

March, 2018



Fast Responders Are Kept Far!

An Assessment on Localization Practice in the Humanitarian Response for FDMN¹

Summary

According to the latest International Organization for Migration (IOM) report, new 671,000 Forcibly Displaced Myanmar Nationals (FDMN) have arrived to Bangladesh since last 25th August². It is predicted that, the number might cross 1 million at the end of this year. Local NGOs (Non Government Organization) and CSOs (Civil Society Organization) of Cox's Bazar have come first in response to this crisis with fast humanitarian support according to their ability³.

Government and non-government organizations including local NGOs (LNGOs) and International NGOs (INGOs) involved with this particular humanitarian response have to report to ISCG (Inter Sector Coordination Group), which is mainly led by UN bodies, for central coordination and also for the accountability to the Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner (RRRC) and to the District administration. ISCG is working with 14 sectors led by 12 organizations as lead agencies where there is only one LNGO. There are 24 Sector Focal Points for the ISCG and among them no one is representing from local and national NGOs.

There are several important findings of the study including, the LNGOs have little role in the decision-making process and planning, INGOs are going for direct project implementation undermining their commitment of reinforcing the local actors in humanitarian response, local actors are not getting expected capacity building support rather staff on whom LNGOs invested huge time and resources are poached by the INGOs, 80% LNGOs involved in FDMN humanitarian response said, their staff had been poached by INGOs and 60% of them are not getting any management fees.

Even though Grand Bargain (GB) and Charter 4 Change (C4C) talk about visibility of local partners, 50% LNGOs informed that, their names and logos were not mentioned in the project reports prepared by INGOs. There are also some best practices which are positive in localization, for example the study finds that, 90% LNGOs have participated in project design.

¹Forcibly Displaced Myanmar Nationals. This is the official term suggested by the Government of Bangladesh instead of "Rohingya Refugee".

²Inter Sector Coordination Group, Situation Report: Rohingya Crisis - Cox's Bazar, 25 February 2018

³<http://coastbd.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Rohingya-Crisis-in-Cox's-Bazar-.pdf>

1. Background: Why Localization is demanded?

From the very beginning of the humanitarian responses for FDMN in Bangladesh, LNGOs and CSOs have been demanding localization of these emergency responses. The activities of Cox's Bazar CSO NGO Forum is reported in the web site of CCNF, www.cxb-cso-ngo.org.

There are some strong reasons for demanding the localization.

- To make the humanitarian aid effective;
- To ensure transparency and accountability;
- To promote sustainable local NGOs/CSOs through reducing transactional cost and use of local knowledge;
- To ensure effective participation of effected population and community people.



From the very beginning of the humanitarian responses for FDMN in Bangladesh, local NGOs and CSOs have been demanding localization of these emergency responses.

2. Why this report?

The specific objectives of this study are:

- II To know about the types of partnership among the Local NGOs, National NGOs, INGOs and UN Agencies and coordination among them.
- II To capture the best practices and weaknesses of these partnerships and coordination.

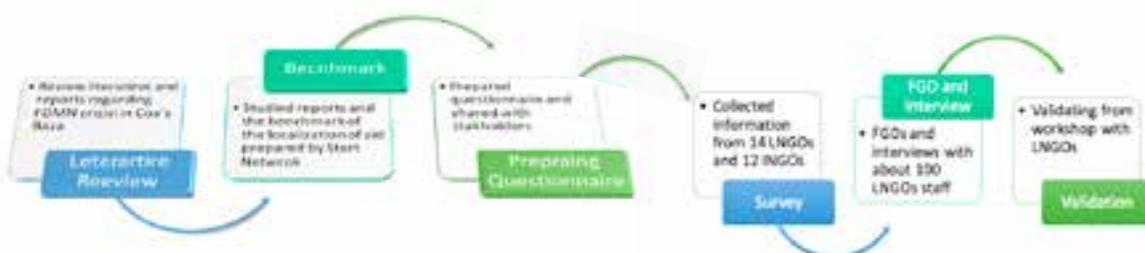


3. The Benchmarks/Indicators for Localization

This study used the benchmark or indicators of localization under seven distinct dimensions based on the Grand Bargain commitments prepared by Smruti Patel and Koenraad Van Brabant in their publication titled 'The Start Fund, Start Network and Localisation: current situation and future directions' (April 2017). To assess the situation of localization in FDMN humanitarian response, this study collected information against some of these benchmarks or indicators.

4. Preparation of the Report

The specific methodologies of preparing the report included; literature review, study the benchmarks, prepare the questionnaires and investigation points, field test, Survey with NGOs/INGOs, Focused Group Discussion (FGDs), individual interviews and reflection/feedback from workshop held in Cox's Bazar. We have got information from 14 local NGOs and 12 INGOs against a specific questionnaire. The result placed here in this report, are mainly based on the information we have received from LNGOs and INGOs.



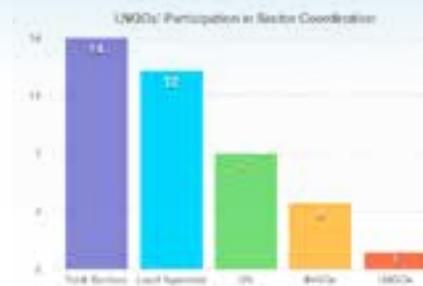
5. Findings

A. Indicator:

National non-governmental actors are encouraged to be part of coordination meetings (also among INGOs) and are allowed to contribute in their own language.

Situation:

ISCG coordinates the humanitarian response to the FDMN crisis in Cox's Bazar. ISCG is taking plans, ensuring coordination and taking important decisions regarding the responses. Participation of the Local NGOs in ISCG is critically poor. There are 14 sectors, only one Co-Lead agency is an LNGO. There are 24 Sector Focal Points for the ISCG, no one is from LNGO and NNGO represent among them!

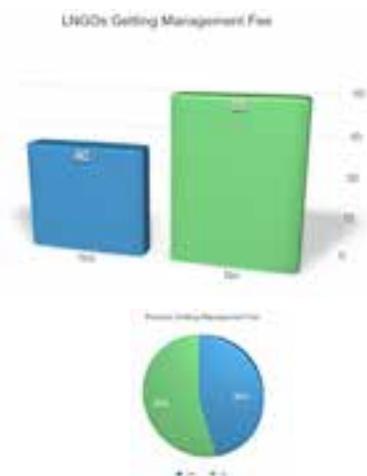


B. Indicator:

National actors receive quality funding: there is a reasonable and unrestricted 'management fee'.

Situation:

Management fee or the overhead cost is the fee provided to the implementing agencies along with the other management costs like salary, office maintenance and necessary equipment to run it. Management fee usually consists of a fixed monthly, quarterly, or annual amount or a certain percentage of the total budget. According to the information we have got from the LNGOs, 40% of them are getting Management Fee. Majority of LNGOs are not getting any management fee. We have analysed the budgets of the projects the LNGOs are implementing and we have found that, 55% project budgets do not include any allocation for management fee.



C. Indicator:

The staff of the national actors is not actively approached or invited to apply for vacancies with international agencies

Situation:

From the survey we have found that, many staff from LNGOs are not only approached or invited, they are recruited by many INGOs. LNGOs usually expect to get at least a prior notice from the INGOs before hiring their staff, let alone the proper time to get prepared to fill in the gap. LNGOs think that, it should be mandatory to collect clearance from the ex-employer. But the situation is not meeting those expectations of LNGOs. 80% of LNGO responders engaged in FDMN response alleged that, their staff had been recruited by INGOs and 90% LNGOs alleged that, prior consent was not taken from them and clearance was not collected.

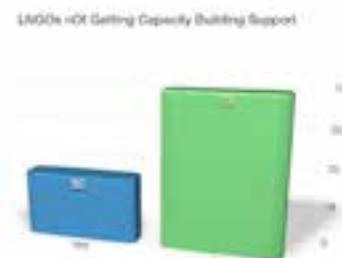
80% of LNGO responders engaged in FDMN response alleged that, their staff had been recruited by INGOs and 90% LNGOs alleged that, prior consent was not taken from them and clearance was not collected.

D. Indicator:

National partners are invited to be part of 'capacity assessments' of the international agency

Situation:

We tried to know whether the INGOs involve LNGOs in their own capacity assessment and for this purpose the question was- "Have you ever participated in any INGO's capacity assessment? 70% LNGOs said, they had never been involved in capacity assessment.

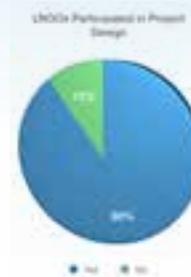


E. Indicator:

Organisational capacity-strengthening efforts address the challenges for national actors of financially sustainable organisations. When a major surge is needed, national actors are provided quickly with additional funding to hire extra-qualified people.

Situation:

70% LNGOs said, they didn't get any capacity building support to be a financially sustainable organization, and 80% LNGOs are not getting any support in emergency needs, or they are not getting any additional funding for hiring extra qualified people to face the challenges. LNGOs are not getting any support beyond the existing project design.



F. Indicator:

In partnership relations, national actors are involved in the design of the proposal and budget, can observe or are fully informed about the project selection process and the reasons for its decisions, know the full budget and not just their part, as well as the financial flexibility and additional provisions (for example lump sum for learning) that are available.



Situation:

The study found a good practice against this indicator. 90% LNGOs participate in project design, even though 40% LNGOs said that, they could not make any changes in project design from their own. On the other hand, another unexpected finding has also been found against this same indicator i.e. 60% LNGOs consider that INGOs don't allow them to know full information about their budget.

G. Indicator:

The names of all national and local collaborators, including sub-contractors, appear in all reports to donors and external communication.

Situation:

Regarding visibility, 50% LNGOs said, their names and logos were mentioned in the project reports prepared by INGOs. One INGO published a report on their FDMN Relief work in its website with about 9700 words. The relief project was implemented by an LNGO, but the report only used 9 words about that LNGO! The INGO is a signatory of the C4C, where the point no 8 says about giving recognition of partner NGOs (we will promote the role of local actors and acknowledge the work that they carry out). On the eve of six month of Rohingya response, higher leading agency release a photo video, which carries photos of UN agencies and INGOs, there was hardly a photo from LNGOs and community contribution.

50% LNGOs said, their names and logos were mentioned in the project reports prepared by INGOs.

H. Indicator:

Dedicated websites, video clips and newsletters in different languages, provide regular briefings to a wider audience that cannot participate directly, who can also feed in questions and proposals that are picked up and attended to.

Situation:

The study has got some good practices against this indicator. 80% LNGOs consider that INGOs website/newsletters are accessible, 70% LNGOs report that, their partner INGOs have website-newsletters in local language.



Prepared by



Secretariat: **COAST Trust**

Cox's Bazar Management and Training Centre:

75 Light House Road, Kolatoli, Cox's Bazar. Phone: 03641-63186

Principal Office: Metro Melody (1st floor), House 13, Road 2

Shamoly, Dhaka 1207, Tel : +8802-58150082, 9118435

e-mail : info@coastbd.net web : www.coastbd.net



We are grateful to GMI and Navigation 360 for their generous advice and guidance in respect of conducting this study.



We are grateful to Christian Aid, ICVA, IoM and Oxfam for support to organize the campaign events. The opinions expressed in this report does not necessarily mean a reflection of their position in this regard.