



# Cost-effectiveness in humanitarian aid: localisation programming

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## Question

*What evidence is there that localisation of humanitarian aid is cost-effective with respect to improving humanitarian outcomes and reducing the cost of responses?*

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## 1. Summary of findings

Localisation of humanitarian aid is a “collective process by the different stakeholders of the humanitarian system (donors, United Nations agencies, NGOs) which aims to return local actors (local authorities or civil society) to the centre of the response with a greater, more central role” (Groupe URD, 2017). The idea of promoting localisation in humanitarian aid through specific commitments of aid organisations and donors was established in 2016 with the Grand Bargain agreement of the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS). By that time, it was widely recognised that national and local actors should become a central part of humanitarian aid due to low structural costs and geographical and cultural proximity to the populations in need. The various actors agreed to allocate at least 25% of direct humanitarian funding to local and national responders to improve outcomes, increase and support multi-year investment in capacity building activities of local and national actors, remove or reduce barriers that prevent international organisations and donors from engaging on an equal basis with local and national responders and include local and national responders in international coordination mechanisms (Groupe URD, 2017).

There is consensus in the humanitarian aid literature that localisation costs less and can have greater impact on areas in need because the staff of local and national actors cost less compared to the staff of international actors and because staff of local and national actors are more aware of local contexts offering tailor-made solutions.

However, the literature does not provide robust evidence showing how localisation is cost-effective. The only tangible evidence relates to particular case studies, such as Myanmar and DRC (Groupe URD, 2017) and Philippines and Nepal (Islamic Relief, 2017). In these cases, the cost of national and local responses was significantly lower and the results very positive. The key elements the success was that the staff of the local actors cost less, were easily deployed, and had good knowledge of the cultural context they were operating in. This information was extracted from interviews with international and local actors.

The literature is more concerned with how localisation, which is accepted as the optimal solution for humanitarian aid in cost-effectiveness terms, can function to the highest international standards and have greater impact on the ground (Oxfam, 2017; Saferworld, 2018). The literature mainly debates facilitating and enabling factors for the overall effectiveness of localisation (Building Markets, 2018; Global Mentoring Initiative, 2018) and what can possibly hinder it or even tarnish its positive image (Oxfam, 2017). Accordingly, the literature focuses on establishing a conflict sensitive approach vis-à-vis the promotion of localisation given that good knowledge of the local context and good access to conflict areas might come with the danger that local actors become part of the conflict as they might well have certain preferences, interests and biases (Oxfam, 2017; Saferworld, 2018).

The literature also discusses which local actors specifically can be the most effective, with some reports arguing that international actors should be open to the idea of collaborating with informal local actors under certain conditions (Overseas Development Institute, 2018). Finally, the literature refers to other advantages of localisation, such as access and agility in difficult or unsafe areas (Groupe URD, 2017; Humanitarian Policy Group, 2018) that are not directly related to cost-effectiveness, but do relate to the belief that local and national actors can be more effective and impactful in areas of humanitarian need.

## 2. Methodology

This literature review is a result of 5 days of desk research into the available evidence about whether policies of localisation are cost-effective in terms of improving the impact of humanitarian aid on the ground, while reducing the overall costs of the response. The ALNAP Humanitarian Evaluation, Learning and Performance (HELP) database was employed to extract secondary sources to be reviewed. The review aims first at examining the effectiveness of localisation for humanitarian responses that are either directly or indirectly connected to the cost in the aftermath of the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016 and the Grand Bargain agreement. In addition, because in many cases the 'lower costs' were considered as a constant positive feature of localisation, which however could not explain variation in humanitarian outcomes, other facilitating/enabling or non-facilitating/enabling factors (intervening variables) had to be reviewed as well in order to explain the dynamics of the 'cost-effectiveness' nexus in a more holistic manner. Finally, the review investigates the recommendations of the literature, particularly as to how localisation can become an efficient policy tool of the humanitarian response that is up to international standards given financial, political and social challenges.

The ALNAP database was searched with the keyword 'cost effectiveness localisation', and the search returned 1031 results. The search was then focused on the most recent work on localisation and particularly on what followed the new framework of localisation that was introduced with the commitments of the Grand Bargain of the WHS in 2016. This constitutes a new reference point in the relationship between donors, international, national and local responders with the main aim being to enhance the role of national and local actors in humanitarian response globally through various means including financial and capacity building remedies. Accordingly, the search was for years 2017 and 2018. It returned 195 returns from which 12 reports and 1 briefing paper were deemed as relevant for the review.

Further searches were conducted on Google Scholar using the keywords 'cost effectiveness localisation' and 'cost effectiveness humanitarian localisation' with no specific dates selected initially and then with a start date of 01/01/2017 to 01/09/2018. The 'sort by date' setting gave no results at all and the 'sort by relevance' setting gave no relevant results at all. Therefore, no further studies were included in the sample from Google Scholar.

### 3. Annotated bibliography

Title	Link	Date	Focus	Document	Organisation	Methodology	Cost-effectiveness Evidence
As Local as Possible, As International as Necessary: HAI Position Paper on Localisation	<a href="https://www.alnap.org/system/files/content/resource/files/main/hai-position-paper-localisation.pdf">https://www.alnap.org/system/files/content/resource/files/main/hai-position-paper-localisation.pdf</a>	January 2017	Efficiency of Humanitarian response and the role of Localisation	Position paper	Humanitarian Aid International (HIA)	Desk-based research	The HAI position paper highlights the need to place local response at the heart of humanitarian efforts. Local communities and local organisations are key to humanitarian response. However, they receive a very small fraction of the global humanitarian financing. Data shows that only 0.4% of international humanitarian assistance was directly funnelled to local and national NGOs in 2015. Initiatives, such as the World Humanitarian Summit held in May 2016, constitute attempts to increase financial support for local and national responders. HAI's proposal among others is to implement the Great Bargain and the Charter for Change recommendations.
Localisation More Than the Money: Localisation in Practice	<a href="https://charter4change.files.wordpress.com/2017/09/more-than-the-money-full-report.pdf">https://charter4change.files.wordpress.com/2017/09/more-than-the-money-full-report.pdf</a>	July 2017	The study focuses on analysing patterns, similarities and context-specific examples that establish a definition of 'localisation' and present the main challenges for strengthening it.	Report	Groupe URD	The study adopted an inductive approach based on a desk review and semi-structured interviews in Myanmar and DRC.	The report based on a desk review and semi-structured interviews in Myanmar and DRC with international, national and local humanitarian responders focuses on what the definition of localisation and its aims are, what advantages bears on the humanitarian sector, what hinders its development and what the main pitfalls of attempting to develop it further are. By and large, localisation places local actors to the centre of humanitarian responses and aims to enhance the effectiveness and relevance of aid in the short term and its impact in the long run. The report acknowledges that there is a variety of reasons for encouraging localisation, such as reduction of costs and increased efficiency, effectiveness and relevance, sustainability of projects beyond the emergency phase. However, the report highlights that there is a major imbalance at a global level in terms of funding with local and national NGOs combined receiving 2.3% of direct funding in 2015

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							<p>according to the Global Humanitarian Assistance report.</p> <p>In the cases of Myanmar and DRC, interviewees argued that the comparative advantages of national and local NGOs are lower costs (it does not provide specific figures), access and agility in difficult or unsafe areas and greater acceptance and ownership of programmes in local communities through local ties and knowledge of the context. In addition, local NGOs can have long-term presence, which allow potentially for sustainable operations and exit strategies for international actors. Having said that, international and local NGOs pointed out that management capacity, financial resources and governance problems were some of the main weaknesses that hinder the expansion of localisation.</p> <p>To conclude with, the report underlines that localisation “should not be seen predominantly as a way of saving money” despite the fact that reduction in humanitarian costs can be achieved. This agenda should also be pursued for reasons related to “relevance, appropriateness and adaptation, greater speed and efficiency, increased capacity to access populations, better links between humanitarian aid and development, strengthened resilience”.</p>
Fostering local partnerships in remote management and high-threat settings: Emerging lessons from child protection	<a href="https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/resourcedocuments/12302.pdf">https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/resourcedocuments/12302.pdf</a>	July 2018	Partnership arrangements, capacity-building efforts and risk management	Report	Humanitarian Policy Group (HPG)	Desk-based research and semi-structured interviews with an anonymous INGO, Syrian organisations partnering with it, other INGOs	The report is an attempt to fill the gap in the literature of humanitarian action in terms of studying remote management modalities in child protection programming in Syria. The report argues that local partners receive inadequate levels of financial support despite being the only feasible option to provide child protection interventions in many parts of Syria and that INGOs should boost the “technical capacity-building and financial support for Syrian partners to improve the collection of sensitive information

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programming in Syria						running child protection programmes in Syria through local organisations, UN agencies and donors	and data in line with data protection standards". Drawing on several contexts, the report argues that instrumental subcontracts and transactional arrangements are not helping local actors to achieve their potential. However, it is underlined that INGOs in Syria have significantly invested in capacity-building in order to "minimise...the reputational and financial risks arising from weak capacities...". Accordingly, the report recommends that INGOs should continue funding technical and organisational capacity-building efforts in order to support the "quality and effectiveness of remote training". Finally, the report highlights the need to address child protection in terms of "who is best placed to respond to a particular crisis" that increases complementarity between the organisations and thereby efficiency in child protection.
Localisation in Practice: Emerging Indicators and Practical Recommendations	<a href="https://www.alnap.org/system/files/content/resourcelibrary/files/main/Localisation-In-Practice-Full-Report-v4.pdf">https://www.alnap.org/system/files/content/resourcelibrary/files/main/Localisation-In-Practice-Full-Report-v4.pdf</a>	June 2018	Assessing localisation in context of the Start Network's Disasters and Emergencies Preparedness Programme (DEPP)	Report	Department for International Development, Action Against Hunger, CDAC Network, Start Network  The Global Mentoring Initiative (GMI) is the author of the report	The report draws on semi-structured interviews and consultative discussions in UK, Ethiopia, Bangladesh and Switzerland as well as desk-based research	The Disasters and Emergencies Preparedness Programme (DEPP) was a three-year programme worth £40m. The aim was to "increase and strengthen the capacity of the humanitarian system at all levels, although support was weighted towards training and development for local humanitarian workers at national level".  The report is an attempt to analyse whether and how the DEPP project has contributed to strengthening localisation. It is initially argued that localisation has developed on short- and medium-term financial interests of donors and on grounds related to local organisations access to high risk areas. Specifically, localisation is more cost-effective because local and national responders cost less, and transaction costs are lower. In addition, support to local organisations means that local communities will enhance their capacity to deal by themselves with humanitarian crises or development issues more effectively.

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							<p>The report suggests that for a more effective localised humanitarian support changes need to be carried out on four different levels:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. System-wide or global capacity to maximise the participation of affected populations</li> <li>2. Operational changes that will make the collaboration between INGOs and local and national responders more functional</li> <li>3. Strategic thinking that will create an enabling environment for localisation</li> <li>4. Organisational in terms of reviewing INGOs' mission, policies and practices, legal framework etc.</li> </ol> <p>In terms of good practices of the DEPP that relate to funding/financing, the report argues that 1. Local organisations were supported to develop their capacity in fundraising and finance management 2. Flexible small to modest grants were provided to local and national organisations "for their chosen capacity development priorities".</p>
Enabling a Localized Aid Response in Syria: An Assessment of Syrian-led Organizations	<a href="https://www.alnap.org/system/files/content/resource/files/main/enabling_a_local_aid_response_in_syria.pdf">https://www.alnap.org/system/files/content/resource/files/main/enabling_a_local_aid_response_in_syria.pdf</a>	May 2018	Mapping and assessing the capacity of Syrian-led civil society organisations based in Turkey and Syria	Report	Building Markets (authored the report), Watan (local partner that carried out field research and data collection)	Desk research, primary data collection through an in-person survey, stakeholder interviews, focus group discussion with Syrian CSOs	<p>By and large, the report investigates the extent to which localisation has been promoted in the case of the Syrian humanitarian crisis given the severity of the conflict and the scale of the humanitarian disaster. Specifically, it is looking into the capacity of Syrian-led civil society organisations (CSOs) operating in Syria and Turkey, their relations with INGOs and how this relationship could strengthen the capacity of the CSOs and thereby increase the impact of humanitarian assistance.</p> <p>Initially, the report maintains that "by funding and partnering with local civil society, donors can spend development dollars twice by providing direct relief while building the capacity of local</p>

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							<p>actors where needed, jumpstarting economic recovery and investing in a sustainable response.” This gains more importance considering that the humanitarian sector faces a \$15 billion financing gap. In addition, the report argues that INGOs cannot operate in conflict areas, such as Syria, and that local and national humanitarian organisations can potentially ensure sustainability and impact.</p> <p>Having said that, in the case of Syria, it is observed that active Syrian-led CSOs with “unique skills, expertise, and [which] are on the frontlines delivering an estimated 75% of aid, yet they only receive roughly 0.2 to 0.9% of direct funding”. In addition, according to the report, OCHA underlines that in the Syrian response “86.4% of funding goes through international organizations (INGOs and UN agencies). However, 55% of partners are national and they receive a mere 0.2% of funding”. INGOs manage to attract more funding “due to their ability to meet strict donor requirements and humanitarian principles”. Nevertheless, unlike INGOs, the report maintains that Syrian CSOs also have access, knowledge, and relationships that give them a strategic advantage. In some instances, even, they are driven by a personal commitment and connection to their country. Despite their capacity, Syrian CSOs continue to receive just a fraction of donor funding. Similarly, Syrian organisations in Turkey are not assisted by donors due to “due to bureaucracy, perceptions of risk, low capacity, and a lack of coordinated investment in programs and approaches that recognize them as leaders in the crisis response. The resulting subcontracts and partnership agreements with Syrian CSOs often do not sufficiently cover costs, placing these</p>



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							<p>organizations at risk by preventing them from planning beyond the short-term.”</p> <p>The report argues that CSO capacity scores were highest in communications, program management, and safety and security. Scores were lowest in financial, procurement, and human resources management. Accordingly, the report suggests that the international community needs to support the local CSOs in Syria further giving the example of allowing them to claim indirect costs that will cover operational expenses, attract and retain qualified staff and invest in process and systemic improvements.</p>
Holding the Keys: Humanitarian Access and Local Organisations	<a href="https://www.alnap.org/system/files/content/resourcelibrary/files/main/1981.pdf">https://www.alnap.org/system/files/content/resourcelibrary/files/main/1981.pdf</a>	January 2018	Challenges international and local humanitarian organisation face in accessing Syria and Ukraine	Report	Humanitarian Policy Group (HPG)	<p>Desk research of documents from UN agencies, international NGOs, the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement and local organisations, grey literature and academic publications.</p> <p>Fieldwork in Lebanon, Turkey and Ukraine that involved semi-structured interviews with international and local NGOs, and focus group</p>	<p>The study examines challenges related to the access of international and local humanitarian organizations to Syria and Ukraine and suggests ways for a more effective humanitarian access to conflict zones.</p> <p>The main findings of the study can be summarised in that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Flexibility, agility and connectedness with people on the ground are significant weaknesses of international actors</li> <li>- Local actors in both Syria and Ukraine were better in identifying temporary windows of opportunity to negotiate access with groups in charge to the affected areas</li> <li>- A major facilitating factor for local groups in obtaining access was trusted networks through timely and appropriate assistance</li> </ul>

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						discussions with affected populations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Access to Syria and Ukraine was neither uniform nor permanent</li> <li>- Both case studies also showed that negotiations for access might take place on local as well as international level. International humanitarian organisations can have a key role on higher levels of negotiations</li> </ul> <p>Specifically, the findings of the study support the idea of complementarity between international and local humanitarian organisations. Each of the actors has its own comparative advantage with local organisations being more flexible and having deep knowledge and understanding of the context within which they operate, and international organisations having more experience in humanitarian and in conducting negotiations on a higher level, such as at the UN level. However, the report underlines that international actors should give primary role and support local actors that are able to get access because they are more flexible and agile. The key for efficient access to conflict zones is complementarity, according to the report.</p>
Field Survey and Analysis: Survey of Local Partner Organisations providing Humanitarian Aid in Uganda	<a href="https://www.alnap.org/system/files/content/resources/files/main/OECD_Uganda_overall_partner_survey_January%202018.pdf">https://www.alnap.org/system/files/content/resources/files/main/OECD_Uganda_overall_partner_survey_January%202018.pdf</a>	January 2018	Assess the extent to which localisation has been promoted in Uganda	Report	Ground Truth Solutions	Quantitative method: Survey to gauge the experiences of local and national responders who administer humanitarian assistance (21 local and national partner organisations of three	<p>The report explores a number of issues that relate to the relationship quality between local and international humanitarian actors, capacity building and financial support.</p> <p>The results illustrate that local partners are very positive when it comes to the relationship quality, i.e. the respect that international actors show to them and their efforts to listen and to respond to their questions and concerns. In addition, local actors are positive with the capacity building efforts and specifically the improvement of their technical abilities, monitoring and evaluation skills, participatory approaches, strategic planning,</p>

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						international organisations and four UN agencies in Uganda)	<p>management and financial skills. They are least satisfied with the communication strategies and long-term planning. Finally, local actors seem to be positive about contributions to their core costs, but least satisfied with the flexibility of the funding when circumstances on the ground change.</p> <p>The report does not engage with the question of how these perceptions affect effectiveness on the ground.</p>
Informality in Urban Crisis Response	<a href="https://www.alnap.org/help-library/informality-in-urban-crisis-response">https://www.alnap.org/help-library/informality-in-urban-crisis-response</a>	March 2018	Importance of informal actors, networks and activities in responding to urban crises	Report	Overseas Development Institute (ODI)	Literature reviews	<p>The report goes deep into analysing the advantage of international humanitarian organisations engaging with non-formal local actors within the context of urban humanitarian crises. The main argument is that formal local actors might not be as effective as informal local actors in some instances. Drawing on cases of urban humanitarian disasters, such as Port-au-Prince, Manila, Eldoret and Nairobi, the report argues that urban-dwellers appealed for support to informal actors for the provision of protection, housing, access to basic services and support for their livelihoods. Therefore, one of the main questions for effective and impactful humanitarian assistance should be which local actors are the most appropriate to work with on certain urban disasters. Failure by international actors to identify appropriate informal and non-traditional structures that can help them with their operations can be a missed opportunity to build on already ongoing work, duplicate and in some instances, it might create or exacerbate tensions between local actors. The best way forward would be for humanitarian interventions to facilitate synergies between formal and informal local institutions when considered relevant.</p>

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Conflict-sensitive approaches to development, humanitarian assistance and peacebuilding: A resource pack	<a href="https://www.alnap.org/system/files/content/resource/files/main/Conflict-Sensitive-Approaches-to-Development-Humanitarian-Assistance-and-Peacebuilding-Resource-Pack.pdf">https://www.alnap.org/system/files/content/resource/files/main/Conflict-Sensitive-Approaches-to-Development-Humanitarian-Assistance-and-Peacebuilding-Resource-Pack.pdf</a>	March 2018	Conflict-sensitive approaches to development, humanitarian assistance and peacebuilding	Report (resource pack)	Saferworld	Desk review	[3. Humanitarian assistance and conflict section] Among others the report argues that humanitarian assistance can have adverse effects in conflict areas because on the one hand, on local level, it can be manipulated by local actors to strengthen one part of the conflict against the other part and on the other hand, on international level, it can be used for partisan political interests through its instrumentalisation. Accordingly, the report recommends that the idea of conflict sensitivity should be promoted whereby international humanitarian organisations follow a politically informed neutrality and a conflict prevention perspective. In addition, there is need for the establishing a solid institutional framework for conflict sensitivity at all stages of the intervention cycle.
Money Talks: A Synthesis Report Assessing Humanitarian Funding flows to Local Actors in Bangladesh and Uganda	<a href="https://www.alnap.org/system/files/content/resource/files/main/r-money-talks-humanitarian-funding-localization-230318-en_0.pdf">https://www.alnap.org/system/files/content/resource/files/main/r-money-talks-humanitarian-funding-localization-230318-en_0.pdf</a>	March 2018	International investment in localisation	Briefing paper	Development Initiatives, OXFAM	Quantitative research based on gathering data regarding the fiscal year 2015 of Bangladesh and Uganda.  Qualitative research drawing on interviews with a number of local and national actors.  The paper is also using the comparative	The report highlights that despite the critical role that local and national humanitarian actors (LNHAs) play in dealing with humanitarian crises, they only received 2% of the direct international humanitarian assistance in 2016. The ramifications of insufficient funding can be summarised in lower efficiency, effectiveness and accountability of the humanitarian sector.  Specifically, the report explores the dynamics of localisation in two different incidents in Bangladesh and Uganda, i.e. widespread flash floods and the South Sudan refugee crisis respectively.  Accordingly, the report makes the following observations:  - LNHA in Uganda received significantly less international humanitarian financing (LNHA in Bangladesh received 12% of

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						method for the two case studies.	<p>the total funding in the country and LNHA in Uganda received 39%). The reasons for that are not clear. The authors make different hypotheses, such as the types of crises, the degree of access of international actors, the size, experience and capacity of local actors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Following from the previous observation, the report argues for the need of a contextually-driven analysis that will measure both volumes of funding flows to local and national actors, a tracking system of the type of actors and appropriate ways to fund the aforementioned actors as directly as possible.</li> <li>- The local and national actors reported that the closer the relationship between LNHA and donors, the greater the actors' involvement in overall programme management at the initial stages (budget design, strategy of humanitarian responses)</li> <li>- Local interviewees also maintained that lack of information sharing, communication, and dialogue between local actors led to project failure, delays in action, and contributed to relationship mistrust.</li> <li>- Furthermore, they acknowledged that calls for more direct funding should not be separated from calls to reduce duplication and management costs or increasing collaborative humanitarian multi-year planning and funding and calls for equitable partnerships.</li> <li>- Donors explained why the indirect funding is more advantageous than</li> </ul>

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							<p>direct funding, namely that LNHA's cannot meet reporting requirements and that managing grantees at country level is impractical.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Quality of funding mechanisms and relationships are equally important to the volume of direct funding.</li> <li>- A few national NGOs reported that communication and access to international donors and decision-making is more important than increasing direct funding.</li> <li>- Oxfam research in other countries showed that humanitarian assistance that is not informed by LNHA's engagement in humanitarian coordination and decision-making is not as effective regardless of the volume of direct and indirect funding.</li> <li>- National NGOs also reported that in some instances they are not able to meet donors' requirements in terms of sustainability and pay adequate salaries to their staff when receiving indirect funding. Therefore, providing among others funding administrative costs will help the overall capacity and sustainability of the organisations.</li> <li>- Governments do fund humanitarian assistance and in the case of Bangladesh, the government provides more than international actors. In addition, evidence shows that in Bangladesh the government policy, legal frameworks, and investments over the past few decades in disaster risk reduction (DDR) resulted in significant decrease of deaths caused by climate-related disasters in the country.</li> </ul>

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							<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Misperception on the part of LNHA in Bangladesh and Uganda, namely that INGOs share the largest amounts of money and resources. Data shows that this is not the case. A greater fraction of funding goes to LNHA.</li> </ul>
Bridging the Emergency Gap: Reflections and a Call for Action after a Two-Year Exploration of Emergency Response in Acute Conflicts	<a href="https://www.alnap.org/system/files/content/resourcelibrary/main/BRIDGING-THE-EMERGENCY-GAP-FULL-REPORT_0.pdf">https://www.alnap.org/system/files/content/resourcelibrary/main/BRIDGING-THE-EMERGENCY-GAP-FULL-REPORT_0.pdf</a>	April 2018	Factors that enable or disable the humanitarian sector's emergency response	Report	Medecins Sans Frontieres	Bilateral meetings with more than 150 senior-level representatives from over 60 organisations involved in humanitarian assistance. Critical review of existing knowledge and analysis on the present status of emergency response in acute conflicts, together with re-examination of current global policy developments.	<p>The report raises some serious questions about the operational challenges that come with policies that promote localisation as a result of the World Humanitarian Summit guidelines (WHS). On the one hand, the report argues that national and local actors can be very effective in emergency contexts, especially slow onset emergencies and natural disasters. On the other, in emergencies caused by armed conflicts or in highly contested environments, national and local actors might not act in a principled manner due to their perceptions of certain institutions, groups and communities or their deliberate choice to favour a particular geographic area or populations group. Being part of local dynamics poses a challenge to the principles of neutrality and independence for both, national and local actors undermining the effectiveness of the humanitarian response. Therefore, in these instances, it is not simply about international versus local, but it is about complementarity across organisations and operational approaches that can help local organisations when their capacity is insufficient or when principled action is not possible on their part.</p> <p>The report gives the following examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Yemen, 2015 (Principled action was problematic during evacuation operations as local actors were put under pressure by de facto authorities, other non-state armed groups, and their communities.)</li> </ul>

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							<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Niger/Diffa, 2015-2016 (Pressure by government and donors to INGOs to support local organisations that did not have the capacity to manage emergency response.)</li> <li>- North East Nigeria, 2015-2016 (The national government delayed in recognising the scale of the crisis and caused limitations on humanitarian access. This was not challenged by the sector).</li> <li>- Central African Republic, 2013-2015 (No prevalent focus on localised aid due to the lack of local capacity)</li> <li>- South Sudan, 2013-2015 (Localisation was prevalent. However, many national staff fled or could not work because of fear of attacks due to their ethnicity.)</li> <li>- Mali, 2017 (Lack of qualified local partners. The ones that operate on the ground work for multiple international actors and this might create conflict of interests and issues related to neutrality.)</li> </ul>
Local Humanitarian Leadership and Religious Literacy: Engaging with Religion, Faith, and Faith Actors	<a href="https://www.alnap.org/system/files/content/resourcelibrary/main/r-local-humanitarian-leadership-religious-literacy-310317-en.pdf">https://www.alnap.org/system/files/content/resourcelibrary/main/r-local-humanitarian-leadership-religious-literacy-310317-en.pdf</a>	March 2017	How INGOs engage with issues related to religion and religious actors and subsequently how this affects their work on local humanitarian leadership (LHL)	Report	Oxfam	<p>Literature review of approximately 100 peer-reviewed and other journal articles and over 50 white papers, NGO reports and website pages.</p> <p>Interviews and conversations with over 45</p>	<p>This report focuses on how INGOs engage with religion and faith actors (LFAs) to promote local humanitarian leadership (LHL) and eventually be effective in providing humanitarian assistance in areas of need.</p> <p>The report maintains that religion and faith can have a positive or negative role when dealing with humanitarian crises. Their role can be complex and significant.</p> <p>Religion and faith are part of the humanitarian equation in different ways:</p>



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						<p>policy-makers and staff in humanitarian INGOs, UN agencies, the Red Cross movement, government aid agencies, and academic leaders.</p> <p>Examination of tools utilised by INGOs in their work on local humanitarian leadership and for religious literacy.</p> <p>A day-long workshop with practitioners and academic experts that reviewed preliminary findings</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- They can be a real or purported cause of conflicts</li> <li>- They are part of individuals' recovery from trauma and loss</li> <li>- Faith-inspired humanitarian international NGOs operate in the global humanitarian system. These organisations tend to work with networks of local faith actors and promote them as local humanitarian leaders</li> </ul> <p>There are certain advantages of LFAs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- They have been acting as social safety nets for decades</li> <li>- They have logistical access</li> <li>- Respected in their communities</li> <li>- They can affect social change</li> </ul> <p>However, there are certain negative aspects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- They do not represent their entire communities, particularly the most vulnerable, and often represent traditional hierarchies</li> <li>- They do not consistently promote lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) equality</li> <li>- They do not consistently meet technical standards</li> <li>- They are not always able to scale up in times of crises</li> <li>- They do not always subscribe to humanitarian principles</li> </ul> <p>The report argues that both secular and faith-inspired INGOs engage in one way or another with</p>

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							<p>local faith actors. Secular INGOs engage with them on an ad hoc basis, whereas faith-based INGOs engage with LFAs on a strategic and ongoing basis. However, what they both have in common is a low level of religious literacy.</p> <p>For INGOs to engage with the LFAs efficiently, they should develop a certain level of religious literacy, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identifying which religious or worldview perspectives are culturally dominant, and which marginalised</li> <li>- Comprehending how cultural forms of religious beliefs are imposed by dominant political, economic, and social forces</li> <li>- Identifying religious leaders who are prominent together with religious leaders who are less prominent and/or marginalised</li> <li>- Understand how religious beliefs function as motivating factors for LFAs</li> </ul>
Towards regionalisation of humanitarian action: Islamic Relief's involvement in the Transforming Surge Capacity project	<a href="https://www.aln.ap.org/system/files/content/resource/files/main/surge-regional-case-study-islamic-relief%27s-regionalisation-journey.pdf">https://www.aln.ap.org/system/files/content/resource/files/main/surge-regional-case-study-islamic-relief%27s-regionalisation-journey.pdf</a>	June 2017	Regionalised surge systems	Report	Islamic Relief	<p>Methodology not defined clearly. Literature not provided.</p> <p>Case study analysis</p>	<p>The report provides evidence of why localisation was a more appropriate way to deal with certain humanitarian crises in the Asian context, such as Philippines (2013) and Nepal (2015).</p> <p>It is argued that humanitarian deployment in Philippines from within Asia "proved to be quicker, less costly and – crucially – more beneficial to recipient communities, as deployed staff from the region were more familiar with the Filipino culture than staff surged from headquarters". It should be mentioned that the report does not provide specific numbers as to the times of the deployment or the costs in the case of Philippines.</p>

Title	Link	Date	Focus	Document	Organisation	Methodology	Cost-effectiveness Evidence
							<p>As a result of this experience, the Islamic Relief started in 2014 a process of regionalisation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Its regional roster would focus on 11 skill areas</li> <li>- The regional roster consists of country-level experts</li> <li>- Level 1 modules of training are delivered in-country and levels 2 and 3 are by region</li> </ul> <p>In the case of Nepal, Islamic Relief used for the first time its regional roster. The entire emergency response was carried out by the regional office.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- They were ready within 24 hours after the earthquake had happened. One of the first organisation on the ground</li> <li>- Islamic Relief was able to surge in regional staff from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh</li> <li>- 90% of the staff came from the region. The language skills (people from Nepal can understand Hindi and Urdu) and the cultural affinity of the regional staff made the operations very efficient.</li> </ul> <p>The Islamic Relief is currently developing regionalisation further:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The STRIDE project (Strengthening Capacity and Institutional Development for Excellence) connects local actors across Asia</li> <li>- Regional capacity building and coordination activities</li> <li>- Go Team Asia shared regional roster has been set up</li> </ul>

## Suggested citation

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## About this report

*This report is based on five days of desk-based research. The K4D research helpdesk provides rapid syntheses of a selection of recent relevant literature and international expert thinking in response to specific questions relating to international development. For any enquiries, contact [helpdesk@k4d.info](mailto:helpdesk@k4d.info).*

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