

## World Humanitarian Action Forum 2019: Dignity in Humanity Localisation Roundtable: Actions and Recommendations

### Context

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In 2019, Save Somali Women and Children and the Humanitarian Leadership Academy co-hosted the localisation roundtable of the World Humanitarian Action Forum (WHAF) 2019 in Istanbul, Turkey. The purpose of this roundtable was to take stock of progress to date, identify barriers to achieving the Grand Bargain commitments and enable action-oriented discussion to formulate concrete practical steps to advance the localisation agenda and make a difference to people affected by crisis. In preparation for this event the WHAF secretariat – The Humanitarian Forum also held workshops in Chad and Somalia.

In these forums it was acknowledged that:

1. Local and national actors are often the first responders when a crisis occurs. They have the best access to local populations and have critical knowledge of the local context.
2. Local and national actors are part of the affected population and often continue to work with communities once international actors have completed their response efforts.
3. Despite this, local and national actors often struggle to move beyond project implementation and are not treated as strategic and equal partners with international actors.
4. Whilst commitments have been made to shift power and resources to local and national actors, progress against them is slow and there is a need to think creatively and strategically about what action can be taken both individually and collectively to achieve change.

### Recommendations

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Participants of the localisation roundtable identified a number of key challenges preventing progress against the commitments and formulated the following recommendations to overcome these challenges and drive change.

The following **three recommendations** were prioritised, with the full list available in the annex.

1. All humanitarian actors should commit to strengthening country-level dialogue between donors and local and national NGOs to build trust and understanding.
2. Acknowledging that local and national actors are accessing funding from pooled funds:
  - a. Donors should triple the amount of funding channelled through pooled funds.



- b. Each pooled fund should set an ambitious target based on percentage of the total fund to give directly to local and national actors.
  - c. Local actors should have greater representation in the governance of pooled funds.
3. Donors should make it mandatory that affected populations are involved in the design and delivery of humanitarian programming, and local and national actors should lead this process – learning from and building on existing best practices in survivor and community-led responses.

### Next Steps

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In order to make progress, it is necessary for key stakeholders to understand and take responsibility for delivering on these recommendations.

The WHAF secretariat and the localisation roundtable working group commit to sharing these recommendations with the co-conveners of the Grand Bargain Localisation Workstream, donors, international agencies, governments and local and national partners across our network, thereby influencing policy and practice across the humanitarian sector.

The WHAF secretariat also commits to delivering on the recommendations relating to capacity strengthening through the delivery of a series of workshops for local and national NGOs over the coming 12 months.

### Localisation Working Group Members

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The Humanitarian Forum, Save Somali Women and Children and the Humanitarian Leadership Academy acknowledge the support received in the design and delivery of the localisation roundtable at WHAF 2019 from Christian Aid, the International Council for Voluntary Agencies (ICVA), Humanitarian Aid International and Taawon.



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## Annex: Challenges and Recommendations

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**Challenge One:** Localisation comes with a responsibility to reduce risk to local and national actors and to value them properly.

Recommendations:

1. Donors should significantly increase investment in local and national NGO staff development.
2. International organisations should adopt ethical recruitment policies.
3. There should be global implementation of compulsory Indirect Cost Recovery (ICR) in all partner contracts – all the way to front-line responders.

**Challenge Two:** There is a lack of expertise and active participation of local and national actors in co-ordination structures.

Recommendations:

1. All clusters must have a position for a local/national NGO representative to co-chair with financial support for this role allocated by the UN or cluster lead agencies.
2. The UN, government and NGO forum should co-develop a Terms of Reference (TOR) for local and national NGO representatives in clusters. This should include clear deliverables and a commitment to report back to NGO forum. Local and national NGO representatives must sign and uphold these TORs.

**Challenge Three:** The approach to 'capacity building' is top-down and does not acknowledge the capacity local and national actors currently have.

Recommendations:

1. Donors should adopt a standardised risk-based model for due diligence, using a graduated or tiered approach rather than pass or fail.
2. There is a need to change the terminology to 'capacity-strengthening' or 'capacity-sharing', acknowledging that this should be a two-way exchange of knowledge, skills and experience.
3. Donors and international agencies should ensure principled partnerships, including multi-year funding for capacity strengthening with the opportunity for local and national actors to define what support is required.

**Challenge Four:** There is a lack of direct funding available for local and national actors.

Recommendations:

1. Acknowledging that local and national actors are accessing funding from pooled funds:
  - a. Donors should triple the amount of funding channelled through pooled funds.

- b. Each pooled fund should set an ambitious target based on percentage of the total fund to give directly to local and national actors.
  - c. Local actors should have greater representation in the governance of pooled funds.
2. All humanitarian actors should commit to strengthening country-level dialogue between donors and local actors to build trust and understanding.
3. Local and national actors should work together to explore alternative solutions and new sources of funding, for example, the private sector.

**Challenge Five:** There is little co-ordination and partnership between local and national actors, and their voice is not being adequately included or heard.

Recommendations:

1. Local and national actors should come together in consortium to cooperate, network and influence, including:
  - a. Strengthening representation, influence and leadership in humanitarian decision making bodies.
  - b. Sharing resources, expertise and evidence on how they deliver principled and effective humanitarian response.
  - c. Taking a collective approach to capacity-strengthening – especially in relation to developing institutional/organisational capacities.

**Challenge Six:** Affected communities currently have little or no input into the design and delivery of humanitarian programming, and it does not always adequately meet their needs. Communities affected by crisis should be empowered to be the agents of their own recovery.

Recommendation:

1. Donors should make it mandatory that affected populations are involved in the design and delivery of humanitarian programming, and local and national actors should lead this process – learning from and building on existing best practices in survivor and community-led responses.

**Challenge Seven:** Progress against the Grand Bargain commitments is slow and lacks ownership.

Recommendations:

1. The localisation agenda should not be confined to the Grand Bargain timeframe but championed as a process that links humanitarian reform to, and aligns with, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and climate reform.
2. There is a need to institutionalise the localisation commitments by moving beyond reliance on individuals to drive this forward, to creating organisational cultures.