
- Peer-to-peer learning and exchanges
- Incentives from donors to encourage shift in approach
- Predictable funding for capacity strengthening programmes
- Strategic approach that considers how the opportunities for and benefits of localisation can be realised across the Grand Bargain framework



Demonstrator Country Missions – Highlights and Learning

[Presented by Naomi Tulay-Solanke, Executive Director, CHI, Liberia; Aydrus Daar, Executive Director, WASDA; Hero Brzw, Deputy Country Director, EACH, Iraq; John Bono, Regional Emergency Specialist, UNICEF, Jordan, Regina Gujan, SDC]

The localisation workstream organised three multi-agency missions to three countries (Bangladesh, Iraq and Nigeria) from September 2018 to April 2019. The so-called demonstrator country missions were undertaken to promote and sustain the momentum on the fulfillment of the Grand Bargain localisation commitments. More specifically, the objectives of the missions were to understand what localisation means for various stakeholders, identify good practices and barriers to localisation, and come up with actionable recommendations.

The key learnings emerging from the demonstrator country missions are:

1. *Localisation as long-term strategic, equitable partnership VS service / project delivery and cost efficiency*

For local and national humanitarian actors, localisation is about international actors' recognition of and support for their leadership and capacity to lead effective and accountable response while for many international actors localisation is understood more from an implementation partnership standpoint – service/project delivery and cost-efficiency-focused relationship. Some see localisation as striving for complementarity while others it is a transformative agenda where local actors are ultimately leading principled humanitarian response. Unpacking what localisation means and what the end goal is, discussions touched upon power, respect, trust and relationship building.

2. *Localisation is progressing but further dialogue is needed to address lack of trust on both sides*

The notion of risk, both fiduciary and operational, is a key obstacle to the further progress of localization. Concerns about fraud, high fiduciary risks, and perceptions of neutrality of aid make localisation more complex, especially in areas with an ongoing conflict, and represent an impediment to stronger partnerships between international and local actors. When it comes to operational risks, some perceived comparative advantages of local actors, like access to certain areas, could expose them to increased security risks and make them vulnerable to pressure. Yet, in terms of solutions, there is an ongoing difficulty in finding the right balance of risk-sharing between international and local actors when it comes to fiduciary and operational risks. Trust needs to be built, based on the shared objective of localization that delivers principled and effective humanitarian aid and more importantly accountability to affected populations.

3. *Capacity Strengthening (programmatic, technical, organisational) should be two-way, built on local actors' knowledge & detailed understanding of the context and with long-term investment*

Capacity constraints among local actors are considered as a key barrier for them taking on a larger role and more leadership within humanitarian programming. Capacity strengthening approaches that delivered positive results and which many local actors appreciate include learning by doing, mentoring and accompaniment, training and building pipeline of leaders, building organisational systems and capacities and investing in long-term partnership.

4. *Good progress in representation in HCTs and coordinating bodies, but room for improvement (language / jargon, quality of representation)*
5. *Major donors mostly not directly partnering with L/NGOs & indirect cost is a concern for many L/NGOs*

Majority of funding to local actors is channelled through one or two intermediaries (UN agency or INGO). This is, in some cases, linked to the limited possibility of absorption of large sums by local actors and the difficulty for donors to accompany a larger number of smaller partnerships. Apart from demands to address issues around indirect and core costs, there is a preference particularly from the local and national NGOs responding to frequent small to medium scale natural disasters to establish and have more direct access to pooled funds.

6. *There are various women /-led organisations but many remain on the sidelines of localisation discussions*

Many women-led/women's organisations engaged in humanitarian work are on the sidelines of localisation discussions. Efforts to localise that did not support participation of affected women and of local women's groups risk further marginalizing them and entrenching the inequalities they face.

7. *More work needs to be done for local actors to agree on ways on how to better collaborate, respect and build on one another's strengths*

The localisation agenda moved forward where networks of local actors came together and defined for themselves a common goal, agreed on ways on how to better collaborate, respect and build on one another's strengths. More work needs to be done for other local actors in other countries around this which would also allow for a meaningful coordination on representation for them when engaging with international actors.

Thematic Researches and Guidance Notes Development



Capacity strengthening and complementarity in humanitarian responses

[Presented by John Bryant, Senior Research Officer, Humanitarian Policy Group, Overseas Development Institute]

The study is addressing two key questions – how can capacity be better understood to support more collaborative humanitarian response and what are the opportunities and obstacles that need to be addressed to foster more effective complementarity among humanitarian actors? The study involves three country case studies, i.e., Bangladesh, Democratic Republic of the Congo, and the British Virgin Islands.

The research covers three areas – definition of capacity, assessment of capacity, and strategies and approaches to strengthening capacity.

On the definition of capacity, there is a range of understanding of capacity and there are at least three perspectives in defining capacity, i.e., (a) defining capacity as the “capacity” that one has, (b) capacity defined within a specific context, and (c) capacity vis-à-vis outcomes for affected groups of people. Who defines capacity leads to unequal power dynamics and tends to support narrow definitions of capacity (i.e., technical). As a result, capacity strengthening is not systematic and focuses on utilitarian aspects that serve project delivery purposes. The lack of consensus on definition means it is difficult and almost impossible to decide how local humanitarian action can

and should be. The range of definitions and the political dynamics of deciding on a definition of capacity, has significant implications on how and what aspects of capacity are assessed, who does the assessment, and for what purposes the assessment of capacity is made. The burden of evidence is often on local organisations who are expected to demonstrate they are better, cheaper, more effective leading to humanitarian action that is as international as possible and as local as necessary.

As ways forward, the research focuses on three main recommendations:

1. Define capacity not only from the perspective of international actors who provide and design capacity building interventions but through a wider range of stakeholders, including affected people, and in relation to specific crises;
2. Move toward context-wide capacity mapping, and;
3. Fill gaps through complementary approaches where all capacities at all levels are harnessed and combined in such a way that support the best humanitarian outcomes for the affected community, and capacity strengthening.



Accelerating localisation through partnerships

[Presented by Lizz Harrison, Programme Manager, ALTP, Christian Aid; David Fisher, IFRC; Hast Bahadur Sunar, Tearfund; Myo Thet Oo, Christian Aid]

This is a two-year initiative from 1st November 2017 to 31st October undertaken in Nepal, Nigeria, Myanmar and South Sudan by a consortium of international NGOs led by Christian Aid. Local and national NGOs are represented in the respective steering committees in the four countries. The specific objective of the initiative is to enable local and national actors to progress the localisation of humanitarian response at both national and global levels through fostering effective partnerships. A total of 350 NGOs were consulted in the course of the initiative.

While current dominant modes of partnerships have been instrumental in different degrees in meeting the needs of crisis-affected people, there is an overwhelming aspiration towards a more equal and genuine partnership away from sub-contracting relationship. This new mode of partnership is expected to strengthen the lead role of local actors in collaborative work (from designing of project, to joint monitoring visits, and joint learning events) and shifting international agencies towards more supportive roles wherever appropriate. This new mode of partnership also requires improvements in local actors' access to financial resources and increased financial sustainability, respectful human resource practices, building flexibility in programme management, and improvements in funding practices. This new mode of partnership is predicated on a long-term, holistic capacity strengthening of local actors, based on their self-identified capacity development agenda and priorities.

A number of challenges need to be addressed, including, identifying the most complementary way of working together between local and international actors in a specific context, reconfiguring a humanitarian coordination mechanisms that is largely led by international actors, compliance-focused donor policies, the emergence of novel financial and fiduciary risks, and finally and most importantly, addressing power relations, and letting go of positions of power to allow local actors to assume leadership of humanitarian action.



Country-level financing solutions for local actors

[Presented by Abiyot Tilahun, Huda Shashaa, Development Consultants, OWLRe; Coree Steadman, IFRC]

OWLRe, a consulting organisation, was commissioned by IFRC to carry out research on country-level financial solutions for local actors with the objectives of (a) identifying good practices and opportunities on country-level financing within the Grand Bargain localisation framework, and (b) providing guidance on strengthening and expanding national and local actors' access to humanitarian financing. The research was carried out in Colombia, Ethiopia and the Ukraine.

At the global level, the US, Germany, UK and EU are the largest contributors of humanitarian funding. Multilateral banks play an important role and most of them directly fund, but not always, national governments. Private funding (individuals, corporations, foundations and trusts) and remittances are increasingly significant sources of humanitarian funding. Pooled funds are increasingly gaining momentum and provide donors options to pool resources for common and un-earmarked emergency response. However, global financial solutions are characterised by lengthy transactions, with large numbers of players involved, reach people in need through multiple channels, and very small amount of financial resources reach local and national actors. Funding to local and national actors are made mostly through intermediaries such as UN agencies and international NGOs.

The percentage of humanitarian funding going to local and national actors has increased in the past three years (2% in 2016 and 8.74% in 2018)². Almost 85% of this funding has gone to government agencies. Barriers persist in the way of local and national actors' access to funds, including: limitations to donors' ability to directly fund local actors, due diligence demands and capacity constraints, short-term/project-based relationships, overwhelming reliance on foreign funds, and member-only pooled funds.

Some good practices identified by the research thus far:

- Funding arrangements that include overhead/core costs by default for local and national actors;
- Longer-term and more sustainable partnerships between donors and local and national actors, with local/national NGOs moving from “implementers”/“sub-contractors” to equal partners;
- Establishment of local humanitarian fora and integrating local actors in official coordination mechanisms at the local level;
- Clear and open communication of procedures and mechanisms for pooled funds and improving local and national NGOs access to pooled funds through their representation on review panels.



Localisation in protection coordination

[Presented by Alice Hawkes, Senior Technical Adviser, International Rescue Committee; Katja Rosenstock, Save the Children]

² Development Initiatives (June 2019), key trends in global humanitarian assistance; HPG/ODI (June 2019) Grand Bargain annual independent report 2019.

This initiative was launched by the Global Protection Cluster in response to Grand Bargain localisation workstream commitment to support and complement national coordination mechanisms where they exist and include local and national responders in international coordination mechanisms as appropriate and in keeping with humanitarian principles. The initiative reached 87 local protection actors from seven countries (DRC, Libya, Myanmar, Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan, and Pakistan) between 2016 and 2017.

Thus far, there is a large number of national actors (government counterparts, national and local NGOs) that comprise the membership of protection coordination groups and who participate regularly in cluster meetings. For the most part, local actors recognise the benefits that engagement with the cluster system can bring to their organisations.

However, a number of obstacles to more meaningful and substantive participation of local actors in cluster coordination remain. Some of these are: (a) lack of knowledge of the workings of the cluster system, (b) lack of access to information even as basic as the dates of cluster meetings, (c) poor participation in decision making and strategic processes, (d) meetings not conducted in a language that local actors are more comfortable with, (e) lack of Human Resources to cope with demands of cluster coordination, (f) lack of inclusiveness of national partners, and (g) difficulties in accessing humanitarian funding.



Gender-responsive localisation and humanitarian action [Presented by UN Women]

In a series of regional conferences organised by the UN Women preceding the three regional conferences on the localisation of aid, the following priorities were identified:

- *Funding for gender-responsive localisation* – dedicated and sustainable funding for women-led/women’s rights organisations;
- *Equitable partnership and institutional strengthening* – longer-term partnerships to strengthen WRO/WLO leadership, flexible funding and reporting requirements, access to humanitarian country pool funding opportunity, partnerships for accountability, alternative means of partnership/collaboration with women’s organisations by supporting coordination hubs, trainings, consortia development and peer support;
- *Gender-responsive humanitarian needs assessment and planning* – women-led CSO participation and leadership at different stages of humanitarian planning processes and coordination mechanisms, availability of sex/age disaggregated data and vulnerability profiles; establish/strengthen women’s networks to monitor, inform, and influence humanitarian response prioritisation and funding allocations;
- *Women’s humanitarian leadership development* – support national and local women-led and women’s rights CSOs on women’s leadership development and effective influence and engagement along the humanitarian-peace and development nexus; promoting social norms on leadership towards inclusion and gender equality, comprehensive leadership development programmes building support for women’s leadership in communities and organisations; train women CSOs on the cluster system, coordination, and humanitarian funding processes; access to relevant information;

REGIONAL AND NATIONAL EXPERIENCES: OVERVIEW OF PRESENTATIONS

The regional conferences were a lode of richness in terms of shared experiences in and collegial conversations on localisation initiatives at the national and regional levels. A total of 28 regional and country level initiatives (7 from Africa, 7 from Middle East, and 14 from Asia Pacific) were shared in break out and plenary sessions to kick off and frame discussions on the localisation experience and learnings in each region.

These initiatives included efforts around development of national humanitarian networks, survivor and community-led responses, localising emergency preparedness and response, and collective advocacy with donors and government at the national level.

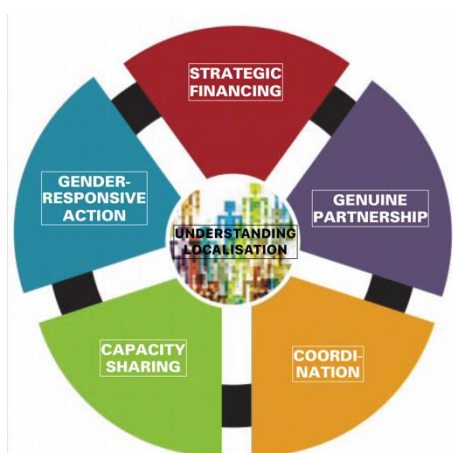
Another cluster of presentations focused on the interrogation of partnership dynamics, modalities of partnership, development of partnership standards, and addressing power relations in the humanitarian sector. Initiatives to improve coordination mechanisms, capacity strengthening, and institutional development were also shared.

There were presentations on new and innovative country level financing solutions – both initiated by international NGOs as well as those developed and managed by local humanitarian actors.

A number of presentations focused on initiatives around supporting governments to establish enabling legal and policy frameworks to accelerate localisation. Initiatives that helped governments develop laws, rules and procedures to facilitate and regulate international assistance were also shared.

Finally, there were strong presentations by women's organisations on initiatives to strengthen gender-responsiveness of disaster responses as well as shine a light on the continuing marginalisation of women's rights and women-led organisations in the humanitarian sector, both in access to humanitarian financing and participation in coordination and decision-making platforms.

PRIORITY ISSUES AND PLANNING PROPOSALS BY CONFERENCE PARTICIPANTS



The conference participants identified specific priority issues that they deemed important in accelerating localisation in the next years. These issues echo the thematic research and guidance notes development areas and provide a counterpoint to the issues raised in the global progress reports. These issues are inter-linked and investment and progress in one area impacts on the others.

Based on these priorities, the participants proposed planning/action initiatives for 2020-2021 that they think will make localisation a reality in their national and regional contexts. They also identified advocacy and other asks at the regional and global level to support the acceleration of local and national localisation initiatives.



Understanding the Grand Bargain and localisation agenda

Fostering broader awareness of the Grand Bargain and the localisation agenda and developing a shared understanding among humanitarian actors at all levels

- **Specific issues**

- There are gaps in understanding what the Grand Bargain is about and divergent views on localisation within signatories themselves (between headquarters and country offices) and among other humanitarian actors (especially local organisations).
- Discussions are still ongoing within and across stakeholder groups on the concept of local actors and localisation and the range of possible understandings, including its context-specificity, the identities of “local actors”, what “localisation” means at the community level, and different models and approaches of international and local action.
- There are some existing frameworks of understanding localisation that can serve as good enough starting points towards a more widely-shared understanding of the concept and practice of localisation.
- Localisation, especially in contexts of small- to medium scale disasters or with protracted crises, is not an agenda confined to the humanitarian space alone, but links to development agendas and beyond. In particular at the level of the local responders, such differentiations are less relevant.
- Documentation of existing practice, and related exchange both in multi-stakeholder fora and at the peer-to-peer level, are important to advance the implementation of localisation.

- An important dimension of the localisation discourse is the highly context-specific role of host governments, their own appreciation of what it should be, and their relationship with local civil society actors engaged in humanitarian work
 - Especially in active conflict contexts, the devise “as local as possible, as international as needed” remains valid to ensure that humanitarian aid is neutral, independent and impartial.
- **Planning proposals**
 - In Jakarta, there was a proposition for countries to consider developing their respective “localisation roadmaps” building on existing initiatives wherever these are found. These roadmaps should include spaces for dialogues, developing and sharing case studies, and mapping of existing networks and initiatives that promote localisation. The government has an important role in this.
 - At country level, broaden awareness about the Grand Bargain and localisation principles and agenda among humanitarian actors and the general public is needed.
 - Initiate/Continue multi-stakeholder dialogues in country on localisation that may include topics such as on revisiting the roles of international actors in direct humanitarian service delivery, how Grand Bargain signatories’ understand and action on their localisation commitments and, addressing concerns around trust, risk and accountability, and explore developing corresponding strategies. This process has to be fully owned and carried-on by the in-country based local, national and international humanitarian actors.
 - Aim for greater representation of local actors in relevant country-level and global discussions and fora.



Capacity strengthening

Capacity strengthening and or sharing need to be strategic, address multi-level and multi-stakeholders’ gaps and needs and supported with adequate long-term resources

- **Specific issues**
 - The dominant framing of “capacity strengthening” in the humanitarian sector is a uni-directional transfer of capacity from international actors to local actors, with the latter expected to prove their capacity to the former in order to be able to access more resources and roles in decision-making platforms. Capacity strengthening is not just about the needs of “local actors” as determined by international assessors; it is a two-way dynamic.
 - There are pre-existing capacities and resources at the local level to be acknowledged and to be used to inform the design of capacity strengthening support to them.
 - “Capacity” is often defined largely as technical skills and less in terms of institutional competencies, including the ability to influence, create value, create transformative impact, and sustain organisational development.
 - Strategic and systemic capacity strengthening takes time and resources while most of the current available support are short-term and project based.

- **Planning proposals**
 - Reframe capacity strengthening as “capacity sharing” – a two-way process of strengthening the capacity of all actors in the humanitarian ecosystem, building on complementary capacities and competencies. All humanitarian actors have something to contribute to overall system improvement.
 - Increase support to the development of local humanitarian leadership, including women humanitarian leadership, building on capacities and competences that exist at the local level and taking into account different dimensions and contextual differences of capacity.
 - Capacity strengthening should be contextualized and locally-owned, with local actors defining and managing their own capacity strengthening agenda, strategies and approaches, as well as sources of support, and taking a leadership role with a view to sustainability.
 - Appropriate, long-term investment in institutional development, including investment in women-led organisations, should be a core element of the capacity strengthening agenda, to mitigate implications of short-term unpredictable funding on substantive and sustained capacity strengthening
 - Enhance private sector involvement in capacity strengthening.



Partnership and complementarity

Genuine, transparent and long-term partnerships between local and international actors are those that build and deepen trust, consensus and mutual accountability

- **Specific issues**
 - There are good practice examples of effective and genuine partnerships between international and local/national humanitarian agencies but for many the dominant mode of partnerships remain unequal and instrumental, i.e., project-based, outsourcing/subcontracting relations, donor and recipient relationship.
 - Competition and distrust among humanitarian actors persists at different levels: between and among local and national non-government organisations, between local/national non-government organisations and international non-government organisations, between civil society organisations and governments, between and among international actors, etc.
 - There is a range of understanding and expectation of genuine and effective partnership among different humanitarian actors.
 - Partnership relationships are often between individuals and personalities, rather than institutional and systemic. While personal relationships are important, these do not automatically evolve into institutional relationships with appropriate formality, clear roles, rights and responsibilities, standards and benchmarks, communication, and mutual learning and feedback.
- **Planning proposals**
 - The definition of partnership needs to be sharpened and deeply shared to address aspirations of mutual accountability, complementarity, and leadership. The localisation agenda needs to be underpinned by strong, strategic partnerships that build on and deepen trust and broaden consensus, and provides spaces for legitimate debates, dialogues, and contestations.
 - Where relevant and appropriate, and mindful of principled humanitarian action and civil society space, encourage and support governments to set up enabling policy

and regulatory frameworks to facilitate the work of local actors and foster dialogue with civil society organisations, supported by appropriate regional mechanisms. Build on existing mechanisms and policy frameworks and capitalize on existing multi-stakeholder relationships and high level political support, if available.

- Support trust-building initiatives that can be embedded in formal project/programme relationships towards more long-term/strategic, institutional partnerships that address unequal power relationships
- Where they do not exist, GB signatories and local actor networks might develop their own formal accountability framework and mechanism that take into account different accountability dimensions (vis-à-vis community, donors, government, etc.)
- Explore meaningful relationship with the corporate private sector.
- Develop a “partnership health” check and monitoring framework.



Financing

Flexible, accessible and predictable financing for local actors, with increased access and participation by local and national organisations to/in decision making platforms, with more collaborative and strategic approaches, diversification.

- **Specific issues**

- Current situation dominated by short-term, ad hoc funding, inflexible and unpredictable funding with insufficient support to institutional and indirect costs, channeled through international intermediaries, with conditions over which national/local humanitarian actors have little or no influence.
- There are a number of institutional and legal hurdles (such as domestic regulations on civil society organisations receipt of international funds), as well as capacity issues, that limit access by local actors to in-country funding opportunities. One suggestion is to include, or make more explicit, localisation “lens” or “clause” in funding proposal development and assessment, including those of pooled funds or collectively managed funds.
- There are practical examples/initiatives that show that inclusive spaces on decision-making on funding can work. The lessons emerging from these initiatives need to be amplified for the benefit of the broader humanitarian community.
- Shifts in funding priorities and modalities towards local actors will require the re-examination of the roles of international actors as well as terms of partnerships between national/local actors and international actors.
- There is a need for a more strategic and collaborative approach to humanitarian funding that incrementally shifts dominant funding revenue streams from external sources to more locally-generated, diversified funding sources and revenue streams, including from national governments and the corporate private sector.

- **Planning propositions**

- Promote spaces for inclusive conversations on humanitarian financing issues. Local and national responders should be included in conversations and collective advocacy towards innovative, multi-year, predictable and flexible funding arrangements that include support to core/institutional and overhead costs, including access to relevant information by local and national actors.

- Support efforts towards diversification of funding sources, with emphasis on the development of local/domestic resource mobilisation and exploration of national and public donation revenue streams.
- Build on and amplify initiatives on collaborative approaches to humanitarian fundraising, including pooled funds, funding consortia, etc.
- Explore ways to mitigate the dilemma between counter-terrorism measures and humanitarian action, which adversely impacts on localisation.
- Promote a more holistic perspective on resource provision that also contributes to building system-wide capacity – including support to both preparedness and response, flexibility between humanitarian and peace and conflict funds, and replenishment of funds and other resources that have already been expended, and support to measures that promote local NGO coordination mechanisms.



Gender-responsive localization

Mainstreaming gender and amplifying the role of women, women leadership, inclusion

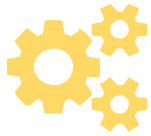
- **Specific issues**

- Despite long-standing efforts at gender mainstreaming in the humanitarian sector, the voices, contributions, and concerns of women remain largely invisible and marginalised. Bringing women and women leaders into the heart of humanitarian work and localisation requires a gender sensitive, intersectional, and inclusive perspective and approach.
- The number of women's rights and/or women-led organisations engaged in humanitarian work has increased but they remain on the sidelines of coordination platforms and decision-making spaces. Accelerating gender-responsive localisation of humanitarian action depends to a significant degree on promoting and recognising women's leadership. Women leadership needs to be visible and substantive in decision-making and accountability platforms.
- Resourcing women's rights/women-led organisations remains a significant problem, as they are often left out of formal coordination and funding discussion and decision-making platforms. They report extra burdens in obtaining appropriate and adequate resources.

- **Planning propositions**

- Conduct researches and develop pilots on gender-responsive and inclusive humanitarian programming to inform a more strategic agenda and framework, operational considerations (e.g., disaggregated data, indicators, project design and management tools), and investment priorities.
- Conduct regional studies to understand more deeply the significant barriers to women's more meaningful participation and leadership in humanitarian response. These can include case studies addressing gender in national legislative/policy frameworks.
- Invest in women humanitarian leadership development and support efforts to enhance the participation and role of women's rights organisations/women-led organisations in humanitarian coordination, decision-making, and funding bodies at different levels.
- Establish forum/network at regional and national levels among local NGOs and CSOs to share experiences and good practices to promote equality in

humanitarian action between women and men, safety for women responders and organisations, and allocation of more funding resources to women's and women-led organisations. Donors at country, regional and central levels should be engaged to support/advocate on the same messages.



Coordination

Further amplify local voices and increase leadership for local actors in humanitarian coordination mechanisms and decision-making platforms

Specific issues

- Whilst recognising some progress has been made to increase representation of local actors in humanitarian coordination mechanisms and decision-making platforms, practical barriers remain to amplify local voices specially at global level.
 - There is limited and varying progress in local representation in HCTs and other coordinating bodies, including the quality of representation beyond presence. There is a need for different humanitarian actors to be clear about their expectations of various coordination mechanisms – e.g., effective representation of local voices, in particular representation of women's and women-led organisations, and policy- backed approach to representation.
 - Local actors, especially local NGOs, need to develop and strengthen their own coordination platforms that can both be mechanisms for the acceleration of localisation commitments at local level and at the same time a point of leverage for credible and legitimate inclusion and representation in other coordination mechanisms that involve government and international actors.
 - The inadequate and sometimes ineffective participation of local actors in coordination mechanisms is also a factor of the lack of effective coordinative networks and mechanisms among the local actors themselves, often expressed in problems of legitimacy and credibility of local representatives in coordination mechanisms. These networks and mechanisms need to be resourced.
 - Locally-led coordination mechanisms can provide a platform for all local actors (local and national NGOs, local and national government authorities and relevant agencies) to appropriately and effectively share roles and responsibilities among themselves and avoid unhelpful competition to limited spaces in system-wide coordination mechanisms.
- **Planning propositions**
 - Promote standardised, systematic approach to representation of local actors in international humanitarian coordination mechanisms, including leadership roles, spaces for women-led organisations, and full representation (i.e., so that representatives do not only speak for themselves but on behalf of a wider local humanitarian community)
 - Advocate for meaningful engagement with regional bodies to support localisation and enhancement of local actors role in coordination mechanisms;
 - Support existing national platforms and or initiate the establishment of regional network/s on localisation to promote information sharing and joint advocacy.
 - Support the setting up of effective coordination mechanisms for local and national NGOs to strengthen their capacity for collaborative work and leverage their engagement with donors and other coordination mechanisms that involve

- international actors. Existing networks at national and sub-national levels need to be mapped, as a starting point.
- Empower local actors to engage coordination mechanisms by bringing local and national actors as co-chairs of all clusters.
 - Enhance women representation and role in decision making spaces and platforms at all levels.

CONFERENCE ORGANISATION AND MANAGEMENT

Organisers

The conferences were organised by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and the Government of Switzerland as the co-conveners of the Grand Bargain Localisation Workstream with funding support from the European Union Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid.

Regional hosts and co-organisers

The individual regional conferences were co-organised/hosted by the following:

- Africa Regional Conference – African Union
- Middle East Regional Conference – Jordan Red Crescent Society
- Asia-Pacific Regional Conference – BNPB (National Disaster Management Authority of Indonesia) and Asia Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management (AHA Centre)