



POLICY BRIEF

THE CONTRIBUTION OF VARIOUS ACTORS TOWARDS LOCALIZATION OF HUMANITARIAN AND DEVELOPMENT ACTION IN RWANDA

Trócaire
Working for a just world.

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A study was commissioned by a number of development and humanitarian actors in Rwanda: **Caritas Rwanda, Concern Worldwide, Norwegian People's Aid, Oxfam, Red Cross Rwanda, Save the Children, and Trócaire**; to document the contribution of different actors toward the implementation of the Grand Bargain commitments in Rwanda. The qualitative research provides insights on existent partnership models between local and international actors, including good practices, challenges, and recommendations to progress the localization agenda in Rwanda.

BACKGROUND

Although the significance of local response in humanitarian action and the principle of local ownership as a best practice have been recognized for a while, the localization agenda has gained momentum since the World Humanitarian Summit of 2016 when several international humanitarian actors and donors signed the Grand Bargain and, subsequently, related initiatives as the Charter for Change (C₄C).

The agreement emphasized that principled humanitarian action would be made 'as local as possible and as international as necessary'.

The need was recognized to make more deliberate and explicit efforts to better engage with, empower, and promote the work of local actors.

Localization can take a number of forms and the principles can be applied to different domains:

Partnership:

The localization discourse is challenging organizations to move from a sub-contracting partner model which is a transactional relationship characterized by

power asymmetry, strong donor conditionality and unilateral decision-making to a more genuine, equitable, complementary, and transformational partnership, which supports locally-led responses, sustainable development and system transformation.

Funding:

In order for a real power shift to take place, the issue of resources is central, which means to increase direct and quality funding to local responders along with greater transparency regarding resource transfers to local NGOs. The Grand Bargain signatories committed to predictable, multi-year, un-earmarked, collaborative and flexible funding; an aggregated target of at least 25% of the funding should go to local and national actors, and greater use of funding tools to increase and improve assistance delivered by these local responders.

Capacity strengthening:

Central to the achievement of localization is empowering local actors into effective and resilient organizations who

are playing a leading role in crisis anticipation, response, recovery, and sustainable development. Long-term strategic partnerships that contribute to organizational capacity development based upon principles of capacity sharing as well as providing realistic levels of overhead costs are fundamental to this.

Voice and influence:

If the commitments under the localization agenda are to be successful, it is critical that local actors are recognized as legitimate and equal stakeholders in decision-making processes, and sectoral policies and procedures facilitate local organizations to take a leadership role in humanitarian and development action.

Commitments made as part of the Grand Bargain are focusing on supporting existent coordination mechanisms and ensuring active participation, influence, and visibility of local actors in these spaces.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Discourse

- » International and local actors should develop appropriate and effective communication strategies and materials to explain the concept of localization across the humanitarian-development-peacebuilding nexus, its origins, ambitions, and its relevance to the Rwandan government and civil society.
- » International and local actors, including government to jointly develop a national localization framework, based on existent research and a process of further assessment and dialogue at different levels. The framework will encompass a common vision what localization means in the context of Rwanda and how this will be achieved overtime.
- » Localization principles, commitments, and targets should be integrated into Rwanda's Aid Policy Framework and External Development Finance Performance system.

Partnership

- » Partnerships should foster diversity and complementarity. Particularly, community-based organizations and private sector should be increasingly engaged as agents and partners of development and humanitarian action.
- » Partnerships between local and international actors should also focus on emergency preparedness and resilience building of communities.
- » Working practices facilitating quality relationships, where there is trust, respect, transparency, complementarity, mutual ownership, joint learning and inclusion in decision-making, should be adopted.

Funding

- » Donors, intermediaries, and local partners should agree that multi-year funding and specific amounts of overhead costs will be passed on.
- » In order to meet the localization commitments, donors should create more inclusive, streamlined, transparent and flexible funding mechanisms which promote stronger partnerships and increase direct access of local actors to humanitarian and development funding.
- » International actors should publish the percentage of funding going to local actors and the percentage of funding dedicated to partner capacity strengthening.
- » INGOs should support their partners to diversify and increase their funding streams by linking them up directly with back donors, capacity strengthening and providing support in setting up alternative fundraising and income generating activities.
- » INGOs should critically review their funding and HR strategies in order to reduce competition with local actors for resources.

Capacity Strengthening

- » Capacity strengthening activities and investments by different international and local actors target a diverse range of local actors, build on prior investments and fit within a broader strategic framework jointly agreed upon.
- » Development partners and international agencies should harmonize basic capacity assessment tools or all actors should agree to accept one another's assessments. Assessments should be done in a reciprocal manner.
- » There should be context-specific and effective capacity strengthening approaches delivered by competent professionals. This includes supporting and fostering local learning and the exchange of experiences, capacities, and innovations among actors.
- » International and local actors should agree upon a coordination & learning platform/structure that facilitates improved working in partnership and civil society capacity development.

Voice and Influence

- » The Ministry in charge of Emergency Management (MINEMA) should recognize that coordination frameworks exist between the government and its international partners, as well as support national and local NGOs to fully and effectively engage in prevention, mitigation, response and recovery to humanitarian emergencies in Rwanda.
- » Each actor should map and analyze decision-making processes and power dynamics in programming processes and delivery and assess where target communities should and could have more voice.
- » International actors should consistently and deliberately promote the role that local partners play in humanitarian and development action through the use of different communication strategies and formats.
- » Local actors, particularly networks, should reflect on ways to take up effectively their mandate to shape policy design and implementation. International actors should provide relevant support in the form

of capacity strengthening as well as funding for comprehensive civil society-led research to inform advocacy.

- » There should be fund flexibility to facilitate programme adaptation in response to community feedback.



Stakeholders following proceedings during Localisation case study Launch on 26th February 2019



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