

Summary Note

Localization workstream extra ordinary teleconference

05 September 2018

This meeting was called in preparation for the co-convenors' meeting on 14 September 2018 in Geneva that is aimed at implementing the recommendations of the Grand Bargain Annual Meeting (18 June 2018, New York). The call focused on reviewing the ODI informal proposal on the Core Commitments.

1. Introductions were made and Mr. Philippe Besson from SDC welcomed the participants
2. Short update on the planned field missions to demonstrator countries
 - a. Bangladesh – the nine-member mission team to be led by USG Dr. Jemilah Mahmood is all set to conduct the mission from 9 to 13 September 2018. The team will be meeting with key stakeholders in the capital Dhaka, in Cox Bazaar and in the two coastal Districts in the South - Kurigram and Sylhet.
 - b. Iraq – mission is tentatively scheduled for 18 to 22 November 2018 and preparations are underway in coordination with OCHA in country
 - c. Nigeria – mission is being planned sometime in January 2019
3. Feedback on ODI informal proposal on Core Commitments

A. Summary of comments from the co-convenors

The recommendations made sense particularly on identifying two priority Core Commitments that balances the focus on the 25% goal with long term strengthening of local actors' institutional capacity. The workstream need to study at how these recommendations will affect its current workplan and on the connections between workstreams. Merging with the participation revolution workstream may not be the right solution and mainstreaming would be better. The two dimensions (financing and capacity strengthening) are already quite complex and if the workstream want to generate results/changes it needs to position itself in the most feasible and practical way. The workplan produced at the beginning of this year is a practical and productive way to deliver the results.

The 25% funding target will not be reached if investment in capacity building and partnership to fulfil the basic and non-negotiables necessary terms and conditions such as organizational capacity. Focus should be on low hanging fruits, what can be delivered as rapidly as possible through realistic, pragmatic and consensual solutions.

B. Comments from workstream members

- a. On prioritisation
 - Fully support the two priorities (core commitments). Localization is not only about financing, one without the other will be counter productive
 - Support the selection of the two core commitments and is in agreement with the points made that capacity on multi-year basis is a precondition to achieve the 25%. In the Asia Pacific

meaningful and strengthened participation and decision making by local actors is also a priority in addition to these two core commitments.

- The most important issue, multi-year capacity strengthening, may have been overshadowed by the 25% target. Actions proposed under Core Commitment 2 need to be articulated more concretely specially to clarify how to support greater leadership and decision making and (build) stronger organizations at the local level. What is also missing is the idea of a quid pro quo and what needs to be done at the local level. The HD nexus can be used to reflect on this more – what action can be done to support more programmatic approach to capacity strengthening and to make this concept more operational? What are the critical gaps that exist at the country level that can be supported and the long term vision of increased response capacity? How do we factor in less results at funding level, with governments that are becoming more responsible and capable in responding, and the direction of the support for transition and greater leadership and response at the local and national level?
- Current conversations include a question on what is lost if we focus on the commitments that have been suggested and what is gained. It is supportive of the recommendations but what remains is the gap on looking at funding tools such as pooled funds and the creation and support to existing tools need attention. The GB Annual report has indicated that a number of donors have used pooled funding a good tool/mechanism for localization but how effective is this?
- Prioritisation is welcome. Actions are complicated with lots of jargon and not sure if these are priority actions. More realistic view on what is happening on the ground missing. On the money aspect where a specific action is addressed for OCHA, there is currently no money for this work.
- Focus should also be on the quality of funding not just the 25% target. There is a worry that the last priority action re IATI and reporting will increase administrative burden for local actors. There is a need to look at the cost that local and national actors the different types will require to meet these. Question if there have been consultations with local actors on this paper. (The ODI paper was released only recently and was shared with local actors who are members of the workstream).
- There is no need to merge workstreams 2 and 3. The cash-based programming (Workstream 3) need to be more inclusive and decentralised. On capacity strengthening of local actors, this should be informed and guided by the objective to not replace local capacities and that discussion or decision on what this is must be down to local actors
- Focus on first Core Commitment would address the big blockages on effectiveness and efficiency and has the most potential to change at the field level. The two Core commitments will allow to see past the 25% target which is a real blockage. Need some work on the actions to improve clarity and concreteness – this can be approached through reviewing the workstream workplan.
- Agree with prioritisation. Within the priority actions on IATI, concerns came up very strongly from local and national actors because the reporting system is very complex and an administrative burden. Both FTS and IATI are mentioned but more on the latter.

b. Impact on the work of the workstream

The co-convenors noted that the workstream is already doing most if not all of the proposed priority actions. Bringing in the eminent person for the Eminent person would be good for political buy in. A question was posed if there is anything else that the workstream should be doing and or it should stop doing?

Comments from workstream members:

- Let us look at the practical actions. We need to have a clear sense of what practical actions are necessary, what may or may not be added in the workplan. We have implicitly prioritized the same things. The proposed actions of ODI need to be better articulated first.
- Workplan is ok as it is but should be largely based on these priority actions especially on the capacity strengthening aspect
- For the next reporting period, we need the information on financing /operationalising the definitions. We need measurable indicators to track progress, taking the lesson from the 25% indicator.
- We need to recall why we do this. This means to an end – better services, accompanying people better. Localization is not a purpose to itself. We should be concerned on not adding to transaction costs, to the whole burden of the system, we can create another industry on measuring this or that. There is a risk that we forget what the core of our concern is. Glad to see that there is a consensus on prioritising these two commitments but when it comes to priority actions they need to be better analysed. It is not multi-year funding per se that will solve all issues
- Multi-year funding through humanitarian streams may not be the best way to think about this but rather in the HD nexus where longer term, sustainable and effective institutional and capacity building support can be made.
- The idea should be not to de-prioritise the existing efforts but to make sure that the workplan activities include sufficient actions to realise the core commitments. A helpful process will be to compare the ODI paper with workplan to identify gaps and remaining questions. We have in our mind the entire quid pro quo, we know that if the entire quid pro quo is not achieved we are not going to achieve the entire purpose of GB. We should set higher actions i.e. how the actions in localization workstream is contributing to systemic shift to localization. We need to look at how the humanitarian system at the response level is being localized through the lens of the participation revolution.
- On risks, local and national actors have been working with international actors and there is a need to distinguish this from the risks mentioned in the ODI paper.

b. On merging and or mainstreaming workstreams

- The co-convenors are not keen on the merger with participation revolution. Mainstreaming should be more appropriate way forward as we do not see the case for merging, no synergies.
- The general concern is to really use our limited resources and time in the best way. There may be appealing solutions such as merging workstreams but in the end it will generate more work, issues and burden to everyone
- It is important to consider the key message in the ODI analysis that GB is over structured and under governed. If we don't consider merging, how do we achieve a greater accessibility and deliver on the quid pro quo. This may raise challenges eg with participation, but quid pro quo may not be achieved by just improved coordination between workstreams
- Most if not all workstreams are closely related as part of localization. Managing or identifying parameters for tracking changes, developing practical actions are important, if these are merged the risk of diluting is there.
- Participation is for everybody not only for local actors, it has a long way to go in terms of achieving its aims and responsibility of all actors. For this reason we need to keep it separate but closely connected.
- Understand the linkages but the workstream have a lot on its plate already. Need to be mindful of the challenges such as on merging with cash which is a very complex issue.

Important linkages can be highlighted but how do we to translate this into operations? We may create additional obstacles if we merge.

- Merging is not the answer to the efficiency argument especially with the work that needs to be done. There are inter connectedness with other workstreams, the main issue is the risk of dilution of work, we may hamper progress further by merging as opposed to looking areas to inter connect. Connecting can be through the workplans or having conversation with other workstreams on overlaps.
- The cash workstream is not as big as localization, the former may lose out in merging. Participation and cash need to have more discussion on synergies. Distinctions between workstreams need more dedicated attention and there are different actions needed to achieve each.
- Participation revolution requires a systemic shift. This should be about all other workstreams not only localization.

NEXT STEP:

Co-convenors will bring the key points raised from this meeting to the 14 September co-convenor's meeting. More analysis will be made on which parts of the priority actions are more relevant and useful to meet the prioritised commitments.

AOB:

A doodle poll for the next regular teleconference meeting date will be sent.

Participants – Leah Psiya/POWEO, Elizabeth Ross/USAID, Muhammad Amad/NHN, Robert White/UNHCR, Anita Kattakuzhy /Oxfam, Stephen Close and Mikaela Lupsi/Australia, Michel Arens/Germany, Jeremy Wellard/ICVA, Vincent/ERCC, Janet Puhlovic/OCHA, Brigitte Mukengeshayi/ECHO, Jonathan Abrahams/WHO, Amanda Schweitzer/CRS, Umar Iqtidar/Action Aid, Kim Harper/WHO, Hero Anwar/REACH, Friedo Heinrich/Netherlands, Phillipe Besson and Sarah Herrendorff/SDC, David Fisher and Coree Steadman/IFRC. **Smruti Patel/GMI**