

GB Localisation Workstream Virtual Workshop on Learnings and Next Steps

Consolidation Session – 03 September 2021

Background

Following the Grand Bargain Annual Meeting in June, the new GB 2.0 approach adopted by signatories calls for a primary focus on two ‘enabling priorities’ relating to quality funding and localisation/participation. The framework includes some of the localisation priorities as identified by the Workstream around strengthening the role and engagement of local actors, capacity strengthening, role of intermediaries and quality partnership, and quality funding. It also took up Workstream member suggestions to “bring the Grand Bargain from Geneva to Goma”, as discussions at the country level are most likely to be relevant to the realities of local actors there. The six “country level dialogues” piloted by the Workstream in 2020-21 have helped pave the way here.

However, the role of workstreams, including the Localisation Workstream, going forward is not yet fully defined. Discussions between Localisation Workstream members, as part of the GB 2.0 consultations, indicated some agreement on the need to continue its work whilst recognizing that some adjustments in its priorities are necessary.

Therefore, this workshop was held with the purpose of reflecting briefly on learnings from the Workstream’s 2020-2021 workplan and discussing next steps for the Workstream (and other components of the Grand Bargain) over the next two years.

The following are a few ideas, proposed by the co-convenors, for undertakings of the WS during the next two-year timeframe of the GB 2.0 (or until June 2023) that were discussed during the webinar:

1. Supporting an effective and inclusive process at the country level, including women’s rights organizations and women-led organizations (WROs and WLOs), to build ownership and momentum
2. Further incubating the issue of increasing international investment in support for locally-defined capacity needs, including for WROs and WLOs
3. Advocacy, collaboration, and synergies on localization are strengthened

The workshop was carried out in two phases: one session—split into two groups to accommodate different time zones—to discuss lessons learned and next steps, and one session to consolidate and prioritize ideas proposed during the first session.

Summary of comments and other ideas for WS2 Next Steps

Overall comments on the co-convenors’ proposal

WS members generally agreed with the proposed area of engagement by the co-convenors, with some additions and comments. For example, it was recommended to define a clear and more

ambitious vision for the Workstream in the next two years whilst balancing the need to prioritise and be realistic, as the Workstream cannot take on too much. Additionally, there is more clarity needed on work/engagement at different levels (global and country level) and with different processes and mechanisms (FG, caucus, National Reference Groups, IASC, etc).

It was also stated that it would be useful to have a framework and criteria to track progress and accountability.

Members suggested that the WS should work to ensure that localisation as an enabling priority informs everything that GB does going forward.

Finally, it was emphasized that the “how” element of the WS’s goals and actions should be prioritized over the “what”.

Country-level engagement through dialogue processes National Reference Groups (NRGS)

There was strong support for and agreement around engagement at country level through the dialogue processes and the initiative to establish National Reference Groups (NRGs). WS members emphasized the importance of building on outcomes and learnings from the country level dialogues, as well as a more open process that is meaningfully led by national/local actors.

It was also expressed that there is a need to address gaps and challenges, including the lack of dedicated advocacy/policy staff, funding support specially for local actors’ engagement, limited engagement by some international signatories, and coherence with other localisation groups/discussions.

Members suggested that NRGs should have the space and access to GB overall structures (e.g., Facilitation Group) as they will be dealing with a multitude of issues not just localisation and that the WS should work to ensure national/local actors play a leadership role in NRG process while also ensuring meaningful engagement of international signatories.

It was also discussed that while NRGs as a concept are still being formed, and could take many shapes and sizes, the WS needs to find a way to connect HCTs, local leadership, and NRGs through channels of communication so that the NRGs aren’t satellite structures that are isolated from others.

Another point was raised on the issue of due diligence and reporting that the rules applied at global level often do not match capabilities of actors at the country level, particularly during emergencies. Thus, it was suggested that the WS should focus on creating a better match between the global reporting/other requirements and the reality of the country contexts. To do this, it was proposed to pilot, in a limited number of countries, processes on changing the donor/international requirements by utilizing national champions.

WS members emphasized the need to listen to affected population and show them the added value of the WS. Further, there could be a need for the WS to better clarify that localisation is here to stay and that this is the new way of working. In this regard, it was recommended that the WS should pursue bottom-up with a long-term perspective, not just two years at a time.

Finally, it was pointed out that national governments seem to be missing from the conversation and that the WS should address this gap.

On the planned caucus on role of intermediaries

There were several recommendations on how the WS could support the proposed caucus on the role of intermediaries. First, the WS could use the previous recommendations from its study on the

future role of intermediaries as a starting point to inform engagement with the planned caucus. It was proposed that, while the caucus will provide the political leadership to unlock progress, the WS could provide feedback and input, and serve as a clearing house for information for the caucus.

Additionally, it was stated that more emphasis is needed on issues around direct funding to local actors, donor and intermediaries' policies and procedures, due diligence, and reporting.

WS members emphasized that there has frequently been a disconnect between HQs and national offices and that the WS should work on fixing this bottleneck. Further, it should approach the intermediary issue as a "chain" issue that includes all elements (global, regional, national, local).

It was also suggested that the WS advocate on accountability of international intermediaries on their approaches to partnership and increasing focus on local leadership. It was noted that this would be timely as many donors are now reviewing their reporting mechanisms.

There was also a proposal to eventually create a caucus that goes beyond studies and focuses on creating a new type of intermediary, as there is a need to project for the future and anticipate how we can work differently.

Nexus and capacity strengthening

There was broad agreement that the WS should continue advocating for a nexus approach and capacity strengthening for local actors, building on the Workstream discussion in June and fostering dialogues with other development, peace, and climate colleagues—including through discussions at the political level

It was added that, while international financing arrangements and mechanisms are important, it will also be useful to include the need for sustained national-level funding sources. Thus, the WS should explore the diverse ecosystem of country-level funding mechanisms relating to capacity strengthening, resilience, nexus, etc that would allow national actors to play a lead role. The WS could also explore the possibility for donors to develop a coordinated approach (not necessarily a new funding mechanism) to the nexus funding issue.

On capacity strengthening, it was suggested that the conversation should also include building capacity of international actors to increase their ability to better interact and create equal partnerships with local actors.

Finally, there was an idea for the creation of a caucus on creating national funding mechanisms that emphasize capacity building for local actors. This was justified by a need to work on incubating capacity strengthening approaches. It was proposed that the WS could possibly work on laying the technical groundwork for the caucus, and then in a year pushing it and getting donors on board.

25% funding target

One theme that came up frequently was the continuation of a focus on advocating for the 25% aggregate funding goal laid out in the GB. It was discussed that, as a high profile, very visible GB commitment, advocating for the creation of a caucus maybe the best way to address the political blockage/challenge to move this goal forward.

However, members emphasized that the WS should continue to put emphasis on creating more direct and quality funding to local actors. In order to successfully convey the importance of the goal, it was proposed that the WS should focus on data reporting and proper analysis that includes the quality element of funding.

Before working more on this, however, it was discussed that the WS needs to define what it wishes to achieve. For example, it is known that the goal is not moving forward, even though donors are saying they want to fund local actors more. There are a number of technical issues that the WS could address.

Since many of the technical and political issues around the 25% goal have been identified during closed-door meetings, it was suggested to have future discussions, or a caucus, focused on working specifically with donors at a bi-lateral or small-group setting to identify and resolve the main blockages. The WS could also have a broad conversation about the 25% goal and identify the political issues which could be advanced through a caucus.

Finally, it was suggested that the WS could also focus on actions to build trust between donors and local actors.

Participants

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