LOCALIZATION THROUGH INNOVATIVE APPROACHES

APP
ASIAN PREPAREDNESS PARTNERSHIP

Pakistan Resilience Partnership
NHN

The flagship regional platform of Asian Preparedness Partnership (APP), was founded by six countries of Asia including Pakistan for improving the preparedness and emergency response to disasters by strengthening the capacity of local humanitarian actors. The initiative is being implemented by Asian Disaster Preparedness Center with support from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

In line with the regional initiative, Pakistan Resilience Partnership (PRP) was established in 2018, under the umbrella of NDMA. The objective of the PRP is to improve the interface and partnership between PRP partners namely government, local humanitarian organizations, private sector, media and academia for enhancing their capacities through partnerships, knowledge resources, training, and networking opportunities. The Pakistan Resilience Partnership is contributing towards strengthening the disaster preparedness and emergency response capacity at national and local levels in disaster-prone areas withinthe country. The PRP strategy aims to develop the local humanitarian networks comprising of National Governments, Local Humanitarian Organizations, Private Sector, Media and Academia, which will result in enhanced coordination and information exchange, during the period of emergencies caused due to disasters.
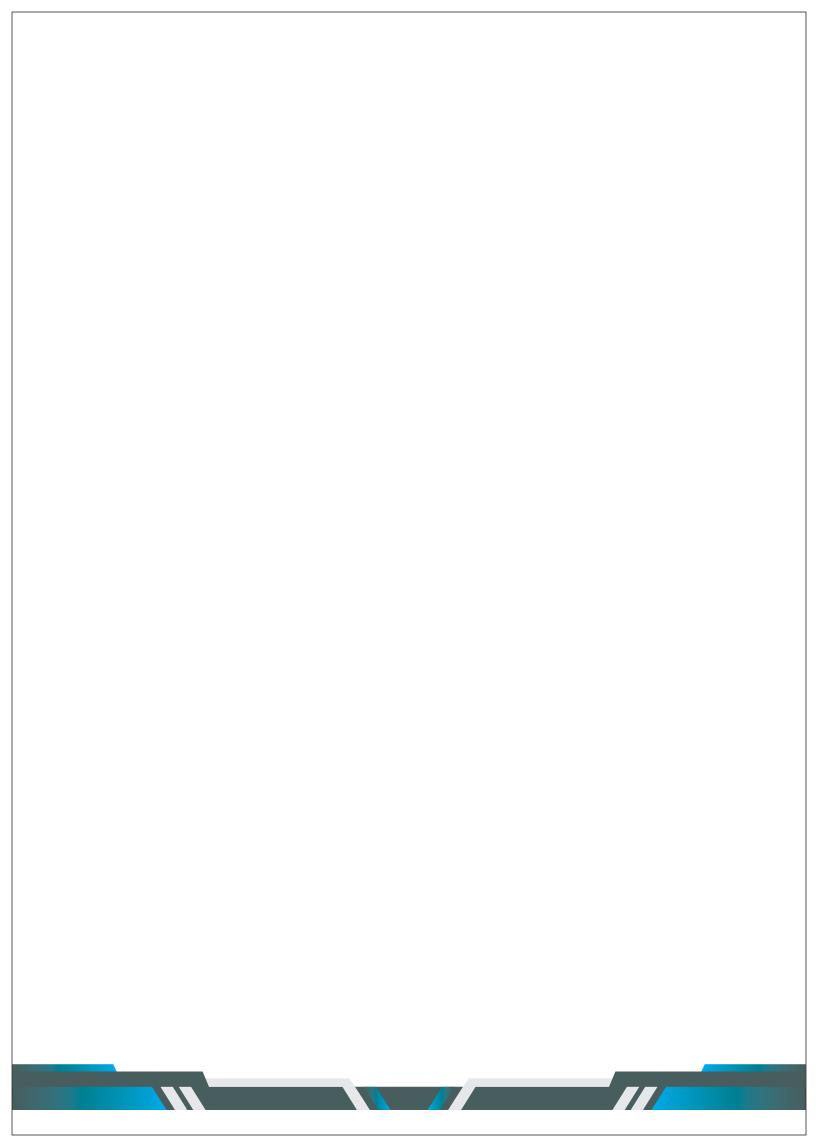
PREFACE

Humanitarian Resilience Journal is a biannual magazine published with the support of Asian Preparedness Partnership (APP) under the umbrella of Pakistan Resilience Partnership (PRP). This initiative has been undertaken to bring forward different perspectives on the general humanitarian landscape of Pakistan. Each issue of the journal is dedicated to a specific topic of national importance. The contributions to this journal are purely on volunteer basis.

The eighth issue of the journal focuses on "Localization through Innovative Approaches". The articles in this issue contains innovative localized best practices that have been implemented in country and the region. The views, opinion and interpretations expressed in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or positon.

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How Innovative Approaches can Accelerate Localization of the 2030 Agenda

Masooma Rahmaty and Jimena Leiva Roesch

United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres started 2020 by warning that geopolitical tensions and mistrust in the political establishment are among the major global threats for the future. Secretary-General Guterres also said that the antidote to this mistrust lies in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Five years into its implementation, however, many policymakers agree that momentum towards achieving its goals is slowing down. What then is needed for the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to be achieved and for mistrust and tension to be addressed?

Pushing Back Against Mistrust

At the core of any effort to tackle the growing levels of mistrust is the need for governments to build stronger connections with local populations and to decentralize decision-making and implementation structures. The 2030 Agenda provides the ideal opportunity to begin this process of localizing implementation, as the agenda's goals will not be achieved if the conversation stays at an elite level. As Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed emphasized, localization in this context means "true ownership by all stakeholders" and an environment where the "aspirations of the SDGs become a reality for communities, households, and individuals, particularly those who are at risk of falling behind the most." In this way, any achievements in development and peacebuilding will endure.

To achieve this kind of localization and ownership, it is important for governments and the UN to transform the way they usually work. The 2030 Agenda offers governments the main driving seat, with the UN providing critical support in many developing countries. The reality on the ground with this arrangement is that one country's ministry takes primary lead on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and, at best, an inter-ministerial table is set up to receive general updates from other sectors. Civil society and the private sector are "consulted" principally when the national voluntary review (VNR) to monitor progress comes up and governments need to offer a statement to the UN in New York.

The 2030 Agenda meant to change this manner of business as usual. In many countries, these inter-ministerial tables are transforming the way governments work into a more integrated manner, where, for example, gender equality and women's empowerment advances are not championed only by a gender office or team, but are a concern embedded across all programs related to the SDGs. Up to now, engagement with civil society and the private sector on the part of governments remains ad-hoc in most cases and is often disorganized, with only a few privileged civil society organizations (CSOs) included in the process.

Community leaders and small, local civil society organizations also need to become partners in these efforts. Ownership at this level would guarantee that the 2030 Agenda matters not only as a unifying international framework, but also as a transformative document creating social cohesion and shared vision at the community level. City mayors and municipal authorities can also be, and are becoming, a driving force behind implementation, particularly outside capitals. At least 11 cities have already presented their Voluntary Local Review (VLR) to the UN, and the number keeps growing.

New Ways of Connecting the Global to the Local

To change the way governments and the UN usually work, mechanisms must be designed that allow for regular interaction between municipal authorities, community leaders, grassroots organizations, and the local private sector. The key to localizing the 2030 Agenda, then, lies in organizing these new models of engagement.

An example of such an initiative was the "Localizing the 2030 Agenda: Building on What Works" forum in The Gambia which brought together more than seventy participants from eight West African countries. The forum was intended to deepen discussion, identify good practices, and foster new ideas on how to accelerate progress on achieving the SDGs from the ground up. Participants included government officials from the central and municipal levels, and UN and civil society representatives. The forum was structured to put the local community at the center of multi-stakeholder engagement. By placing people at the center as called for in the 2030 Agenda, the process of defining implementation strategies engaged local authorities and community leaders more systematically.

Learning from New Approaches

The "Building on What Works" forum proved to be a unique and innovative model for accelerating the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. Designing such an approach, however, requires a change in mindset. There is a need to reflect on the overall approach to sustainable development, which is often a top-down process where strategies are defined at the international or national levels and implementation is expected at the municipal and local levels. It requires a shift from working in silos to working as an interconnected system from the bottom up and top down—both horizontally and vertically—while engaging in multi-stakeholder partnerships beyond the scope of traditional development actors.

Shifting mindsets allows for an environment to be created that provides space for local communities to demonstrate that they possess the solutions to their own challenges, and to present and build upon existing initiatives on the ground that are working. In SDG implementation thus far, there has been a tendency for external actors to create an agenda and specific priorities that are exogenous to the context and the needs of communities. Although well-intentioned, these efforts can be limited in their ability to bear sustainable results. If we are to learn from new approaches that empower local communities, external actors can bolster sustainable development by supporting national governments and local communities to sustain collaborative efforts and to thereby be more responsive to the reality on the ground over the long-term.

Ultimately, this shift in mindset rests on a whole-of-society approach, i.e., that achieving the SDGs will require all segments of a society at the local level. For it is only through a whole-of-society approach that the richness of knowledge, interest, and expertise that exists in all communities can be captured. By being a microcosm of the wide array of actors involved in sustainable development—from women's and youth organizations, small business and entrepreneurs, faith-based organizations and leaders, art communities, political parties, media, and others—broad-based local efforts like the "Building on What Works" forum can help identify effective entry points for collaboration that can be taken to scale at the national level.

What Does This Mean for Accelerating the 2030 Agenda?
During last year's SDG Summit, Secretary-General Guterres said, in relation to achieving the SDGs, that "we are far from where we need to be. We are off track." There are only eight years left until the goals expire in 2030. Setting global goals of this kind has been an audacious experiment since the Millennium Developments Goals in 2000. The SDGs set ambitious standards, and if we are to get on track, the 2030 Agenda needs to become a new social contract between governments and people. It needs to be known, discussed, and shaped to fit local contexts. The goals need to act as shared aspirations that connect the different layers of society. The UN has launched the "Decade of Delivery and Action," which presents a valuable opportunity to build on momentum in achieving the SDGs. Engaging and empowering leaders from the bottom-up is fundamental to these efforts.

Localized Mechanism for Ensuring Accountability to Affected Population

Azmat Khan

The concept of accountability in the humanitarian sector has been evolving for quite some time. The most broadly used classification of upward, horizontal and downward accountability have been mentioned regularly at different forums. The upward accountability is considered accountability to donors and government, horizontal accountability as accountability to own community and downward accountability to those whom the humanitarian community assist with their interventions. Specifically accountability to the affected population which had been called downward accountability by some practitioners is getting the much needed attention these days, and Inter Agency Standing committee has also identified it one of its priority in 2022-2023 in its work.

The main pillars of the accountability to affected population revolve around the involvement of the affected population in the design and delivery of the humanitarian assistance according to their needs. Currently major focus of the accountability in practice goes to the complaint registration and feedback mechanism. This approach gives very limited space to the affected population to change the design or modality of the assistance, and in situations where needs of the affected population evolves after the design of the program/project this becomes a serious dilemma, if a humanitarian operation is not responsive to the real needs of the affected population we cannot say that the humanitarian actor is accountable to affected population in its true spirit. Again in the current practices of due diligence major focus goes on to presence of written policies on complaint registration and feedback in the section of the accountability to the affected population and very little is being done on creating that true space in the humanitarian programming where the affected population can really modify the humanitarian programs to its need.

When we as humanitarian actors advocate for the flexibility in funding, we in fact are asking for improving the accountability to affected population because theoretically the flexibility in the funding will make it easier to modify the humanitarian operations according to the evolving needs of the affected population. In the current practices with non-flexible funding total accountability seems to be zero sum. Which means that the funding received from a donor is tagged for specific tasks/items, regardless of whether that task/item is now needed or not by the affected population. Now the upward accountability demands that the funding be spent exactly on those items/activities for which it had been ear marked, while the spirit of accountability to affected population demands that the operation be modified and made responsive to the needs of the affected population.

Localization and Accountability to Affected Population:
The term localization is not just a hype created after the world humanitarian summit of 2016, but it had been a long felt real need of the humanitarian operations. Localization is not just the flow of funding through local organizations but it also includes empowering the affected population, local actors, formal and informal organizations of the affected population to have a say in the decision making processes which gives direction to a humanitarian operation. The structural power imbalances in the aid sector make it difficult for the affected population to have that control and leading role. It is comparatively easier for the affected population to hold the local actors accountable, as in a theoretical situation where the humanitarian operation ends, the most accessible will be the local actors to the affected population, because the international actors after winding up the operations will leave the country or at least that place where the humanitarian action took place.

Responsiveness of the Aid and Accountability to Affected Population
Many a times the humanitarian actors mobilize funding for a disaster affected population, and understandably many times this is a time consuming process. The situation on ground keeps on changing and thus the needs of the affected population also evolves. For example a disaster coming around January in Pakistan will require winterized NFIs, but if the funding becomes available somewhere in February, those NFIs will be irrelevant to the needs of the affected population in March. There will be no complaint on the quality or quantity of items that is not going to be used by this population for the next 9 months. So a typical accountability system might tick it alright that no complaint was received, but there is a need to look beyond the tick system and see if the assistance has really caused an ease in the life of the affected population.

To overcome this issue the flexibility in humanitarian funding offers a great avenue for improving this aspect of the accountability to affected population.

Bargaining Power of the Affected Population:
The aid sector inherently has some power imbalances, where those having control over resources have more power than those who receive those resources. The development of social mobilization strategies where the affected population can form their own formal or informal organization who oversee the humanitarian operation or contribute to design and modification of the humanitarian aid is one promising solution. The concept of Jirga/Shoora need to be revitalized and the affected population be given freedom to elect those people as their representatives who can safeguard their interests in the form of having a vigilant eye on the humanitarian operation as well as the evolving needs of the affected population.

Innovative and Sustainable Localized Solutions in Thar Region

Shewa Ram Suthar

The United Nations World Water Development Report 2018 states that by 2050, approximately 6 billion people will not have access to clean water. This is the result of increasing water demand, depletion of water resources, and increasing pollution of water, driven by dramatic population and economic growth. But these figures are for the rest of the world, Tharparkar and the desert portion in Umerkot and Sanghar districts have been facing this issue for a very long.

A view of stagnant water after Rain in local Tarai in desert village

Access, availability and quality of drinking water in Thar has been a major challenge. The majority of the villages in Thar are emanated in brackish water.

The entire Thar and desert part of Sanghar and Umerkot depends on rainfall, when fortunately, there is no drought in any year and the good rains occur in the months of July and August, the rain water stands everywhere in Thar which is used by the villagers for their drinking and for the animals. Tharparkar is considered a very fragile district in terms of its socio-political situation, government and its departments have low productivity and inadequate provision of basic public services. The government is unable to provide basic services such as water, food security, health, and education.

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At the same time, pregnant women are suffering from major inequalities and injustices in various sections, even in pregnancy they travel long to fetch water from far flung areas.

In some places in Thar, the non- government organizations have built rainwater harvesting tanks and some people have even built tanks in their houses with their own help to save the rain water. After the rains, most of the rainwater in Tharparkar is standing in open areas which is locally called Traai.

The people of Tharparkar use it very carefully, they also use their intellect to purify the water and harvest it for many months. Some people have even installed locks on their water tanks in Thar. Thari culture revolves heavily around family and they are patriarchal with the oldest male making many decisions for the family. The traditional Thari family can include multiple generations living together in one household. The members of the household share incomes, expenses, and household chores, with this tradition and culture, open defecation has been going on in Thar for centuries, which has severely affected the water resources. The dried excreta mix with the sand and goes to wells and other open water ponds.

Despite such problems in Thar and in barrage side of Umerkot, people in these areas are also working hard and adopting some innovative methods to filter and save potable water which comes from different sources, i.e., rain water harvesting tanks, water wells and water courses/ canals in barrage side. If we talk about the barrage side of Umerkot, they use most of the drinking water from the watercourse which is very dirty. Now in most of houses the concept of Nadi filter is being utilized to purify the water of water course to use it for drinking purposes.

The Nadi filter is simply an optimized residence for the "good microbes" that eat up the microbes that cause diseases. The filter is designed to protect the good microbes in the sand which would be destroyed if the sand was allowed to be churned up or drained of water. They require a stable surface to live on with a constant supply of dirty water and oxygen to feed on. The sand in the filter provides an enormous surface area for them to live on and they multiply to fill this space. This takes two to three weeks to establish.

The people of Thar use local wisdome to avoid chemical contamination and save water in an innovative way and they are also purifying with the support of Nadi Filter, through boiling and

Figure   A local Nadi Filter practiced in desert village

sometimes they filter it with a cloth. Their behavior also changed after pandemic. They are also growing vegetables from the same water. The people of Thar have gained confidence that the existing water of Thar can grow the nutritious vegetables in a better way.

Localization & its Importance for Local NGOs

Jehangir Khan

It's been a while since the discussions on the Localization are being done and humanitarian actors are coming to a common understanding of "Localization", but yet many individuals are not very clear with the Grand Bargain[1], or about what localisation is, and why it is a significant commitment. That also applies to key personnel among donor and host governments, senior managers of UN agencies, INGOs and local/national CSOs, humanitarian advisors, and evaluators. One deputy country director of a UN agency in a country with a major humanitarian crisis, for example, stated "We are localised because the majority of our staff are nationals." In another study it was mentioned that seven humanitarian advisors (5 internationals, 2 nationals) in Bangladesh, three were knowledgeable about localisation discussion and commitments and committed to localisation, while four knew very little about it and did not consider it relevant.

Upon consultation, INGO staff stated that one of the reasons for this lack of knowledge is that many senior staff at country level have not received much practical guidance on what to do differently after the World Humanitarian Summit and release of the Grand Bargain. This was even seen in agencies that have formally committed to the Grand Bargain (59 signatories, 24 donors, 13 UN agencies, 19 INGOs, 2 Red Cross Red Crescent Movement and OECD). Grand Bargain working streams have been created around each of the ten commitments. Though these have produced research and analytical reports and also tips and guidance, they are not widely known at country level.

Localization of Aid
According to Plan International, aid localization is a collective process which aims to place local actors, civil society organizations, and local public institutions at the center of the humanitarian system and the humanitarian response[2].

Localization Agenda?
Localization is not about INGOs and UN agencies exiting from the humanitarian space. Rather, it is about moving away from direct service delivery and strengthening a humanitarian system that can support local authorities and responders. Localization is not about creating a dominant local actor[3].

Charter for Change?
The Charter for Change is an initiative that aims to transform the way the humanitarian system operates to enable local and national actors to play an increased and more prominent role in humanitarian response.

Localization in Humanitarian Work
Localization means increasing international investment and respect for the role of local actors, with the goal of reducing costs and increasing the reach of humanitarian action.

Commitments of Grand Bargain
The Grand Bargain commits donors and aid organizations to providing 25 per cent of global humanitarian funding to local and national responders by 2020, along with more un-earmarked money, and increased multi-year funding to ensure greater predictability and continuity in humanitarian response, among other commitments[4].

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[1] The Grand Bargain (Official website) | IASC (interagencystandingcommittee.org)
[2] Localisation of Humanitarian Action | ALNAP
[3] INGOs and the Localisation Agenda | HAD (had-int.org)
[4] Grand Bargain | Agenda for Humanity

1.   IMPORTANCE OF LOCALIZATION:

The essence of a 'participation revolution' and localisation agenda has been present in key references for humanitarian action since before the Grand Bargain or Charter for Change. The Red Cross and INGO code of conduct commits to "attempt to build disaster response on local capacities."[5] The Sphere Standards require aid agencies to "support local capacity by identifying community groups and social networks at the earliest opportunity and build on community-based and self-help initiatives." The Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) looks for a humanitarian response that "strengthens local capacities and avoids negative effects." References to the same can also be found in the humanitarian policies of various donors. Other aspects of the Grand Bargain like the harmonization of donor procedures and requirements have been long-standing commitments, and were derived from the various 'high-level meetings on Aid Effectiveness'[6] (Rome in 2003, Paris in 2005, Accra in 2008, Busan 2011)[7].

2.   RATIONALE BEHIND LOCALIZATION CONCEPT:

The rationale for localization is not clearly articulated in the Grand Bargain document. However, in light of the continued debate about the nature and even desirability of localization, this is a key question, "Why localization is important". By listening to the conversations surrounding localization since the World Humanitarian Summit, GMI has identified three possible rationales for localization.

The financial argument: Localization is needed because it is more cost-effective. Local and national actors are cheaper than international ones, and funding them directly, or providing cash to crisis affected people, reduces transaction costs. This financial justification is strong in the Grand Bargain, which is strongly grounded in the earlier report by the High Level Panel on Humanitarian Financing[8]. This report drew attention to the growing financing gap between global humanitarian needs and available humanitarian funding.

The principle argument: We should not, because we have more financial resources at hand, treat local and national actors as subordinate. They too make necessary and valuable contributions to the collective effort, and often do significant parts of the work, sometimes at high risk[9]. Local and national organizations arguing for more equitable partnerships typically do this on the grounds of principle.

The strategic argument: The strategic objective of all international cooperation in situations of crisis or 'development' should be to support and enhance the capacities for those receiving the international assistance, so that they can deal with these situations by themselves. This is in the medium-term financial interest of the donors; while deploying large international resources every time there is a crisis, is not sustainable nor it is in the best interest of all stakeholders.

A decentralization interpretation focuses strongly on the problem of excessive 'centralization' of strategic (and financial) decision making about relief responses, and acknowledges a need to be more cost-effective. Under this interpretation, 'localization' can be achieved if strategic, operational and financial decisions are made close to the 'at-risk' or affected areas, and if 25% of financial resources go 'as directly as possible' to 'local' actors (here defined as those in proximity to the crisis area), irrespective of who they are. In that interpretation, more direct funding of the nationally registered offices of international agencies and/or the

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[5]The further clarification of that commitment is no longer fully in line with current understanding: "All people and communities – even in disaster – possess capacities as well as vulnerabilities. Where possible, we will strengthen these capacities by employing local staff, purchasing local materials and trading with local companies. Where possible, we will work through local non-governmental humanitarian agencies as partners in planning and implementation and cooperate with local government structures where appropriate." International organisations employing national staff for example, is not now accepted as an expression of 'localisation'.
[6]http://www.oecd.org/dac/effectiveness/fourthhighlevelforumonaideffectiveness.htm
[7]https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Localisation-In-Practice-Full-Report-v4.pdf
[8]https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/hlp_report_too_important_to_failgcoaddressing_ the_humanitarian_financing_gap.pdf
[9]The Red Cross and INGO Code of Conduct, the Common Humanitarian Standard, reports from the 'Missed Opportunities' group of British NGOs, and the Charter for Change signed up to by a wider group of INGOs, appear more motivated by principle.

national affiliates of international alliances, counts as contributions to the 25% objective.

A transformation interpretation: The 'domineering' presence and attitudes of international agencies are important obstacles to national leadership and to building strong and sustained national capacities. This obstacle will continue until international organizations are prepared to share at least part of the global purse for humanitarian financing. 'Transformers' are also concerned that localization as 'decentralization' turns into an incentive to accelerate the 'multi-nationalization' of INGOs: creating more and more national offices and national affiliates, that will also have to compete in fundraising from the domestic market. This does not diversify the organizational eco-system, because there is no level playing field for those who do not have these structural international relations. Increased competition in the domestic market will further reduce the space, especially for national civil society organizations, who are already under financial and sometimes also political pressures.

The spirit of the Grand Bargain suggests that the appropriate interpretation of 'localization' is more of 'transformation' than of 'decentralization'[10].

3.   IMPORTANCE OF LOCALIZATION FOR LOCAL NGOs

Localization has been debated and researched for a full four years now. While there are many laudable small examples of change, a lot remains to be done. Overall progress remains slow and there is little evidence of structural or systemic change. Local and national actors who were present at the World Humanitarian Summit are becoming skeptical, wondering whether it was more than an expensive public relations event. It is not acceptable that so many in-country decision makers and advisors, including from agencies that have signed up to the Grand Bargain or the Charter for Change, are still unclear about what that means in practice.

Details may remain that need further reflection and discussion, but there is sufficient clarity now about what the justifications and motivations are for localization, what the overall intent is ('reinforce' rather than 'replace') and how that translates into operational practices. The donors also need to create an enabling environment and priorities investment in local and national actors, which will permit a faster pace of localization.

The social sector may get the following benefits of localization if pursued with continuity and untiring efforts with a sustainable actions, individually and through networks like NHN, Near Network, Start Network etc.

- Common standards and a coordinated approach are applied for community engagement and participation, with emphasis on inclusion and supported by a common platform for sharing and analyzing data to strengthen decision-making, transparency, accountability and limit duplication;

- Local dialogue is used as well as technologies to support agile, transparent but also secure feedback.

- There is a systematic link between feedback and corrective action to adjust programming.

- Donors provide time and resources for this and fund with flexibility to facilitate program adaptation in response to community feedback.

- All humanitarian response plans – and strategic monitoring of them - as of the beginning of 2018 demonstrate analysis and consideration of inputs from affected communities (from Commitment 6 'participation revolution').

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[10] K. Van Brabant & S. Patel 2017: Understanding Localization Debate. https://www.gmentor.org/localization & S. Patel & K. Van Brabant 2017: The Start Fund, Start Network and Localization: current situation and future directions. Start Network & Global Mentoring Initiative, April 2017 https://start-network.app.box.com/s/3hs 09ryakami7n8hjliaruaaw9ycir4r

- Data collection is coordinated and streamlined to ensure compatibility, quality and comparability, thus minimizing intrusion into the lives of affected people (from Commitment 5: Improve joint and impartial needs assessments);

- Cash transfers are used routinely, alongside in-kind assistance, service provision and vouchers (from Commitment 2 'cash-based programing'); More support and funding for local and national responders. There is multi-year investment in the institutional capacities of local and national responders, including preparedness, response and coordination capacities. This is also being achieved in collaboration with development partners and through the incorporation of capacity strengthening in partnership agreements.

- Barriers that prevent organizations and donors from partnering with local and national responders are removed, and their administrative burden reduced.

- National coordination mechanisms are supported where they exist, and local and national responders are included in international coordination mechanisms, as appropriate and in keeping with humanitarian principles.

- A global aggregate of minimum 25% of humanitarian funding goes to local and national responders as directly as possible, reducing transaction costs and improving outcomes for affected people.

- A 'localization marker' is used to measure direct and indirect funding to local and national actors.

- Greater use is made of funding tools which increase and improve assistance delivered by local and national responders, such as country-based pooled funds (from Commitment 2: More support and funding for local and national responders).

- There is a noticeable increase in multi-year, collaborative and flexible planning and multi-year funding instruments, and the impacts on program efficiency and effectiveness are documented. Oversight is exercised to ensure that recipients apply the same funding arrangements with their implementing partners (from Commitment 7: Increased collaborative, multi-year humanitarian planning and funding).

- Partnership agreements are harmonized and partner assessment information is shared (from Commitment 4: Reduce duplication and management costs).

- Reporting is simplified and harmonized, with a common report structure, centered on core requirements and a common terminology (from Commitment 9 on reporting requirements);

- Donor's funding is traceable throughout the transaction chain as far as the final responders and, where feasible, affected people.

4.   RECOMMENDATIONS

1.   Develop clear practical guidance for country-level decision makers and staff and set up a monitoring mechanism to ensure that GB and Charter for Change commitments are being implemented. NHN in Pakistan is playing its role, however all NGOs need to put their share in any possible form to speed up the process.

2.   Continuous communication through verbal or written briefing notes and via short video or audio clips

are necessary to explain the why, what and how of 'localization.' As many NGOs and it staff even on senior positions are not fully aware of the term and agenda.

3. Ensure that there is special attention to recognize and support the capacity at local level, which could include community-based organizations, local civil society groups, local authorities, etc.

4. Ensure space for and support already existing local level networks and forums (like NHN and PHF), as it helps them to collaborate and strengthen their own collective capacity to communicate and respond to issues in their own communities.

5. In contexts of chronic or recurrent crisis, in-between times provide the opportunity to map and strategically reinforce the eco-system of collective capacities. That will reduce the need to rely heavily on international surge capacity. Global surge preparedness should include policies, procedures and competencies to support and reinforce local capacities in a crisis situation.

6. The leaders of international organizations and donors should articulate more clearly what is expected of their staff to ensure implementation of the commitments to localization.

7. Relief actors, individually and collectively, need to take action at the above four levels if they are to succeed in adhering to their commitments. The 'Seven Dimensions Framework' will assist action most directly at operational level.

8. Contextual analysis is essential, and reflecting on the above influencing factors to assist in determining the pathways/speeds and the type of investment that is necessary for localization to succeed.

Strengthening Local Capacity on Disaster Risk Management to Promote Human Value in Nepal

Suresh Thapa, Puja Shakya, Man Thapa, Shyam Jnavaly and Krishna Ghimire

Context

Disasters are globally understood to be those unprecedented occurrences, that inflict loss of lives and properties of peoples residing in and around any specific location or region. Human sufferings under such circumstances have been evident in the form of life and property loss, long-term injuries leading to disability, and deprivation of basic human entitlements. All of these ultimately weaken human value and force individuals, regions, or countries into poverty. Therefore, it becomes essential that human values and sufferings need to be safeguarded prior, during, or post to any aftermaths. Disaster Risk Management (DRM) and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), preparedness, and resilience-building should be framed as part of the core rights- and needs-based mandate of humanitarians[1]. Humanitarian actions are guided by humanitarian principles based on humanity (saving human lives and alleviating suffering), impartiality (response based on need and without discrimination), neutrality (non-biased to any side in conflict or dispute), and independence (governed by humanitarian objectives).

Nepal is classified as one of the top 20 multi-hazard countries in the world[2] that is exposed and susceptible to multi-hazard risks due to its geography, geological position, and climate change. Every year multiple forms of hazards like floods, landslides, fire, earthquakes, and lightning have caused great loss of life and property. Between 2017 and 2018, a total of 6,381 disaster incidents have been recorded by the National Emergency Operation Center (NEOC) of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA). These incidents claimed the lives of 968 people and injured 3,639[3]. These situations demand better preparedness, response as well as effective humanitarian assistance, where government, humanitarian agencies, and the private sector play their roles for immediate response.

The Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DRRM) Act 2017 has provided sets of DRM and DRR structures to address disaster management at federal, provincial, and local government levels, in Nepal. In recent and past years, a series of capacity-building initiatives to improve the capacities of national and local actors are gradually improving them to prepare for and respond to disasters, but such capacities are still inadequate without the integration of humanitarian perspective in DRR and DRM at all levels.

Humanitarian Standard Training and its Importance in DRM

The Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) is made up of nine commitments (Figure 1) that have been designed to facilitate the improvement of the quality and effectiveness of humanitarian response and actions. These are undertaken by institutions/organizations and individuals to prevent and alleviate human suffering during emergencies. On the other hand, disaster management plans and their execution become effective only when humanitarian perspectives and standards are embedded and reflected in
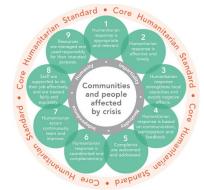

Figure 1: Core Humanitarian Standard

[1] Scaling up Disaster Risk Reduction in Humanitarian Action, 2020. UNDRR. https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Integrating DRR-Humanitarian-v07.pdf

[2] UNDRR (2019). Disaster Risk Reduction in Nepal: Status Report 2019. Bangkok, Thailand, United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific

[3] Nepal Disaster Report, 2019. Ministry of Home Affairs. 1594.pdf (drrportal.gov.np)

those plans. Therefore, DRM and DRR actors at all levels need to be capacitated and facilitated to build their respective legal and humanitarian frameworks on DRRM and refine their understanding of humanitarian imperatives during disaster preparedness and planning.

Initiatives Engaging Local Stakeholders in Humanitarian Action in DRM

Asian Preparedness Partnership (APP) is a unique multi-stakeholder regional partnership established by the Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC). It includes countries from South and Southeast Asia to better prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters. The partnership is supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (the Foundation) and the United States Agency for International Development Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (USAID BHA).

APP strives to improve stakeholder coordination and dialogue between governments, local humanitarian organization networks, and the private sector to enhance capacities through partnerships, knowledge resources, training, and networking opportunities. The APP serves as a network of networks connecting these key local actors who are working on emergency response and disaster risk management at the national and sub-national levels for a more coordinated and effective response at the time of disaster. It promotes locally led disaster preparedness, response, and recovery actions through improved coordination mechanisms, strengthened humanitarian leadership, training, and capacity development, systems transformation, innovation, south-south learning and knowledge exchange, and regional cooperation. The partnership's overall goal is: "Safer and well-prepared communities through locally-led DRM actions, so that disaster impacts on at-risk communities of Asia will be reduced".

APP's efforts are contributing to priority 4 of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR) 2015-2030 for 'enhancing disaster preparedness for effective response'. The partnership's commitments are also aligned with the World Humanitarian Summit and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. (Source: Asian Preparedness Partnership (APP) – ADPC APP). As the National Chapter of the APP, the Nepal Preparedness Partnership (NPP) was formed on 24th December 2017, in partnership with the Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA), Nepal Disaster Resilient Network (NDRNet), Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industries (FNCCI) and National Disaster Risk Reduction Centre (NDRC).

The initiatives under APP and NPP have objectives of strengthening the capacity of humanitarian actors in DRM and DRR. Various capacity building activities on enhancing knowledge and implementation of Humanitarian Standards were conducted by the NPP team. The team developed the Humanitarian Standards Training Manual for local actors to institutionalize and apply the actions, under NPP.

In the context of humanitarian principles and standards in Nepal, brief capacity needs assessment and a gap analysis were commissioned to gauge the existing capacity and gaps among local actors namely local humanitarian organizations (LHOs), private sector organizations, and the local/provincial government (municipalities) authorities. The assessment showed that LHO members were relatively aware of the Sphere standard (What are humanitarian standards? | Sphere Standards) and Core Humanitarian Standard. Local authorities and private sectors were less aware of these standards. Despite the various levels of awareness, these standards have not been institutionalized. Based on the findings of the assessment, a training manual was developed in Nepali. The manual incorporated training contents to address the existing gaps. The final version manual was also shared through a national-level workshop on World Humanitarian Day.

Under the umbrella of APP and NPP, NDRC collaborated with the MoHA; Disaster Preparedness Network (DPNet); and Association of International NGOs (AIN), to organize one national-level, three provincial level, and one municipal level Basic Training of Trainers (BTOT) in September – December 2021. The key objectives of

the training were to enhance the capacity of local humanitarian actors on humanitarian principles and assistance, as well as to disseminate the developed Humanitarian Standard Training Manual. The training is specifically intended to produce local champions for promoting humanitarian and localization agenda; streamline humanitarian principles into the institutionalization and capacity-building process of organizations working in this field of humanitarian assistance; to increase the capacity of locally-led actions to prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters; and improve the quality of humanitarian responses at all levels. Moreover, this effort was made to promote and upgrade the understanding of humanitarian perspectives at all three levels of the governance system of Nepal for DRM through various events.

Various participatory learning and sharing approaches were exercised during the trainings including mini-lectures, question-answer/ floor discussion, brainstorming, audiovisual presentation, quiz, peer learning, group work, and intra-group. To enable better understanding among the participants, sessions and scenarios were developed and linked with the local contexts. Role-plays were performed similarly to participants' normal work roles so that they could internalize and relate their actual roles during emergencies.

Key Achievements of the Training

Based on the feedback received from the participants using pre and post-tests and training evaluations, the overall trainings were successful and beneficial to the participants. The trainings contributed to refining and adding knowledge and perception of the participants with respect to causes of disasters, the difference between hazard and disaster, DRM, and DRR. Among the 174 participants, 148 participants responded in pre and post-tests with their ideas, knowledge, and perspectives.

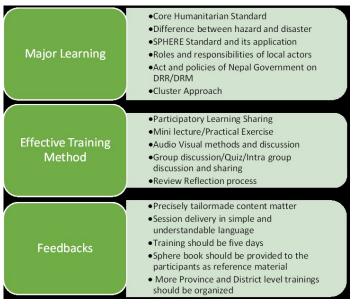**Knowledge sharing and key discussions during the training sessions**

- Survivors are humans and humanitarian assistance to them should be carried out based on impartially, independence, humanity and neutrally to reduce human sufferings.
- The survivors of disaster or conflict have the right to receive protection and assistance to ensure the basic condition for life with dignity. Thus, it becomes essential for all supporting agencies to respect their right to life with dignity and reduce human sufferings.
- Developing a common understanding of humanitarian perspective/standards and disaster management enables the basic compliance of humanitarian standards during disaster management.
- CHS, Sphere, and other humanitarian standards aim to safeguard the humanitarian value of the affected, at-risk, and needy population during the process of disaster management and climate change initiatives.
- Local level is the initial impacted area for any disaster, and also the first responders in any such event. Thus, the capacity, skills, and resources, and compliance of national and international guidelines at the local level determine its ability to withstand, respond and safeguard the humanitarian value at times of disaster.
- Fulfillment of humanitarian principles and standards during preparedness, response, and recovery operations by humanitarian agencies is a step closure to ensuring quality response and accountability.

Major Learning	• Core Humanitarian Standard • Difference between hazard and disaster • SPHERE Standard and its application • Roles and responsibilities of local actors • Act and policies of Nepal Government on DRR/DRM • Cluster Approach
Effective Training Method	• Participatory Learning Sharing • Mini lecture/Practical Exercise • Audio Visual methods and discussion • Group discussion/Quiz/Intra group discussion and sharing • Review Reflection process
Feedbacks	• Precisely tailormade content matter • Session delivery in simple and understandable language • Training should be five days • Sphere book should be provided to the participants as reference material • More Province and District level trainings should be organized

Key Challenges, Opportunities, and Learnings

Humanitarian perspective, principles, and standards are discussion points that arise only when disaster strikes. The customary approach to emergency response is more guided by the charity-based mindset rather than the humanitarian approach. The topic of humanitarian approaches has gradually come into practice to fulfill ground context and donor accountability but has yet to be institutionalized among all humanitarian actors at all levels. It was primarily not in effect at the local level. Participants of the trainings also faced a similar dilemma since they had been dealing with the issues in a smaller and fragmented context. The participants were with various levels of understanding and mindset regarding the topics of the sessions, which was one of the challenges to bring them into the basic common understanding of the training topics. In addition, the context by which they understood disasters and humanitarian aspects were also identified as different. For instance, participants from remote mountainous areas have a different experience of disasters and humanitarian assistance than the participants from plain areas of the country. However, this had also been an opportunity for the trainers as well as the participants to know the instances from different regions and contexts from the country during the training sessions.

> Shalik Ram Poudel, Livestock Development Officer, Ratnanagar Municipality
> "Our confusion on the approach and understanding of relief assistance was more inclined towards the charity mindset. With this training, it has become clear to us that every assistance needs to incorporate the humanitarian principle as the affected have the right to life and dignity"

The participatory and the practical approaches of the training sessions made the facilitation as well as knowledge transfer and enhancement of the participants efficient and easy. In addition, the thematic experts helped deliver the practical sessions to better understand the session by the participants with clarity.

Although there are many national guidelines, policies, and directives to ensure safety and security from unprecedented disastrous events, everyone needs to have a common understanding of the humanitarian standards to manage operational barriers to the response. This was one of the key learning and experiences during the training. Additionally, the participants from the local level expressed that to better understand and improve the technical aspects of humanitarian standards in DRM, technical assistance will enable them to better perform and protect the human value of the affected and needy population during any stage of the disasters. During the discussions of the training sessions, it was also understood that periodic consultation and knowledge sharing among humanitarian workers to upgrade and update knowledge, enhance coordination, and cooperation among organizations working at all levels during disaster management is essential. The participants agreed that national and local level governments along with humanitarian organizations should contribute to developing a uniform understanding of humanitarian standards at all levels.

> Deepa Ghimire, Chief- Women, Children, and Senior Citizens Section, Ratnanagar Municipality
> "The most important aspect during emergency relief and response is to maintain optimum coordination and cooperation with all levels of the government and local humanitarian organizations. This supports effective and efficient works to minimize duplications of works and makes everyone accountable."

Way Forward and Recommendation

Knowledge on Humanitarian Standards should be imparted and enhanced at the local and grassroots level for improving DRM planning and implementation. Similarly, LHOs need to streamline and institutionalize Humanitarian Standards for DRM. Furthermore, promoting training to local level actors will enable them to prepare a critical mass of local actors to lobby, advocate, and improve humanitarian assistance as the first responders.Krishna Adhikari – Rastriya Samachar Samiti (Journalist)

"Humanitarian assistance is driven by principles and standards of humanity. Observance of it will enable timely and need-based assistance to communities to reduce their suffering and ensure their human value."

Additionally, the training manual developed should contextualize the existing humanitarian standards into the local context and also translate them into local language. Similarly, capacity building activities for the local actors should be prioritized too, along with regular and timely monitoring and evaluation of the activities. The

manual developed should be encouraged to be used by all organizations working in DRM so that the standards are adequately understood and applied accordingly.

The Localization Agenda 2030 – Emergences (Importance & Challenges), Room for Innovation from Regional / Country Perspective of Pakistan

Syed Javed Gillani

The Grand Bargain its subsequent launch in World Humanitarian Summit of 2016, is a commitment and agreement between some of the largest humanitarian organizations and donors to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of humanitarian action by providing more resources to the people in needs, leading to resilience building against predictable and unforeseen disasters. To achieve this, the Localization agenda remains the key component of the Grand Bargain which, advertently, emphasizes the resourcefulness of local actors including the civil society and local communities. Localization has been described as a "more global way of thinking about the transformation in development finance, and in the spirit of thinking and acting on emergencies and development starting with actors who are "closest to the scene." (Vielajus &Charancle, 2020).

While the Global humanitarian and development narratives remained pre-dominant in devising, directing and rolling out of the localization agenda, the contextual experiences at regional levels are significantly varying. The shrinking humanitarian and development finance is an existential challenge for major part of the local civil society which clearly highlights the importance of localization agenda more than ever. On the other hand, the definition of localization as '' incremental change" suggests that the role of international actors will continue to be a necessity for the foreseeable future. This majorly led to arguable debates on resource distribution between local and international civil society, while digging out the questions around capacity, outreach and access, accountability, transparency, ownership etc. Needless to say that the overwhelming majority of humanitarian assistance is already provided by local actors which clearly emphasizes the re-conceiving of humanitarian sector from bottom up rather than top down.

According to a 2017 report by the Australian Red Cross, an effective and powerful international humanitarian ecosystem would invest both in local and international capacities based on their areas of comparative advantage. However, there is very little investment in local capacity, coupled with inconsistent support for local leadership and coordination mechanisms, both of which are focus areas in The Grand Bargain. It seems that international humanitarian actors harbor a blind spot on how they can engage national and local actors, based on assumptions made about the added value and potential of national and local actors to contribute and lead humanitarian action.

Humanitarian and developmental interventions based on the needs of the local communities surely carry significant weightage during programmes and project's design. Meanwhile, over the course, increased emphasize on right based approach has had significantly positive results on sustainability as well as resilience building of the local community and civil society. Voicing the rights of most marginalized and providing them tools to pursue their objectives is the most effective means towards sustainable transformation. Investing on the local resource through capacity building, behavior change communication, linkage development with local authorities must remain the key priority of donors as well as international humanitarian and development fora. Equitable allocation of humanitarian and development financing to local actors is core element of localization agenda and hence, rather than creating a deadlock, both local and international organizations must endeavor to build an environment of acceptability and synergy building based on comparative advantages and acceptance of each other. For the same purpose, developing partnerships based on mutual trust and complementarity is significant.

In Pakistan's context, the application and practicability of localization agenda is more relevant owing the decade's long partnership building between the local and international civil society. The prior presence of

humanitarian system and its subsequent transition to development have multiple learnings leading to the fact that localization needs time and space to experiment, fail and learn without the process being stifled, controlled, or constrained. An experimentation space that allows local actors to 'try stuff'. This may seem too idealistic for the times we are in, but we ought to make time for getting things done right. The risk estimation should move away from national and local actors towards what we could lose as a collective.

Integrated approach is a key component to sustainable and cost-efficient programmes providing ample space for innovation and adaptability to local civil society. Towards this end, emphasize should be given to partnership development with local communities rather than the short term one-time givers' and recipients' casual interaction leading to increased dependency. To achieve this, progressive and visible transition from relief to early recovery to development by local as well as international actors must remain the key priority at all levels. Operational or partners-based interventions, the international and local civil society must emphasize clearly on distribution of autonomy over project's resources while equally clarifying the division of accountability at all levels. From contractual mind-set to partnership development, the notion of localization agenda must be taken further from a development jargon to practical and workable model supporting 2030 agenda of World Humanitarian Summit in life and spirit.

In the end, although localization feels a lot like an implementable strategy, it has been five years since The Grand Bargain was set in motion, the elevated goals for localization are still far-fetched. There is an all-around change in roles that needs to happen, in which, concerns like questions around capability, training, accountability and minimizing financial risks need to be de-emphasized as well as logically described from the perspectives of local and international civil society actors.

Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre (ADPC) with support from Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) is implementing the program 'Increased Locally Led Actions to Prepare for, Respond to and Recover from Diasters in selected high risk Countries of Asia' in 6 South and South-East Asian countries namely- Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Cambodia, Philippines and Myanmar.

The program utilizes a unique network approach by creating the Asian Preparedness Partnership (APP) - a multi-stakeholder regional partnership through the program. APP strives to improve inter-organizational coordination and dialogue between Governments, Local Humanitarian Organization networks and Private Sector networks for enhancing capacities through partnerships, knowledge resources, training and networking opportunities. The program's goal is to strengthen the emergency response capacities in these countries to better prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters.