

Integrating Grand Bargain Commitments in Rohingya Relief in Bangladesh

TOWARD A SUSTAINABLE APPROACH

Reducing Transaction Cost, Ensure Accountability to Local Authority and Partnering with Local Organization



Turnout was enthusiastic in the public dialogue on Integration of Grand Bargain Commitments held on 28 February 2018 in Cox's Bazar.

A Joint Response Plan (JRP) for April to December 2018 is prepared on the eve of 6 months completion (August 2017 to March 2018) of the humanitarian response to the FDMN (Forcibly Displaced Myanmar Nationals)/ Rohingya relief work in Cox's Bazar. Taking this opportunity, Cox's Bazar CSO NGO Forum- CCNF (www.cxb-cso-ngo.org), a network of the local NGOs and CSOs, along with COAST Trust (www.coastbd.net) jointly organized two public dialogues consecutively in Cox's Bazar on 28th February and in Dhaka on 3rd March 2018. Both of the dialogues titled "Integrating Grand Bargain (GB) Commitments in Rohingya Relief and Facilitating Localization" are participated by diversified important stakeholders from government, donors, local, national and International NGOs, and locally elected leaders.

The dialogues had two separate keynote presentations, one is on the summary findings of the study done by Koenraad Van Brabant of Navigation 360 and Smruti Patel of Global Mentoring Initiatives (GMI) titled "Debating the Grand Bargain in Bangladesh: How are Grand Bargain Commitments Shaping the Response to the FDM/ Rohingya Influx?" (<http://coastbd.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Final-Debating-Grand-Bargain-and-Rohingya-response.pdf>) and the other presentation is prepared based on the study conducted by Mujibul Haque Munir of COAST Trust titled "Seven Dimension of Localization and Its Implementation in Rohingya Relief".

A detailed report on the event held on 28th February event in Cox's Bazar is available at <http://coastbd.net/7101-2/>, and a brief report of 3rd March event held in Dhaka is available at <http://coastbd.net/reduce-transaction-cost-ensure-accountability-and-partnering-with-local-organization/>.

These two events are organized basically with two objectives (i) to remind all the actors involved in the FDMN (Forcibly Displaced Myanmar Nationals) humanitarian response in respect of their commitments manifested in Grand Bargain and Charter 4 Change (C4C) Principles and (ii) to show the pathways as way forward towards sustainable approach i.e. with a continuous strive for reducing transaction costs, ensuring accountability towards local authorities and in partnering with local organizations.

"Local people sacrificed. Cox's Bazar economy got shattered. Humanitarian response must not lead to disparity".



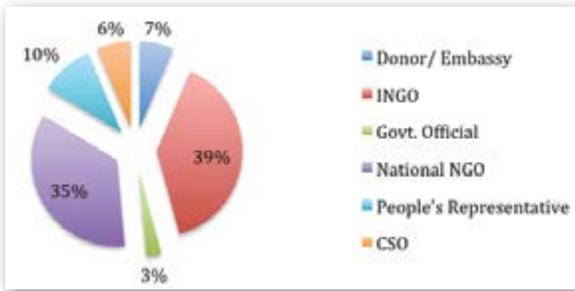
Mohammad Abul Kalam, NDC
Additional Secretary / Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner, Cox's Bazar



The podium of the public dialogue held on 3rd March 2018 in Dhaka. Diversified participants from donor organisations, INGO, local and national NGO, CSO and journalists attended the meeting

It should be noted that CCNF and COAST Trust have been doing this campaign since the beginning of Rohingya influx both in national and local level. A glimpse of those activities is available at www.cxb-cso-ngo.org. These two events are financially supported by Oxfam, Christian Aid, ICVA and IoM.

Here we have the graph on the diversified participation in the dialogues in Cox's Bazar and Dhaka. Our effort on the systematic communication results in a considerable and balanced turnout of



almost all involved actors. Total 184 participants took part in both the events.



“Just after our liberation war of 1971, our NGOs have had the need for technical assistance from foreign expatriate, but in last four decades our NGOs have evolved with a lot of interactions and most of them gained a commendable level of expertise in management, project implementation, accountability, transparency and self-sufficiency in this regard. INGOs and donors should consider this when undertaking need Assessment for an expatriate involvement.”

Shaheen Anam
Executive Director, Manusher Jonno Foundation
A body which promotes human rights and good governance through advocacy and funding to around more than 150 local organizations for more than one decade, with funding support from DFID/UKAID, World Bank, SIDA and other donor agencies.



“Although many NGOs are working now, but it is the local NGOs who are the first responder to the crisis. The amount of response of the local NGOs for the Rohingyas might seem very little, but they are the one who understand better on the ground. I will request INGOs, donors, and UN agencies to extend their support for capacity building, particularly financial assistance.”

Md. Ali Hossain
Deputy Commissioner, Cox's Bazar

Koenraad Van Brabant in his study highlighted the issue of aid workers influx, staff poaching, limitation of participation both from host communities and Rohingyas, little understanding of guidance from the GB signatories' headquarters, and direct operational tendency from INGOs and UN agencies, which he termed as internationalization rather than localization. He commended the joint effort especially including of Bangladesh Army, the effort made the orderly establishment in such a surge situation and major morbidity and mortality have been avoided. He pleaded for Legacy Planning from all the actors in way ahead.

Mujibul Haque Munir of COAST has studied on implementation of 7 dimensions (Funding, Partnership, Capacity, Participation Revolution, Coordination Mechanisms, Visibility and Policy Influence) of localization as suggested in Start Fund initiated report titled “The Start Fund, Start Network and Localization: current situation and future directions” By Smruti Patel and Koenraad Van Brabant (April 2017). His study report's title is “Fast Responders Are Kept FAR! Localization Practices of Humanitarian Aid in FDMN/ Rohingya” (http://coastbd.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Key-note-presentation-slides-from-COAST-on-localization-7-dimension-study-from-COAST_28th-Feb.pdf).

He highlighted the little participation of local NGOs in coordination mechanism e.g. only one local NGO (LNGO) as lead agency in 14 clusters, while in the rest of the sectors 12 agencies include 7 UN agencies and 4 INGOs. In respect of funding management fee, 60% of LNGO do not receive it. INGOs have recruited staff from 80% of LNGOs responders without any prior consent. 70% of LNGO responders said that they have never been involved in capacity assessment of INGOs, while INGOs do 100% capacity assessment of LNGOs.

50% INGO responders said that they do not provide any capacity building support to LNGOs. In respect of recognition of partner LNGOs in media, Munir presented a case showing a donor organization who used 9700 words in its website on Rohingya response allocating only 9 words for describing its LNGO partners. There was a photo-video released by the top coordination body on the eve of 6 months completion of Rohingya Relief, there were hardly any photos of the contribution of LNGOs and the community people.

He also mentioned a case of INGOs who came to the relief operation partnering with local NGOs in the beginning, but now they have opened their own office and started direct operation without partnership. He also mentioned cases that INGOs and UN agencies employing students and teachers and as a consequence of that the education activities of locality is awfully hampered e.g. 60% students of Ukhiya College found absent. The local leaders said that there might be a loss of generation in higher education of the locality.

Here we have different quotations from important speakers participated in both of the dialogues having reflections of the critical issues. Analyzing the studies and reflections from the events, we are proposing following recommendations which should be integrated in the interventions for the FDMN/ Rohingya relief in future.

- (i) JRP should be considered as a live document, so that in the course of time new issues could be integrated. Especially the JRP should be revisited in view of the GB commitments, which has indeed a little reflection in it.
- (ii) Leading responsibility of ISCG should go fully with the government agencies under the leadership of RRRRC (Refugee Relief and



Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner of Bangladesh Government, Mr. Mohammad Abul Kalam is speaking in Cox's Bazar dialogue



“After the war of liberation since 1972 many local humanitarian and nation building initiatives gradually emerged as successful NGOs, they have developed the human resources to meet the embryonic challenges and universal compliances to run the show, but without caring minimum norms of staff hiring, INGOs and UN agencies pillaging the skilled staff of the local NGOs as they are capable to give high salary. This doesn't go with policy of “do no harm”, this harmful practice concealing the hope and prospect of developing the local NGOs and thus sustainable development of the locality and community. So when they say all NGOs are equal –that is far from the reality, actually ‘ all are equal but some are more equal “

G. Nayeem Wahra

Adjunct Faculty, University of Dhaka and Member Secretary, Disaster Forum, a NGO network in respect of humanitarian assistance.

Repatriation Commissioner) including the involvement of local governments for the effective coordination on ground level. In fact, it should lead to avoidance of duplication of resources and maintaining of quality standard of services.

- (iii) For effective communication and coordination of all the expatriates involved should have orientation on local language and culture. All correspondences in filed level should be in bangla since most of the UN agencies and INGOs have Bangladeshi staff. All meetings in Cox's Bazar should be held in a designated day, culture of rampant meeting calling should be stopped. In fact, these will facilitate the easy access and communication of local NGOs and local government staff in ISCG and in planning level.

Charter 4 CHANGE

- 1 Increase direct funding to Southern NGO for Humanitarian Action
- 2 Reaffirm the Principles of Partnership
- 3 Increase Transparency
- 4 Stop undermining local capacity
- 5 Emphasise the importance of National actors
- 6 Address Subcontracting
- 7 Robust organisational support and capacity strengthening
- 8 Media and public communication about partners

- (vi) All agencies including INGOs and UN bodies should publish their aid data in view of IATA principles in local languages in their websites. There are huge public questions on transaction cost, especially on overhead and management cost.
- (v) There should be participation mechanism from host community and Rohingya refugees. And there should also be complaint response mechanism with all involved actors for both host community and Rohingya refugee, which should be open and transparent especially in camp level.
- (vi) All UN agencies should maintain one single logistical hub e.g. one single car pool for movement and transportation for all actors. INGOs can also participate there. The coordination in this logistics level can be offered to LNGOs and government officials too, which can minimize a huge amount of management cost and improve the image of aid agencies.
- (vii) UN and INGOs should be withdrawn from direct field operation, while it should be in partnering with local organizations and local government, tailored to facilitate local commitments, low cost operation, and accountability that leads towards sustainability of the approach.
- (viii) INGOs and UN agencies should immediately go for common framework of employment, compensation and

“We should consider whether we will fund Titanic, while we know that it has every possibility to sink, we should consider funding small life boats, as at the end who will rescue people. In respect of Rohingya relief it is a choice between Titanic and Life boats. Sustainability of humanitarian assistance and localization means investing in life boats i.e., local organization and community for enhancing their commitment and capacity for taking care of Rohingya refugees.”

Abu Morshed Chowdhury
Chief Executive Officer PHALS, and Co Chair CCFN.



The surge response to the Rohingya influx has been successful in avoiding major morbidity and mortality and establishing relatively ordered camps. But its nature has been a classical example of what Ramalingam and Mitchell have called the ‘comprehensive approach’. It has relied heavily on the massive scaling up of a few UN agencies and INGOs, although the Bangladesh army also played a critical role. From a Grand Bargain (and Charter for Change) perspective, it has done the opposite of what was committed to and has ‘replaced’ rather than ‘reinforced’ local & national capacities. So far there has been hardly any genuine participation of and accountability to the affected populations. This modality of response is extremely expensive and doesn’t contribute to reducing the humanitarian financing gap. Problematically, it has been the CCFN that has had to inform and remind the international actors of what they committed to. A robust change of course is required where continued spending goes together with a strategic and structural investment in local and national capacities.

Koenraad Van Brabant
Navigation 360

pricing policies in following principles.

- There should not be employment of students and teachers.
 - There should be one job from one family.
 - Without clearance certificate from previous employer there should not be any employment.
 - If a minimum 2 years experience staff of LNGO being selected for hiring by INGOs and UN agencies, there must be a compensation package to be given to that LNGOs, as they LNGO have invested to train his/ her.
 - All agencies and INGOs must do security check of all employment whether the staff has any police case.
- (ix) All agencies must have a common wage framework in respect of employing labor from host communities and refugees; there should not be any disparity in this regard.
- (x) Until last quarter of 2017, there were 1200 expatriate involved in the Rohingya operation both from INGOs and UN agencies. These has to be demand driven and need based. It also caused huge security tensions among government agencies.

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