

LOCALISATION OF AID



**ARE INGOS
WALKING
THE TALK?**

**SHIFTING
THE POWER**

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COVER: STAFF FROM ALL 11 PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS OF STP BANGLADESH TAKE PART IN A FIRST AID, SEARCH AND RESCUE TRAINING.
PHOTO @ CHRISTIAN AID BANGLADESH

1. Introduction

The Shifting the Power project (StP) is aiming for a more balanced humanitarian system, where the role of local and national humanitarian actors is valued, supported and recognized by international humanitarian agencies, donors and International NGOs. The debate on localisation of humanitarian action has gained momentum in the past two years, following the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit, yet its implementation is at an early stage. Many WHS participants debated whether the aid system was broken, the necessity for transformation, improved effectiveness, and the consistent increase in humanitarian needs. The vision and journey of localisation has been repeatedly confirmed as the 'right direction', not only because it is considered morally and ethically right but because there is an increasing body of evidence that localisation increases impact and improves effectiveness. As the current humanitarian system and its foundations are routinely challenged to 'work differently', a review has been carried out of the current opportunities, challenges and good practice in the relationships between INGOs and local humanitarian actors. The core argument is that INGOs have to improve their partnership practices with local and national NGOs to better recognize and respond to their leadership, as well as to adapt accordingly their advocacy, media or fundraising work.

The research was commissioned by the six international organizations – ActionAid, CAFOD, Christian Aid, Concern, Oxfam and Tearfund, – working together in the Shifting the Power project, supporting 55 of their local and national NGO partners who share the vision and ambition of playing a leading role in decision-making and responding to crises in their countries and regions.

This research aims to contribute to an ongoing effort, to build the future of increased localized humanitarian action. It draws on national research projects in the five countries of focus, as well as a global research, and emphasizes the importance of sharing (i.e. distributed and networked) power within the humanitarian system. The report encourages INGOs to localise humanitarian response in a coherent, collective manner, and in a way that is responsive to context, rather than leaving it to individual, ad hoc, approaches that are at the mercy of project or programme funding.

It is only fair to say that the Shifting the Power INGO consortium members face the dilemma of negotiating a balance between being committed to delivering life-saving responses to people in crisis and shifting power for moral, effectiveness and sustainability reasons. The tension between crisis response and long-term change is not unique to INGOs, but common to other humanitarian actors engaged in the localisation

IT IS ONLY FAIR TO SAY THAT THE SHIFTING THE POWER INGO CONSORTIUM MEMBERS FACE THE DILEMMA OF NEGOTIATING A BALANCE BETWEEN BEING COMMITTED TO DELIVERING LIFE-SAVING RESPONSES TO PEOPLE IN CRISIS AND SHIFTING POWER FOR MORAL, EFFECTIVENESS & SUSTAINABILITY REASONS.

debate. Power will always have to be analysed, negotiated or require negotiation – this is a fundamental aspect that should be taken into account when devising localised humanitarian programmes and response.

The review provides the insight that there is not a one size fits all approach for every context or a once and for all time settlement on

power shared or shifted, yet the role of local and national humanitarian actors should neither be ignored nor underestimated. Sharing and shifting power should result in a humanitarian system where national and local NGOs reinforce and not replace other bigger actors, and vice versa.

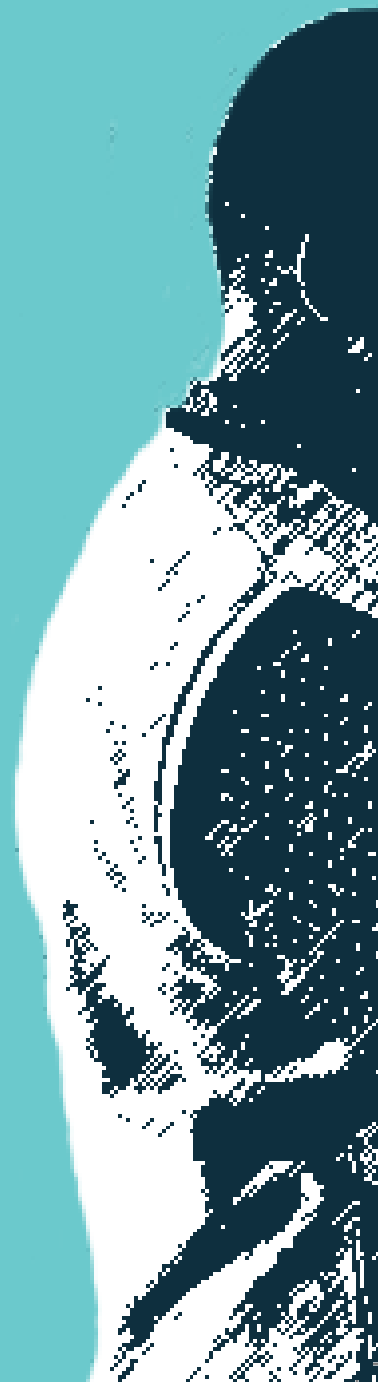
Thanks to their extensive background in humanitarian response, the agencies involved in the project are in a unique position to lead the modelling/ trialling and testing of different approaches that result in the shift of power. The report recommends that the INGOs amplify what is working and consistently produce regular evidence of initiatives, lessons and impact in key areas of collective vision and Key Performance Indicators, donor/funding influence, mutual capacity strengthening initiatives, partnership feedback mechanisms, humanitarian decision making and its impact on communities. There is an urgent need to be more strategically engaged and invest in national and local

KEY THEMES IN COUNTRY RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS

The country research findings and recommendations outlined many of the features of the StP project, and/or wider organizations stated priorities and collective commitments. However, the linkages of the different priorities of the STP were found to be carried out, at times, in silos. The StP appears 'project-ized', where there are clear opportunities to amplify and roll out current practice, to inform country-wide ways of working. There were, for instance, some internal stakeholders interviewed who, although focused on localisation or partnerships but not specifically with the StP project, had little knowledge of parts of the project e.g. SHAPE framework. There appeared opportunities to embed the StP work further in country programme priorities and a potential for a broader 'roll out'. A distinctive advantage is that many findings and recommendations in the National Research conducted seemed to be aligned with the project priorities.

THEMES CONSISTENT WITHIN THE MAJORITY OF THE NATIONAL RESEARCH PIECES INCLUDED:

- **The need for a clear vision and leadership into practice e.g. an alignment between the HQ and field perspectives on localization within each agency, which should move from outputs to clear outcomes, defining success that is time bound;**
- **Setting up a 'partnership marker' where feedback on partnership is predictably and systematically sought and change happens as a result of this feedback;**
- **The need for mutual capacity acknowledgement, appreciating collective strengths, dispelling myths on who holds capacity and/or where capacity support can be sought;**
- **Documenting evidence of impact, adopting common partnership tools and approaches that decrease the reporting burden for local and national agencies;**
- **To move to a demand vs supply approach in capacity support;**
- **Reinforcing Charter for Change (C4C) and Grand Bargain recommendations on donor relationships and advocacy including clarity on the percentage of work through partners, percentage of funds, and percentage of funding overheads which is guaranteed, predictable and as a minimum for organization to operate, deliver and sustain its work;**
- **Integrating an advocacy element through the sponsorship of and investment in local/national networks and supporting partners lead role in influencing coordination mechanisms, national government, policy and legislation;**
- **Increasing research on localisation impact and Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA) of the role of community/volunteer action in humanitarian response.**



networks, as they act as a catalyst to raise the profile and influence of front line responders.

A change in mind set and ways of working does not happen overnight, however for power to shift, there needs to be a conscious 'letting go' by those that have a tight grip on power, and this requires courage, and considerable adjustment to mind-sets, systems and structures. If International NGOs are serious about shifting power, then they must invest in organizations, networks and movements that they do not control. Individuals and institutions need to move beyond their preoccupation with organizational survival. The reality is that the shifting of power will happen at varying

speeds according to the domain and context. INGOs operate in a multi-polar, uncertain world and stable contexts can quickly become fragile. The humanitarian sector will change at its pace, INGOs at theirs, and within INGOs departments and functions change at their own pace too. There will be no neat, linear progression, so INGOs must be prepared to commit adequate resources, recognise the importance of local and national organisations and press on. Localisation is a journey and reaching the destination should go above and beyond current programmes, projects and the implementation of commitments arising from international summits.

“ A CHANGE IN MIND SET AND WAYS OF WORKING DOES NOT HAPPEN OVERNIGHT...”



PARTNERS TAKING PART IN A WORKSHOP TO FINALIZE THE PLATFORM ADVOCACY WORK PLAN IN GOMA, DRC.
PHOTO @ BAHATI JACQUES, CAFOD, DRC

2. Practices of Partnership

The research has found a gap in the quality of partnerships and how they are seen and perceived by those involved in them. The words used by INGOs to describe their approach to partnerships and their partnership practices do not match the reality as experienced by those partners.

The Missed Opportunities report continues to be extremely relevant and contains recommendations that have yet to be acted on by many, including some of the Shifting the Power consortium members. On the perceptions of local actors within the StP DRC research and as consistently noted in the other country research, partnerships are often project based and not strategy / programme based. The relationship can be based on temporary or finite funding that does not enable any meaningful investment in organizational governance, wider human capacity or systems. Moreover, even the activities associated with maintaining a functional and ongoing partnership receive little or no additional funding, meaning it is left to individuals and their own means as to whether or how they meet to collaborate. A shift from project partnerships to strategic partnerships, consistent within and between programmes, is one way in which power can be shifted.

Additionally pre-positioned partnerships in countries and localities at risk have enabled a stronger and more impactful localised response. In the example of the emergency responses in the Philippines, in Nepal, in Fiji and elsewhere, it was the pre-existing relationships that enable INGOs like ActionAid, CAFOD, Christian Aid and Oxfam to respond quickly and effectively.

“THE RESEARCH HAS FOUND A GAP IN THE QUALITY OF PARTNERSHIPS AND HOW THEY ARE SEEN AND PERCEIVED BY THOSE INVOLVED IN THEM.”

2.1 Prioritising partnership management

Currently partnership management is a woefully under-resourced aspect, from basic partner capacity assessments through to investing in managing partner relationships, with the result that power remains with the INGO that provides the funding, and the partnership struggles to be a partnership of equals. There are a few notable exceptions that can serve as a reference for good practices, however, and these are those INGOs that work almost exclusively through partnerships (ActionAid, CAFOD and Christian Aid). Without a doubt, agencies must choose to address this issue: it requires a consistent and comprehensive investment in partnership brokering competencies, and in some cases, as Christian Aid has done, dedicated partnership focused role(s) that is a resource for the whole organi-

zation. Job descriptions and duties need to reflect the increasing responsibilities required to managing and supporting partnerships and ensure the investment in time and skills in developing partnership strategies. Individuals often have an opportunity to maintain connections with those working in local or national NGOs and this social capital is worth nurturing. A dedicated partnership role can offer support to INGO employees as they do this, and the returns seem substantial. Central to the partnership between INGOs and local/national agencies is for INGOs to become more able and flexible to work with the local partners' ambition and journey; the process should not result in the creation of local organisations that mirror the practices of INGOs, as it has been noted during our research.



2.2 Language barriers

To make substantive progress towards localisation, INGOs should also devise a change in narratives and overcome language barriers. Language can be a barrier to localisation and greater leadership by national and local humanitarian actors, since members of the Shifting the Power consortium operate exclusively in English. There is some capacity within INGOs to operate in any given local language, but largely there is a reliance on partners (local or national NGOs) to bring this expertise.

CAFOD recently went to great lengths (and expense) to simplify its emergency operating procedures using plain English, and condensing thousands of pages into a single document closer to 100 pages. Other INGOs in the consortium could go much further and make key documents available in local languages for the benefit of partners and those receiving aid. However, as long as INGOs communicate exclusively in English, the power will be tilted towards those who can read, speak and write it.

**QABALE GOLLO, CARITAS ISIOLO NUTRITION OFFICER (STANDING),
SR. JACINTA NJERU, MATERCARE HOSPITAL HEALTH TEAM, EMMA RIGBY,
CAFOD HUMANITARIAN AMBASSADOR AND JAMES GALGALLO, CAFOD
HUMANITARIAN CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT OFFICER ATTEND TO DAABA
RIGHTS HOLDERS DURING THE NUTRITION AND HEALTH OUTREACH.
PHOTO @ CARITAS ISIOLO**



3. Organisational support and capacity strengthening

Besides allocating resources to partnerships, the consortium agencies also need to make critical investments in their own agencies that will facilitate and sustain a shift in power, e.g. dedicated role or time and leadership recruitments and programs have to focus on the behaviours required to achieve this – and this in turn requires supportive and enabling systems and structures, such as the performance management systems (both incentives and accountability mechanisms including job descriptions and the appraisal / evaluation process) to reinforce any shift. During the research period, StP agencies have started this investment, as an example, Oxfam has recently recruited a full time C4C staff member to promote and support its C4C commitments. One way of translating this into internal change will be by establishing that every Oxfam Country Representative has a KPI to assess how s/he delivers on the localisation agenda.

Recognizing the current range of agency commitments, initiatives and reflections within and outside the specific agencies, it is necessary to work on the implications for staff competences, numbers, career progression and morale, based on the collective vision of change. There is a huge opportunity for agencies and their leadership to model and champion this new humanitarianism, ensuring communities and people affected by crisis are at the centre and that local actors and networks take the lead and are invested in the process. A change in the business model is needed and the existing commitment to localisation is a window of opportunity.

“ A CHANGE IN THE BUSINESS MODEL IS NEEDED AND THE EXISTING COMMITMENT TO LOCALISATION IS A WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY.”

3.1 Strengthening capacity: opportunities and challenges

For INGOs, capacity strengthening is not a new concept, however it is still one of the foundations that will allow a paradigm change in the humanitarian system, as capacity is often identified as a gap in local and national actors ability to take the lead in humanitarian response. To innovate and achieve a more inclusive and balanced capacity-strengthening approach, Shifting the Power therefore adopted the SHAPE framework, which uses a self-assessment process and includes the areas of ‘Power and Influence’. This makes SHAPE unique compared to other capacity frameworks that tend to focus on internal organizational development areas. The inclusion of ‘Power and Influence’ underscore the Project’s focus on assisting National NGOs to increase their power and influence within their existing humanitarian setting and the wider international humanitarian system.

In interviews a key challenge that was repeatedly raised, is the absence of a harmonized or a common standard for capacity development, within and between agencies and that there is a generalized assumption, on where capacity is and for what. As one interviewee mentioned, ‘each capacity assessment, where a similar assessment is not conducted with both partners can reinforce the power imbalance in the partnership, and that international agencies have capacity, access and are part of humanitarian decision making fora’. Recurring evidence suggests local knowledge, relationships and experience are often devalued and that many ‘assessments’ can be done with the same partner of different INGOs, creating an increased burden of partnership. Respondents suggested that a standardized approach, dual capacity assessment, including a power analysis with National NGOs and INGOs together, would be crucial going forward.

4. Communication, fundraising & funding

There is currently tension between a stated intent to shift power and the need for those working in fundraising and communications to simplify their messages for public consumption and engagement. It is rare for an INGO to champion its partners and describe the work a partner has done and partners do not get the credit for the work they do. Concerns around 'dumbing down' the story, or 'misrepresenting' partners are raised particularly in fundraising campaigns for disaster response where the INGO has access to an outpouring of public goodwill and generosity and can use their brand and communications expertise to generate funds for an emergency response. This often results in sending a message to the general public that 'INGO x is responding to the earthquake in country y, help us to save lives now', then that is the donor appeal the public is giving to. If the message is accompanied by a photograph of INGO x's staff member delivering life-saving activities as well, regardless of whether the programs are delivered through or by partners (local or national NGOs) then this entrenches the misunderstanding.

It is an incredibly convenient misunderstanding, but it masks a real contradiction that INGOs could do more to acknowledge and tackle as part of their journey towards localisation. However, it is a sensitive topic requiring courage from those involved, especially as it would need some organizational re-positioning and reprioritization in a crowded and competitive funding

environment, including an awareness-raising effort with the public and donor base.

The StP Kenya research clearly showed some of the barriers that local NGOs encounter when seeking support from donors: "Local NGOs said they often found it a challenge to get direct funding from donors due to perceived and real weaknesses in their governance,

FUNDING FOR PARTNERSHIPS REMAINS A CHALLENGING ISSUE'. BROADLY THERE ARE FIVE AREAS OF FUNDING TO BE CONCERNED WITH:

- 01 Funding for the partner's overhead in order to level the playing field and contribute to flexible and strategic investment for the organisation.** The Charter for Change makes some provision here and for non-signatories, a specific commitment to pay a fair and stipulated overhead would be welcomed, and contribute to a power shift.
- 02 Funding for the actual partnership** – the oil that lubricates collaboration and working together. This is typically over and above the minimum overhead, and covers the cost of maintaining the relationship and some co-design activity. A percentage would be welcomed and some organizations such as CAFOD have included funds to enable this.
- 03 Funding for partners to innovate or to transition / set up as strong independent entities.** Again, this typically requires unrestricted income that can be granted to partners, as in the case of Action Aid in the Philippines where the decision was taken to shift power to a national NGO network rather than to invest in Action Aid's own presence in country.
- 04 Funding for contingencies** – as highlighted in the DRC and Bangladesh research, NGOs have faced problems in 'No regrets' - early action or quick response to a humanitarian emergency and reconfirms the necessity, as currently planned within START and other agencies, for local NGO contingency funds for response.
- 05 Funding directly** – the start of INGOS facilitating direct access to funding sources and donors is welcomed and should continue. In addition to ensuring local funding initiatives and advocacy support for increased domestic resourcing for local actors.

accountability and transparency systems, technical skills and geographical coverage. They also said that community contribution as first responders in emergencies, were not normally recognized, acknowledged, quantified, documented and shared in the wider international disaster response discourse."Furthermore, direct access to funds is hampered by the payment by results agenda together with grants that are akin to commercial contracts encouraging INGOs to sub-contract partners to deliver very specific outputs against non-negotiable targets. It is hard to shift power in such circumstances as the liability remains with the main contractor (the INGO) and just as they are relatively powerless and subject to the demands of their donor, so their sub-contractor (the local or national NGO) has very limited power

“THERE IS CURRENTLY TENSION BETWEEN A STATED INTENT TO SHIFT POWER & THE NEED FOR THOSE WORKING IN FUNDRAISING & COMMUNICATIONS TO SIMPLIFY THEIR MESSAGES FOR PUBLIC CONSUMPTION & ENGAGEMENT.

also. The service contract culture and payment by results agenda end up maintaining if not reinforcing the power dynamic and imbalance, and the consequence of this and the associated transfer of risk creates a hierarchy or food chain that is difficult to change².

Finally, it is fair to say that it is becoming increasingly necessary to change from a model that funds programs that originate from HQ to one which allocates funds for programs that are entirely conceived and designed / developed in a country of operation. In the current circumstances, however, funds for local capacity strengthening are scarce. It is the organizations that have a reasonable level of unrestricted income that have been able to then invest in local capacity, both of their own staff and through granting funds to partners.

¹ There is an ongoing discussion, led by the NEAR network in the context of the Grand Bargain Workstream on Localisation, on the definition of direct funding reaching L/NNGOs and the role of intermediaries. For more information see Near Network (2017) , Open Letter – Localisation Marker Working Group Definitions Outcome, available at http://www.near.ngo/imgtemp/downloadfile/Open%20Letter%20on%20Localization%20Working%20Group%20Definitions_20%20June%202017%20_1498019781.pdf

² The Disaster, Emergencies and Preparedness Programme on Financial Enablers project deals with the funding system in much greater detail.

A STUDENT TAKES PART IN A SHORT COURSE TO BUILD CAPACITY AROUND PREPAREDNESS, RUN IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE UNIVERSITY AND STP PAKISTAN PARTNER FRDP. PHOTO @ ACHAR BOZDAR, FRDP



5. The external context

In terms of the pressure to shift power, many organizations are surfing the localisation wave, particularly over the last two or three years, which has been characterized by drivers such as the Grand Bargain³, the Charter for Change⁴, the INGO Accountability Charter⁵, the Core Humanitarian Standard⁶, the Less Paper More Aid initiative⁷ and the World Humanitarian Summit. Shifting power is clearly the zeitgeist – even the very fact that many organizations are now openly discussing power and its impact on programmes, as one respondent indicated, ‘is a major breakthrough’. Five years ago only a handful of organizations debated and acknowledged the unbalanced power dynamic of the humanitarian system. In the last couple of years the Start Network and many of its members such as ActionAid, CAFOD, Christian Aid and Oxfam have spoken clearly about the shortcomings in the humanitarian system and the need to redistribute power. Other networks and movements such as the NEAR Network have put the challenge of shifting power at the top of their agendas.

The WHS outcomes supported this shift, by reinforcing national and local systems and ensuring accountability to affected people, with 399 individual or joint commitments and an additional 88 commitments made to invest in local capacities, including by increasing the amount of funding channelled to local responders⁸. The six consortium agencies made explicit commitments at the WHS. Concern has identified 23 commitments aligned to the Secretary General’s Agenda for Humanity. All agencies indicated ensuring increased support by way of direct funding and capacity building to national and local NGOs, some specifically focusing on women-led organisations (ActionAid), some with an explicit indicator that at least 25% (Concern) and some indicating 30% (Oxfam) of their humanitarian funding

IN TERMS OF THE PRESSURE TO SHIFT POWER, MANY ORGANIZATIONS ARE SURFING THE LOCALISATION WAVE, PARTICULARLY OVER THE LAST TWO OR THREE YEARS

going directly to national partners. CAFOD, as the lead agency on the Charter for Change, made an explicit commitment to implement it by May 2018. By the same deadline, Oxfam committed to streamline and harmonize across NGOs its requirements for partners; namely

capacity assessments, funding proposals and reporting requirements, and not to ask of its partners more than its donors ask of Oxfam. Tearfund pledged to deliver change within their own organizational ways of working, so that southern-based actors can play an increased and more prominent role in humanitarian response. Christian Aid, by 2018, stated a commitment to significantly strengthen the humanitarian capacities of at least 100 local and national NGOs, including through the “Shifting the Power”, “Finan-



JOYCE CHARLES, FROM KONGELAI WOMEN'S NETWORK, WEST POKOT, KENYA SPEAKING AT A MEETING ON LOCALISATION OF HUMANITARIAN AID DURING UN ECOSOC HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS SEGMENT 2017 ORGANISED BY GERMANY, CHARTER FOR CHANGE AND DEPP. PHOTO @ VITTORIO INFANTE, ACTIONAID

³ <http://www.agendaforhumanity.org/initiatives/3861>

⁴ <https://charter4change.org>

⁵ <http://www.accountablenow.org>

⁶ <https://corehumanitarianstandard.org>

⁷ <http://lesspapermoreaid.org>

⁸ WHS - Commitments to Action, September 2016

cial Enablers” and “Transforming Surge Capacity” programmes. A key outcome of the WHS was the Grand Bargain between donors and humanitarian organizations. The agreement includes a specific commitment to channel at least 25% of funds by 2020 to national responders. Donors should provide multi-year funding, fewer conditions on funding and harmonize reporting requirements, to avoid duplication, ensure focus on outcomes and that in return, humanitarian organizations reduce duplication and management costs, be more transparent about costs and commit to a “participation revolution” where communities and people agencies aim to assist are more listened to and part of decision making in humanitarian operations. Besides the Grand Bargain, donors have also continued to review their policies, seeking to shift their practice with

regard to funding local organizations. In the last few years USAID (OFDA) and UKAID (DFID) have taken small but tangible steps towards shifting power and grantees have had to respond to demands to channel a greater proportion of their institutional funding to local partners. Other Start Network projects are reviewing this in detail (the Financial Enablers project), and arguably we are only at the beginning of this shift, in that huge political and legal obstacles remain when it comes to directly funding a local organisation but change is underway and initiatives such as the current discourse within the US on legislative changes, supported by Oxfam-US, establishing national level Start Funds and the NEAR Network's planned review of potential local funding models and best practice options, are the evidence.

5.1 Stronger national NGOs

The drive to shift power is also primarily coming from the local and national NGOs and diaspora communities themselves, as a result of their technical and financial strengths, in particular in more stable middle income contexts. They are leading advocates for national change and approaching institutional donors, using links with national stakeholders and are more assertive in their interaction with INGOs. A consistent message, during the WHS Global consultations ‘was frustration from governments and local organizations who struggle to be seen by the international community as the primary agents of response and to access resources’⁹. INGOs, as one respondent affirmed, are now responding to NNGO and civil society calls with initiatives such as StP, C4C, but this may raise the issue of INGOs capturing the localisation debate and keeping their slice of the cake, without fundamentally altering their basic predominance.

5.2 Changing government legislation, policies & practice

In some places a stronger role for NNGOs may also be reinforced by government policies and legislation that limits INGOs activities, leaving INGOs with few options other than negotiating a partnership, should they wish to work in those contexts. Some local and national NGOs have benefited from long experience in humanitarian action and are able to leverage their connections, knowledge and resources, which has allowed a number of national NGOs to successfully navigate the international humanitarian system. Moreover, most African, Asian and Latin American governments are now setting their own priorities in policy-making, and no longer looking at Europe or North America for inspiration, as pointed out by Irungu Houghton. This is happening while donor behaviour is shifting in Europe and North-America: development assistance is now aligned with trade opportunities, geopolitical and commercial interests¹⁰. Additionally cited in the national research and in particular in Pakistan, is that of ‘the entry of the mostly foreign, corporate, for-profit entities into the areas that were traditionally considered the primary domain of NGOs both national and international.’

⁹ One Humanity: Shared Responsibility- Report of the Secretary-General for the World Humanitarian Summit

¹⁰ Irungu Houghton (2016) “Five disempowering traits that International NGOs must drop”, available at <https://www.opendemocracy.net/transformation/ir-ng-houghton/five-disempowering-traits-that-international-ngos-must-drop>

6. Looking to the future

The sharing of power and shift to increased localization should not be limited to a single project or a program within an organization, but organizational. StP agencies have joined a variety of platforms, such as Charter for Change and the Grand Bargain, that map out clear roles and deadlines to achieve a more representative humanitarian system. With adequate investments, StP agencies are therefore better placed than other actors to implement new ways of working and fairer partnerships with local and national humanitarian organisations. Shifting the power needs to be more than a one off conference, advocacy product or collection of workshops but a systematic discourse proposed to maximize on the opportunities, address challenges – which at times may be uncomfortable – and identify success, which is time bound.

Finally, we do need to acknowledge that in the absence of a cataclysmic external shock to the system, shifting the power is a long and negotiated process. The end result is that power is shared, i.e. evenly distributed. We need to look beyond shifting power to a wealthy local elite or powerful local or national NGOs, and look towards communities and crisis affected people. There is always the possibility that a major shock will catalyze transformative change, but for now, the focus is on evolution. Effective co-design, robust participation, effective and representative governance and honest, forward looking discussions about the changing role of NGOs will all play their part in accelerating a shift in power. And the reality is that the shifting of

power will happen at varying speeds according to the domain and context. INGOS operate in a multi-polar, uncertain world. Stable contexts can become fragile in a short space of time. The humanitarian sector will change at its pace, INGOS at theirs, and within INGOS departments and functions change at their own pace too. It's illogical to expect a neat linear progression, so we should be prepared to dig deep into our reserves of stamina, and press on.

“ THERE IS ALWAYS THE POSSIBILITY THAT A MAJOR SHOCK WILL CATALYZE TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE, BUT FOR NOW, THE FOCUS IS ON EVOLUTION. ”

Let's be part of the change:

LOCALISATION OF HUMANITARIAN ACTION - INGOS SIGN OFF ON A CHARTER OF COMMITMENTS AROUND LOCALISATION

On 26 May 2017, Shifting the Power Pakistan in collaboration with the National Humanitarian Network (NHN) hosted "Let's be part of the change: Localisation of Humanitarian Action" at the Marriot Hotel, Islamabad.

The event was a signing off ceremony on a Charter of Commitments around localisation following the key findings and recommendations on the research, Localisation of Aid: INGOS Walking the Talk? While being aligned with the Charter for Change, these commitments are also supported by a monitoring framework to track progress.

The main signatories included the four StP INGO consortium members in Pakistan (ActionAid, Concern, Oxfam and Tearfund) plus non-StP agencies such as Care International and Muslim Aid. Representatives from UN OCHA and the Pakistan Disaster Management Authority were in attendance and shared their own commitments on pushing the localisation agenda.

The Charter of Commitments places emphasis on the following areas: recognition, collaboration, capacity building, funding for LLNGOs, accountability, and transparency. Consortium members made



STAKEHOLDERS SIGN OFF ON A CHARTER OF COMMITMENTS AROUND LOCALISATION
PHOTO @ HUMAYOON, NHN

some remarkable commitments to promote the localization agenda in the country, with ActionAid resolving to continue long-term partnership with local organizations and discourage project-bound relationships. ActionAid will also continue to actively promote and recognize the role of local civil society organizations spearheading joint assessments during all disaster phases.

Concern Worldwide agreed to consider reviewing their existing partnership policy

and make changes if needed. Concern will also continue incorporating policies such as the Protection of Programme Participants, code of conduct, CHS, Concern equality policy, and social mobilization to ensure impartial assistance based on the needs and capacities of communities and people affected by crisis.

Oxfam committed to involve local humanitarian actors in capacity building initiatives, in addition to setting up seed money for systems strengthening of local partners.

Tearfund committed to facilitate partners to forge partnerships with government departments i.e. District/ Provincial Disaster Management Authorities. Tearfund will also continue to invest in capacity building of the local organizations around emergency preparedness and response. Tearfund will continue to capacitate local organizations around resource mobilization and develop funding strategies, strengthen financial systems and develop policies and systems.

These commitments will enable INGOS to move forward in implementing actions, processes and policies to shift the power towards locally owned and led humanitarian response.

