

DISASTERS AND EMERGENCIES PREPAREDNESS PROGRAMME

REGIONAL LEARNING CONFERENCE LOCALISATION IN ASIA 18-19 JULY 2017



CONFERENCE PACK

DEEPENING THE LEARNING PROCESS ON LOCALISATION

The Disasters and Emergencies Preparedness Programme (DEPP) Regional Conference on Localisation in Asia took place in Manila, Philippines on 18th & 19th July 2017. The conference brought together over 100 representatives from local, national and international non-governmental organisations and government ministries from seven countries affected by disasters in Asia and Africa, as well as representatives of the Start and CDAC Networks from the UK for two days of discussions on the localisation of humanitarian action.

Hosted by the DEPP Learning Project, the conference aimed to provide a unique opportunity for programme staff, local partners and external stakeholders to share robust lessons from work undertaken to increase the voice and influence of local actors in line with the Grand Bargain and the [commitments](#) made at the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit. It also aimed to provide a platform for stakeholders to discuss how to contribute to wider sector discussions around localisation following the WHS anniversary.

Representatives shared presentations on initiatives to localise preparedness and response in seven countries in Asia and Africa. Roundtable discussions provided an open forum for all participants to share ideas on how to strengthen local and national actors and enable a more inclusive, people-centred response.

Putting communities at the centre of programmes, building partnerships with governments, supporting local actors to access funds and decision-making forums, and strengthening the humanitarian-development nexus are the key themes that emerged from two days of discussion. These are also the clear areas of priority when creating a roadmap to localisation and moving the agenda forward.

The Disasters and Emergencies Preparedness Programme (DEPP) is a 3-year programme funded by UK AID and managed by the Start and CDAC Networks. It consists of 14 projects in 10 focal countries, each implemented by a consortium of agencies. The DEPP seeks to improve the effectiveness of response by investing in local and national networks and strengthening the capacity of local actors to enable them to engage meaningfully in humanitarian coordination systems and respond more effectively to emergencies.

To learn more about how the DEPP is furthering the localisation agenda, please see the [2016 Learning Report Executive Summary](#), and the following briefing papers: [Learning on Localisation from the DEPP](#) and [Developing A Locally Led Response](#).

ONE OF THE LARGEST REGIONAL EVENTS ON LOCALISATION IN 2017



LOCALISING DISASTER EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS LESSONS FROM ASIA

KEY



FACILITATOR: SHAHIDA ARIF, REGIONAL LEARNING ADVISOR, DEPP LEARNING PROJECT, ACTION AGAINST HUNGER UK

SESSION

LINKS

WELCOME ADDRESS

Benedict Balderrama, National Coordinator of PHILSSA, a member network of CODE NGO & Dr Meshesha Shewarega, Executive Director, a network of local civil society organisations in Ethiopia.



“The alleged capacity deficits and the reputational risk arguments labelled against local humanitarian actors are to a large extent excuses to maintain the status quo. Unless changed, this inclination will make the localization of aid agenda a futile venture.”

PHILIPPINES: IMPROVING HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE WHERE IT MATTERS MOST

Maria Alexandra Pura, Christian Aid



“The best measure of humanitarian capacity building is to test it in an actual crisis.”

BANGLADESH: STRENGTHENING LOCAL AND NATIONAL AGENCIES FOR IMPROVED LOCAL RESPONSE

Shahana Hayat, Talent Development, Save the Children; Dr Dibalok Singha, Dushtha Shasthya Kendra; Dr Ehsanur Rahman, NAHAB; Shamina Akhter, Shifting the Power, Christian Aid; Suman Islam, Humanitarian Leadership Academy; Mr Abul Kalam Azad, Department of Disaster Management, Disaster and Relief Ministry



“Aid politics is more complicated than development politics. An issue in the Grand Bargain is that it is not clear where the synergies between the humanitarian and development sectors lie.” – Dr Dibalok Singha

JOURNEY TO LOCALISATION

Mark Bidder, UN OCHA Philippines



“The humanitarian system is an ecosystem, where things are interdependent and interconnected. Capacity building should go both ways; INGOs and L/NNGOs need each other.”

MYANMAR: IMPROVING HAZARD, RISK AND EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS

Yeeshu Shukla, Strengthening Emergency Preparedness Systems in Myanmar, Christian Aid; Ruby Rose S. Policarpio, Regional Integrated Multi-Hazard Early Warning System for Africa and Asia; Sutthiphong Khongkhaphon, Karen Social and Environmental Network



IMPROVING THE SAFETY OF CIVILIANS

Bran Nu, Protection in Practice, Karen Baptist Convention; Mung Jat Naw: Oxfam

PAKISTAN: IMPROVING LOCAL RESPONSE AND ENABLING A MORE INCLUSIVE PEOPLE-CENTRED RESPONSE

Sana Zulfiqar, National Humanitarian Network



“Localisation is a trendy word, but what we need is a clear roadmap. This must be led by L/NNGOs and needs to be context specific.”

REGIONAL LEARNINGS

LEARNINGS FROM THE CDAC NETWORK

Angela Rouse, CDAC Network

“We need a system where money and power trickles down, one that is less top-heavy and more democratic.”

REGIONALISING SURGE: ‘GO TEAM ASIA’

Lisa Joerke, Transforming Surge Capacity, Plan International



CROSS-PROGRAMME LEARNING LEARNING REPORT 2016 & LEARNING PLATFORM

Elizabeth Smith & Darja Markek, The Learning Project, Action Against Hunger UK



For more details about the proceedings, highlights and key messages from Day One, please see this [blog post](#).

DAY TWO

LESSONS FROM AFRICA



KEY



FACILITATOR: HELEN ASNAKE, REGIONAL LEARNING ADVISOR, DEPP LEARNING PROJECT, ACTION AGAINST HUNGER UK

ONGOING REMARKS: Daniel Karugu, Assistant Director of Veterinary Services, Department of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries, Kenya

SESSION

LINKS

KENYA: LEARNINGS ON EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS

Blandina Bobson, Urban Early Warning Early Action, Oxfam



ETHIOPIA: LEARNINGS ON EARLY WARNING AND PREPAREDNESS SYSTEMS

Tamrat Terefe, Public Health Emergency Preparedness in Gambella, Christian Aid



STRENGTHENING THE CAPACITY OF LOCAL ACTORS AND INSTITUTIONS IN ETHIOPIA, KENYA AND DRC

Chala Gidisa, Shifting the Power, CAFOD;

“Localisation is not just a one-time event; it is a long and complex journey.”

Patrick Katelo, PACIDA Kenya;

Angelina Kayumba, Shifting the Power, CAFOD

“Localisation does not mean UN out and local in; there is still a need for complementarity, and it is a progressive journey of mutual support.”



INVESTING IN LOCAL CAPACITY

Winnie Mapenzi, Talent Development, RedR Kenya



EXTERNAL PERSPECTIVES ON LOCALISATION

PART ONE



SCIENCE POLICY AND PRACTICE

Donna Mitzi D Lagdameo, Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre



GLOBAL AND REGIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON LOCALISATION

Jeremy Wellard, International Council of Voluntary Agencies

DAY TWO

ECOSYSTEMS WORK FOR ESSENTIAL BENEFITS (ECOWEB)

Nanette Salvador-Antequisa, EcoWEB;

Louie John Aguila, Humanitarian Leadership Academy



We need to start talking more about the changes that localisation is leading to. There are many divergent perspectives and opinions on what the final outcome of localisation will look like. We need to collectively decide this and also determine how success will be measured.” – Jeremy Wellard, International Council of Voluntary Agencies

PART TWO



KEY FINDINGS FROM THE DEPP FORMATIVE PHASE REPORT

Vandana Sharma & Phuong Pham, Harvard Humanitarian Initiative



STRENGTHENING RESPONSE-RECOVERY-DEVELOPMENT CONTINUUM AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

Arghya Sinha Roy, Asian Development Bank

ENGAGEMENT OF LOCAL ACTORS AND FUNDING MECHANISMS

Josefina Timoteo, Office of Civil Defence, Philippines

CONSOLIDATION – EVIDENCING – CONTRIBUTIONS



PARTICIPANTS DISCUSS KEY ISSUES AND QUESTIONS TO DETERMINE WHETHER HUMANITARIAN ACTION IN A PARTICULAR CRISIS CAN BE SAID TO HAVE BEEN SUCCESSFULLY LOCALISED

Dr Robina Shaheen

LOCALISATION AND HUMANITARIAN CAPACITY BUILDING

Neil Patrick, Department for International Development, UK

PLENARY: RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CONFERENCE ON LOCALISATION

CLOSING ADDRESS

Angela Rouse, CDAC Network & Lot Felizco, Christian Aid

For more details about the proceedings, highlights and key messages from Day Two, please see this [blog post](#).

FURTHERING THE LOCALISATION AGENDA

WHAT DOES THIS LOOK LIKE IN PRACTICE?

KEEPING COMMUNITIES AT THE CENTRE

Localisation is about putting communities at the centre when designing interventions and empowering them to take back ownership of their own lives and livelihoods in the run-up to and after a disaster. Although these are not new principles - they are based on the CHS and IASC guidelines – Angela Rouse and Shahana Hayat reminded us that we are still falling short of a system where marginalised voices are heard and communities are considered partners in a response.

However, we heard a positive example from EcoWEB, an organisation in the Philippines that is piloting survivor-led response. This approach involves micro-grants for individuals, giving them the opportunity to address their own needs in the most effective way. The ultimate aim is to go beyond simply providing assistance – instead, EcoWEB aims to address the longer-term needs of disaster-affected populations.

WORKING WITH GOVERNMENTS AS PARTNERS

Governments are important actors in the landscape of localisation. They are embedded locally, have contextual knowledge, and own the regulatory structures through which the systems of preparedness and response must function. We heard about positive engagements with governments from several DEPP projects, including the Urban Early Warning Early Action project: Daniel Karugu, a Nairobi County government representative, spoke of his enthusiastic support for the project, voicing the government’s commitment to supporting its early warning system beyond the current timeframe of the DEPP.

We discussed what it means to strengthen the capacity of governments, as this is one of the building blocks of localised response and key to ensuring sustainability and ownership of initiatives. However, we also acknowledged that engaging governments can be difficult, particularly in fragile states, and more thinking is required around what approaches we can take to do this in the most effective way.

THE DEPP ACROSS THE GLOBE

- The DEPP has a presence in 10 countries that are at great risk of natural disaster or conflict.
- The country brochures for the Asian DEPP countries below illustrate how the programme is investing in local capacities in these areas.

PHILIPPINES

PAKISTAN

BANGLADESH

MYANMAR

CAPACITY BUILDING GOES BOTH WAYS

- Several speakers emphasised the importance of building the capacity of local actors, both at the individual and organisational level.
- Chala Gidisa highlighted that country offices do not always have access to information on the Grand Bargain or the localisation of aid, raising questions around how we can ensure that this trickles down effectively.

We were reminded that there is also a real need to build the capacity of international actors in understanding the local context and challenge the top-down transfer of knowledge in order to create a humanitarian system that is more democratic.

We agreed that capacity building strategies should be context-based and sustainable - capacities that are built should aim to have a lasting impact. What approaches can we take to ensure this happens, especially when we are working with such short timeframes?

INVESTING IN LOCAL CAPACITY AND GENDER MAINSTREAMING

Women are particularly vulnerable in response, but utilising their knowledge and strengths is crucial and hearing their perspectives often brings to light issues that can otherwise remain unknown. Several speakers highlighted the importance of engaging women in their programmes and Winnie Mapenzi shared various strategies the Talent Development project has used to achieve greater gender parity in their training. Overall, we agreed that supporting women’s leadership at the local level is key to furthering the localisation agenda and more needs to be done to achieve this.

CHANGING FUNDING STRUCTURES

How can we ensure local actors have greater access to resources? This seems to be the million-dollar question. Several speakers presented the challenges that L/ NNGOs face in this regard: eligibility requirements, passing due diligence checks, and perceived and real weaknesses around governance structures are just some struggles local actors mentioned. Whilst local actors are often disadvantaged in this system, Neil Patrick from DFID explained that donors are constantly reassessing how they can ensure partners receive funding in the most efficient way.

This requires more thinking, but we heard some potential solutions including setting up national NGO funds and tapping into local funding sources. Mark Bidder from UN OCHA suggested that whilst UN systems will be challenged in the coming years, local economies are growing and these might be worth investigating.

COMPLEX SITUATIONS REQUIRE A MULTI-STAKEHOLDER APPROACH

Localisation does not mean working without the UN and INGOs in humanitarian situations. Instead, it is about looking for stakeholder complementarity in terms of skills, capacity and influence. Jeremy Wellard from the International Council of Voluntary Agencies highlighted the need to find the value in networks and alliances within the ecosystem of actors, and several speakers emphasised that INGOs and L/ NNGOs need each other to work effectively.

However, this way of working also involves larger organisations stepping back and recognising when a smaller local organisation may be better placed to act in a specific context. We heard from the Shifting the Power project in DRC, as Angelina Kayumba explained how their INGO consortia partners are working to empower local and national NGOs in the country to participate in national and global forums. Still, we agreed that more lobbying and advocacy is needed so that local actors can have greater say in decision-making forums.

FOCUS ON: EVIDENCE AND LEARNING

We heard many concrete examples across and outside of the programme about how localisation is taking place. The discussions at this conference have gone beyond the conceptual level to highlight real and practical steps that have been taken to help achieve the goals set out during the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit. The programme is now at the point where it must harness evidence and lessons learned around localisation, and draw from its collective experience in order to contribute to the wider sector discussions on what localisation should look like. The forthcoming position paper that will be produced by the Learning Project could provide a starting point for this.

FOCUS ON: EVALUATING THE DEPP

The [Harvard Humanitarian Initiative](#) is conducting the independent external evaluation of the DEPP, which aims to improve programme effectiveness and enhance learning during the lifespan of the programme and to assess the extent to which the DEPP has provided an efficient and effective approach to strengthening preparedness response capacity.

This three-year external evaluation is comprised of four phases, and the 14-month formative phase was conducted from February 2016 – March 2017. The primary objectives of the formative phase of the evaluation are: 1) To assess the relevance of programme outputs and 2) To assess the efficiency and effectiveness of programme delivery. The report also aims to identify current gaps and emerging best practices and to provide guidance to DEPP stakeholders about how to improve the potential effectiveness of the DEPP as well as evidence to inform future similar programmes.

The [Executive Summary](#) provides a more detailed outline of the key findings from the Formative Phase Report.

FOCUS ON: DIGITAL PLATFORMS

The tools and methods we use to learn are constantly evolving and during the conference we heard about two new platforms we can get involved in! Louie John Aguila explained how the Humanitarian Leadership Academy's online platform [Kaya](#) facilitates access to learning resources at the local level by hosting a range of training courses. The digital Learning Platform hosted by the DEPP Learning Project is a growing library of evidence around what works in humanitarian capacity building, where you can browse others' and share your own learnings. We encourage you to explore what both of these have to offer!

KEY MESSAGES

- Localisation is not a new phenomenon but since the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit there has been more momentum at the international level to work towards strengthening the voice and influence of local actors.
- Localisation is context-specific and will look different in different contexts. However, at its core, it is about keeping communities at the centre and building their capacity in ways that are empowering.
- Localisation appears to largely be a donor and civil society discussion, but it is necessary to explore how governments understand this concept and how we can engage with them effectively.
- The DEPP has experienced some successes in increasing the voice and influence of local actors, however more can be done with regards to exploring linkages between the humanitarian and development sector, creating partnerships, and striving for greater transparency and accountability towards partners and communities.
- It is time to create a clear roadmap to localisation and harness our collective programme experience to contribute to the wider sector debates on this topic.

CRITICAL QUESTIONS

The presentations and discussions over the two days generated a number of questions on the theme of localisation which are key to moving the localisation agenda forward. These questions require more thinking and we encourage you to engage and continue the conversations in the [forums](#) on the [Learning Platform](#).

- Why are local organisations or their representatives not effectively or adequately represented within the UN HCT and have a say in resources and interventions?
- Is 'capacity building' a requirement for CSOs & local NGOs alone? Can we also talk about capacity building of donors, INGOs and government agencies?
- What are some of the indicators of success of localisation? How do you measure them?
- How are the voices of the poorest and most vulnerable sector in Bangladesh influencing decision/s in terms of humanitarian response prioritisation?

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations emerged from consolidating everything we had discussed over the two days. They aim to provide a common definition of localisation for both programme and external stakeholders and serve as a starting point for creating a roadmap to localisation.

1 UNDERSTANDING AND REDEFINING LOCALISATION:

Localisation is about putting communities at the centre. Ensuring community participation should be codified in law so obligations and duties around this matter exist.

2 STRENGTHENING THE CAPACITIES OF LOCAL RESPONDERS:

Local responders include survivors, local and central governments, CSOs/CBOs, INGOs working in affected areas, and private sector entities. The capacities they require include technical skills, knowledge of Minimum Standards, funding, pre-positioned resources, and more coordinated systems.

Putting in place risk assessments, contingency plans and accessible contingency funds during peacetime and ensuring stakeholders in at-risk areas are coordinated can help local actors acquire these capacities.

3 INCREASING COLLABORATION BETWEEN LOCAL, NATIONAL, AND REGIONAL ORGANISATIONS:

We need to review the existing structures of emergency response at national and local levels to understand ongoing roles of different stakeholders at different levels.

We need to develop partnership principles that are not competitive but complementary, and clearly define and establish actors' roles based on their strengths. We also need to invest in managing collaborations at the institutional level, as this is the key to sustainable partnerships.

4 CHANNELLING FUNDING TO L/NNGOS:

There has to be a change in the mindset of NGOs and donors regarding how they channel funds to local partners. The DEPP Management Team needs to pursue lobbying and advocacy in this regard.

We should also establish context-specific funding mechanisms at the national level that are accessible, flexible, anticipatory, seek to reduce bureaucracy and manage risks.

5 MEASURING THE SUCCESS OF LOCALISATION EFFORTS:

We should measure how far we are involving communities in our programming. We can assess the capacity of communities on the ground, level of access, and the types of partnerships we are establishing with communities.

This can be measured by how efficiently local resources are mobilised, how able and willing external actors are to support community initiatives, and whether assistance is delivered in a timely manner.

6 ENGAGING WITH NON-NGO ACTORS INCLUDING GOVERNMENTS, PRIVATE SECTOR, AND COMMUNITIES:

Different actors require different engagement strategies. We should build on existing relationships, seek to formalise informal relationships, and understand the value we can add to private sector partnerships. We need to create accessible platforms which can bring together communities and other stakeholders.

WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?

We are committed to furthering the localisation agenda and will continue to work with existing DEPP initiatives and external stakeholders to achieve this. Over the next eight months, the Learning Project will be arranging consultations with local actors in country in order to move this agenda forward. However, we know that localisation is a long and complex journey that needs to continue even beyond the course of this programme.

We will also be producing a position paper based on discussions from the conference, which will be shared with you once finalised.

If you would like to get in touch with someone you spoke to or identified opportunities for collaboration with at the conference, the full list of participants is [here](#). Photos from the event are available [here](#).

We very much look forward to hearing your feedback about the conference so that we can make our future events better! Please share your thoughts and comments [here](#).

The event was organised by the DEPP Learning Project and facilitated by the Regional Learning Advisors Shahida Arif and Helen Asnake. Communications support was provided by Elizabeth Smith and Darja Markek.

We would also like to express our thanks to Maria Alexandra Pura, Dyan Mabunga Rodriguez and the Christian Aid and Action Against Hunger Philippines offices for their logistical support, as well as the Humanitarian Leadership Academy in the Philippines for live streaming the event.