

Summary Note

GB Localisation Workstream

Country Level Dialogue Process on Localisation Peer to Peer Learning Event

07 June 2021 12:00-13:30 (Geneva, CEST)

Objectives

The peer-to-peer learning event aimed at capturing, sharing, and exchanging the learnings and outcomes from the country-level dialogue processes in the six countries (Colombia, Myanmar, NW Syria, South Sudan, Nigeria and Somalia) supported by the Workstream with additional inputs and contributions from other involved countries who have volunteered to carry out country level dialogues – Philippines and Turkey. Specifically, the event is aimed at the following:

1. To exchange experiences and learnings on the dialogue process around: (1) convening and engaging with different stakeholder groups; (2) promoting understanding and implementation of GB commitments on localisation; (3) identifying priority issues and building consensus
2. To share and jointly analyse the key outcomes to date of each of the dialogue processes and identify opportunities and remaining barriers that maybe relevant to the wider sector and or to the future of GB discussions
3. To exchange and gather feedback and learnings on framework, tools and methodologies used

A total of 23 participants composed of country-based co-facilitators from Myanmar, Nigeria, Northwest Syria, Turkey, and the Philippines and Localisation Workstream country dialogue subgroup members attended. In plenary and breakout group discussions, participants shared their learnings and experience on the key outcomes of the dialogue process, identified the most significant changes, and the key lessons learned from the dialogue process in each country.

Key outcomes of the dialogue process

Throughout the country-level dialogue process, countries involved designed and carried out surveys and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with donors, INGOs, local and national NGOs, and community groups as well as multi-stakeholder thematic workshops e.g., financing, capacity building, humanitarian coordination and decision making. The dialogue process had different starting points in each country including the level of engagement from the different stakeholder groups. Due to the size and diversity of stakeholders involved, some countries took a bit more time to kickstart this process, and, in the case of Myanmar, the process was highly impacted by security issues. In Turkey, the dialogue process started even before the Workstream-supported process through the initiative of a group of local NGOs which has now been formalised as a

Localisation Advocacy Group with a Secretariat and funding from a local NGO network. In Syria, the NGO Forum in NW Syria coordinated the process from start to end while in the Philippines a consortium between a local NGO (ECOWEB), A4EP, OCHA and Oxfam was formed.

In South Sudan, the setup of the group was a bit long and chaotic but it results in a stronger grounding being under the umbrella of the Localization Working group of the NGO Forum, involving donors and UN agencies too.

While in some countries such as in Syria, they struggled to get UN agencies to engage in the process, in the Philippines the (OCHA) Resident Coordinator himself has been very supportive and engaged. Both countries are planning to publish and share their country dialogue reports to their respective HCTs, with Syria looking for endorsement and the Philippines suggesting a working group to take the recommendations forward.

The substantive focus of the dialogue process in each of the countries covered a wide range of topics including reciprocal capacity building/strengthening, representation and leadership in HCTs, new ways of working due to COVID, advocacy, intermediary roles, and funding issues such as overhead costs.

Key learnings from the dialogue process

While the short timeline of the dialogue process was noted as an impediment to carrying out actual changes, many pointed out that the process for designing and discussing how to enact changes can be as important. The success of the process can be measured by how it was inclusive, collaborative and complementary whereby the value of each actor is recognised. As a Workstream-supported process, emphasis was made on the distinct and added value of ensuring that all key stakeholder groups are engaged even if this was difficult in some locations.

With the short timeline and the competing demands and priorities for each of the stakeholders involved, it was both a necessity as well as a challenge to find a way for everyone to work. In some countries, co-facilitators found a lack of goodwill by some key actors to practice/walk the talk of localisation while in others, it was difficult for people to agree on the definition of localisation. The dialogue process encouraged and raised the level of interest in and support for localisation and the Grand Bargain specifically in countries where the discussions are less advanced.

Since it was not funded, the work of carrying out these country-level dialogues took a lot of time and resources from co-facilitating organizations. The question was thus raised of how do we make sure that there is support and resourcing for these locally-led processes in GB2.0?

Having real buy-in from UN actors is vital for the success of these change-making processes. Participants noted that IASC coordination and locally-led coordination processes should be linked and that it is helpful to factor this into roll-out of the IASC coordination/localisation guidance and GB 2.0 approach to 'connecting to the country level'.

Another important learning that was identified is that when we have the discussions, the input of affected populations should be central. Using the seven-dimensions framework was helpful in design the dialogue process while incorporating local voices.

The importance of determining how each country can work with government actors during the planning, coordination, and implementation of humanitarian programs was also identified as a key learning. Participants noted that not all governments will engage in the same way and that each government will likely have their own version of what localisation should look like. This supported the notion, which was repeated by multiple participants, that country-specific context is highly important to consider going forward.