

Localisation in Coordination

Background

The World Humanitarian Summit recognised that increased localisation is fundamental to the delivery of a dignified and effective humanitarian response, concluding that humanitarian action should be “*as local as possible, as international as necessary.*” The associated Grand Bargain emphasized the need to make more deliberate and explicit efforts to better engage with, empower and promote the work of local actors.

Following the Summit, the Protection and Education Cluster Lead Agencies, and Co-Leads made commitments to promote localisation¹. In essence, this means that coordination groups and their respective response strategies should be guided by the principle – “*as local as possible, as international as necessary.*”

The opportunities that the coordination system brings

The aim of the cluster approach is to strengthen system-wide preparedness and technical capacity to respond to humanitarian emergencies, and provide clear leadership and accountability in the main areas of humanitarian response. At country level, it aims to strengthen partnerships, and the predictability and accountability of international humanitarian action, by improving prioritization and clearly defining the roles and responsibilities of humanitarian organizations². This includes leading the development of national humanitarian response strategies for the protection and education sectors; helping government, donors and pooled fund managers decide when and where to invest funding; and encouraging good practices to be taken to scale.

This brings both an **obligation to promote localisation** and an **opportunity to amplify localisation efforts, mobilise resources, take successful pilots to scale and influence structural changes within individual agencies and networks**. For Child Protection and Education, this will ultimately lead to **greater coverage and quality of services, more sustainable systems and improved cost-efficiencies**.

A conceptual framework for localisation in coordination

Dimension	What this means for coordination
Governance and Decision-Making	Local actors should have equitable opportunities to play leadership and co-leadership roles at national and sub-national levels; and have a seat at the table when strategic decisions are made (for example, in Strategic Advisory Groups or Steering Committees).
Participation and Influence	Even if not taking the decisions, local actors should have the opportunity to influence these decisions. To do this, they need equitable access to information and analysis on coverage, results etc; and the opportunity and skills to effectively and credibly convey their thoughts and ideas.
Partnerships	Coordinators should be promoting a culture of principled partnership both in the way it interacts with its members; and the way in which members interact with each other. In some cases, this requires transitions from sub-contracting to more equitable and transparent partnerships, including recognising the value of non-monetary contributions by local actors (networks, knowledge).
Funding	Local actors should receive a greater share of the humanitarian resources, including pooled funds. Where they have the institutional capacity to manage these funds, local actors should be able to access funds directly.
Institutional Capacity	Whilst technical capacity strengthening is important, coordination groups should also actively encourage more systematic and coordinated opportunities to receive support to strengthen operational functions, as part of the overall sector strategy to scale up services.

¹ For more information:
<https://www.agendaforhumanity.org/initiatives/3861>
<https://www.agendaforhumanity.org/stakeholder/252>

² For more information:
<https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/about-clusters/what-is-the-cluster-approach>
<http://educationcluster.net/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Cluster-Coordination-Reference-Module-2015-final.pdf>

Localisation and the Humanitarian Programme Cycle

Localisation is a process and the degree to which a response can be locally led; and the degree to which international support is necessary will change depending on local conditions, capacities and contexts. It is largely a subjective judgment and Coordinators are well placed to be able to assess what is the right ‘balance’ and bring sectors to a consensus on how the humanitarian response should be best configured in support of localisation. Coordinators also have an important role in helping Cluster members to clarify the implications for humanitarian responses – the CP AoR and Education Cluster have developed a brief Q&A which may be a helpful resource for this.

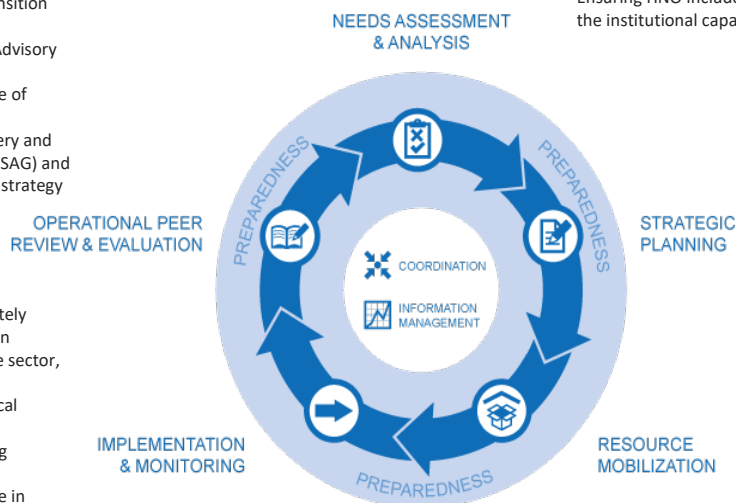
There are opportunities at every stage of the Humanitarian Programme Cycle to ensure that localisation is taken into account. Over time, localisation should be seen as an integral part of the humanitarian response strategy; and not a standalone issue. This includes ensuring that localisation considerations are taken into account during the HNO and HRP processes, when developing and prioritising project sheets and when monitoring the humanitarian response (e.g. the 5Ws).

Examples of how localisation can be integrated into the HPC

- Supporting local agencies for Lead/Co-Lead positions or putting leadership transition strategies in place
- Including local actors in Strategic Advisory Groups (SAG) and HCT
- Modelling and monitoring a culture of principled partnerships in Clusters
- Constantly reviewing service delivery and funding arrangements (e.g. by the SAG) and using recommendations to inform strategy and response.

- Ensure that Cluster membership accurately reflects the diversity of the humanitarian community – including diaspora, private sector, academia etc
- Translating key communications into local languages
- Facilitate onsite coaching and mentoring support from international partners
- Share good practices and promote these in future response plans
- Adapt the 5Ws to allow for disaggregation by implementing and funding agency
- Produce and share dashboards that provide analyses disaggregated by local/international implementing agencies

- Ensuring the HNO incorporates the views and data from local actors. This could also include academia, diaspora, private sector, in addition to civil society
- Ensuring HNO includes both needs of affected populations and the institutional capacity needs of local actors



- Prioritising service delivery by local actors HRP and cluster strategies, where possible
- Developing a sectoral institutional capacity building strategy as part of the HRP
- Cluster indicators including disaggregation by local/international
- Promoting partnerships that draw on coaching and mentoring approaches, rather than sub-granting
- Including explicit references to institutional capacity building outputs (e.g. reduced risk ratings) in project sheets

- Supporting local actors to contribute to FTS tracking
- Prioritising local actors’ project sheets in funding rounds (e.g. pooled funds)
- Including institutional capacity building for local partners in pooled funds

Specific Localisation Initiatives – Child Protection and Education

In many countries, local actors constitute up to 75 per cent of coordination group members. They are usually the first responders, they continue to operate when international agencies withdraw (due to access or funding constraints or planned transitions). They also bring cultural and historical knowledge and credibility; and local networks and relationships. This offers opportunities to achieve each of the core elements of coordination – **greater coverage, better quality and a more predictable, timely and sustainable prevention and service delivery system.**

The Child Protection AoR (on behalf of the Protection Cluster and together with the Education Cluster) will be undertaking a range of specific initiatives to both strengthen the global policy and strategic frameworks; and support country coordination groups to give effect to localisation commitments. A summary of these initiatives, based on the localisation in coordination conceptual framework, is below:

CP AoR and Education Cluster: Key Results Planned for 2018/2019

Governance and Decision-Making

- At least 3 child protection coordination groups co-led by a national civil society actor (together with Save the Children, Plan International and UNICEF)
- Guidance for working with national authorities in conflict settings available to all coordinators (together with ProCap)
- Government capacity building programme rolled out in at least 2 new regions (together with IFRC)
- Global CP AoR Strategic Advisory Group, including local actors, in place to guide strategic planning and monitor workplan implementation

Influence and Participation

- Localisation dashboard routinely used in at least 10 country coordination groups during key stages of HPC
- Engagement with diaspora initiated in at least 2 CP and Education coordination groups (together with DEMAC/DRC)
- Helpdesk decentralised to 4 locations and operating in at least 4 languages (together with UNICEF and Translators Without Borders)

Partnerships

- Principles of Partnership self-assessment tools finalised (together with ICVA)
- Partnerships assessments done in at least 4 countries
- Commitments secured from senior partnership policy managers from key CP AoR and Education Cluster members to explore new coaching and mentoring models (together with Caritas, Care International, ICVA and IFRC)

Funding

- Pooled funding guidance adapted to enable local actors to access funding for institutional capacity building (together with OCHA, IFRC and Care International)
- Institutional grants trialled and documented for at least 4 local NGOs

Institutional Capacity

- SHAPE Framework trialled in at least 2 countries (together with Actionaid)
- Institutional capacity strengthening guidance, including recommended approaches issued by Global CPAoR in advance of 2019 HRP preparation
- Mentoring models initiated and documented in at least 4 country coordination groups (together with NRC, Mercy Corps and Plan International)

- Activity fully funded
- Activity partially funded
- Activity not funded

For more information:

- Michael Copland, Global Child Protection AoR Coordinator, mcopland@unicef.org
- Maria Agnese Giordano: Global Education Cluster Coordinator, mgiordano@unicef.org
- Anthony Nolan: Global Education Cluster Coordinator, Anthony.Nolan@SaveTheChildren.org