

LOCALIZATION – NEW CONCEPT OF PROVIDING HUMANITARIAN AID

INTRODUCTION

The international humanitarian system has long been criticized for marginalizing groups from crisis areas, often referred to as “local” humanitarian actors. Historically, these local actors have received less than 3% of direct humanitarian funding, have been excluded from humanitarian decision making and coordination mechanisms, treated as sub-contractors or suppliers when working with international groups, and have often had their capabilities questioned.

“Local” is a fluid and complex construct. The understanding of the word “local” remains controversial and diverse, varying depending on the context. This goes beyond the humanitarian and resilience investing (HRI) origins in a particular country and includes ethnicity, region, education, social status/class, gender, etc. Locality has many levels, from community to province to nation (3). The issue of localization has recently become a dominant debate in the international humanitarian system. Although many projects and programs have been launched to “localize” humanitarian assistance, i.e. to transfer power and resources to local rather than international actors, there is little sign of progress in this regard. While there is still a lack of consensus about what “localization” means in practice, it generally refers to a loosely defined agenda to include local humanitarian actors more systematically in the international humanitarian system. It also includes reforms to center local leadership and power in humanitarian response. There are assumptions that localization will improve the quality and impact of humanitarian responses; however, very little published generalizable evidence has tested these assumptions.

SUMMARY

Localization is a term describing a humanitarian and development approach that prioritizes project management, ownership and control of humanitarian and development programs by making principled humanitarian and development action as local as possible.

To answer the questions about the impact of humanitarian and development programs by using localization approach is multi-layered. This also includes providing an answer to national organizations organizational development, the right balance of organizational structure, policies, culture, procedures, and people procedures, including monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning system and practices.

Keywords: humanitarian aid, localization of humanitarian aid, Grand Bargain

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ATTEMPTING TO INCREASE INTERNATIONAL INVESTMENTS BY LOCALISATION

At the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit (WHS), a new localization assistance program was agreed, and participants committed to an agreement called the Grand Bargain that would increase international investment in the leadership, capabilities and activities of local humanitarian organizations. Investing in the long-term institutional capacity of local actors is a central part of the Grand Bargain and is based on the understanding of those with long-standing experience in the humanitarian community that this will lead to more effective and cost-effective assistance (2; 5).

WHS emphasized that the persistent and unequal distribution of power prevents the communities and organizations most affected by crises from making as many decisions as possible about how to respond. Much of the literature views localization to fundamentally rethink the humanitarian sector and emphasizes the importance of better leadership and implementation by local and national actors. Some believe that localization will improve the quality and impact of humanitarian assistance (4).

The localization success found in the Grand Bargain focused on monitoring progress on commitments to support humanitarian localization efforts (7; 8; 9), rather than on the benefits of a local response to people in need. The literature has not sufficiently focused on assessing the impact of localization on the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of humanitarian responses and outcomes for people in crisis situations. Furthermore, there is no evidence that a full price-performance analysis has been carried out on the site. The affected population's perception of the different roles of international and local actors in providing adequate humanitarian assistance was not adequately assessed, particularly given the change from previous models that reflected very little local input or ownership. There is an opportunity to strengthen accountability for those affected by the crisis through localization, rather than treating these two issues as separate needs of the humanitarian system.

The question of greater inclusion of local actors has featured for some time in debates on how to make humanitarian action more efficient and address unequal power relations within the humanitarian system (6). There is a critical and continued need to further understand both the enabling and hindering factors that support localized or locally led humanitarian responses to natural disasters, conflicts, and prolonged complex emergencies.

The literature has lacked focus on assessing the impact of localization in terms of the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of humanitarian responses and outcomes for people in crises. The perceptions of affected populations on the different roles of international and local actors in delivering appropriate humanitarian assistance have also not been adequately assessed, particularly given the shift from previous models that reflected very little local input or ownership. There is an opportunity to strengthen accountability to people affected by crisis through localization, rather than treating the two issues as separate requirements of the humanitarian system. Although it has not been comprehensively or consistently documented, there continues to be anecdotal evidence and strong opinions that localization can deliver increased impact in a number of areas, which provides a strong basis for further exploration or validation. (1)

At a time of increasing focus on localization – defined in broad terms as shifting humanitarian and development power and funding to local actors – and overall rethinking the contours of humanitarian assistance in the context of efforts to decolonize aid, there remains questions as to the proof of concept. Question that shall be examined refer to the theoretical and practical basis of localization in aid and its nexus to decolonizing aid, and offers practical examples of where localization has worked, including presenting case studies of organizations successfully employing such efforts. Responses on this question would further aim to support the knowledge base in this area, by identifying critical themes that are necessary at the organizational level to make localization successful, including operations, systems, financial controls and key challenges.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The status of research on the transformation of the humanitarian aid delivery process is still in its early stages of development. Proposed solutions may be found in answering questions about organizational financial management and control system, policies and procedures in non-governmental and development organizations; promoting better management of financial and non-financial resources of humanitarian and development funds; prevention of financial fraud, good and compliant financial management, the choice of transparent and optimal accounting methods for measuring results and financial and non-financial reporting, organizational culture people, monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning system; the use of new technologies.

LOKALIZACIJA – NOVI KONCEPT UPRAVLJANJA HUMANITARNOM POMOĆI

REZIME

Lokalizacija je termin koji opisuje humanitarni i razvojni pristup koji daje prioritet upravljanju projektima, vlasništvu i kontroli humanitarnih i razvojnih programa čineći principijelnu humanitarnu i razvojnu akciju što je moguće lokalnijom.

Odgovori na pitanja o uticaju humanitarnih i razvojnih programa korišćenjem lokalizacionog pristupa su višeslojni. Lokalizacija takođe uključuje pružanje odgovora na organizacioni razvoj nacionalnih organizacija, pravi balans organizacione strukture, politike, kulture, procedura rada i procedura za ljudske resurse, uključujući praćenje, evaluaciju, odgovornost i sistem učenja i prakse.

Ključne reči: humanitarna pomoć, lokalizacija humanitarne pomoći, Grand Bargain

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