Advancing localization in Somalia through country dialogue on Grand Bargain with the support of Localization Workstream

Country-based dialogue facilitators
1. Save Somali Women and Children (SSWC)
2. Somali NGO Consortium
3. Save the Children

Supported by Localization workstream

Background on Localization in Somalia

The Grand Bargain (GB), is an agreement entered into by more than 30 of the biggest donors and aid providers at the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016; the first step in the localization process. The GB committed donors and aid organizations to commit to providing 25% of global humanitarian funding to local and national responders by 2020, along with more money that is not earmarked. This agreement will lead to increased multi-year funding to ensure greater predictability and continuity in humanitarian response. This is in aim to incorporate capacity strengthening in partnership agreements, to reduce barriers that prevent partnerships between local and national responders with donors and include local along with national responders in international coordination mechanisms.

Globally, in multiple humanitarian crises and development situations, the issue of aid localization is crucial. Somalia is one such area where a growing number of Somali-led NGOs are looking to play a greater, more equal role in tackling the desperate situations that exist. In partnership with international counterparts who currently lead the humanitarian response, there are a range of challenges in the current context which are preventing this from happening. Many of these barriers are visible to all actors involved, yet their viewpoints can be alarmingly different. If progress is to be made, it requires an understanding from all the stakeholders about each other's constraints, challenges and proposals.

Furthermore, the current global pandemic (COVID-19) has the risk of disproportionately affecting the developing world – where local and national actors are on the frontlines and have real ability and capacity to change the course of the crisis for their communities. The need for financing solutions that inspire and incentivize change models and alliances has never been more critical. The pandemic has highlighted the importance of advancing the localization agenda as movement restrictions and border closures meant that those on the ground were able to responsd to the continuous crises faced by the most vulnerable communities in particular, the triple threat (locust infestation, flash floods and Covid-19).

Localization progress and achievements

Partnership practices for localization

- SNC/SSWC/SCI have been involved in various global platforms and groups to push the localization agenda for an increase in the inclusion and representation of national and local NGOs in the International Humanitarian System at the national and global level

through increased knowledge, capabilities, leadership capacity and organizational integration.

- SNC/SSWC/SCI, in conjunction with The International Organization for Migration (IOM) conducted 2 workshops on localization for The Global Camp Management and Camp Coordination (CCCM) Cluster coordinators held in March. The objective of this workshop was to bring together CCCM partners, strategic donors and other important stakeholders to first understand the core components of localization in Somalia and also collectively identify methods that can be used to enhance localization efforts within the cluster.
- The output of the workshop was a draft Localization Framework and Localization work plan, which was endorsed after comments and discussions amongst the participants. Both documents illustrate clear objectives and measurable indicators that the cluster aims to accomplish by mid-2022.

Humanitarian financing for local actors

- The Localization Framework has also been presented at the HCT and to the Somalia Donor Group (SDG) with the view of sharing information on the work that is ongoing within the Country.

Capacity strengthening for localization

SNC paired 3 INGOs with 12 local NGOs for the capacity building based on local NGOs existing major gaps withd INGOs conducteing a capacity assessment for all of these organizations. The first phase of the trainings were completed with all trainings conducted via virtual methods and also physically. The SNC conducted feedback sessions to discuss what worked well and what needs to be improved for the upcoming phase. The following areas capacitated for the local NGOs where they developed different policies and reviewed existing policies after the trainings

- Save the Children was paired with 3 LNGOs, WASDA, TAKULO and HLDI
- Safeguarding training conducted with SC and 3 partners (4 people attended from each partner)
- DRC was paired with 3 LNGOs SONYO, KAALO and ASAL
- Capacity assessment for the SONYO, KAALO and ASAL conducted by DRC
- Review/planning meeting with DRC twins conducted
- Risk management training conducted by the Save the Children with TASKO, WASDA and HLDI (3 people attended for each organization)
- Financial and compliance training (10 people attended facilitated by DRC physically)
- Monitoring and Evaluation training conducted by World Vision for 6 local NGOs.
- SNC/SSWC/SCI through the localization working group initiated the move to harmonize the capacity assessment for local actors by INGOs. The initiative is in the process of getting buy-in from all INGOs and also raising funds for execution.

Participation of local actors in humanitarian coordination groups

- SNC/SSWC/SCI was involved in the selection process for NNGOs representatives globally joining IASC RG 1 Sub-Group. Our representative SNC as co-chair advocated for the inclusion of Local Actors. The Sub-Group's objectives are to gather and then use available information to further mainstream localization in the leadership and coordination of humanitarian operations. Enhancing the Inclusion of NNGOs in the RG 1 Sub-Group on Localization is important to reach these objectives. Due to this, through a selection process 8 LNNGO's were picked globally to join RG 1 Sub-group on localization. SNC/SSWC/SCI was part of the selection panel and ensured there is good gender and geographical representation of the selected participants
- SNC/SSWC/SCI contributed to the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Guidance on strengthening participation, representation, and leadership of local and national actors in IASC humanitarian coordination mechanisms
- Localization working group and task force established and regular meetings held.
- In a bid to increase the inclusion and representation of national and local NGOs in the International Humanitarian System at the national and global level through increased knowledge, capabilities, leadership capacity and organizational integration; SNC as the Co-chair of The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) RG 1 Sub-group on Localization was called to discuss impediments faced by L/NNGOs in a UNHCR Coordination Training session on Localization. The context was Somalia and discussion at length on impediments such as security, funding etc. The country Dialogue team also had a speaker at The Humanitarian Networks and Partnerships Weeks (HNPW) session on Localization in April.

Gender-responsive localization

- SNC/SSWC/SCI, in collaboration with OCHA Somalia conducted training for Cluster Inclusion Focal Point (CIFP) Working Group (WG) on PSEA, Localization and Mine Action. The focus was on training on the role of gender in Localization.
- SNC formed a Gender Working Group recently and conducted the first meeting in the last week of June. INGOs, and local NGOs attended the meeting, withNAGAAD Network as chair, and CARE International as co-chair of the GWG.
- SNC also conducted women forums in Somaliland, Puntland and South, through local NGOs NAGAAD Network in SL, SWA in Puntland and SSWC in South. The objectives of these workshops was to understand the rationale and principles behind promoting gender equality in humanitarian action, the challenges, the fundamental need to change attitudes and beliefs, and the need to promote an equal balance of power between men and women.

Challenges

- There is a wide gap between international organizations and actors who dominate the humanitarian space and local stakeholders.
- Communities across Somalia face pressing humanitarian challenges which are exacerbated by successive shocks from natural disasters and conflicts.
- Limited Community engagement and capacity building
- Limited funding to support localization agenda in Somalia

Ongoing efforts

- The workstream is in coordination with the Nexus platform and OCHA who are planning to conduct research on localization. The Nexus platform has rolled out research on aspects of funding and capacity building. The outcome of the research will be useful in the future workstream facilitation of localization.

Recommendation

- Investing in localization Funding: There is a need to put emphasis on allocating more resources to local actors and efforts that support localization, i.e. facilitating the localization workshops, supporting direct funding for local actors.
- There is a strong case for investing more in national actors and for international organizations to support rather than lead wherever possible.
- Practical Commitment: Many actors who committed to localization should fast-track the practical implementation of the localization efforts.
- Strategy Inclusion: Participation of national actors in strategic processes should be increased and more national actors should be given prominent leadership space in the program designs
- Continuous dialogue: There is a need to continue discussing the localization agenda within the country. This tends to make the subject more relevant and create awareness on the stakeholders working in the country.