

Localising Humanitarian Action

Case Studies from Uganda, Kenya, the Philippines, and India



Photo credit: Humanitarian Aid International (HAI) - India

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Executive Summary

There is growing interest in the theory and practice of localisation in Uganda's humanitarian action. Globally, the localisation movement was accelerated by 'The Grand Bargain,' an agreement that aims to get more direct funding to national and local actors in order to support a more locally led response. The Charter for Change (C4C) is an initiative led by local, national, and international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to help move forward some of the commitments of the Grand Bargain.

This report highlights the achievements of the C4C Working Group (C4C WG) in Uganda and summarises learning from three organisations championing localisation in Kenya, the Philippines, and India. The objective of the report is to inform localisation planning in Uganda.

The C4C WG has been an instrumental platform for advancing the localisation agenda in Uganda and has an active, growing membership holding dialogues and advocating for localisation. The group has also provided learning opportunities and an information and knowledge sharing platform. Key successes include: increased capacity building opportunities for local NGOs (LNGOs), enhanced partnerships with international NGOs (INGOs), and improved access to funding opportunities for LNGOs from agencies, such as UNHCR. By having women in leadership roles, the C4C WG is also bringing local women's voices into humanitarian coordination spaces.

In Kenya, the NGO Arid Lands Development Focus (ALDEF) has been a champion for localisation and is the chair of the Kenya C4C WG. ALDEF developed a network of LNGOs in the arid and semi-arid region of the country. The network has leveraged partnerships and accessed funding to benefit members located in the most crisis-affected areas, facilitated by a 'passporting' process, where the LNGO's financial capacity is assessed once and shared with other international partners. The network influences funding decisions by sitting on Project Steering Committees (PSC) and providing local data to help inform a response.

In the Philippines, the national NGO (NNGO) Ecosystems Work for Essential Benefits (ECOWEB) led a country-level multi-stakeholder dialogue process on localisation. ECOWEB is a participant of the international C4C Coordination Working Group. The participatory dialogue process highlighted the desire of local crisis-affected actors to be part of the response through meaningful and quality partnerships, and not just passive recipients. ECOWEB models meaningful partnership by supporting LNGOs and Community-Based Organisations (CBO) with microgrants and technical support, and by co-designing proposals.

In India, the NNGO Humanitarian Aid International (HAI) is a leader in localisation. It helped form the Alliance for Empowered Partnerships, a signatory of the Grand Bargain, and was the first organisation of the Global South to host the C4C Global Secretariat. HAI has created a national platform for local organisations and acts as an intermediary, attracting funding from national and international sources to disburse to its member LNGOs in crisis-affected areas. HAI worked with the START Network to develop the Indian Humanitarian Hub, a way to share knowledge, innovate, and develop a pooled fund.

Recommendations that can be drawn from the experiences of the three organisations are:

1. Carry out a multi-stakeholder dialogue process that engages L/NNGOs, populations affected by crises, local governments, and other local first responders.
2. Establish a network of L/NNGOs to leverage partnerships and coordinate a response.
3. Establish a passporting process so that LNGOs can more readily work with other international partners and scale up a response.
4. Provide training to build the response capacity of local actors before a crisis.
5. Support NNGOs that model localisation to act as intermediaries.
6. Develop longer-term strategic partnerships that define roles based on the strengths of each partner.
7. Collaborate with actors to establish a pooled fund mechanism.
8. Continue to advocate for localisation.

1. Introduction

In Uganda, there is growing interest in the theory and practice of localisation in humanitarian action. The multiple local, national, and international actors involved in the refugee response are guided by the [Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework¹](#) (CRRF) and the Secretariat of the CRRF is developing an implementation plan for its localisation strategy. Many of the local, national and international non-governmental organisations (NGO) involved in the response are also part of the [Charter for Change²](#) (C4C) Working Group in Uganda. The C4C Working Group (C4C WG) provides a space for dialogue on localisation and is in the process of developing its strategic priorities.

To inform these strategic priorities and the related plans, the Uganda Learning, Evidence, Accountability, and Research Network ([U-Learn³](#)) was asked to document learning on localisation from other contexts. U-Learn and its [Learning Hub⁴](#) (LH) facilitate cross-sectorial learning and knowledge exchange to improve outcomes for refugees and host communities in Uganda.

Three countries that have had successes in localisation were chosen to be the focus of the investigation: Kenya, the Philippines, and India. Key informant interviews were held with a representative of a national organisation in each of the three countries. These interviews were complemented by a desk review of relevant resources.

This report provides a brief introduction to localisation in section 2, then documents the progress of the C4C WG in Uganda in section 3. In sections 4 to 6, the report showcases successes and learning from three organisations championing localisation in the countries of focus. In the final section, the report highlights key takeaways from the case studies that actors in Uganda can draw on in their own localisation planning.

It is worth noting that the research in this report has a narrow scope. The learning shared in each case study reflects only one organisation's experience and not necessarily the experience of the many other stakeholders involved in the broader localisation process in each country.

1 <https://opm.go.ug/comprehensive-refugee-response-framework-uganda/>

2 <https://charter4change.org/>

3 <https://ulearn-uganda.org/>

4 <https://ulearn-uganda.org/learning-hub/>

2. Understanding Localisation

‘The Grand Bargain’

The [World Humanitarian Summit \(WHS\)](#)⁵ in 2016 represents a pivotal moment for the humanitarian sector. The WHS came in response to the growing recognition of the power imbalance and inefficiencies within the humanitarian system where international actors that are furthest from the crises tend to have greater decision-making powers and control of resources, and local responders have the least influence and access to funding. The outcome of the WHS was an agreement between donors and humanitarian organisations, known as ‘[The Grand Bargain](#).’ The Grand Bargain (GB) aims to ‘get more means into the hands of people in need and to improve the effective⁶ness and efficiency of the humanitarian action.’⁷

The initial agreement included 51 commitments in ten workstreams that were meant to shrink humanitarian needs, deepen and broaden the resource base, and improve aid delivery. The most prominent among these is the commitment to provide at least 25% of annual global humanitarian financing to national and local actors ‘as directly as possible’ by 2020.⁸

In the five years following the WHS, the number of [signatories](#) to the GB grew from 30 to 65.⁹ The broad and ambitious scope of the GB, however, made it challenging to advance on all commitments. In 2021, the framework was revised to focus on a narrower set of priorities, focusing on the two key enablers of **quality funding** and **localisation/participation**.¹⁰

This revised set of priorities is known as the ‘Grand Bargain 2.0’ and received renewed commitment from the signatories.

Workstreams of The Grand Bargain (2016)

- Greater transparency.
- Support to local and national responders.
- Increase cash-based programming.
- Reduce duplication and management costs.
- Improve joint and impartial needs assessments.
- A participation revolution.
- Multi-year planning and funding.
- Reduce the earmarking of donor contributions.
- Harmonise and simplify donor requirements.
- Enhance engagement between humanitarian and development actors.

5 <https://agendaforhumanity.org/summit.html>

6 <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/grand-bargain-official-website/grand-bargain-signatories>

7 Inter-Agency Standing Committee. 2022. The Grand Bargain (Official website) <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/grand-bargain>

8 Smutri, P. and K. Van Brabant. 2017. The Start Fund, Start Network, and Localisation: current situation and future directions. Start Network.

9 Inter-Agency Standing Committee. 2022. The Grand Bargain (Official website) <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/about-the-grand-bargain>

10 Metcalfe-Hough, V., W. Fenton, P. Saez, and A. Spencer. 2022. The Grand Bargain in 2021. An independent review. Humanitarian Policy Group.

Localisation

The idea of localisation is not new. There have been efforts independent of the GB to build the capacities of local actors to respond to development and humanitarian challenges. The advantages of supporting local humanitarian responders are clear:¹¹

- Earlier and faster responses
- Greater cost effectiveness
- Better access to affected populations
- Better understanding of local circumstances, politics, and cultures
- Greater acceptance by local populations
- Potential to link response, recovery, and development initiatives
- Increased accountability to local populations
- Greater sustainability

The concept of localisation, however, is less clear. The initial GB refers to localisation as principled humanitarian action that is '*as local as possible and as international as necessary*.' The broadness of the concept in the GB has led to two different interpretations that each shape the way organisations move forward the localisation agenda:

- a. Decentralisation interpretation:** where strategic, operational, and financial decisions are made physically close to 'at-risk' or affected populations. To decentralise decision-making, some international NGOs (INGOs) register their organisation as a local affiliate or branch in aid recipient countries.
- b. Transformation interpretation:** where the humanitarian system is transformed so that the strategic, operational, and financial decisions are made by local and national humanitarian actors (LNHAs).¹²

It is the latter interpretation that is used by the organisations consulted in this report. To better operationalise localisation, countries and organisations developed their own definitions within the broader interpretations. One commonly referenced definition, developed by humanitarian actors in the Pacific, reinforces the concept of localisation as transformation:¹³

'Localisation is a process of recognising, respecting and strengthening the leadership by local authorities and the capacity of local civil society in humanitarian action, in order to better address the needs of affected populations and to prepare national actors for future humanitarian responses.'

The revised framework of the [Grand Bargain 2.0](#) reinforces the idea that localisation is transformation by prioritising both localisation and participation in enabling priority 2: '*Greater support is provided for the **leadership, delivery and capacity** of local responders and the **participation of affected communities** in addressing humanitarian needs.*' In the GB, localisation is about empowering local actors, strengthening local leadership, and involving local responders throughout all phases of humanitarian assistance.

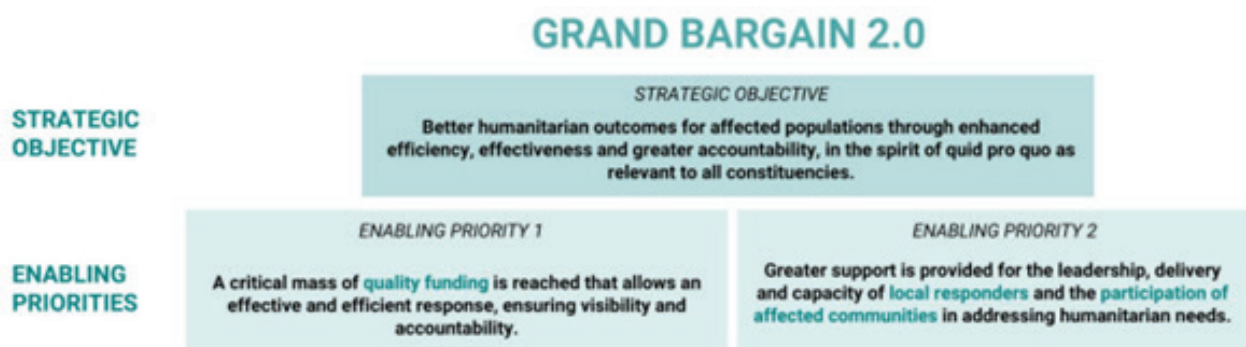
Typology of Local and National Humanitarian Actors (LNHAs)

In its report *Localising the Response*, the OECD developed the following typology of local humanitarian actors:

- National and sub-national state actors
- National authorities in aid recipient countries
- National and sub-national civil society actors
- National Societies of the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement
- National NGOs and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)
- Sub-national/local NGOs and CSOs
- Local and national private sector organisations

11 International Federation of Red Cross. 2018. Policy Brief: Localization – what it means and how to achieve it; Fabre, C. 2017. *Localising the Response*. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).
12 Patel, S. and K. Van Brabant. 2017.
13 Fabre, C. 2017.

Figure 1: Strategic objective and enabling priorities of the Grand Bargain 2.0 (IASC 2021)



As shown in figure 1, priority 2 is complemented by enabling priority 1 on Quality Funding,¹⁴ which focuses on more predictable, multi-year funding (particularly for protracted crises), that has flexible arrangements, and is channelled as close to the frontline as possible. One of the mechanisms promoted to achieve quality funding is pooled funds.¹⁵

Pooled funds: This type of mechanism allows donors to pool their contributions into a single, unearmarked fund that goes towards local humanitarian efforts. A pooled funds mechanism provides flexible and timely funding, allows for new and diverse donors to contribute, and allocates funding based on needs. Examples of pooled funds are the United Nations' (UN) **Country-Based Pooled Funds (CBPF)**, the UN **Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF)**, the Red Cross/Red **Crescent Disaster Response Emergency Fund (DREF)**, and the START Network's **START Fund**.

Moving forward

There have been some advances on the GB commitments, particularly in relation to increasing cash assistance and supporting local leadership. There was also an increase in the volume of flexible and multi-year funding in 2021, though the financial requirements to meet humanitarian needs increased at a higher pace.¹⁶ The overall proportion of humanitarian financing going directly to local and national actors rose to 3.1% in 2020 but fell to 1.2% in 2021. This is far from the goal of providing 25% of the funding to local and national actors established in the GB. However, 12 of the GB signatories¹⁷ have reported meeting or exceeding the target.

Although there is a strong case for localisation, studies have highlighted common barriers that are slowing progress, such as:¹⁸

1. Many donor policies do not allow direct funding to local organisations; eligible organisations must often be from the donor country.
2. Limited administrative capacity of donors and INGOs to manage multiple contracts with local actors.
3. Continual loss of institutional memory and capacity as local and national NGO (L/NGO) personnel move to higher paying jobs in INGOs operating in their country.
4. LNGOs do not have the resources to develop competitive proposals and provide the co-financing that many donors require.

14 The Grand Bargain 2.0. 2021. Endorsed Framework and Annexes. <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/2021-07/%28EN%29%20Grand%20Bargain%202.0%20Framework.pdf>

15 OCHA. 2022. Country-based Pooled Funds (CBPF). [https://www.unocha.org/our-work/humanitarian-financing/country-based-pooled-funds-cbpf#:~:text=Country%2Dbased%20Pooled%20Funds%20\(CBPF\)%20allow%20donors%20to%20pool,timely%2C%20coordinated%20and%20principled%20assistance](https://www.unocha.org/our-work/humanitarian-financing/country-based-pooled-funds-cbpf#:~:text=Country%2Dbased%20Pooled%20Funds%20(CBPF)%20allow%20donors%20to%20pool,timely%2C%20coordinated%20and%20principled%20assistance)

5. Donors, UN Agencies, and INGOs are unwilling or unable to cover core/overhead costs of local organisations, further limiting these organisations opportunities to obtain funding for co-financing.
6. The perspective that local actors' relationships with affected populations hinders their ability to apply humanitarian principles, such as neutrality and independence.
7. The international community's acquiescence to the status quo, as well as a preference for partnerships over direct funding.
8. A lack of trust stemming from the perspective that local actors do not have the skills and experience to take on a significant role in large-scale humanitarian responses.
9. The perspective that local organisations lack the financial management capacity and procedures to manage a large influx of money.
10. Preference of donors to channel funds (often unearmarked) to organisations with large humanitarian distribution systems.

One mechanism that has helped move the localisation agenda forward is the Charter for Change (C4C), which was launched at the WHS. The C4C is an initiative led by local, national, and international organisations to move toward a more locally driven humanitarian system. The C4C outlines eight commitments that the INGOs signatories agree to put into action, and that are endorsed by national NGOs (NNGOs) and LNGOs.

The C4C initiative has thematic working groups (e.g., advocacy, capacity, coordination), as well as country-level C4C working groups (C4C WG). As of 2022, there were three country-level C4C WG in Kenya, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), and Uganda, and other country-level localisation networks led by C4C endorsers in Bangladesh, the Philippines, and Nigeria. These groups bring together local, national, and international NGOs operating in the country to define the priorities and ways forward for localisation.

Charter for Change Commitments

Direct funding – Commit to transfer at least 25% of humanitarian funding to national and local NGOs

Partnership – Reaffirm the principles of partnership

Transparency – Publish the amount or percentage of funding that is transferred to local and national NGOs

Recruitment – Address and prevent the negative impact of recruiting NNGO staff during emergencies

Advocacy – Emphasise the importance of national actors to humanitarian donors

Equality – Address subcontracting and ensure equality in decision-making

Support – Provide robust organizational support and capacity strengthening

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- 16 Metcalfe-Hough, V., W. Fenton, P. Saez, and A. Spencer. 2022
 - 17 CAFOD, Care International, Christian Aid, the Czech Republic, France, IFRC, OCHA for CBPFs, Spain, Trocaire, UNHCR, UNICEF, and WHO.
 - 18 Christopolos, I., M. Hassouna, G. Desta. 2018. Changing humanitarian practice on localisation and inclusion across the nexus. ALNAP; Fabre, C. 2017; Street Child. 2022. The Localisation Agenda; Patel, S. and K. Van Brabant. 2017.

3. Uganda: Advocating for Localisation

This section highlights some of the achievements of the country-level C4C WG in Uganda. The Uganda C4C WG was established in 2019, chaired initially by the local organisation Community Empowerment of Rural Development (CEFORD)¹⁹ and co-chaired by Oxfam.

What is the localisation context in Uganda?

Uganda is Africa's largest refugee-hosting country. There are nearly 1.5 million refugees and asylum seekers from DRC, Burundi, South Sudan, Somalia, and other countries living in 13 settlements across the country.²⁰ In addition, Uganda has had to respond to a number of crises in recent years, such as locusts, floods, and the COVID-19 pandemic.

CEFORD is a non-profit LNGO founded in Uganda in 2000. Its mission is to provide capacity development services that build the resilience of disadvantaged women, men, youth, children, and other groups. Its core activities include agriculture, education, disaster risk reduction, and humanitarian response.

In 2017, the Government of Uganda launched the [Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework \(CRRF\)](#) to address the humanitarian and development needs of both refugees and host communities. It provides a common framework for all actors involved in the refugee response (local, national, and international) to coordinate their actions. It is governed by a multi-stakeholder Steering Group that includes the Government of Uganda, local government, development and humanitarian donors, UN agencies, NNGOs, INGOs, the private sector, international financial institutions, and refugee representatives.

A Localisation Task Force was created in 2021 to develop a road map for localisation. In addition, the Refugee Engagement Forum was established to systematically ensure that the voices of refugees in Kampala and refugee settlements are taken into account by coordination structures. There is no UN CBPF established in Uganda. However, research is being undertaken by the Humanitarian INGO Network (HINGO) and the International Council of Voluntary Agencies to explore the possibility of creating a pooled fund in Uganda.

Table 1: International Humanitarian Assistance reaching local and national humanitarian actors in Uganda

Year	Total IHA	Amount going indirectly to LNHA	% to LNHA
2015	\$166 million	\$18 million	11%
2016	\$154 million	\$20.6 million	13%
2017	\$319.3 million	\$29.3 million	8%

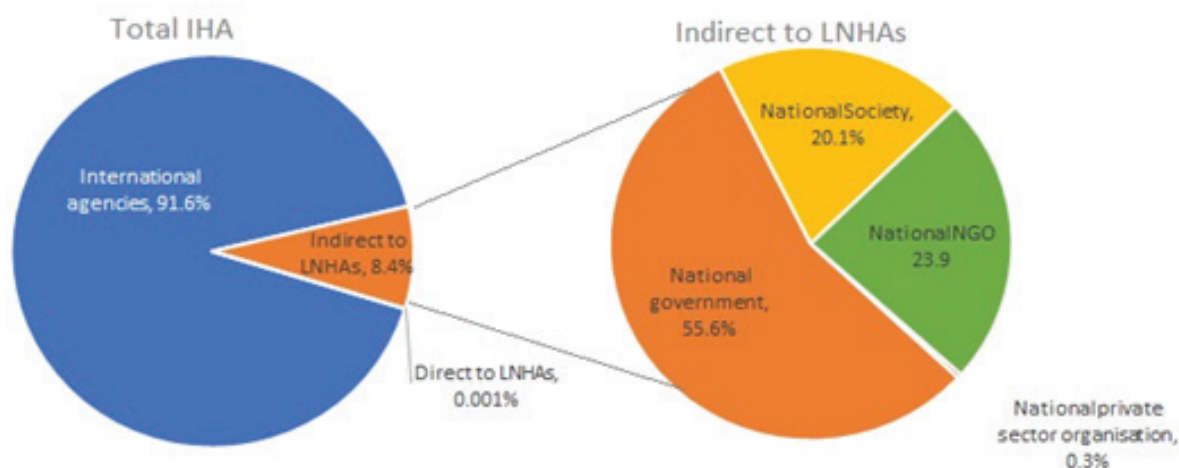
Research carried out in 2019 found that in the years following the WHS, there was an increase in the absolute amount of International Humanitarian Assistance (IHA) reaching local and national humanitarian actors (LNHAs) in Uganda. However, the proportion of IHA going to LNHA saw a decline (see Table 1).

¹⁹ <http://ceford.or.ug/>

²⁰ UNHCR, 2022. Refugee Response Portal. <https://data.unhcr.org/en/country/uga>

Furthermore, more than half of the amount going to LNHAs went to the national government. The rest went primarily to the Ugandan Red Cross and NGOs. Less than 1% of the total amount went directly to LNHAs in both 2016 and 2017 (see Figure 2).²¹

Figure 2: Direct and indirect funding to LNHAs in Uganda in 2017 (from Degnan and Kattakuzhy, 2019)



What are the localisation priorities?

The Uganda C4C WG is the outcome of a dialogue meeting held by Oxfam about sustaining the results of the Empowering Local and National Humanitarian Actors project implemented by Oxfam in Uganda. Meeting participants wanted a way to continue driving the discussion on change in the humanitarian system in Uganda and the C4C WG was created to meet this need. The main priority of the Uganda C4C WG is for local and national actors to have an increased role in the humanitarian response in Uganda. The group's priorities are guided by the eight C4C commitments (see text box on page 9) with a focus on the use of advocacy to advance the localisation agenda.

What has been achieved?

Creating high engagement: The C4C WG has been an active platform for dialogue since its start in 2019 and has grown over time. As of the end of 2022, there were 14 INGO signatories and over 100 endorsers. The endorsers represent the diversity of organisations in the country and include faith-based organisations, national organisations, women-led organisations, and refugee-led organisations. The engagement of so many endorsers energises the movement for localisation in the country.

Hosting the C4C Global Secretariat: Because of its experience chairing the country-level C4C WG, CEFORD was selected to host the [C4C Global Secretariat](https://charter4change.files.wordpress.com/2021/11/structure-of-the-charter-for-change-2021-1.pdf) in 2022.²² As host, CEFORD had a role in planning and coordinating C4C Global Secretariat activities, and provided administrative support to the C4C signatories, endorsers, and working groups globally.

Settlement-Level Actor Mapping (SLAM)

To facilitate connections between national-level and settlement-level stakeholders, U-Learn and partners developed [SLAM](#), a mapping visualization that provides information on the refugee-led organizations, community-based organizations (CBOs), local and national NGOs, and private sector actors present in the 13 refugee settlements across Uganda.

²¹ Degnan, C. and A. Kattakuzhy. 2019. Money Talks: Assessing funding flows to local and national actors in Uganda. Development Initiatives and Oxfam.

²² <https://charter4change.files.wordpress.com/2021/11/structure-of-the-charter-for-change-2021-1.pdf>

Learning from the eight different thematic and country-level working groups²³ allowed CEFORD personnel to increase their capacities and knowledge on localisation. through.

Enhancing partnerships: Several INGOs and C4C signatories are improving their partnerships with local actors and working through them more to implement projects. For example, these INGOs are working with local actors to develop joint proposals for projects. Some of the organisations are opting to work through local actors in refugee settlements rather than implementing directly. There are more than 200 local organisations active in the settlements.²⁴

Accessing new funding opportunities: C4C WG's capacity strengthening efforts are allowing local organisations to take advantage of the funding opportunities that are opening. For example, the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), who did not previously fund local actors directly, has started new funding mechanisms that local actors can access, such as the [Refugee-led Innovation Fund](#)²⁵ that organisations led by people who experienced forced displacement can apply to. UNHCR has also put out calls for proposals that both local and international NGOs can apply to, through which CEFORD won a competitive bid.

Raising women's voices: The C4C WG has made women's empowerment and inclusion a core part of its work and made an intentional effort to invite women-led and refugee-led organisations to participate. The C4C WG's leadership board is currently made up of all elected women, and the group has mandated that the chairperson be a woman. The participation of local women-led organisations in the WG has opened partnership opportunities for them with INGOs and NNGOs, increasing the representation of local women in national decision-making spaces. The chair of the C4C WG has a seat on the Humanitarian Country Team and on the CRRF Localisation Task Force, which brings local women's voices to the humanitarian coordination spaces.

Why was the C4C WG successful?

There are several factors that have facilitated the C4C WG advances in localisation.

Capacity strengthening: Capacity strengthening initiatives have given LNGOs the skills to lead the local response in partnership with INGOs. These initiatives have included training, mentorships, academic courses, and peer learning. Training topics offered include advocacy and those related to humanitarian response (e.g., refugee response, disaster risk management, climate change, Do No Harm principles, and Education in Emergencies). CEFORD benefited from a mentorship program with Oxfam that trained local water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) engineers. INGOs brought LNGOs into refugee settlements so they could learn first-hand how the refugee response is conducted.

Champions: INGOs that are committed to localisation are helping to move the localisation/participation agenda further and are supporting local actors to take a leading role in humanitarian response. In Uganda, Oxfam had funding specifically dedicated to increasing the capacity of local actors to lead humanitarian action, which was used for training, mentoring, and establishing the Uganda C4C WG. Another champion is [Street Child](#), who has researched barriers for LNGOs to access funds and provided support to LNGOs to overcome the barriers.²⁶ [Street Child](#) worked with African Women and Youth Action for Development (AWYAD) to gradually take the lead on delivering an Education in Emergencies program. In the first year, the funding came through Street Child, but as AWYAD gained experience in managing the program, they began receiving funding directly from the donor.

23 Advocacy Group, Capacity Group, Coordination Group, Endorsers' Task Group, Reporting Group, C4C WG DR Congo, C4C WG Kenya, C4C WG Uganda

24 Settlement-Level Actor Mapping (SLAM). <https://ulearn-uganda.org/slam/>

25 <https://www.unhcr.org/innovation/refugee-led-innovation-fund/>

26 Street Child. 2022.

Enabling environment: The CRRF enables an operational environment that allows local actors to work alongside INGOs. The increased participation of national responders was written into the CRRF Road Map (2018-2020),²⁷ the CRRF National Action Plan (2021-22), and CRRF Strategic Direction (2021-25).²⁸ While the strategies in these three documents may not yet have translated into implementation, they have allowed local actors to participate in decision making spaces and have facilitated successful advocacy for policy changes. Shifting donor policies are also part of the enabling environment, creating funding and partnership opportunities for local organisations. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID), for example, has developed a [global approach to localisation](#)²⁹ that allows it to work more through refugee- and women-led organisations. The European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) has opened the possibility for local organisations to be part of consortiums with eligible European INGOs.

What are the lessons learned?

The lessons learned from the Uganda C4C WG experience of championing localisation are:

1. Special effort is required to enhance the participation of women-led organisations. The C4C WG found that women did not generally answer calls to participate, as they are focussed on their local work. The C4C WG made an intentional effort to identify and reach out to women-led organisations, as well as to build their capacity to represent local actors in coordination spaces.
2. Support refugee groups to formalise to increase their representation. Previously, refugees were organised in informal groups, often with higher male participation. The C4C WG advocated to the government that these groups should be able to operate as organisations. Once formalised, the refugee-led organisations had the opportunity to participate in, and potentially to become chairs of, the C4C WG. Participation increases their visibility and opportunities for partnerships.
3. There needs to be more coordination spaces open to local actors. Having one local actor, the chair of the C4C WG, in the coordination space is an important achievement, but it is not enough. It is hard for the chair to have influence when she is one voice among many and trying to represent many types of local stakeholders.

27 The Government of Uganda. 2019. Uganda's Revised CRRF Road Map (2018-2020). <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/74394>

28 Office of the Prime Minister. CRRF Strategic Direction 2021-2025.

29 <https://www.usaid.gov/localization>

4. Kenya: A Network for Localisation

This case study highlights the experience of the NGO Arid Lands Development Focus (ALDEF)³⁰ in championing the localisation agenda in Kenya. The localisation movement in Kenya began prior to the WHS. The Kenyan C4C Working Group was formed in 2021 and is chaired by ALDEF and co chaired by Trocaire.

What is the localisation context?

The localisation movement in Kenya was spurred in part by the country's decentralisation process. In 2010, a new constitution was enacted that divided the country into 47 counties. In 2013, 47 new governors were elected and allocated resources to oversee functions traditionally held by the national government.³¹ This changed the space and role of the civil society organisations (CSOs) in the country. Twenty Kenyan CSOs from arid and semi-arid counties came together to analyse and redefine their role, which included active citizenship and participation in the planning and budgeting process of county governments. ALDEF and the CSOs brought this experience to the WHS and participated in the launch of the Network for Empowered Aid Response.³²

Arid Lands Development Focus (ALDEF)
Kenya is a national NGO. Its mandate is to promote gender justice, good governance, and advocacy, build resilience, undertake humanitarian response, and strengthen institutional systems to enhance service delivery in the country. ALDEF is vice-chair of the African Humanitarian Organization Network.

The Network for Empowered Aid Response is a movement of local and national CSOs from the Global South that has the aim of reinventing the aid system through innovation, knowledge sharing, and fair, equitable, and dignified

Kenya has grappled with multiple humanitarian crises since the WHS. There have been repeated droughts in the Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASAL) region, a desert locust infestation, outbreaks of cholera, and the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, Kenya hosts more than half a million refugees from neighbouring countries. The country has benefitted from UN CERF funding for drought response but does not have access to a CBPF. The government has a Drought Management Fund, implemented through the National Drought Management Authority, but there is not a formal mechanism to trigger funding.

What are the localisation priorities?

A survey of LNGOs in 2021 demonstrated that the three priority dimensions of localisation were funding, capacity strengthening, and partnerships.³³ CSOs had already begun advancing on these priorities when the Kenyan C4C WG was launched in 2021. The C4C WG works on the eight commitments of the C4C and has thematic working groups focusing on Capacity Strengthening and Advocacy and Research.

The Kenyan C4C WG's vision for localisation is to have a common disaster risk management framework in the country with a pool fund mechanism (for national and international funds) that would release funding to local actors in the crisis-affected areas based on an up-to-date trigger system and government-led mechanism.

³⁰ <https://aldef.org/>

³¹ World Bank. 2019. Kenya's Devolution. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/kenya/brief/kenyas-devolution>

³² <https://www.near.ngo/>

³³ Development Initiatives. 2021. Kenya, partnering learning review.

What has been achieved?

ALDEF has been instrumental in mobilising LNGOs and INGOs in Kenya and has had several important achievements.

Arid and Semi-Arid Lands Humanitarian Network (AHN): The AHN is a forum that brings together more than 30 LNGOs working in ten counties, primarily in the ASAL region of Kenya. ALDEF is the host and convener of the network. The network has been successful at collecting data to assess and forecast drought, making joint statements and pitches, and leveraging partnerships to access funding. In 2019, at the onset of drought, AHN reached out to its partners to make a case for 'no-regrets funding' to act early, avoiding loss of life from the 'dangerous delay'³⁴ of waiting until the situation has reached crisis-level. At the time, only ALDEF and one other member of the network had a partnership with an INGO, both with Oxfam. The AHN leveraged the partnership with Oxfam to obtain funding to support its LNGO members in the counties that were the most drought affected. Oxfam provided an initial seventy thousand pounds (£70,000) from its own reserve fund, which went directly to local partners. The AHN also convinced the START Network to activate the START Fund to obtain further funding for anticipatory action.

Locally led response: The AHN has enabled LNGOs to take a lead in the drought response. During the 2019 response, the AHN analysed the available drought forecast data to identify the three counties at greatest risk from the drought and the member LNGO in each county who was best positioned to respond. ALDEF received support from Oxfam to train the three LNGOs on cash assistance and community mobilisation. Initially, ALDEF managed the funds from Oxfam and transferred the money to the LNGOs. Later, ALDEF encouraged Oxfam to conduct a financial management due diligence assessment of the three LNGOs. After these assessments, Oxfam entered into grant agreements with three LNGOs in the drought-affected counties who then led the response, distributing cash assistance directly to the affected population. In this way, the AHN was able to efficiently scale up the response from 200 to 1,341 households. To scale up the drought response further, more partners of the AHN were invited to go through the due diligence assessment, resulting in seven local partners in seven counties managing cash distributions to 2,561 households.

New partnership model: The AHN pitched the model of locally led cash distribution to INGOs and ECHO. The Kenya Cash Consortium³⁵ was established, led by ACTED in partnership with IMPACT Initiatives, Oxfam, Concern Worldwide, and seven members of the AHN.³⁶ The Kenya Cash Consortium was able to access three funding contracts from ECHO, providing cash assistance to over 15,000 households facing food insecurity due to drought, flood, and the locust infestation. Including external funding, the Cash Consortium has mobilised more than sixteen million dollars (\$16 million) in funding. Through the consortium, the four INGOs transitioned from implementing directly to working through the LNGOs.

Local influence on funding decisions: While LNGOs face barriers to receiving direct funds, the AHN was successful at developing mechanisms to influence funding decisions. When a crisis is emerging, the AHN provides data to the Humanitarian Country Team. The group establishes a Project Steering Committee, where the AHN sits as a convener, to make decisions about the use of funds from institutional donors like ECHO. When funds are brought in through international partners, the AHN Steering Committee uses data from the counties to influence decisions on which counties should be targeted, what the money should be used for, and provides a list of local organisations who can deliver the response. Similarly, AHN presents data to County Steering Groups, where there is representation of the National Drought Authority, to influence decisions on the response.

34 Hillier, D., and Dempsey, B. 2012. A dangerous delay: The cost of late response to early warnings in the 2011 drought in the Horn of Africa. Oxfam. <https://www.oxfam.org/en/research/dangerous-delay>

35 <https://www.acted.org/en/kenya-cash-consortium-provides-4711kes-37eur-a-month-to-support-over-15000-households-affected-by-food-and-nutrition-insecurity-following-recent-floods-and-desert-locust-infestation/>

36 ALDEF, Merti Integrated Development Programme, Pastoralist Community Initiatives Development and Assistance, Pastoralist Girl Initiative, Rural Agency for Community Development and Assistance, Sustainable Approaches to Community Empowerment, and Wajir South Development Association.

Triggering an Emergency Declaration

In July 2021, after two below normal rainy seasons (March-April-May in 2021 and October-November-December in 2022), AHN conducted a snapshot assessment of the drought crisis, which was used to influence stakeholders on severity of the drought. The assessment was used as the basis for the Flash Appeal released later in July in Wajir county by the UN Resident Coordinator. The appeal was used to lobby governors from northern Kenya to declare a crisis in their counties. Ultimately, this momentum resulted in the president declaring a drought emergency in September 2021.

Why was it successful?

Walking the talk: Kenyan local and national NGOs did not wait for change to come, but initiated the localisation process themselves. Under ALDEF's leadership, Kenyan NGOs began organising themselves, increasing their technical capacity, and creating the conditions needed for them to lead a local response. The NNGOs carried out their own localisation process by supporting LNGOs, providing training, and channelling funding directly to local actors.

Passporting: For LNGOs to manage funds from INGOs, they had to go through a due diligence process. The process requires them to compile and present documentation such as external audit reports, financial manuals, certificates of registration, and banking information. To avoid repeating the cumbersome process for every potential INGO partner, the NGOs established a passporting process. If one INGO does a due diligence assessment, that report can be presented to other INGOs to prevent repetition of the process.

Trigger model: The AHN is piloting a system to trigger funding for anticipatory action in counties experiencing drought. Through short- and long-range forecasting of the drought situation and the use of county-level data on populations in crisis, malnutrition rates, and food security, AHN informs decision-making on when and where funding is needed. AHN is building protocols and a Standard Operating Procedure to trigger the release of funds to a county, which it hopes can be a model for the National Drought Management Fund.

Trusted partners: ALDEF had an existing partnership with Oxfam in Kenya. Due to the trust that was already established, Oxfam was willing to take the risk of transferring its own reserve funds to ALDEF for the 'no-regrets funding'. The trust was also extended to the LNGOs of the AHN and enabled them to lead the cash distribution.

C4C WG as a platform: The C4C WG is used as a space to share localisation successes. The LNGOs and NNGOs in the WG show how localisation can be done in practice to convince others to move in that direction. ALDEF and others used the space to demonstrate successful partnerships, creating a network, passporting, and collective engagement.

Enabling environment: In 23 ASAL counties, there is a County Steering Group with representation of different actors, and the National Drought Management Authority as the coordination unit. The County Steering Group meetings are an entry point to bring information together in coordinated manner and influence decisions on the response.

What was learned?

ALDEF shared the main lessons learned from the process of advancing localisation in Kenya.

1. Working as a network, organisations can drive forward a locally led response. One organisation alone cannot push the system in a new direction. But together, the organisations in the AHN had a voice and had influence. They supported each other, leveraged partnerships to have greater reach, and distributed tasks to organisations in counties of greatest need.
2. Draw on the strengths of each partner. Localisation is about defining roles that draw on each other's strengths. LNGOs can scale up interventions, access hard to reach areas, and bring local knowledge, while INGOs can provide technical guidance, funding, meet compliance needs of institutional donors, and share knowledge.
3. Localisation efforts should strengthen the national systems. The AHN is developing mechanisms that aim to strengthen the government systems. AHN works through existing structures at the county level, to influence decisions at county and national levels. The AHN is developing a locally-led response model that can be scaled up to support the national government response.
4. For local organisations to take on a greater role, they require support for core functions. To manage more funds and meet compliance requirements, local organisations need to have support for multiple core functions (e.g., financial management, logistics, human resources, and governance). When projects finance only activity-related expenses, it can overstretch local staff and resources.

5. The Philippines: Dialogue on Localisation

The following case study showcases the learning from the NGO Ecosystems Work for Essential Benefits (ECOWEB)³⁷ in advancing localisation in the Philippines. ECOWEB is a part of the international C4C Coordination Working Group and leads the C4C network in the Philippines. They are aiming to strengthen the C4C structure by establishing a country-level working group.

Ecosystems Work for Essential Benefits (ECOWEB) is a development and humanitarian organisation. It started as a local organization but has grown to a national NGO, based in southern Philippines. Its purpose is to provide alternative development that is ecologically sustainable, socially just, economically equitable, and politically

What is the localisation context?

The Philippines is vulnerable to multiple hazards, including floods, tropical storms, landslides, and earthquakes. In recent years, the country has had to deal with frequent and compounding crises, including drought, earthquake, COVID-19, Typhoon Goni, and super Typhoon Rai, the latter of which affected more than 12 million people.³⁸

Humanitarian action is coordinated by the Humanitarian Country Team, under the leadership of the UN Humanitarian Coordinator. The Humanitarian Country Team includes the UN Agencies, INGOs, the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement, local disaster response networks, and donors. There is a large network of LNGOs and CBOs in the Philippines (60,000 registered aid organisations),³⁹ they are not well-represented in the coordination forum. The Philippines has benefitted from UN CERF funding, and Disaster Response Emergency Funding from the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement but does not have a CBPF or similar pool fund for local organisations to access.

What are the localisation priorities?

According to ECOWEB, one of the main localisation priorities in the country is to mobilise communities to lead humanitarian action. One of the key messages emerging from a multi-stakeholder dialogue process is that community leaders want to be treated as partners in action, not just recipients in aid. Localisation is not just about moving money, but it is about meaningful and equitable partnerships, strengthening civil society, and advocating for the government to be accountable.

The Alliance for Empowering Partnerships (A4EP) is a network of independent and local organisations and global advocates. The network provides a platform for South-South cooperation and knowledge sharing. A4EP became a signatory of the Grand Bargain in 2021.

What has been achieved?

ECOWEB has helped to advance localisation in the country both by leading a dialogue process and by supporting local organisations.

37 <https://ecowebph.org/>

38 OCHA. 2022. The Humanitarian Pitch. <https://reliefweb.int/report/philippines/philippines-humanitarian-pitch>

39 Moshman, J. The Philippines' NGO Sector. <https://www.wango.org/ngonews/february09/philippinesngos.htm>

Localisation dialogue process: Between February and June 2021, a participatory, multi-stakeholder dialogue process was carried out to promote the GB commitments and define the way forward for the country. The process was initiated by ECOWEB and the Alliance for Empowering Partnerships (A4EP)⁴⁰ and engaged LNGOs, NNGOs, INGOs, UN-OCHA, the UN Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator (RC/HC), the Government, and CSO networks. The process used the [Seven Dimensions of Localisation](#) developed by Global Mentoring Initiative⁴¹ as a framework for the discussions.

Figure 3: The Seven Dimensions of Localisation (from Van Brabant and Patel, 2018)



Recommendations and Road Map: As a result of the dialogue process, a [final report](#) was created with recommendations and key actions in each of the seven dimensions.⁴² The report was shared with the GB international committee as part of A4EP's reporting on its commitments as a signatory. Based on the recommendations in the report, a localisation road map for the Philippines Humanitarian Country Team was created. The road map includes responsibilities, indicators, and a monitoring and evaluation plan to guide action and advocacy efforts. The dialogue process was systematised and shared in a [toolkit](#).⁴³

UN support: Since the dialogue process, there has been greater backing from the UN RC/HC for the localisation process. The RC/HC had follow-up discussions with local CSOs and for the first time went to communities affected by crisis to hear the voices of those affected. The RC/HC is advocating for a CBPF that would be accessible to local organisations.

Partnership approach: ECOWEB is an NNGO that partners with small LNGOs and CBOs and demonstrates an equitable partnership approach. ECOWEB has co-designed project applications with its partner LNGOs and provides LNGOs with technical support so they can lead the planning, procurement, and management of a response so that it best meets the needs of the affected population. ECOWEB also provides microgrants to the LNGOs. ECOWEB can show, in practice, how partnerships work, and advocate for use of a similar model among by INGOs and governments.

Unrestricted funding: ECOWEB has accessed new sources of funding from corporate and philanthropic donors and made successful joint applications with CBOs for multi-year unrestricted funding for humanitarian action. With this ECOWEB is able to further demonstrate the benefit of flexible funding and an equitable partnership approach.

⁴⁰ <https://a4ep.net/>

⁴¹ Van Brabant, K. and S. Patel. 2018. Localisation in Practice. Emerging Indicators & Practical Recommendations. Global Mentoring Initiative

⁴² Patel, S. Salvador-Antequisa, R., Felizco, M., Vidic, M. 2021. Moving Forward Localisation of Humanitarian Action in the Philippines. <https://reliefweb.int/report/philippines/moving-forward-localisation-humanitarian-action-philippines-philippine-multi>

⁴³ ECOWEB. 2021. Toolkit on the Conduct of Dialogue on Localisation of Humanitarian Actions. The Philippine Experience 2021.

Institutional strengthening: The NNGO is continually faced with the challenge of losing highly capable staff to international and government agencies. They have reviewed their salary structure and raised salaries to be more competitive. They incorporate institutional strengthening into projects where flexible funding or overhead are not available. This allows the project to contribute to capacity building activities and the costs of some core staff, such as for monitoring and evaluation or program development.

Why was it successful?

Taking initiative: The local organisations did not wait for funding and localisation to come to them. ECOWEB, an early endorser of the GB, partnered with A4EP. Together they contacted two GB signatories operating in the Philippines, UNOCHA-Philippines and Oxfam Pilipinas. The four organisations volunteered to work together as an informal consortium to help move forward localisation in the country.

Localisation movement: There was already an active localisation movement in the country. There were existing CSO networks (who were engaged in the dialogue process described above), including the Disaster Risk Reduction Network, the Philippines Preparedness Partnership through the Center for Disaster Preparedness, and the Community Led Emergency Action Response Network.⁴⁴ The C4C helped to support this movement, building on the momentum, rather than being the leader of it.

Inclusive dialogue process: The dialogue process in 2021 was successful because it was inclusive. It involved not only INGOs and L/NNGOs, but also CBOs in affected communities, local CSOs, local governments, the private sector (such as foundations and volunteer groups), and the national government. The process gave voice to the local actors who are most affected by disasters and the first to respond.

Global connection: ECOWEB is part of the international C4C Coordination Working Group. Being part of this working group provided the opportunity to bring global ideas to the local dialogue process, and to bring the results and learning of that process back to the global stage.

What was learned?

The main lessons learned that ECOWEB shared are:

- 1. Local governments have an important role.** There should be coordination between local government units and CSOs. As duty bearers, these units have an important role in the dialogue process and the humanitarian response. CSOs should fill the gaps where the local government units fall short.
- 2. Take a community-led approach.** More can be achieved when there is trust in the capacity of local leaders to lead, act, and decide. Do not assume local actors do not have the capacity to lead, give them the opportunity and they will often surprise you.
- 3. Put people at the centre.** Engage the affected population around decisions of how aid is used and in the design of the response. Aid is important but it is people that make it into an instrument to address needs. The advocacy efforts that ECOWEB led were more successful when they were backed by the people affected by crisis.
- 4. Demonstrate the change you want.** ECOWEB shows how localisation can be done in practice. It works with local actors, develops partnerships, builds capacity, and engages affected populations.

44 ECOWEB. 2021. Toolkit on the Conduct of Dialogue on Localisation of Humanitarian Actions. The Philippine Experience 2021

6. India: Modelling Localisation

This case study shares the experience of Humanitarian Aid International (HAI)⁴⁵ in enhancing the locally led response in India. There is no C4C working group in the country, but HAI is an active endorser of the charter and was the first organisation of the Global South to host the C4C Global Secretariat, in 2019 to 2021.

Humanitarian Aid International (HAI) is a NNGO in India established in 2016. HAI works on humanitarian response, disaster risk reduction, and humanitarian advocacy. It strives to be the first Indian organisation to work throughout the country, as well as internationally, with the financial support of Indians.

What is the localisation context?

India is a large country, prone to multiple hazards. It is estimated that 80% of the population live in districts exposed to floods, droughts, heatwaves, and cyclones.⁴⁶ The country has institutions dedicated to disaster response, including the National Disaster Management Authority and State Disaster Management Authorities. The states get a yearly allocation under the State Disaster Response Fund for emergency response.⁴⁷ India has historically been a major aid recipient nation, but in recent years has also provided aid to other developing countries.⁴⁸ India has a strong economy, the fourth largest in the world, and has a diverse and growing private sector.

The humanitarian architecture in the country largely favours international organisations. The Government of India does not generally issue appeals for foreign assistance but will allow INGOs operating in the country to provide humanitarian assistance. There is a United Nations Disaster Management Team, comprising various UN Agencies, but no CBPF has been established. There are numerous INGOs in the country, many of whom have established an affiliated organisation registered under Indian law. While there are approximately 3.1 million local and national NGOs in India, the largest number of NGOs anywhere in the world,⁴⁹ they have minimal access to direct funding. The international organisations have greater brand recognition and are better able to mobilise resources both internationally and nationally.

What are the localisation priorities?

HAI aims to shift the humanitarian paradigm in India. It is promoting a humanitarian architecture with a bottom-up approach that is reflective of traditional response mechanisms and Indian value systems. The focus is on strengthening the local response system, building locally-led leadership, and enhancing the participation of affected communities. HAI is working towards three priorities:

- 1) creating a national platform of local organisations,
- 2) developing a national pooled fund to help make disaster response timely, and
- 3) creating a national roster to provide surge support to smaller organisations.

⁴⁵ <https://hai-india.org/>

⁴⁶ UNICEF, 2022. Humanitarian Action for Children 2023 - India.
<https://reliefweb.int/report/india/humanitarian-action-children-2023-india>

⁴⁷ HAI. 2019. Towards a Localised Humanitarian Response in India.
<https://reliefweb.int/report/india/towards-localised-humanitarian-response-india>

⁴⁸ HAI. 2019.

⁴⁹ HAI. 2019.

What has been achieved?

In the six years since its establishment, HAI had the following achievements in enhancing the locally-led response:

National platform: HAI has created a national platform to connect itself with local organisations that provide a first response to disasters. LNGOs often face challenges accessing funding due to a lack of visibility and the sophisticated compliance requirements of donors. As an NGO, HAI manages the compliance requirements of donors and partners, and enables funding to reach LNGOs in crisis affected areas. The national platform has 19 LNGO members from across India. Through the platform, HAI has mobilised support for the LNGOs to respond to floods, COVID-19 pandemic, Pakistan refugee response, and other crises, reducing response time and the operational costs of the humanitarian action.

Modelling meaningful partnerships: HAI is modelling the type of meaningful partnership that they want from the international community. The partnerships between HAI and the LNGOs are based on principles of transparency, trust, and complementarity. Participation in the national platform is voluntary and free. The partnership between HAI and the LNGOs is equal, with joint proposal creation and fundraising. HAI is fully transparent about how funding is distributed between itself and the LNGOs. Through the partnerships, HAI builds the capacity and raises the visibility of LNGOs. For example, the North-East Affected Area Development Society (NEADS) was supported by HAI to lead flood response in its region and to become a vocal advocate for localisation at the national and global levels.

North-East Affected Area Development Society (NEADS) is a grassroots development organisation founded in a remote village in 1985. It has a presence in 500 villages in five districts of the Upper Assam region. It provides disaster risk reduction, humanitarian response, and WASH services. It has led the response to severe floods in the region.

National roster: HAI is developing a roster of local people and organisations with different skills in the country that can be mobilised to provide surge support to smaller organisations. The roster will include the technical expertise that LNGOs offer, such as in WASH), health, and information technology. It will also include other resources, such as doctors, in the country. The people and organisations on the roster will receive training on humanitarian response and in turn commit to provide a few weeks of pro-bono work responding to an emergency. HAI is mapping out the skills needed on the roster and where those skills currently are.

Sharing overheads: A common barrier for localisation is that foreign funds cannot be used by other organisations for their overhead costs. To overcome this challenge and fulfil its commitment to equality with its partner LNGOs, when HAI receives international funds that cover some institutional costs, it shares its own resources with the LNGOs for their overhead expenses.

Funding mechanisms: HAI worked with local and international NGOs and the START Network to set up the [India Humanitarian Hub](https://startnetwork.org/network/hubs/india-humanitarian-hub)⁵⁰, with the Secretariat hosted by NEADS. NEADS previously accessed funding from the START Fund for its response to COVID-19 and flooding. The hub brings together L/NGOs and INGOs with the aim of promoting locally led action, sharing knowledge and innovations, and establishing a pooled fund mechanism. Additionally, HAI launched fundraising campaigns for emergency responses to raise funds nationally and internationally, with a [webpage](https://hai-india.org/campaign/)⁵¹ for online donations.

50 <https://startnetwork.org/network/hubs/india-humanitarian-hub>

51 <https://hai-india.org/campaign/>

Local response capacity: In times of non-emergency, HAI works with local authorities and communities to strengthen their capacity to lead a disaster response. HAI builds on existing CBOs and people's organisations to form village-level disaster response teams who will help to collect information and contribute to the planning and design of the response.

Why was it successful?

Shared values: The LNGOs that are part of HAI's platform share HAI's values of transparency and principled partnerships. There is a shared commitment to the goal of locally led action and to the transparent management of funds with two-way information sharing.

Increased LNGO visibility: The LNGOs have little visibility on their own. By being part of the national platform and making a commitment to transparency, they increase their visibility and demonstrate their credibility. HAI also gives LNGOs a platform to become more vocal about localisation and bring local voices to decision-making and coordination spaces.

Engagement in C4C and GB: HAI was the first organisation of the Global South to host the C4C Global Secretariat. Hosting the Global Secretariat allowed HAI to grow and improve its operations. The funding received for hosting covered the full-time salary of the program manager and some institutional costs, allowing HAI to start renting an office and build their credibility and visibility. HAI also co-founded A4EP, which became a signatory of the GB. As the A4EP representative, HAI participates in the meetings of the GB and its workstreams on Localisation, the Participation Revolution, and Greater Transparency, and shares with and learns from the global network.

What was learned?

The main lessons learned that HAI shared are:

- 1. Work through an NNGO intermediary.** One of the barriers to direct funding is donors' lack of capacity to manage multiple contracts with LNGOs. A strong NNGO like HAI can be the intermediary, holding the contract with the donor, fulfilling financial requirements, and disbursing funds to the LNGOs to implement the response.
- 2. Complementarity is key.** No one actor has comprehensive capacity, so draw on the strengths of each to define the roles of LNGOs, NNGOs, and INGOs in the response. Further, identify the different skills and expertise available in each organisation and use this understanding to work more efficiently.
- 3. Say 'No' to unequal partnerships.** L/NNGOs are often in a difficult position of needing funding. However, if an INGO will not credit HAI or its LNGOs for their work or there is no transparency about the distribution of funds, HAI no longer accepts the partnership or funding.
- 4. Plan around processes, not funding.** Funding from international donors often has a limited scope, leading to siloed and sectorial approaches. HAI wants to go back to the roots of village and community transformation and strengthening CSOs. It wants to regain the independent, bottom-up way of thinking that is not tied to funding.

Recommendations

The Grand Bargain (GB) has provided a stimulus to accelerate localisation. While it may not yet have achieved its initial objective of increasing direct funding, it has prompted many actors to take steps towards more locally led humanitarian action.

The case studies in this report describe the different approaches taken by organisations to move forward the localisation agenda in their respective countries. The scope was limited to the perspectives of a few organisations and as such do not reflect all the processes occurring in each country. However, these experiences have highlighted several achievements and lessons that countries like Uganda can draw from. The following are recommendations for local, national, and international NGOs to move forward localisation in their countries, based on the experiences from the case studies.

- 1. Carry out a multi-stakeholder dialogue process that engages L/NNGOs, populations affected by crises, local governments, and other local first responders.**
NNGO champions can lead a dialogue process across the country in partnership with international agencies and organisations. At the community level, NNGOs can engage LNGOs, local governments, populations affected by crises, and other local first responders in participatory discussions about their role in humanitarian action. At the national level engage INGOs, UN, donors, national authorities, private sector, and NNGOs. Provide a common framework for the focus group discussions and interviews that covers different elements of localisation and a locally led response, such as participation, partnerships, capacity, visibility, and financing. Promote the GB commitments on localisation to raise local actors' awareness and allow them to define what localisation means for them. Create a road map or recommendations to feed into the country's humanitarian system and frameworks, such as the Humanitarian Country Team or CRRF.
- 2. Establish a network of L/NNGOs to leverage partnerships and coordinate a response.**
L/NNGOs from different sub-national regions that are vulnerable to crises can come together to establish a formal or informal network. The network can collect and share local data to proactively assess situations, prepare joint communications, influence decisions, and make the case for anticipatory action. The network can support the development of a trigger mechanism using locally collected data to trigger funding from the national system. The network members can leverage partnerships with international actors to allow funding to reach the L/NNGOs in the most affected areas.
- 3. Establish a passporting process so that LNGOs can more readily work with other international partners and scale up a response.**
INGOs and NNGOs can provide training LNGOs to improve financial management to meet international standards. The INGOs can perform due diligence assessments with the LNGO to determine the capacity of LNGOs to manage finances according to donor requirements. NGOs can work together to establish a passporting process so that international organisations accept a due diligence assessment already performed, rather than repeating the process with each new potential partner. Further training on cash and voucher assistance can be provided to LNGOs to disburse expand cash-based programming led by the LNGOs.

4. Provide training to build the response capacity of local actors before a crisis.

INGOs (and NNGOs) can provide technical assistance and training to local actors to be ready to lead a response. Assess the capacity of L/NGOs to determine their strengths and weaknesses. Draw on their strengths in a response and invest in developing capacity where there are gaps. Provide training to L/NNGOs in key humanitarian topics, principles, and standards so they will be able to manage a response in line with international practice. Provide support to informal groups of refugees or women to transform into formal organizations, which will facilitate their participation in coordination, dialogue, and decision-making spaces. Provide training to the women and refugees to be better prepared to represent the interests of diverse local groups in humanitarian coordination spaces.

5. Support NNGOs that model localisation to act as intermediaries.

NNGOs that have the financial management capacity and processes to manage funds according to donor requirements can take on an intermediary role. International actors can channel funds through the NNGO, who can manage the contracts, assume the risk, and disburse funds to L/NGO implementers in affected areas. The NNGO can build partnerships with L/NGOs in different regions of the country that have the capacity to respond and that share values, such as transparency. NNGOs can model localisation by establishing meaningful and equitable partnerships with L/NGOs, being fully transparent about the distribution of funds between partners, jointly developing proposals, providing support for overhead costs, providing small grants, and supporting L/NGOs to lead humanitarian action. NNGOs can also help to increase the visibility of L/NGOs, working with them to increase their capacity and giving them opportunities to have their voices heard. NNGOs can further enhance readiness by developing a roster of local human resources, logged by location and area of expertise, who can contribute to the response.

6. Develop longer-term strategic partnerships that define roles based on the strengths of each partner.

INGOs can develop longer-term strategic partnerships with L/NNGOs independent of funding. Identify capacity gaps of the L/NNGOs and priorities to work on together over time. INGOs and L/NNGOs can work together to co-create projects and apply for funding. When funding is available, develop a project agreement that includes activities that contribute to the strategic partnership goals and shares overhead with the local partner. INGOs and L/NNGOs can also work as a consortium during a response, with a division of roles that draws on strengths of each partner. L/NGOs can lead the implementation, delivering humanitarian assistance to affected populations, with INGOs providing technical assistance and fulfilling donor requirements. INGOs can explore alternatives to setting up a full country office in parallel to the L/NNGO structure, such as renting spaces in L/NNGOs offices or embedding their key roles (e.g., M&E leader) into an L/NNGO.

7. Collaborate with actors to establish a pooled fund mechanism.

Pooled funds were identified as an important mechanism to facilitate a local response. However, each of the key informants noted challenges in establishing a pooled fund. Where possible, draw on existing structures or collaborate with actors to set up a pooled fund for the country. This may include working with the START Network to set up a country fund or humanitarian hub or working with UNHCR to set up a CBPF. Alternatively, work with the national government to support the set up a national pooled fund for both national and international funds. The fund may be managed by the government, but L/NNGOs can help establish the mechanisms to trigger funding and the criteria for disbursement of funds to local actors and organisations.

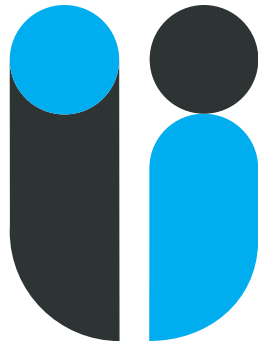
8. Continue to advocate for localisation.

Local, national, and international NGOs can work together to identify barriers to localisation and advocate for change. This may include advocacy to donors to open eligibility of funding to local actors directly or as part of a consortium; advocating for increased support to cover core costs, support staff, and/or the institutional strengthening of LNGOs; advocating for changes on pre-financing requirements and simplifying the funding application process; and/or advocating for policy changes where there are barriers to local organisations providing a response, entering refugee settlements, or participating in coordination spaces.

The case studies demonstrate that in each country organisations are moving forward localisation in their own way, according to their context and priorities. The GB provides a framework for localisation. The C4C can act as a catalyst to move the localisation agenda forward and its working groups provides a platform to connect actors, showcase good practices, and invigorate the movement. The common messages that came out from the case studies are that L/NNGOs can begin moving forward with localisation without waiting for change to come from the international level. At the same time, international actors should give more opportunities to local actors, because when they are given the opportunity, they demonstrate that they have the capacity to lead.

ACRONYMS

A4EP	Alliance for Empowering Partnerships
ALDEF	Arid Lands Development Focus
AHN	Arid and Semi-Arid Lands Humanitarian Network
ASAL	Arid and Semi-Arid Lands
AWYAD	African Women and Youth Action for Development
C4C	Charter for Change
C4C WG	Charter for Change Working Group
CBO	Community-based organisations
CBPF	Community-based Pooled Fund
CEFORD	Community Empowerment of Rural Development
CERF	Central Emergency Response Fund
CRRF	Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
DREF	Disaster Relief Emergency Fund
ECHO	European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations
ECOWEB	Ecosystems Work for Essential Benefits
GB	Grand Bargain
HAI	Humanitarian Aid International
HINGO	Humanitarian International NGO Network
IHA	International Humanitarian Assistance
INGO	International non-government organisation
LNGO	Local non-governmental organisation
LNHA	Local and national humanitarian actors
NEADS	North-East Affected Area Development Society
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NNGO	National non-governmental organisation
RC/HC	Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations Refugee Agency (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees)
WASH	water, sanitation, and hygiene
WHS	World Humanitarian Summit



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