

Summary for the Closing Speakers: Localization and the Future of CVA

Local Partnerships Sessions, Thursday July 23, 2020

Two sessions were held (English and Spanish), with over 100 attendees between both sessions, with a large representation of local and country-based actors (number TBC). Summary of Key Points for the Closing Panel:

- **Local actors and partnerships facilitate effective and accountable responses for those affected by crisis.** Local Actors continue to be a critical link to communities, context understanding and sustainability. Panellists discussed examples of how working closely in partnership, CVA programs have been adapted to field realities, provided timely responses and amplified the voice of highly vulnerable and less visible groups in the community. Local actors also understand processes of engagement with local and national stakeholders, facilitating work with social protection systems. We heard about networked approaches, often adopted by local actors, and how these facilitate women's rights, gender awareness and voice for those most affected by crisis. Notably, examples were shared of how local actors delivered at a lower total cost to transfer ratio (an indicator of value for money) than international actors. This pushes back on the common argument that through scale cost efficiency can be achieved by indicating that the same or greater cost efficiencies can be achieved through delivery with local actors.
- **Equal participation in decision making forums and clarity on Cash Coordination continue to challenge local actors and their ability to effectively respond.** Due to the expanding use of cash and increasing number of actors involved, it is critical to have one common "predictable, accountable cash coordination mechanism." Local level CWGs have facilitated engagement of LNGOs and CSOs (an improvement on the one National CWG model), but this is still limited to no or low levels of representation or participation of local actors in National CWGs – nor is it clear to local actors how CWGs are situated within and accountable as part of the wider humanitarian system. There is a need for CWGs to involve local actors in the co-creation of common demonstrable principles, strategic direction, and actions in CVA programming.
- **There has been limited progress on the work on localization as committed to under the Grand Bargain with partners still viewed as 'implementors' that need 'capacities' to deliver. It is time to change the narrative, there should be equitable partnerships with local actors and the value of each partner recognized through 'capacity sharing.'** Four years into the Grand Bargain we are still failing to move beyond implementation contracts with local actors to more equitable and transformative partnerships. Partnerships which recognise the funding needs of local actors including the inclusion of core costs as standard and opportunities to directly access funding and properly resource local organizations. We fail to understand what partnership with local actors mean (see the [Oxfam toolkit on CVA and Partnerships](#) recently this week which aims to address this barrier practically across the CVA project cycle) and to recognize the value (see point above) local actors bring to effective and accountable CVA program delivery. Examples were shared of how we frame the conversation beyond capacity building, which fails to recognize the capacities that local actors bring to the table, to dialogue and action on capacity sharing.
- **Local actors are at the centre of CVA delivery and closest to communities. Local actors continue to be at the forefront of risks, particularly in the context of COVID-19. Health risks must be recognized and mitigations properly resourced.** Examples were shared from Bangladesh, Colombia, South Sudan, Uganda, Colombia and Ecuador on program adaptations by local actors to respond in the context of COVID-19. Local actors facilitated program adaptations and innovations that were context specific and flexible enough to reach the most vulnerable, for example those that could not access digital technology or that were less visible within their communities. However, the risks faced and the need for personal protective equipment (PPEs) etc. by local actors continue to be under-recognized in budget (PPEs, security costs, duty of care, etc.) and resource sharing. Risks are often transferred to local actors with little done through a partnership approach to share and mitigate the risks collectively. Programs in the context of COVID-19 have also been designed without the engagement of local actors, the missed opportunities for co-designed programming limits the effectiveness of CVA in the context of COVID-19 because of a limited understanding of local and contextual issues.

