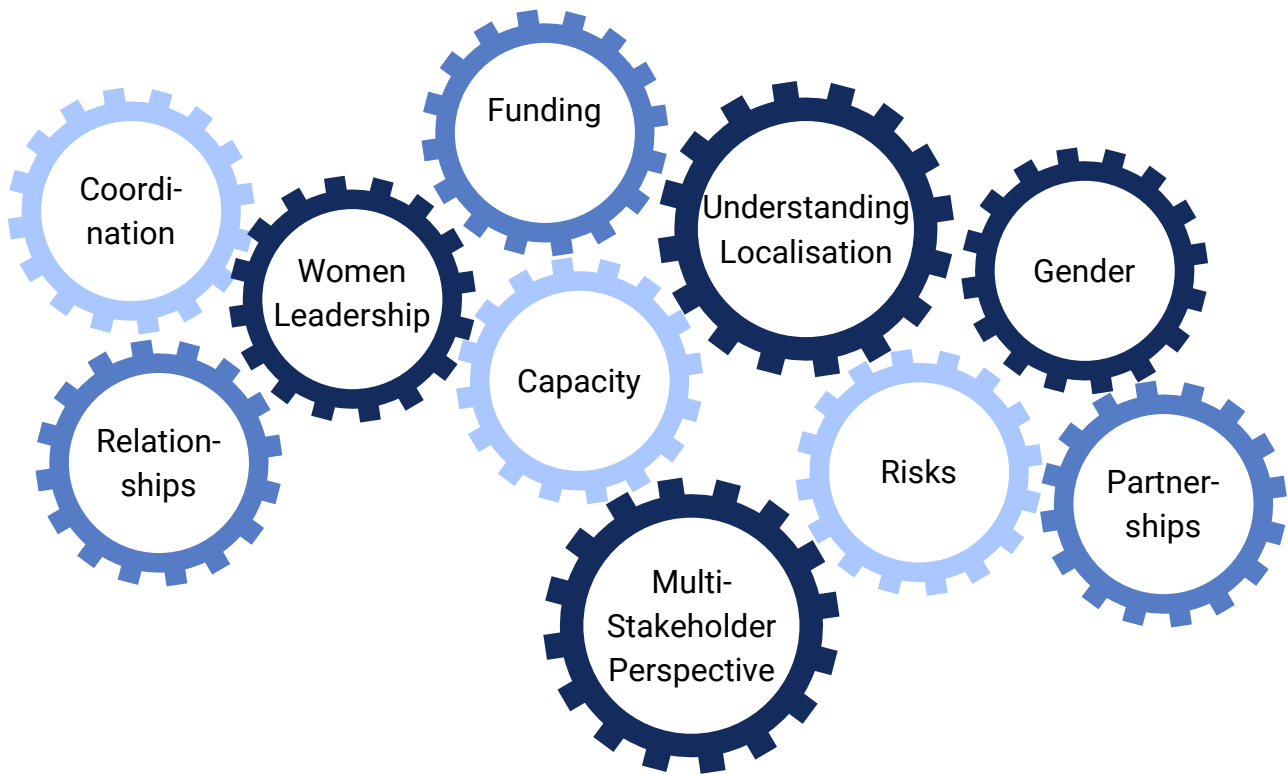


Middle East Regional Conference on Localisation of Aid

HIGHLIGHTS DISCUSSIONS DAY 1



BROAD OBSERVATIONS

- Localisation is an idea whose time has come, but there is still resistance of established system to cede power and control
- Need to address the risks emerging from localisation, but also not to forget the risks of making no change
- Localisation has not yet become a reality; interesting “micro” level initiatives but no systematic transformation/macro-level shifts yet
- in this region, it is important to look at the development, peace and humanitarian nexus as we face a number of protracted crises
- Advancing localisation in practice will require radical shifts in policy and operations, peer-to-peer learning and exchanges, incentives from donors to encourage shift in approach, predictable funding for capacity strengthening programmes

UNDERSTANDING LOCALISATION

- Localisation still not well understood
- Need for common understanding of localisation – currently, different actors speak different localisation language – and clarify expectations, priorities of different stakeholders
- Localisation happens if there is an investment in local actors with a long term perspective
- Localisation requires more coherence between development and humanitarian funding systems
- Localisation is also about local actors defining their own strategies, areas of expertise and intervention, understanding their strengths and weaknesses. Then being able to voice them, assert them, especially in times of crisis.
- Greater documentation and sharing of the many good practices – we need greater communication of the different initiatives which are progressing localisation

CAPACITY STRENGTHENING

- Genuine capacity building requires a more transformative effort, perhaps independent of or parallel to humanitarian short-term funding
- Make it less a taboo to invest in strengthening local organisations as an end in itself
- Multi-year funding and support/coaching – mentoring, capacity sharing, context-sensitivity
- Local actors need to grow into the role eg networking, representation, coordination, etc and should form consortia among to address administrative and due diligence requirements
- Can we define institutional capacity? Who gets to decide?
- From a bottom up approach, allow and give opportunity to local partners to evaluate their needs, their approach, their strategy
- INGOs need to rethink their capacities to support the needed support – do we need different people. Lack of self-analysis
- Capacity is not an end result, it is a process and therefore should be invested in as such – punctual and always evolving
- Shifting from a training/workshop culture to build capacities to coaching, job shadowing, accompanying and looking at investing in a systemic way in LNAs
- Individuals doing the capacity strengthening – who are they, how they understand the needs and challenges of the region

FINANCING

- NNGOs have major funding constraints, especially in sub-contracting arrangements
- Requirements of donors are becoming more complex and inhibiting localisation; compliance requirements are increasing; donors set the rules and the rules become stricter down the chain; need for streamlining funding application processes
- Governments can provide funding to their own local civil society organisations
- Some good practices and initiatives that can be replicated and or scaled up by NEAR Network (Nepal and Somalia), ACT Alliance (Rapid Response Mechanism), IFRC (DREF), Start Fund
- Necessity to have flexible and multi-year funding and ensuring there is core funds v. project funds also to be able to engage in key processes and respond to emerging needs, cutting transaction costs;
- Types of funding: Increase the availability of medium-sized grants to move beyond small versus massive scale projects; multi-year financing to reach local WROs/WLOs;
- Pooled funds should cover overhead costs
- Need to address governmental restrictions on international funding to local actors

ACCOUNTABILITY

- International NGOs, LNNGOs, Governments, UN agencies, EU – should all be accountable to people at the grassroots level
- Need to share best practices in particular related to mutual accountability and confidence building
- Lack of global quality/accountability benchmark
- Extremely high transaction cost for securing funding for local actors; similar for different size grants (due diligence, monitoring, reporting, etc)
- Accountability (as a two way street) is critical to trigger and accompany the change needed to make localisation happen
- Set tracking mechanisms and monitoring that will track funding, which will create accountability and support to local organisations;
- Audit process – should be locally relevant, contextual

RELATIONSHIPS, PARTNERSHIPS, REPRESENTATION

- Localisation requires new mindset, new way of thinking. Do not think traditionally, do not fragment aid, and target group, we should think comprehensive, we need to bridge the gap between development and aid
- Collective bargaining between local actors and international partners can have benefits for all sides
- Counterterrorism legislation challenging localisation progress in the region
- HCTs – no good reason why more LNGOs are not better represented
- Partnerships follow the money (incentives to build partners as an exit strategy); lack of real incentives to building partnerships
- Biggest national actors currently control dialogues – how can more local actors be more involved
- We need open communication lines between donors and local actors; improved communication and learning
- Terms of partnership agreements need to be better defined, informed by value of each partner
- Complementarity – it is not about same capacities for everyone but looking at who brings what on the table and invest on this
- Long term relationships are critical– whether between local organisations and community leaders or international actors and local organisations
- Change will not come through one programme or one partnership. The localisation journey will take time.

GENDER MAINSTREAMING, GENDER-RESPONSIVE LOCALISATION, WOMEN LEADERSHIP

- Localisation efforts should put special focus on women leaders, women's rights organisations
- Consider funding quota for WLOs and WROs
- Enhance gender mainstreaming throughout the localisation process
- Including a gender focus in partnerships
- Important to see the larger role of women – shift in approaches needed, not just the victimization, recognize the leadership of women in humanitarian action; see other kinds of needs beyond protection;
- The voices of women need to be heard and women need to tell what localisation means for women and how humanitarian aid can be localised.