

European Humanitarian Forum

Forum humanitaire européen



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OPERATIONALISING OUR COLLECTIVE COMMITMENT TOWARDS LOCALISATION

Key recommendations as emerged from Field Consultations held in Bangkok and Panama in November 2021

- 1. The EU, its member states, and humanitarian stakeholders should foster the complementarity between local and international levels:** While local organizations are generally better equipped than international ones in terms of contextual knowledge and field presence, the limitation of their capacities (needs assessments, logistics, security, expertise in conflict context, among others) is often a real constraint for the localization of the response. In this sense, the analysis of capacities should be systematically carried out in each crisis, context, country, or project, so that appropriate capacity building support programmes tackle the main gaps identified. Without a continuous support on this, local organizations may be weakened instead of reinforced as a heavy price to pay for their engagement in a humanitarian response.
2. Communities, community-based organizations, and local government units should be and are at the forefront of localization. Anticipatory action can be one of key enabling factors in localizing humanitarian action. By enabling at-risk communities to decide their preparedness actions, mobilizing local actors and empowering local governments, it requires social preparation facilitated by local partners and sustainable engagement of the local government. A fine balance between localization and risk transfer.
3. With that, investing in local governance is essential. With limited resources, this must be multiplied in order to maximize investment in capitalizing partnership and harmonizing capacity development for a local government.
4. Local organizations and communities affected by humanitarian crises should be recognized as partners and not as mere contractors to implement activities predefined by international agencies and donors or as recipients of assistance. Involvement in the whole programming cycle from the formulation phase, recognition, visibility, and acknowledgement of their contribution are not only good practices, but a strong commitment that should be undertaken by humanitarian actors and measured through specific indicators.
5. Local actors should not be left alone in complex contexts where the humanitarian space and their own security is under threat. Risks should not be transferred to local actors, and front liners should be supported to ensure their access and security through the allocation of specific resources, training on humanitarian principles, security measures and provision of psychologic support in situations with critical and intensive exposure. We propose that joint advocacy mechanisms are systematically established to protect the humanitarian space, which is often more restricted for local organizations.
6. Lack of resources often undermines the development of local capacities. Humanitarian funding should be flexible and allow multiyear actions for a sustainable improvement. Specific budget lines should be

set up to allow local organizations to access direct funding. Indirect costs coverage should be shared between international organizations and their local partners, thus supporting them to keep their capacity. Competition between international and local actors for local staff should be avoided, as this undermines local capacities.

7. Humanitarian coordination mechanisms should systematically integrate local actors. Their multiplicity and diversity should be overcome through different ways as for example supporting networks of civil society organizations to enhance their leverage, coordination, and productive dialog.
8. Localization is key to improve the efficiency and pertinence of humanitarian response. In this sense, we encourage the European Union and international humanitarian stakeholders to listen more systematically to the populations they want to protect. Continued engagement of the EU in the process of institutionalizing localization is essential. The EU could play a vital role as an interface between international commitments and the communities.