

Localization of Humanitarian Aid

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Summary: *This paper includes a review of literature on localization and humanitarian interventions. Analyses of related literature reveal three main fields of interest, including the empirical review which evaluates existing literature on the topic, theoretical review and the conceptual framework. This paper refers to empirical review of the relevant literature.*

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GRAND BARGAIN

The Grand Bargain, launched in 2016, regulates humanitarian aid to help achieve maximum benefits for the population in need, according to Esmail (12), one of the aims of the Grand Bargain is to improve accountability and openness in the humanitarian system. This entails making certain that humanitarian actors take greater responsibility for the resources they receive and are more open and honest about their operations. This would help to enhance trust and credibility among stakeholders. The Grand Bargain also aims to increase financing and assistance for national and local humanitarian actors (1). This objective acknowledges the knowledge and closeness of local actors to impacted communities, which puts them in a better position to provide efficient and culturally relevant support. The Grand Bargain aims to enhance local capacities and encourage sustainable solutions to humanitarian issues by giving local actors more authority, which is central to localization. The Grand Bargain also aims to reduce administrative burdens on humanitarian organizations by standardizing procedures and streamlining processes to reduce duplication of efforts among humanitarian actors (1). It also places a strong emphasis on the value of comprehensive needs analysis, which entails carrying out thorough assessments to determine and rank the needs of impacted groups. Additionally, the Grand Bargain also aims to improve the cooperation of humanitarian actors and ensure the participation of those affected in making decisions for solutions to their problems (1). Adhering to these commitments would help to tailor support to the needs of those in need.

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The Paris Declaration of 2005 was aimed at improving the quality of aid. Concerns regarding the disorder and ineffectiveness of aid initiatives prompted the Paris Declaration, as both donors and recipients realized that there was a need for more responsibility, coordination, and alignment in the donation process. The declaration emphasizes that recipient countries must own and lead in finding solutions for their challenges (18). This helps donor efforts be guided by the local needs and ensures that their support aligns with the strategies of the recipient. The Paris Declaration also emphasizes cooperation among donors to avoid issues such as duplication and maximize the impacts of the donations (18). Again, the declaration expects donors and recipient countries to be accountable and that the results of the donations be assessed to ensure that aid is effective (18). These principles act as a guide for countries receiving and offering aid to achieve maximum benefits for those in need.

LOCALIZATION AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

There is a growing focus on localization in humanitarian non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as a way to achieve a good standard of implementation and provide sustainability for humanitarian activities. Financial management is one of the key areas that support the realization of localization efforts. The localization in financial management must create conditions that allow the donors to trace the use of the funds. Burger and Owens (7) highlight the importance of transparency of financial practices, including detailed budgeting reporting mechanisms and audits, to show how the resources are being used and to hold accountable the affected community members. This transparency is of great importance for the establishment of trust in stakeholders and should also reflect the real effectiveness of interventions.

Whenever there is effective finance management, resources are always directed towards localized initiatives. Based on research conducted by Burger and Owens (7) proper allocation of funds play a critical role in enhancing customization procedures through market research and the establishment of local distribution channels. Localization also allows entrepreneurs to venture into new markets and adapt to different regulatory environments. In this case, financial management can assist in the assessment and mitigation of risks associated with such endeavors. Through the conduction of thorough risk assessment and implementation of appropriate risk management strategies, organizations can easily safeguard their investment, thus navigating every uncertainty more effectively. As described by Esmail (12), localization efforts are also considered in the sustainability and social responsibility initiatives. Through financial management, environmental, social, and governance considerations can be easily integrated into decision-making procedures. Therefore, funds must be allocated towards sustainable practices, for this will assist the organizations in aligning their localization efforts with broader community goals while considering brand reputation and resilience.

Localization strategies would incorporate capacity-building initiatives that are particularly designed to enhance the financial management expertise of local NGOs and local communities. The work by (11) points to the need for capacity building to be provided in financial planning, budgeting, monitoring, and reporting within the organisation, which helps to improve sustainability (8). These capacity-building interventions, such as training programs and workshops, help empower local actors, thus making them become effective managers of resources and thoughtful financial decision-makers; in the end, this contributes to well-executive and impactful humanitarian interventions.

Additionally, localization of financial management prioritizes the creation of inclusive collaboration networks that involve citizen participation and fair resource utilization among international and local actors. Research by AL-SAQIR (n.d) emphasizes the advantages of multi-stakeholder partnerships that integrate local knowledge and resources to ensure control and traceability of financial transactions (2). Through joint engagement with community-based structures, humanitarian NGOs can exploit their local resources and networks, plan effectively, and use appropriate interventions that are responsive to the community's needs.

In addition, the sustainability of financing sources should be included in localization attempts, and alternative financing models should be considered. Local NGOs are subject to internationally sourced but project-based and short-term funding that does not promote their long-term sustainability (3). Measures such as shared resources funding, neighborhood-based community asset investing, and social impact financing could also assist in developing more sustainable and locally driven finance options for various organizations.

Although localization of financial management presents numerous benefits, it still has its own obstacles. Whereas NGOs at the local level experience inadequacy in both financial and technical capacities, bureaucratic barriers may pose a great challenge (11). Moreover, power configurations in the given partnership are an equally important challenge. Conversely, the use of technology and community approaches may be preferred in this case, while the tools of digital technology in finance management or local knowledge systems in the decision-making process can be applied. While demonstrating these challenges and relying on the inheritance of luck, non-governmental organizations still have the chance to make their services more efficient financially and profoundly contribute to the development of their activities as long as they are sustainable.

Localization of financial management becomes an imperative strategy towards achieving better quality of operations, governance, and sustainability. Striding by promoting financial accountability, building capacity, and establishing equal partnerships, humanitarian NGOs can turn over to local actors, set in motion community resilience, and ensure that resources are allocated in a transparent and targeted manner. Researching and investing in localization-based mechanisms is crucial to succeeding in the optimization of humanitarian practice and having a profound effect on helping humanity.

LOCALIZATION AND ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE AND CULTURE

Localization as the new paradigm in humanitarian NGOs is the change in the perception and the method of delivering humanitarian aid and response interventions. The core component of the localization agenda is the empowerment of the local people and the community in the decision-making process. A study by Beagle (6) underlines the value of the inclusive leadership style that appreciates local knowledge, skills, and agency. No matter how strong the political will is, it is leadership that makes the difference by developing collaboration, trust, and responsibility among staff, ultimately translating into better-informed and contextualized humanitarian actions. Furthermore, decision-making is desirable to be devolved to a level where flexible and adaptive responses can be efficiently utilized in conformity with local purposes and priorities.

The implementation of a localization agenda entails the creation of communication channels through which country and international participants operate harmoniously. Keengwe (1) point out that setting up social and technological networks (formal and informal, respectively) for information exchange, coordination, and decision-making is what determines the performance of the global supply chain. Through these means, the process of syncing up conflicting organizational cultures, operations systems, and operational structures is made easier, thus better integrating the humanitarian efforts to ensure success.

Moving forward, localization practices will require a shift from the organizational core values and culture to be more humble, respectful, and partnering. Yang's (20) research study points out the efficacy of organizational culture changes to promote greater diversity, equity, and inclusion through policies, processes, and staff interactions. Creating a work environment based on communication with all partners, being open and responsible, and developing trust and collaboration guarantees everyone better and more relevant results.

Additionally, localization could require new human resource practices while hiring and promoting talented locals into leadership positions and developing their leadership capacity (Hailey, 2002). This could come as a campaign to upturn the ideas of expertise and qualifications that have long been the priority of foreigners or those who come from a certain educational background or have good educational and support systems in place. Having a multidisciplinary and locally grounded workforce will help to achieve a better knowledge of the context and establish a higher level of credibility and legitimacy (13).

Despite the perceived positive outcomes of localization, there are potential cultural-related organizational structure challenges. For example, people resist change; there are power imbalances and resource availability can be limited (4). While multiculturalism also provides immigration projects with innovation potential, the creation of opportunities and learning adaptation is no less crucial. When an NGO internalizes diversity, encourages inclusive leadership, and establishes collaboration, it will be better

positioned to identify challenges and take advantage of opportunities that will allow its organizational effectiveness and impact to grow.

Essentially, localization in humanitarian NGOs entails changing organizational structures and culture to bring on local actors, labour on collaborative efforts, and ultimately ensure more efficient and effective responses. With a system of inclusive leadership, coordination mechanism building, and values endorsing equality and partnership, organizations have the ability to take on complex localization tasks and advance their goal to end human suffering and to strive for dignity and human rights for everyone.

THE LOCALIZATION OF NEW TECHNOLOGIES

Atputharajah and Wanga (2020) note that localization re-emerged as the central issue of focus of world policy of refugees in the Summit of World Humanitarian in 2016 and, currently, the Global Compact for Refugees. According to Erdilmen & Sosthenes (11), localization has many exemplary benefits, including reduced costs, reduced duplication of services, and deeper linkages to vulnerable populations. Although localization has such advantages, Atputharajah & Wanga (4) differ from Erdilmen and Sosthenes (11) in that it also has barriers, including risk management strategies and due intelligence, indirect funding plans, and international NGOs' reception that Local NGOs are incapacitated. This research reveals that the localization of humanitarian acts is limited. According to Atputharajah and Wanga (4), some examples of localization include inter-agency, training, and local hiring by international NGOs. As humanitarian systems assist vulnerable populations, they also face such challenges as inadequate funds and unfair relations between the Global South and the Global North; therefore, localization offers the solution to such problems. Studies in the past have emphasized the possibilities of better efficiencies and attraction of community to localization; however, they have also indicated that there are some major obstacles, such as logistic difficulties and fund disparities (6). This research will look to expand knowledge by gathering empirical data from the ground of NGO operations.

For a long period of time, humanitarian activities have been centralized, whereby decision-making and resource allocation are only done by international organizations. However, this approach has previously been criticized due to the inability of international organizations to understand the local contexts (14). One of the ways of solving this is through the localization of technology. According to Mesmar et al. (9), the main benefit of technology is that it assists in bridging the information gap that affects the effective implementation of humanitarian interventions. As indicated above, international organizations may have a limited understanding of the actual humanitarian needs of people within the local communities. In such situations, international organizations can leverage low-tech solutions such as SMS-based data collection tools, which would make it easier to collect data even remotely. The use of SMS-based data collection

tools described above is an example of localization of technology, given that these technological devices could easily be applied in local contexts.

Several tools, such as machine learning, have led to significant advancement capacities of translation and localization tools. Equally, websites and app localization are becoming very critical for reaching global audiences. According to Ergun (10), localization provides comprehensive solutions for the adaption of websites and applications to different languages and regions. Such platforms play a critical role in providing features such as language detection and dynamic content adaption, which allow organizations to deliver personalized experiences to all consumers worldwide. In different research conducted by Nikidehaghani and Hui-Truscott (18), localization has extended beyond language translation, as it entails the adaption of user interfaces and experiences to suit the preferences and expectations of local users. For instance, design tools have been empowering designers to enhance the creation of culturally relevant and intuitive interfaces for different markets. Such tools play a critical role in enhancing the customization of layouts, colors and navigation patterns through consideration of cultural norms and user feedback.

The process of localizing new technology means that these can be tailored to the specific needs and contexts of the target populations. For instance, mobile applications can be designed with local languages, cultural sensitivities, and literacy levels in mind, ensuring greater accessibility and usability (14). This kind of localization means that accurate information can be acquired from local communities, which improves the quality of humanitarian services offered. However, Ergun (14) noted that the implementation of these technologies could be an expensive process, especially in situations where technologies need to be tailored to specific locations or situations. Despite the challenge, one of the benefits of new technologies is that information can be collected and transmitted in real time. The implication of this is that different issues facing people within the community could be solved in real time. The ability to solve issues in real-time presents a possibility of significantly improving the quality of decisions made.

Erdilmen and Sosthenes (11) and Nikidehaghani and Hui-Truscott (18) report that an effective collaboration strategy among local and international NGOs has been promoted recently to enhance the strengths of the internal process. Although it has less localized humanitarian aid plans, it is a grand system that strengthens the capacity of locals, boosting regional humanitarian performance in projects and developing local capabilities. Mikeladze (16), in his study concerning localization and financial management roles, reports that the main aim of NGOs is to perform public activities rather than financial management. The author also says that as long as NGOs have unorganized funds, they cannot achieve their goals effectively and maximally. The achievement of organizational goals in an NGO determines effective financial management and planning.

Nikidehaghani and Hui-Truscott (18) and Erdilmen and Sosthenes (11) researched the localization of humanitarian Aid and together report that localization of humanitarian Aid has currently become a topic of great concern after the Summit of World Humanitarian of 2016 because the summit emphasized the significance of locally-led

feedback to be a remedial measure to power disparities to systems of humanitarian. Atputharajah and Wanga (4) add that there is yet to be a discussion regarding the practical complexities of local humanitarian Aid. Nikidehaghani and Hui-Truscott (18) aimed to research the localization concept in humanitarian support via a study that focused on NGOs. Regional actors are set time apart for debates on how to effectuate humanitarian action addressing unequal power actual tons in the contemporary error (11). The local actors have raised a call for inclusion, making efforts to reform the localization agenda in the humanitarian sector (17). The author reveals that the debate has no critical discussion concerning underlying assumptions, mostly the local conceptualization. Mulder (17) argues that the contemporary discourse is all about the challenging local conceptualization in the disagreement from binary to global, resulting in blind spots in analyzing the exclusion of humanitarian functions.

According to Mulder (17), there are calls in the sector of humanitarian and its expansion to localize support, involve communities, and advance its participation. National governments, together with INGOs, have made typical feedback to this call and are ready to operate with actors of local to distribute local and communal participatory Aid. Mulder (16) added that the setup is hierarchical because separate actors lead in designing the projects, as the regional actors work on the project implementations (18). The key outcomes are, therefore, affected such that those outcomes for aid participation and localization do not eventually materialize. In their research, Erdilmen & Sosthenes (11) and Atputharajah and Wanga (4) drew similar conclusions that it has been a global idea since the 1990s to strengthen the capacities of local humanitarian actors, offer relevant information and funding, and incorporate local non-governmental organizations in decision-making processes. The authors also stated that localization efforts had attained momentum from the World Humanitarian Summit 2016, among other commitments and international platforms, alongside the 2015 Charter for Amendment, 2016 Outstanding Bargain, and the 2018 International Compact on Expatriates. Localization of humanitarianism has become a contemporary issue of concern. To ensure a swift localization transition, several changes are to be implemented. Such changes include reconsidering localization as a priority, having a strong approach to the structures of direct funding, and formalizing exit strategies (11). The changes can address localization issues with great potential.

CONCLUSION

Empirical literature review reveals a few topics related to localization of humanitarian aid. These are financial management, organizational structure and culture, and localization of technologies. Success towards localization as set out in the Grand Bargain has focused on tracking progress on commitments to support the act of localizing humanitarian responses (by providing most relevant definition of localization of humanitarian response) rather than the benefits of localized responses for people affected by crisis or

in the process of economic development. There is a need to further establish a relationship between localization and humanitarian aid efficiency and to demonstrate whether localization can work and it is effective and if effective to be further supported and scaled up, and if not sufficient evidence is presented, then additional focus on capacity building may need to be employed.

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Lokalizacija humanitarne pomoći

Rezime: *Ovaj rad obuhvata pregled literature o lokalizaciji i humanitarnim intervencijama. Analize srodne literature otkrivaju tri glavna polja interesovanja, uključujući empirijski pregled koji ocenjuje postojeću literaturu o ovoj temi, teorijski pregled i konceptualni okvir. Ovaj rad se odnosi na empirijski pregled relevantne literature.*

Ključne reči: lokalizacija, održiva rešenja humanitarnih pitanja, nevladine organizacije, finansijski menadžment

