



Editorial

Véronique de Geoffroy &
François Grünewald

* Special issue *

AID LOCALISATION

One might think that there was a consensus about giving a central role to local actors in crisis response... Experience has shown how essential the role of local actors is in the initial hours and days after a disaster, or to gain access to difficult or contested areas in numerous conflicts, where international operators are not welcome. And yet, the debates about how to put localisation into practice have been more complex than expected. This special issue of Humanitarian Aid aims to shed light on these debates, presenting a number of points of view based on examples from a variety of contexts.

Even the definition of which local actors are concerned by localisation is not so simple, as it cannot be limited to NGOs, and also includes governments, national and local disaster management agencies, and municipal actors. Each of these actors plays a specific role based on their mandate and their capacities, as Nawal Karroum points out in her article on the response to hurricane Matthew in Haiti, in which she underlines the common objective of localisation efforts to reinforce the resilience of Haitian society in the face of regular natural disasters.

As for local civil society actors, their interaction with “international” actors (which is an inappropriate but revealing term, as they are not “international” as much as “foreign” in relation to “national” actors) are not neutral [...]

Contents

	Aid localisation as a catalyst for resilience during the post-Matthew response in Haiti	<i>Nawal Karroum</i>	.....	3
	Aid organisations in Mali: cooperation and competition...	<i>Verena Richardier</i>	.....	8
	Aid localisation in Ituri (Democratic Republic of Congo)	<i>Véronique de Geoffroy</i>	.....	13
	Myanmar: an innovation lab for localisation	<i>François Grünewald</i>	.....	18
	Local actors: key resources and supporters in protection	<i>Réiseal Ni Chéilleachair & Dr. Fiona Shanahan</i>	.....	22
	Point of view			
	Localisation: moving from commitments to implementation	<i>Kirsten Hagon</i>	.....	24
	The ICRC and the localisation of aid : striving towards complementary	<i>Jérémie Labbé</i>	.....	27
	Localisation as self-criticism: three tales from a Colombian aid worker	<i>Gabriel Rojas Andrade</i>	.....	29
	Aid localisation in Nepal following the earthquake of 25 April 2015	<i>François Grünewald</i>	.....	34
	Bibliography		.....	35
	Events		.....	38

One might think that there was a consensus about giving a central role to local actors in crisis response... Experience has shown how essential the role of local actors is in the initial hours and days after a disaster, or to gain access to difficult or contested areas in numerous conflicts, where international operators are not welcome. And yet, the debates about how to put localisation into practice have been more complex than expected. This special issue of *Humanitarian Aid* aims to shed light on these debates, presenting a number of points of view based on examples from a variety of contexts.

Even the definition of which local actors are concerned by localisation is not so simple, as it cannot be limited to NGOs, and also includes governments, national and local disaster management agencies, and municipal actors. Each of these actors plays a specific role based on their mandate and their capacities, as Nawal Karroum points out in her article on the response to hurricane Matthew in Haiti, in which she underlines the common objective of localisation efforts to reinforce the resilience of Haitian society in the face of regular natural disasters.

As for local civil society actors, their interaction with “international” actors (which is an inappropriate but revealing term, as they are not “international” as much as “foreign” in relation to “national” actors) are not neutral. The actions and funding of humanitarian organisations shape and transform the civil society of a given country, as illustrated by Verena Richardier in her article on how civil society has evolved in Mali. Another article, by Véronique de Geoffroy, shows how local NGOs in Ituri (DRC) have adapted themselves to the humanitarian context. Indeed, the majority of these NGOs are the product of both the humanitarian context and the context of a weak state.

New issues emerge when we attempt to establish a more appropriate and effective balance between the roles and responsibilities of local/national actors and “international” actors. The article by François Grünewald on localisation in Myanmar looks at the issues involved in putting localisation into practice in this context, which raise the question, for example, of whether humanitarian principles are applicable to local actors.

Furthermore, there is a significant risk of seeing local NGOs turning into clones of NGOs from the global North, and thus losing the value of their “local” nature which allows them to understand precisely “what to do”, and “how to do it”. The danger of standardization based on the Western model is particularly significant for certain types of programme, as described by Réiseal Ni Chéilleachair and Fiona Shanahan in their article on the role of local actors in protection programmes.

These numerous and complex issues that have emerged from the field have led to debates at the international level. Indeed, localisation is a collective process that has numerous implications for actors from the global South, but also for the aid system, funding and reporting methods, etc. The International Federation of the Red Cross accepted to assess the progress that has been made by the Grand Bargain workstream that they are co-chairing (see the article by Kirsten Hagon). The ICRC, for its part, has begun internal discussions to analyse its role and the implications of localisation in armed conflict contexts (see the article by Jérémie Labbé).

Aid localisation, which, above all, is a question of regulating the relations of power and respect between actors, can lead to new ways of thinking about solidarity. As such, the very personal point of view of Gabriel Rojas, a researcher and practitioner from Colombia, who has worked in a number of different jobs in the sector, is particularly evocative.

The 19th issue of *Humanitarian Aid on the Move*, which describes experiences from Asia, Africa and Latin America, looks lucidly and vigilantly at the path towards greater recognition for the role played by local actors in many crisis contexts, a path that has great potential, but is not without its risks for the future of the sector.

Aid localisation as a catalyst for resilience during the post-Matthew response in Haiti

Naval Karroum

The following article is based on a study on aid localisation during the response to Hurricane Matthew which struck Haiti in October 2016. It draws on a series of interviews carried out in Haiti in May and June 2017. It presents how and why aid localisation is seen as a way of increasing resilience. It also analyses certain limits that were observed.

Given the trauma and the lessons learned from the response to the 2010 earthquake, and particularly the relentless and recurring nature of the hurricanes that Haitian organisations face and will continue to face, most stakeholders quickly saw aid localisation during the response to Hurricane Matthew as legitimate and necessary. In this precise context, the different stakeholders involved in the response almost unanimously explain that they believe in aid localisation as a way of building the country's resilience in relation to natural disasters and crisis situations. Three underlying factors of resilience are regularly mentioned when discussing the role and position of national and local actors during the response. These are: crisis preparedness, recovery and the long-term impact of the response.

Localisation as a vector of crisis preparedness

Reinforcing risk and disaster management through the Directorate of Civil Protection

Haiti's national risk and disaster management system is more or less in place despite still not having a legal framework. The Directorate of Civil Protection (DPC), the public institution in charge of the operational management of risks and disaster, is not part of any organic law and therefore does not have its own budget, nor does it have genuine leadership status in relation to other public institutions¹. Its mission is to respond to disasters and also prevent and prepare for risks. It therefore played a central role in the preparations for Matthew, and considerable progress was made compared to the situation during the hurricanes in 2004 and 2008². This improvement is mainly the result of the DPC's reinforced operational capacity³ due to massive investment on the part of international donors and UN agencies⁴ in recent years.

During the 2016 hurricane season, the DPC carried out two simulation exercises involving the national and departmental emergency operations centres. One of these concerned the response to a hurricane in the regions that were hit by Matthew a few weeks later⁵. These emergency

operations centres were activated several days before the hurricane, which brought together numerous aid organisations (UN agencies and international NGOs) to prepare and coordinate their operations in collaboration with the DPC, before, during and after the hurricane⁶.

International NGOs also provided the DPC with support, particularly at the commune and local level, in partnership with Haitian civil society organisations. However, though skills at this level were reinforced through training⁷, operational means in "communes" and "sections communales" remained extremely weak⁸. Yet, this local level proved to be essential, notably during the preparation phase. In addition to the warning and evacuation messages sent to the population by radio and text message, the volunteer staff of the civil protection force (and the Haitian Red Cross) covered the regions concerned to communicate security measures and indicate where provisional shelters were located using megaphones. At the "commune" and "section communale" levels, the civil protection committees and emergency operations centres are less formalised and are made up essentially of volunteers. Those who were mobilized during the passage of hurricane Matthew were therefore mostly inhabitants of the affected regions, and were both victims of the hurricane and among the first to provide assistance to their families and neighbours. This situation shows the permeability between public actors, civil society and the population at the local level, and, above all, illustrates that the localisation of the response to Matthew was also boosted by local actors themselves, first among which were the population and community leaders. It shows how fine the line is at the local level between localisation, participatory approaches and community engagement.

Localisation as a way of preparing for future hurricanes

The importance of preparedness in Haiti in June 2017⁹ was all the more obvious because the country was about to enter a new hurricane season. All the organisations present in Haiti were therefore preoccupied by this preparation and conscious of the need to contribute to it in their operations in response to Matthew. For a certain number of organisations, such as those that had been involved in the 2010 earthquake response, localisation is primarily about recognizing the legitimacy and responsibility of the state as a key actor of the response, despite its limited capacity. Without denying the importance of pre-crisis preparation which aims to give national and local actors control of subsequent responses, localisation goes further because it consists of increasing the role of national and local actors

concretely during a response and putting them back at the centre of the response. As such, the localisation of the response to Matthew (though insufficient according to many interviewees) has helped to build the capacity of Haitian actors (including civil society organisations who have been very involved in the response) through practical experience, and has helped to prepare them to cope with future crises. Thus, in this specific context where there are frequent hurricanes, aid localisation cannot be put off on the pretext that local and national actors do not have the necessary capacity or are insufficiently prepared. On the contrary, it is seen as a way of increasing preparation for future crises.

When localisation and recovery go hand in hand

Whether it is seen as a phase of a humanitarian response or as a type of activity, recovery is a concept that is used and understood (sometimes differently) by the majority of actors in Haiti. Whether it is “immediate”, “early”, “rapid” or “sustainable”, it is a transition between, on the one hand, an emergency phase or operation, and, on the other, a longer-term development phase or operation. According to many of the interlocutors met, proper localisation – which allowed local and national actors to play a more significant role – would also promote the recovery transition.

This relatively widely shared idea that localisation and recovery go together in Haiti is based on a number of points. Firstly, in the case of Matthew, there is a major imbalance between the funding of the Flash Appeal¹⁰ of October 2016, which received 62% of the funds requested¹¹ and covered the three first months of the operation – primarily emergency relief activities – and that of the Humanitarian Response Plan 2017-2018¹² which has only received 18% of the funds requested¹³. This imbalance obviously has repercussions for the activities that are carried out by field operators, who are essentially international because they are the main recipients of these funds. What is more, certain international actors have fallen behind with the implementation of their relief activities. This is the case, for example, for the World Food Programme which conducted food distributions for several months after the hurricane in areas where, according to certain actors, this had become inappropriate, or even harmful for the economic and agricultural recovery in Grand Sud. The response by international organisations was therefore deemed to be imbalanced between, on the one hand, emergency relief assistance (individualized and short-term, such as kit distributions), which was insufficient and late but relatively massive and sometimes harmful, and on the other hand, extremely limited recovery aid.

Secondly, Haitian organisations who, for the most part, do not define themselves as humanitarian actors, will tend to rapidly prioritise recovery action such as restoring livelihoods, economic recovery and the rehabilitation of infrastructure. This is a result of their mandate and their competencies because, despite the considerable show of spontaneous solidarity, humanitarian assistance is not the main focus of national and local organisations, and quickly becomes unsustainable for them. However, they have excellent knowledge of the context, solid technical expertise and sometimes legitimacy that allows them to contribute to recovery operations, particularly if these are aimed at a community rather than individualized humanitarian assistance¹⁴. It should therefore be noted that local authority representatives, for example, have a marked preference for (and dual interest in) recovery activities as they have a potentially more significant role in these and they have a more positive impact for the community.

Thirdly, the recovery phase generally leaves more time for constructive dialogue between actors and consequently allows national and local actors to play a more important role in the response. In addition, in contrast to relief agencies who generally provide assistance without in-depth knowledge of the context, international organisations who take part in recovery programmes have often been present for a long time or are used to working closely with local and national actors. It may also happen that donors and recovery objectives encourage more aid localisation than during an emergency humanitarian operation. It is therefore possibly the conditions in which recovery operations are implemented that favour the localisation process. This process is therefore potentially different in a relief, recovery or post-crisis development context as the operational conditions are not the same.

Thus, without necessarily concluding that there is a direct causal relation between localisation and recovery, it would appear that: 1) more localized responses encourage recovery activities; 2) a response more focused on recovery allows greater localisation. Therefore, localisation is accompanied by changes in aid implementation methods and strategic orientation. In addition, funding mechanisms have a significant impact on localisation. It is therefore preferable that donors invest in recovery rather than focusing on emergency aid in order to encourage this process.

Lastly, it remains to be seen whether: 1) localisation is promoted as a means of improving the quality of the

In this specific context where there are frequent hurricanes, aid localisation cannot be put off on the pretext that local and national actors do not have the necessary capacity or are insufficiently prepared. On the contrary, it is seen as a way of increasing preparation for future crises.

response (efficiency, appropriateness, etc.), in which case, emergency relief could remain a priority even though it is less conducive to localisation, or 2) it is one of the objectives of the response, and would become a quality criterion in itself which would justify reviewing certain strategic orientations.

Localisation, for what long-term impact?

The long-term impact is relatively clear in almost all the objectives and strategic orientations of the two planning documents for the response to Matthew: the Humanitarian Response Plan 2017-2018 (United Nations) and the Post-disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA)¹⁵ (Haitian government) which contains a “recovery strategy”.

An in-depth reading of these different strategic orientations and objectives shows that the international community’s response remains a “humanitarian” response primarily geared towards the most urgent needs of the affected population. For its part, the government strategy “follows on from the humanitarian response [and continues] through early recovery programmes in order to achieve sustainable recovery”, and is geared towards the “Major Projects” of the Haitian Strategic Development Plan. This shows the Haitian state’s desire (which is shared by a certain number of other organisations) to ensure that there is as much continuity as possible between humanitarian and development programmes, and to avoid the establishment of an emergency regime. The link between humanitarian and development action here is not limited to ensuring humanitarian operations have a long-term positive impact (sustainable solutions, resilience, and “build back better”), but rather it aims to include the response to the crisis in a development approach, with the aim of a deeper transformation.

In practice, the reference plan is the one which was developed by the United Nations and their partners, the full version of which only exists in English, which is not a national language and is not spoken a great deal by Haitian

stakeholders. These dual strategies are evidence of the persistent difficulty of effectively linking humanitarian and development actions beyond consensual strategic objectives. It also underlines two distinct approaches among international organisations, and within certain United Nations and European Union organisations, who supported the development of both plans and fund certain of their work streams without, on the other hand, having any clear overarching logic.

For certain national and/or development organisations that we met, greater localisation is needed because it would mean that the response adopted the objectives of the Haitian development organisations from the start and contributed to reinforcing pre-established operational strategies. In contrast, for many traditional humanitarian aid organisations, such an approach would involve numerous risks, beginning with the risk of not meeting the essential needs of the most vulnerable people and not respecting humanitarian principles, and particularly the principle of impartiality.

Innovative initiatives and difficult decisions

Certain multi-mandated or multi-phase international NGOs have tried to establish a certain continuity between their humanitarian operations and their development programmes. Two have thus chosen to manage the crisis through their staff on the ground and the “development department” rather than through an external team from the “relief department”. In both cases, this decision (which was not unanimously supported internally) was partly motivated by the desire to guarantee a partnership approach with local actors and communities which contributes to localisation.

In the first case, the international NGO immediately became involved in the emergency response, notably via food distributions, using a strong community-based approach and actively collaborating with local public and civil society organisations. This community acceptance strategy was possible due to the NGO field staff’s in-depth knowledge of the context and local organisations. This approach allowed a very rapid intervention, and a unique level of security for distributions (the organization in question was the only international actor which did not need to call for assistance from the police or the MINUSTHA), as well as a very high quality of food distributions that was recognized by numerous actors (its methodology subsequently became the reference for the WFP’s distributions of food kits). This strategic choice was nevertheless harshly criticized internally because certain aspects of operations were not judged to be sufficiently in keeping with humanitarian standards, notably in terms of targeting, taking needs into account systematically in all sectors, and monitoring and accountability. Indeed, there does not appear to have been any written record or clear vision, particularly regarding the



© Groupe URD

reasons why certain communes were targeted. The targeting was not only based on the seriousness of the humanitarian situation in the different communes, but also on the knowledge and connections of the staff on the ground, two necessary factors for the implementation of a community- and partner-based approach. In addition, the setting up of beneficiary targeting committees in the selected communes was recognized as a way of helping to take protection needs and gender characteristics into account. However, the reporting that was carried out did not show whether or not the community targeting was rigorously based on pre-established vulnerability criteria. This tension around targeting in relation to localisation is not just a detail and was often mentioned as a source of discord between international and national organisations. As a general rule, local actors tend to favour broad targeting, which some see as a way of spreading the assistance too thinly (more beneficiaries - communes/families/individuals - but less assistance per beneficiary). However, this allows a certain form of social cohesion to be maintained within and between communities and secure access to the most vulnerable and isolated populations (distribution trucks are able to get through more easily if they also provide assistance to the communes they cross). Finally, the approach adopted by this international NGO, which involved the massive mobilization of staff in charge of development programmes for the emergency response, considerably affected and slowed down these development programmes.

In the second case, the international NGO worked for the Ministry of Public Health and Population (MSPP) and provided the latter with support in delivering basic services. It chose not to develop its own specific operations, but rather to adapt its different ongoing development programmes and support the MSPP. One of the tensions that the NGO wanted to avoid between its emergency operational method and its long-term intervention logic concerned free healthcare. Emergency and vital healthcare needs were relatively limited after hurricane Matthew. This is relevant because when the public health system is fee-paying, as is the case in Haiti, free but provisional assistance from humanitarian organisations often has negative effects on the national or local system in place.

The NGO adapted its approach by conducting operations over a broader area, adjusting its operational method due to the constraints caused by the crisis, revising its priorities and implementing new activities with additional funds from the donor. This approach was possible because of the quality of the partnership between the international NGO and the donor, in addition to the latter's flexibility and reactivity. As an example, when the NGO became aware of communication problems between the national and departmental public health institutions. It therefore began to copy and transfer documents between these institutions until logistical conditions and means of communication were re-established.

However, this strategic decision to adapt its development programmes rather than launch new humanitarian projects

was not unanimously supported, notably within the NGO in question. Indeed, it is the result of a difficult choice between the humanitarian imperative of providing assistance to populations in need and the imperative of achieving coherence with the intervention logic of the NGO's development programmes.

Lesson learning - the missing link in the localisation process

Whether it concerns innovative approaches like those mentioned above, or more generally the successes and difficulties encountered by the different organisations during this response, lesson learning and experience sharing very often seem to have been overlooked. However, certain interesting and promising initiatives deserve to be analysed in depth.

Indeed, we often forget that this response is characterized by the spontaneous mobilization of Haitian organisations¹⁶, particularly civil society organisations, who have played a fundamental role. Though there was national solidarity, with considerable aid from the capital, it was particularly local organisations in the most badly affected regions who brought the most added value. These organisations are very reactive and often had access to the population before international organisations arrived and when the latter were momentarily prevented due to security concerns or constraints. Civil society organisations based in large towns like Jérémie and les Cailles provided precious assistance, and community-based organisations in the isolated rural zones of the "*pays du dehors*"¹⁷ organized the assistance locally and went looking for aid in urban centres for their communities.

The private sector also contributed significantly to this response. For example, the supermarkets in Port-au-Prince rapidly took action on a large scale by supplying basic goods to the population in the south. Aid organisations (including at least one international NGO) collaborated with the supermarkets and distributed the goods which were not always adapted to the means of transport (dairy products), did not take environmental impact into account (distribution of small plastic bottles of water) or were not in keeping with food aid quality standards (quantity and nutrient intake per individual). Though certain of these difficulties were understood and corrected by the companies during the response, there was no real assessment of this type of collaboration which ended as quickly as it had started when the distributions came to an end. As there was no obligation in terms of budgetary follow-up for these activities, which did not use funds from international donors, there is little in the way of a written record of this collaboration. In addition, with the high turnover of the international NGO in question, institutional memory is in the process of being lost and soon it will be necessary to start all over again if another crisis takes place.

Very little was recorded about these local initiatives, and the way local, national and international solidarity mechanisms

came together and supported each other. This lack of lesson learning appears to have been due to: 1) the lack of organisation and knowledge management capacity of certain local organisations, 2) the lack of time and availability of the different aid organisations for an exercise of this kind, and also 3) the reticence of organisations to discuss the difficulties encountered or the less conventional approaches implemented, including internally, when these had sparked debate. In addition to this is the difficulty of evaluating the real impact of certain isolated but more ambitious operational methods in terms of localisation, and thus the difficulty of promoting them for future responses. For example, certain sporadic (but often old) partnerships between international and Haitian organisations contributed to reinforcing the capacity of local organisations and led to a “locally led” response by and for the population. There were very few cash transfer programmes implemented via local informal micro-credit structures like the “caisses populaires” and “tontines”. And yet, this approach is considered by certain organisations to be a major opportunity which makes it possible to provide vulnerable people with assistance while at the same time supporting local solidarity mechanisms through these community-based social safety nets. Consequently, this approach helps to build community resilience.

Conclusion

There is general consensus among the organisations involved in the response to Matthew that localisation is a catalyst for resilience, for a number of reasons. There is almost unanimous agreement that localisation is a way of increasing crisis preparedness in as much as it contributes to building the preparedness and response capacity of Haitian organisations who are, and will continue to be, the first to take action in the event of a hurricane. The view that localisation favours recovery is relatively widespread. However, it raises questions about the operational and strategic changes that localisation implies and what is “understood by” and what is “expected from” localisation in the different phases of a response.

The objective of a positive long-term impact is widely shared among aid organisations, but a variety of approaches are adopted depending on the organization. It therefore highlights the issue of linking humanitarian and development action, and also the potential influence that the localisation process can have on this link. The innovative approaches put in place by different international organisations show a genuine desire to establish greater coherence between humanitarian and development action and to work differently with local organisations. Beyond the limits and risks of these different approaches, the lack of knowledge management during this response is a major drawback for the localisation of future responses and the reinforcement of local resilience.

As Haiti was partially spared by the 2017 hurricane season (the damage done by Irma and Maria was marginal), let us hope that the respite between now and the next hurricane season will provide an opportunity for a collective effort in terms of knowledge management and experience sharing by the different stakeholders involved in the response to Matthew. Resilience and localisation are long-term processes and need to be implemented before, during and also after and between crises.

Nawal Karroum, Researcher, Groupe URD.

This article is based on a study available on line:

http://www.urd.org/IMG/pdf/LocalisationHaitiReponseMathieu_GURD_2017.pdf

¹ The DPC answers to the Ministry of the Interior and therefore does not have any authority over the representatives of other ministries.

² Andrea Binder, François Grünewald, *IASC cluster approach evaluation, 2nd phase, country study Haiti*, GPPI - Groupe URD, avril 2010.

³ Capacity reinforcement here refers to the reinforcement of competencies (training), resources (human and financial) and operational means.

⁴ UNDP, the EU, the World Bank and certain bilateral donors and NGOs.

⁵ François Grünewald, Ed Schenkenberg, *Real-time evaluation of the response to Hurricane Matthew in Haiti*, Groupe URD – HERE Geneva, January 2017.

⁶ In the Sud department, as the DPC's emergency operations centre's offices were not accessible for several weeks following the hurricane, they were moved to the MINUSTHA's offices.

⁷ Communal emergency operations centres (COUC) are committees of varying levels of formality made up of volunteers and led by the mayor. Their capacities vary a great deal from one commune to another, particularly as the municipal elections took place a few months before the passage of hurricane Matthew. Though some newly elected mayors had already been voluntary members of the civil protection force beforehand, other mayors had never had any training or had never spoken with the COUC members, and some did not even know what their role and responsibilities were in the event of a disaster.

⁸ “Communes” and “sections communales” only have search and rescue equipment (rope, boots, waterproofs, etc.) stored in containers. In many communes, these stocks had not been renewed in June 2017.

⁹ When the field visit and discussions that are the basis of this article took place.

¹⁰ See :

https://docs.unocha.org/sites/dms/Documents/Flash_Appeal-HTI_v3_LR.pdf

¹¹ A total of 119 850 000 USD for a period of 3 months.

¹² See:

https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/hrp_2017_20181.pdf

¹³ These figures, from June 2017, covered a period up till the end of April 2017.

In October 2017, 20.3% of the Humanitarian Response Plan's 291 500 000 USD had been funded.

¹⁴ Though recovery often has a more direct impact on the community, this does not exclude individualised operations. For example, recovery in the shelter sector often consists of financial aid or supplying sheet metal and reconstruction materials per household (whereas the emergency relief phase consisted of tarpaulin distributions).

¹⁵ See : <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/UNDP-HT-PrevCri-EvaluationBesoinPostCatastropheCycloneMathieu-PDNA-31012017-SM.pdf>

¹⁶ JP Jérôme, E Sartorius, J Flécher, JD Sénat, *La réponse haïtienne à l'ouragan Matthew, une aide vitale sous-estimée*, Le Nouvelliste, April 2017.

¹⁷ This expression refers to isolated rural parts of Haiti that are neglected by the “Republic of Port-au-Prince” where most international organisations are based.

Aid organisations in Mali: cooperation and competition in the face of a closed humanitarian market

Verena Richardier

Within a vibrant voluntary sector, Malian aid organisations take many forms, with a variety of objectives and specific rules. There are nevertheless significant ties between them, notably via the careers of their employees, and though there is a significant presence of local organisations in the humanitarian market, this is also uneven and depends on the resources available. Indeed, there is a growing gap between organisations that are in the “market” and organisations that are limited to a more “local” level.

Seeing humanitarian and development aid as a market is not obvious within the world of international solidarity. Indeed, a market is the place where supply and demand meet¹. It is, common sense tells us, geared towards the principles of rationality and economic interest, which are not always compatible with solidarity. Yet, the expression, “cost per beneficiary” is commonly used by international aid workers. It implies an idea of rationality because a project needs to be as cheap as possible for each person who receives aid. This type of expression, while common, is nevertheless much less legitimate than expressions based on the ideas of care and assistance.

The international aid market in Mali came into existence with the first major droughts of the 70s. It subsequently grew based on the international model where associations represent the most appropriate structure with regard to governance issues in a context where there is a great deal of distrust of the state. This development took place in many countries on the African continent, but the 2012 crisis in Mali, and the French intervention, led to a new, more established set-up based on several sources of legitimate authority in addition to the Malian state, embassies and NGOs, such as OCHA, the UN agency in charge of humanitarian coordination. At the same time, the international organisations that arrived in the country to tackle the crisis came up against forms of assistance that are peculiar to well-established Malian associations. This weakened certain organisations – and created new prospects for others – by modifying the balance of the voluntary sector due to the introduction of a market logic based on competition.

In this article, we will explore the Malian humanitarian market and its apparent homogenization. How have Malian associations evolved faced with the generalisation of the NGO model? What relations do these organisations and their staff have with international organisations? The Malian humanitarian market is abundant because the international NGO system is now integrated into local power dynamics that determine entry into the professional and political

worlds, and it is both transforming and consolidating this. However, the management approach of the international system can be at loggerheads with local approaches, gradually creating a barrier between international solidarity and Malian associations who are rendered invisible due to their lack of resources. There are nevertheless still a large number of these associations who maintain intermittent relations with the humanitarian market which is becoming closed².

We will look at two examples that are fairly representative: first, the career path of a young Malian working for a local organization, which will help to understand an environment that deals with contemporary issues (like finding jobs) using traditional formats that are rearranged by the humanitarian market. Then, we will look at the experience of a Head of Programmes of an international organization, which helps to understand how the humanitarian market is being closed to small organisations and the consequences of this on the system as a whole.

Malian associations, traditional formats re-arranged by the opening of the humanitarian market: the career choices of a young, active Malian

Ag is twenty-six. He has two jobs, working both as a teacher in Bamako and as a liaison officer in the same city for a Malian NGO based in Gao. He therefore takes part in meetings in OCHA’s offices, meets Heads of NGOs and state representatives. However, his work as a liaison officer is only one part of his involvement in the Malian voluntary sector, as he is also a volunteer in six associations.

Ag became involved in the voluntary sector via youth associations that are organized based on relatively flexible age groups and social categories (fathers or young unmarried workers, for example). Many authors describe these organisations as being central to the social structure and political power in Western Africa. Age groups are often analysed using a functionalist approach, which shows how they help to share administrative tasks in the absence of the central state, and how they create cohesion. Age groups are organised into a wide range of associations, the selection of their members varying a great deal from one group to another. Members can be chosen based on their age, their generation or their social position in a family lineage³. According to Claude Meillassoux, when they are displaced to urban environments, these associations allow individuals to preserve protective traditional formats but also help them to manage the new demands of life in the capital⁴. The anthropologist analysed the Malian association sector

during the colonial period, then at the end of the sixties, at the beginning of Moussa Traoré's reign, which lasted between 1968 and 1991. Claude Meillassoux studied a wide range of associations which, without being very numerous, had few points in common apart from this ability to transpose the village to the urban environment, so that it was both mythologized and renewed. He describes seven types of association before independence, including youth organisations, trade unions, political associations and regional organisations, that were all built around people from a village or a region, and which the association allowed to bring together in the city. When Moussa Traoré came to power and established a single party state, the rights of associations were considerably restricted. Regional associations were banned as they were suspected of reinforcing ethnic solidarity to the detriment of the idea of the nation. The majority of associations subsequently were official state associations, including youth associations and trade unions. Meillassoux estimated that around a third of the population was involved in official associations. However, a small number of voluntary associations survived despite the single party, for example involving mutual assistance (financial help for marriages, sickness, etc.) and cultural events, with the organization of "traditional" shows that were restyled to some extent.

In northern Mali, there were almost no NGOs until the major famine of 1972. The opening up of the country politically after the fall of Moussa Traoré in 1991 subsequently led to the development of local associations based on the NGO model. This model is the product of, on the one hand, the needs of a hungry and poor population, and on the other, funding from governmental or semi-governmental donors via intermediary "non-governmental" organisations, which are therefore the only ones to reflect the population's needs. The United States Agency for International Aid (USAID), for example, funds organisations to implement projects in order to assist populations in need. NGOs, which are presented as citizen-based initiatives, are seen as the central actor allowing needs to be covered. Thus, they rapidly became a reference model central to national policies, in the north and in the south. For example, in relation to the fight against AIDS, President Alpha Oumar Konaré⁵ declared "One cercle, one NGO" in 2001 ("cercles" are a territorial administrative unit). The figures that are available also illustrate this change. There were 191 NGOs in 1992 as opposed to 1600 in 2003, and there were almost 8000 associations whose status is different from that of NGOs⁶. In 2006, in the district of Bamako, the number of NGOs was as high as 2135 and in 2007, 829 NGOs were created⁷. Ag confirms that this change

There were 191 NGOs in 1992 as opposed to 1600 in 2003, and there were almost 8000 associations whose status is different from that of NGOs. In 2006, in the district of Bamako, the number of NGOs was as high as 2135 and in 2007, 829 NGOs were created.

has taken place in Gao, explaining: "For me, it began in 2010. That is when I began to get involved. Before that, I was over there. There were just a few associations but not enough. There were women's, youth and men's associations". NGOs are a link with the outside and a way of developing the village. Associations, which were traditionally built around an age group gradually became organized, based on the humanitarian model, in order to be able to get funding more easily. Development brokers⁸, based in the capital⁹, oriented projects towards families. The revolt by rebel groups in the North in 2012, then the political crisis after the coup d'état of 21 March 2012, reinforced this model by limiting the possibility of territorial expansion of numerous organisations. The interconnections between the political authorities and rebel groups are so tight – allegiance can change from one village to another – that organisations also

become more and more micro-local. Above all, this shows that Malian « civil society » is anything but smooth¹⁰. These associations, nevertheless, are not necessarily ethnically oriented because their founding members are often public figures (village leaders, business leaders) who can represent several communities. A former territorial administrator told us that he only registered

organisations as NGOs on the condition that they had a public figure at their head as this meant that they did not only serve one side. What is more, public figures do not get involved in "humanitarian" action as a professional career, but rather as an additional political and economic activity.

In 2017, Ag is also part of an association in Bamako, made up of around 70 people from Gao. He has also created his own association to help young people find work, with the patronage of an "uncle" who supports his project. Thus, age groups are linked to families and lineage strategies¹¹. As he is also a liaison officer for a Malian NGO, this provides Ag with a network and precious experience that he can use for his own association. If we look at his career path, the relationship between the Malian associations and international aid NGOs appears natural and fluid. However, this relationship is nevertheless bound up in the market closure process, which is accentuated by the management approach which aims to increase the performance of humanitarian and development projects. This is due to both Malian NGOs, who have managed to break into the market, and international NGOs, who are dominant in financial terms.

The effects of the Malian crisis, between selection processes and opportunities for local NGOs: the experience of a Head of Programme

The arrival of new international NGOs in the country following the political crisis and the initial military interventions by France in 2013 reinforced certain tendencies which were both sources of closure and opportunities within the humanitarian market. Marie, the Head of Programme of an international NGO, told us about her astonishment about this situation. She had just arrived from Asia, where she had been working in a country where access was difficult for international NGOs. When we interviewed her, she had just been made Head of the programme implemented by her organisation in Mali. During her previous mission there had not been many international NGOs. They had cooperated a great deal and had coordinated with the UN agencies that were present. But, in Mali, the reflexes that Marie had developed, such as sharing information about funding for projects with the community, only took place within very closed circles: *“You see, when I receive a call for proposals, I share it, then it’s the best man wins. Here, it’s not like that. You really have to develop personal relationships with people to have a chance. Otherwise it’s difficult to get information!”* She also found it difficult because drinks receptions are not really her thing. But what is “a little difficult” for her, is probably an insurmountable obstacle for others. This is evidence of the narrowness of a market based on inter-personal relations of trust. Despite this, Marie really wants to meet and build relations of confidence with local organisations, because she considers this to be central to her work. She is therefore disappointed about the limited room for action in Mali: *“It is difficult to meet Malian associations here, we always work with the same ones”*. Her experience shows all the ambivalence of partnerships, between solidarity, forced openness and closure of the market to local organisations.

Solidarity is one of the most important ethical norms in the sector. It is cited in the speeches and key documents of all actors (donors and intermediary organisations). In contrast, economic interest (operations that provide an organisation with a living) is accepted on the condition that effectiveness and relevance are given a central place in the system. This point makes it possible to understand why the international humanitarian market is like a “contested market”, which involves goods that are contested on moral grounds. Exchanging or selling goods of this kind, such as human organs, is subject to very specific norms. In our case, solidarity is a contested “good” because it is based, in essence, on giving, while at the same time, it can be very easily accused of being the spearhead of hidden interventionist policies¹². It has to be effective in order to be monetarized in terms of non-operational costs. But, the security problems in Mali, particularly in the north, penalize the large international organisations. Many have therefore



© Verena Richardier

become specialised in fund management and designing projects that are implemented by national NGOs, who, for their part, are able to operate in increasingly dangerous areas and have in-depth knowledge of communities and people’s needs. This gives a privileged position to associations that are able to respect the demands of donors and international NGOs who contractualise their services.

The comparative advantage of national NGOs over international NGOs is being promoted by a favourable international context following the World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul in 2016, which focused, among other things, on “aid localisation”. The Head of one of the biggest Malian NGOs had this to say: *“You have to trust national NGOs. We know the area and the actors. International NGOs need to stop intervening directly”*. However, though this Malian organization is able to claim a place in the market, this is not the case for smaller organisations involved in grassroots action and who are not at all involved in the kind of networking described above. The system therefore reinforces organisations who are already solid and who can work for international NGOs, to the detriment of those who do not have the financial and human resources to meet the demands of the market. The director of a national NGO from

southern Mali explained to us that his own organization had “survived” the competition because it already had its own premises and therefore did not need structural costs as much. Other organisations, on the other hand, are not that lucky and gradually appear less and less credible to international NGOs.

When we asked another employee of an international NGO about her local Malian partners, she answered – a little to be provocative, but mostly out of frustration: “our partners are useless”. Such a negative judgement comes from the incompatibility between the needs of international organisations, who have increasingly been forced to become donors, and thus the employers of “local” Malian organisations, and those of competing Malian NGOs. One group controls the work while the other implements it and has to comply with the demands of organisations that have a very high administrative capacity. The idea of solidarity, and of reinforcing competencies, that is involved in partnerships, is difficult to reconcile with the productivity demanded by a donor. The “uselessness” described by the employee was both technical (“they do not use the right methods”) and administrative (“they do not know how to write reports”). Two competencies are necessary to master these aspects: knowing about and understanding a whole series of international norms, and being able to attract and retain staff with hybrid profiles, who are both used to these norms and are familiar with the local operational context. But local NGOs are subject to two major contradictions: firstly, they are increasingly limited to an implementing role, which subsequently limits the proportion of non-operational costs that they have a right to, and prevents them from attracting this type of staff; secondly, the majority of the networking to connect supply and demand and negotiate implementation – and thus, for example, the rate of non-operational costs – does not take place between international and local NGOs but between international NGOs and institutional donors within a saturated market, which (as we have seen) is very difficult to gain access to, including for international NGOs.



© Moïse

Conclusion

The weakening of small organisations does not, nevertheless, signal the end of the diversity of local civil society. Rather, it shows that the gap has gradually grown between two worlds that used to be very close. Malian associations like “tontines »¹³, and immigrant associations are still very common, to such an extent that it is difficult to establish how many. The Ministry for Territorial Administration’s Grassroots Development Support Unit gives the following figures: 40.000 formal and informal local organisations, and 2.150 officially registered non-governmental organisations¹⁴. The number of religious associations and groups linked to mosques has also grown considerably, the number of mosques having grown constantly (200 mosques in Bamako at the beginning of the 2000s and over a thousand today¹⁵). International organisations, for their part, are struggling to coordinate with all these small Malian organisations despite the presence of OCHA and the government, and therefore focus on a handful of well-known organisations.

Ties nevertheless exist between national, international and local organisations and their staff, who move from one organisation to another, and build strong networks between them. However, the market approach to international aid in Mali leads to structural differences and very different expectations with regard to each type of organisation. The international and Malian NGOs who are part of the system are expected to be productive and inexpensive, but also to conduct operations on a large scale, which means that they are sometimes in competition and sometimes tied together in a service delivery relationship. Despite this, “local” organisations continue to respond more directly to needs at their level, despite the fact that their rules are not always in keeping with the market’s demands for performance, because their usefulness resides within complex social systems that are constantly evolving. Connecting these worlds via the implementation, for example, of an aid localisation strategy, requires knowledge of these systems. Claude Meillassoux already pointed this out in 1968¹⁶: “Voluntary associations, therefore, seem like bubbles rising and disappearing on the surface of boiling water. It is from deeper sources that the people who stir them find their motivation, and it is at a more significant level that we must try to explain a society in which associations are no more than indicators of social problems”.

Verena Richardier, PhD student in Sociology (4th year at ENS Lyon, laboratoire Triangle UMR 5206)

¹ Philippe Steiner, « Le marché selon la sociologie économique », *Revue européenne des sciences sociales. European Journal of Social Sciences*, 1 August 2005, XLIII-132, pp. 31-64, doi:10.4000/ress.326.

² This study of the Malian humanitarian market is part of a sociology thesis which has been carried out for three years on the topic of the distribution of work applied to so-called « intermediary » organisations because they are positioned between beneficiaries and donors. The objective is to understand the cooperation mechanisms that this creates, as well as the circulation of norms, people and money between aid organisations in Mali and China. More than sixty interviews based on the professional careers and the life paths of employees of national and international organisations were conducted. Participatory observation within a French international NGO also allowed these circulations to be studied from within an organisation.

³ Colloque sur les classes d'âge en Afrique de l'Ouest et Ecole pratique des hautes études - section sciences économiques et sociales, *Classes et associations d'âge en Afrique de l'Ouest*, Paris, France, Plon, 1971.

⁴ Claude MEILLASSOUX, *Urbanization of an African community: voluntary associations in Bamako*, University of Washington Press, 1968.

⁵ President of Mali from 1992 to 2002.

⁶ Associations are subject to law N° 04-038. An association can gain NGO via an agreement framework with the government, which is possible after three years of activity in the country. The data available on the number of associations and NGOs is not verifiable in as much as numerous registered organisations do not always carry out activities and many organisations are active without being registered.

⁷ Alexis Roy, « Mali : instrumentalisation de la " société civile " », *Alternatives Sud*, 2010, vol. 17, no 111, full URL in the bibliography.

⁸ Thomas Bierschenk, Jean-Pierre Chauveau et Jean-Pierre Olivier de Sardan (dir.), *Courtiers en développement : les villages africains en quête de projets*, Mayence, France, APAD, 2000.

⁹ Malian diaspora associations play an equally important role in southern Mali.

¹⁰ Michèle Leclerc-Olive underlines this point in an article which aims to deconstruct the expression « civil society » : "By emphasising over and over again on the opposition between the State and civil society, between civil and political spheres, we almost forgot that religious actors, armed groups or military could act in the political space of Mali." Michèle Leclerc-Olive, « Qu'a "fait" la notion de société civile ? », *Cahiers Sens public*, 28 octobre 2013, no 15-16, pp. 107-126.

¹¹ For example, lineage strategies are actions put in place to protect the status of a family in its society.

¹² Philippe Steiner et Marie Trespeuch, « Maîtriser les passions, construire l'intérêt: Les jeux d'argent en ligne et les organes humains à l'épreuve du marché », *Revue française de sociologie*, 2013, vol. 54, no 1, p. 155, doi:10.3917/rfs.541.0155.

¹³ Pooling of resources within a group...

¹⁴ <https://ml.ambafrance.org/ONG-et-Associations,716>, consulté le 23/09/2017.

¹⁵ Patrick Gonin, Nathalie Kotlok et Marc-Antoine Pérouse de Montclos (dir.), *La tragédie malienne*, Paris, Vendémiaire, Géographies, 2013, p. 144.

¹⁶ Claude Meillassoux, *Urbanization of an African community*, op. cit, p. 147 (traduit par l'auteur).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bierschenk Thomas, Chauveau Jean-Pierre et Olivier de Sardan Jean-Pierre (dir.), *Courtiers en développement: les villages africains en quête de projets*, Mayence, France, APAD, 2000, 328 p.

Colloque sur les classes d'âge en Afrique de l'Ouest et Ecole pratique des hautes études - section sciences économiques et sociales, *Classes et associations d'âge en Afrique de l'Ouest*, Paris, France, Plon, 1971, 354; 16 p.

Gonin Patrick, Kotlok Nathalie et Pérouse de Montclos Marc-Antoine (dir.), *La tragédie malienne*, Paris, Vendémiaire, Géographies, 2013, 343 p.

Leclerc-Olive Michèle, « Qu'a "fait" la notion de société civile ? », *Cahiers Sens public*, 28 octobre 2013, no 15-16, pp. 107-126.

Meillassoux Claude, *Urbanization of an African community: voluntary associations in Bamako*, University of Washington Press, 1968, 196 p.

Roy Alexis, « Mali : instrumentalisation de la "société civile" », *Alternatives Sud*, 2010, vol. 17, no 111, URL : <http://www.cetri.be/IMG/pdf/Mali.pdf>.

Steiner Philippe, « Le marché selon la sociologie économique », *Revue européenne des sciences sociales. European Journal of Social Sciences*, 1 août 2005, XLIII-132, pp. 31-64, doi:10.4000/ress.326.

Steiner Philippe et Trespeuch Marie, « Maîtriser les passions, construire l'intérêt: Les jeux d'argent en ligne et les organes humains à l'épreuve du marché », *Revue française de sociologie*, 2013, vol. 54, no 1, p. 155, doi:10.3917/rfs.541.0155.

Aid localisation in Ituri (Democratic Republic of Congo)

Véronique de Geoffroy

In the Democratic Republic of Congo, which has been affected by a latent conflict for many years, with repeated periods of calm and crisis, local NGOs play an essential role, with support from international aid organisations. This article looks at perceptions of different types of partnerships that exist, the approaches of different stakeholders in relation to the institutional and operational issues raised by localisation and the difficulties that remain.

Even though the “Second War of the Congo” officially ended in 2003 after several years of conflict between ethnic groups in Ituri (some of which were instrumentalised by the Ugandan army) and atrocities committed against the civilian population, there continues to be a low-intensity conflict today in this isolated province in eastern DRC which has led to tens of thousands of additional deaths. The conflict has continued because of the weakness of the authorities in the region and because of competition between armed groups over the region’s natural resources.

A variety of local NGOs implement programmes in areas such as child protection (supporting the demobilization of child soldiers), agricultural development, the protection of women and caring for the victims of sexual violence, and peacebuilding. Humanitarian aid is part of all of these activities implemented in the province of Ituri.

Overview of aid in Ituri

Though the network of local NGOs is relatively developed in Ituri, according to several interlocutors it is less developed than in North and South Kivu. The majority of organisations are relatively young, having been created in the upheaval of the last fifteen years in eastern DRC. Others are older, having been created during the 1990s, in the absence of the state, to meet basic social needs such as health, education and water. Though their initial objective was to provide access to these basic services (development), they subsequently turned to humanitarian aid as the crisis deteriorated and basic needs persisted.

The personal histories of the people who have created these organisations are often bound up with the violence in the region. Some were themselves victims of the violence before becoming involved in the aid sector. Some associations do remarkable work, have developed an international reputation (Sofepadi), and manage funds for other local NGOs. Others were created in the region and grew (e.g. Association locale pour le développement intégral – ALDI) and are now present throughout RDC, while others are still only in their early stages of development.

A few interviewees spoke of NGOs that were created in order to get access to funds in a context of high unemployment where humanitarian aid represents a major economic sector. However, the story that emerged during interviews is very similar to that of international organisations when they began: a few visionary and committed people with limited means obtaining minimal initial funding, then growing step by step, with a system based on merit and where success leads to confidence and allows budgets, teams and operations to grow. In conversation, the interviewees often expressed pride in their achievements and gratitude towards those who had believed in them, before moving on to a more nuanced analysis of the current reality.

As for state representatives at the territorial level, they are responsible for coordinating the humanitarian response locally and assessing and communicating needs (population displacement or health needs) to aid organisations. They are responsible for passing on information about needs to their managers as well as monitoring the assistance and protection activities of humanitarian organisations.

At the provincial level, the state technical services participate in the Clusters. They are sometimes co-leads but do not appear to be very invested in these coordination bodies. There are also consultation units and sector-based thematic groups, which are organized by the authorities (for political governance, justice and human rights, agriculture, health and HIV/AIDS, education, etc.), and who are involved in the Clusters. There are other consultation forums in place, for example in connection with the Stabilization and Reconstruction Plan (STAREC), with the governor and the representatives of the Ministry of Planning.

In general, the administration is structurally very weak, and this weakness is the cause of numerous humanitarian situations (conflicts over land, mining regulations, insecurity, etc.). Certain areas simply do not have any state representatives, or do not have the means to get civil servants into affected areas. What is more, state representatives sometimes try to control humanitarian aid and usurp the assistance delivered to the population. Certain negative experiences from the past – where money given to the authorities by the international aid community was embezzled – are still present in the aid sector’s collective memory, which does not help to build trust.

Thus, the relations between the government, its local representatives and aid organisations are sometimes tense, or even conflictual. The authorities are both the target of advocacy and partners for the implementation of aid. This dual position is not always easy, particularly in a context where access to resources is difficult and international aid is a major economic sector, but is not fully controlled by the authorities.

Regarding United Nations agencies, OCHA is at the interface between the humanitarian community (represented by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee or IASC), the governor and the different state services, including the army. In certain contexts in DRC, other international organisations (such as the HCR) provide funds to allow the authorities to get into affected areas and fulfil their role. UNICEF has tried to include the Ministry of Health in the response to cholera but recognizes that the humanitarian response is mainly being implemented by international and local NGOs.

Local NGOs are represented in the IASC: in Ituri, as is the case in South Kivu, two local NGOs are IASC members and others are co-facilitators of certain Clusters. Despite this, local NGOs do not yet seem to be organised into a coordination network in Ituri, whereas the process has begun in the two Kivus, with consultation units for local NGOs and the creation of a network of human rights NGOs by the MONUSCO¹.

On the other hand, provincial coordination does not receive any support from the humanitarian community, though the territorial coordinator and local NGOs recognise that it is needed. They feel isolated and access to information is difficult (internet and electricity). International NGOs are supposed to make contact with the authorities and systematically inform the territorial administrators, but this does not always appear to be done, which creates tension and resentment.

As a result, even though all actors are conscious that in the long term it is the local authorities who will need to take back responsibility for relief, protection and coordination, the handover strategy remains embryonic and humanitarian coordination remains centred around international organisations.

Varied approaches to aid localisation

In this context, international organisations' approaches to localisation vary a great deal, depending on their mandate and culture. Three main approaches were mentioned by local NGOs:

1- *Direct operators*. Certain international humanitarian actors in eastern Congo run programmes directly with communities and only rarely interact with local NGOs, mostly to get information about identified needs, but without subsequently including the local organisation that provides the information in the response. This obviously is difficult for local NGOs to accept and creates justified resentment which raises questions about whether approaches of this kind are viable in the medium and long term. Only very clear added value in terms of expertise or capacities can justify such an approach in relation to local actors that are increasingly well trained and informed.

2- *Utilitarian approach* (a local NGO spoke of "exploitative" partnerships). Certain partnerships are geared towards the

realisation of objectives fixed by the international organisation. The local organisation does benefit from capacity building (either via specific activities, or by "learning on the job") and it is able to operate, or even to improve, via the implementation of projects. However, there is no long-term commitment and it is similar to subcontracting.

3- *Supporting the local response*. Certain international organisations consider their role to be to support local initiatives. Strategic reflection is seen as the preserve of the local organisation and the international organisation then provides them with support. This approach is implemented by NGOs who see their role as being to support civil society and make a long-term commitment, namely development and multi-mandate organisations. This is rarely the case for humanitarian NGOs who have a culture of short-term effectiveness. However, the example of the partnership between MSF and Sofepadi (three years of collaboration which led to the takeover of the clinic for victims of SGBV in Bunia) shows that even humanitarian organisations that are specialized in emergency relief sometimes need this approach to make sure their support has a long-term effect.

The different UN agencies have a similar approach to partnerships with local NGOs. They recognise that they are now able to benefit from the long-term investment by certain international NGOs which has reinforced local NGOs and means they can now sub-contract part of their operations. Thus, in the province of Ituri, out of a total of seven partners, two of the WFP's partners are local; the HCR works with a local partner, three international NGOs and the CNR²; and, lastly, UNICEF has several local partners for a variety of programmes such as the DDR³, SGBV protection programmes, etc.

However, the content of these partnerships is more akin to sub-contracting (calls for proposals for pre-designed projects without any accompaniment other than monitoring



© MONUSCO - Laurent Sam Oussou

and evaluation). The main justification for this approach is the lower costs involved in a context of limited resources. Indeed, the UN agencies (WFP and UNICEF) launch annual calls for proposals and make their implementing partners, whether international or local, compete against each other. What is more, it is difficult to include non-operational costs in these budgets because the competition is tough and costs need to remain competitive.

Today, the strategy adopted in Ituri province by all the agencies met (WFP, UNICEF and HCR) is to go towards more sub-contracting with local NGOs. However, their selection criteria and process has not changed and their strategy for giving priority to local NGOs is not clear.

Finally, the Pooled Fund for DRC currently provides 22% of its budget directly to local NGOs, which represents a significant change since 2016, because during the period 2006-2015, it only provided 10% in this way. This change is also related to the establishment of the CERF⁴, to which UN agencies have access. This has allowed the amount of funding for these agencies from the Pooled Fund to be significantly reduced, and subsequently the amount that goes to local NGOs to be increased.

A partnership which remains problematic and sometimes imbalanced

International organisations recognise the comparative advantages of local NGOs. The first advantage that is often mentioned is the lower operational costs, then the question of access (physical, cultural and to information) and knowledge of the context (certain regions are only accessible to local NGOs) which allows programmes to be accepted/appropriated by communities. Operational agility and rapidity are also recognized but it is long-term presence, which helps to make programmes durable and allows international organisations to adopt exit strategies, which is seen by all as an indisputable added value. Certain interviewees also mentioned lower security constraints which allow greater geographical coverage.

At the same time, certain weaknesses are recognised both by local NGOs themselves, and by international organisations. First of all, weakness in terms of financial management and the limited capacity to mobilise complementary funds (which are selection criteria for some projects), as well as limited assets to allow advanced payments, are often barriers to establishing partnerships and receiving funding. What is more, some local NGOs have governance problems because the principle of voluntary work, which is the basis of an association's activity, is a real challenge in a region where, for many people, each day is used to secure food for the next day. It is not always easy for people to give their time for free or to travel to meetings and it is often necessary to pay some compensation. In addition, almost all the local NGOs in Ituri have institutional problems in terms of financial transparency. Even though everyone, and particularly local NGOs, recognize

that each project needs to be monitored and related spending needs to be clearly reported to the donor, it appears to be difficult to gain access to the consolidated accounts of organisations. Very few local NGOs are willing to share these, which does nothing to increase trust between partners.

However, each organisation should be considered individually and generalisations should be avoided at all cost. Indeed, though local NGOs recognize that some of them have difficulties, they also point out that many international NGOs have the same problem and are assessed with a higher level of risk than certain local NGOs during the micro-evaluations to assess eligibility to the Pooled Fund.

For all these reasons, local NGOs harbour mixed feelings towards international organisations. The quality of their relations depends on the behaviour and the approach of the international actor (their practices and their view of partnerships), but also those of the national organisation, its maturity, and its independence, both in terms of finances and outlook.

All local NGOs recognise the positive input and constructive interaction that have allowed them to develop. At the same time, they sometimes feel exploited, as they are used to provide information and raise the alert and are then ignored during the response. Access to funding remains difficult and some find that being made to compete with international NGOs is unfair. Others describe problems with the behaviour of certain expats in relation to the staff of local NGOs (lack of respect, suspicion, etc.) and point out that if there is a security problem they do not have sufficient resources and are generally not as well equipped or protected as international organisations. They feel that this difference in treatment is unfair. What is more, local organisations have difficulty investing in logistics, particularly vehicles, and support positions in general. This creates a difference in terms of "standing" compared to international NGOs which they also sometimes feel is unfair. Also, the question of the difference between the salaries of local and international staff is regularly mentioned. Local staff do not feel that this is justified and, what is more, it creates a risk of competition to hire the best collaborators.

In this context, partnerships between international and local organisations that are solely based on projects encounter a great number of limitations. Sometimes only operational costs are covered, and not support or management fees, which would allow local organisations to structure themselves. What is more, these partnerships do not provide local NGOs with long-term visibility or financial security. Some are put up for competitive tendering each year, which can lead to opportunistic and un-strategic behaviour on the part of the local NGOs (except specific cases). It is important to note that the majority of partnerships are purely operational: the local organisation implements a part of a programme based on a strategy developed by the international organisation, which does not allow the partner to build its own strategy.

Questions raised by localisation

Regarding humanitarian principles, there does not appear to be any clear barrier or discrimination based on religious, political or ethnic affiliations. The application of humanitarian principles therefore does not seem, at first sight, to be a problem, even though certain interviewees did mention some difficulties, notably the fact that the MONUSCO is not totally neutral. This complicates alliances with United Nations agencies regarding the principles of independence and neutrality. If the political situation were to deteriorate, the positioning of the MONUSCO could change, which could subsequently affect the local and international partners of United Nations agencies. What is more, certain victims are so isolated and difficult to reach that this implies very high costs, whereas resources are limited. Aid organisations tend to give priority to closer and more accessible victims, which creates a problem of impartiality. There is also a certain tension in relation to partnerships with local NGOs: one of their main added values is the links that they have with local networks, communities, the local authorities, etc., but this proximity is also their weakness. There is a real risk of nepotism, with local NGOs who prioritise their own networks for jobs, suppliers, beneficiaries, etc. There is therefore a risk that the tension between minorities will increase with the new situation created by the reorganisation of the territory (cf. establishment of new provinces). This will potentially increase the added value of local NGOs in connection with these different ethnic groups and at the same time will make the question of the neutrality of aid even more critical. All agencies involved in partnerships need to be vigilant about this issue, and the eligibility criteria imposed by the Pool Fund are aimed at changing these practices.

At the same time, certain international organisations are willing to work with local organisations who, individually, are neither neutral nor impartial. Their idea of neutrality and impartiality in these cases is viewed from a higher level (province, region or state). According to these organisations, it is aid as a whole which should be neutral and impartial and not each project or partner taken individually; the ability to apply humanitarian principles to local organisations deserves to be explored further.

As for the added value of international organisations in eastern Congo, this varies depending on their approach: those who deliver assistance directly can argue that they are able to manage large sums securely. This is not a negligible asset for donors who cannot manage a large number of

small projects directly with local organisations, nor take too many risks in terms of transparency. In emergencies, international NGOs who provide relief directly can have added value in terms of reactivity and operational capacity. However, due to the fact that they are external agents, that they have limited links with communities, that their presence is determined by the duration of the humanitarian crisis, and their high structural and operational costs, there is a risk that they will eventually have problems in relation to the Pooled Fund's management and implementation capacity, which will increasingly work with local implementing partners. For those that engage in sub-contracting (such as UN agencies), the lower costs involved in working with local NGOs have a significant impact in a context of reduced spending. International NGOs who work with local partners, on the other hand, need to provide irrefutable evidence to the main donors that they have added value in terms of building/consolidating the capacities of local organisations. Otherwise, there is a major risk that donors will choose to give their money to the Pooled Fund or to UN agencies. It is difficult for an international NGO operating through or with implementing

partners to gain access to funding from the Pooled Fund. Indeed, the Pooled Fund no longer accepts sub-contracting and prefers to work directly through local partners rather than adding another administrative layer by working through an international NGO.

Lastly, the question of aid localisation cannot be considered separately from the humanitarian-development nexus. Local NGOs who deliver humanitarian

assistance in eastern DRC rarely remain focused on humanitarian aid because they have to consider long-term issues and take part in development activities. Concretely, most local NGOs have both humanitarian and development partnerships and projects. For example, certain partners of OXFAM Quebec, who have five-year development projects, are also partners of Trócaire on humanitarian/transition programmes. However, the economic models involved are radically different and the budget involved in an emergency humanitarian response is not comparable to that of a development programme, which is necessarily lower. Both local and international NGOs therefore need to avoid depending on external and institutional funding, and think about other types of internal revenue. Though this is often difficult for international NGOs, it is even more so for local actors who are themselves immersed in contexts where there is often a great deal of poverty and where "generous private donors" are rare.

Before implementing projects themselves, some of these organisations acted as suppliers for international

According to these organisations, it is aid as a whole which should be neutral and impartial and not each project or partner taken individually; the ability to apply humanitarian principles to local organisations deserves to be explored further.

organisations (for example, joinery work for IDP shelters produced in rehabilitation workshops for demobilized young soldiers). This dual economic model, where organisations are able to generate revenue alongside project-related funding to allow their long-term survival, is not always viewed positively. Indeed, non-profit is often understood as not allowing commercial exchanges. And yet, this could be a model for the future for certain local organisations.

Conclusion

Though aid localisation entails transferring more resources directly to local NGOs, how can a humanitarian bubble be avoided which would risk making these organisations dependent on external aid and vulnerable to the often brutal reduction of humanitarian funding?

What is more, injecting more money into local NGOs when state services do not have any resources and civil servants are paid very little could heighten the tensions between these different local actors. The influence of local authorities over local NGO budgets is already a problem and this could get worse if budgets grow without any additional control measures or risk management.

Therefore, alongside aid localisation, there needs to be more significant engagement on the part of development organisations with state partners in order to consolidate the rule of law. They also need to provide the state

administration and services with support, so that they can play their role and the humanitarian sector is not called upon to make up for their shortcomings. This is done to some extent in eastern DRC, notably with UNDP's programmes (for example, training the police in collecting SGBV complaints), but these efforts remain derisory in relation to the scale of needs that exist.

Véronique de Geoffroy - Deputy Director, Groupe URD

This article is based on the findings from a visit to Ituri in eastern Congo in March 2017 for the study « More than the Money » which was carried out in partnership with Trocaire: <http://www.urd.org/Study-on-localisation-More-than>

¹ United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the DR Congo

² National Refugee Commission

³ Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration

⁴ United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF)



© MONUSCO - Anne Hermann

Myanmar: an innovation lab for localisation

François Grünewald

Myanmar occupies a special place among the different contexts where localisation has had a major influence on the way aid practices have evolved. It was the focus of one of the case studies during the research project, “More than the Money: Localisation in Practice”, that Groupe URD carried out for Trócaire.

Introduction

“While the international community is guided by deadlines and guidelines, local actors here are caught between front lines and ethnic lines.”

Member of staff of a national NGO in Myanmar

Myanmar: A turbulent history

Having gone through a number of different crises in the last four decades, the situation in Myanmar today is particularly complex. A peace process is currently being implemented following the insurgency in the northern states, but the conflict is far from resolved. The situation is even more difficult in the western part of the country with the ongoing Rohingya crisis in Rakhine State, which is based on specific political, socio-economic and religious issues. In addition, the country has been regularly affected by extreme climatic events since typhoon Nargis in 2008. A complex mixture of humanitarian and LRRD situations currently exist, with both continuum and contiguous processes, and the aid community is increasingly focusing on resilience building.

The crucial role of local actors

An important characteristic of the context in Myanmar is the critical role of civil society organisations in disaster response. Indeed, many civil society organisations, monks' associations and individuals react when a disaster strikes: generosity is deeply enshrined within Myanmar culture as was evident during the large locally-led responses that took place after typhoon Nargis and the 2015 floods.

Although the recently elected civilian government and large parts of the economy continue to be controlled to a large extent by the army, democratic forces are on the rise in Myanmar. Civil society organisations and the private sector have grown and have become better organised to respond to different crises and have gained a lot of experience since the cross-border operations linked to political resistance in the 1980s. The private sector also plays an important role in natural disaster response. Local businesses, very much guided by the Buddhist tradition of “doing good”, mobilize all kinds of relief items and send them to the disaster scene.

However, response mechanisms seem to be radically different in places such as Rakhine State where local response capacity is far less developed due to historical and political issues.

As in many southeast Asian countries, state-owned and parastatal response mechanisms have always played a critical role in crisis response in Myanmar, and the current trend is towards even greater involvement (the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement with its respective departments, the military, the National Disaster Management agency/Civil Protection Forces and the Myanmar Red Cross Society as an auxiliary of the State in times of disaster).

The key strategic added value of national and local NGOs remains their ability to reach areas where international agencies are deprived access, particularly the conflict-affected northern regions (Kachin and Shan States). International agencies have sub-contracted their activities or have established partnerships to the extent that local NGOs in these areas are leading the humanitarian response both in terms of service delivery and advocacy. In both government and non-government controlled areas, faith-based organisations have been present for a long time and are able to provide much-needed services to displaced populations. Due to their longstanding presence and local knowledge of the region and the conflict, these actors have a legitimate claim to be given a central place in the humanitarian set-up.

The diverse facets of the localisation agenda in Myanmar

There have been numerous responses in Southeast Asia where it has been crucial for the aid sector to work with local governments, municipal councils, local representatives of line ministries, the military and the private sector. Myanmar is no exception. And yet, the localisation debate among international NGOs has tended to overlook these actors, focusing solely on the question of partnerships with local NGOs. For the UN and donors, however, specific engagement with the government at the central and decentralized levels is seen as essential. UNDAC and UN CivMil regional coordinators have regularly been discussing humanitarian aid with the military branches of the government, in particular during exercises and simulations organised under the auspices of ASEAN. This has helped significantly to support the establishment of an enabling environment for civil society organisations and humanitarian aid.

In Myanmar, views differ between agencies about how “aid localisation” should be implemented. For certain types of agencies, it means that funds should go to local actors so that

they can do the work that international actors are no longer able to do. For others, working through local actors is a good way to make savings on otherwise high operational costs. And for others still, it means supporting the capacity of local actors to work with their own communities. For some international organisations, direct access to affected people is an essential part of their operating procedures, as they express solidarity through person to person relations and protect communities through their presence. Organisations of this kind are only able to work in the northern states of Myanmar through their local staff and are only present where they can have direct access to the affected population. These agencies claim that their mandate is purely humanitarian and do not feel they have a role to play in helping to develop civil society organisations. Other organisations are much more used to working with partners as “first line responders”. This is the case for members of the CARITAS Internationalis/CIDSE network, such as Trócaire, who systematically work through the local church but also work in close partnership with other local NGOs. They have a long-term approach and see their main role as being to accompany the emergence of civil society organisations.

Other organisations have a position that falls somewhere between the different approaches described above, either for pragmatic reasons or because they have yet to define their own strategy in relation to localisation. This can be qualified as an “instrumental approach” to partnerships rather than a real commitment to supporting local civil society organisations. They deliver assistance directly or work through local organisations depending on the access situation, keeping as their main focus the effectiveness of humanitarian aid.

The need for flexibility in disaster response - lessons from the Cyclone Nargis Response in 2008

The 2008 cyclone provided a number of lessons for local NGOs and UN agencies. As one assumption was that food was a central need, most agencies requested food. But then they heard that food was already being distributed by local people. National agencies then tried to change their initial requests, so that they could implement WASH programmes, but this proved to be very difficult. In fast changing situations, needs evolve quickly. Local agencies are able to adjust very quickly, but they can be prevented from doing so if they have to adhere to international donors’ rules. Rigid financial and administrative rules slow down or even hinder the ability of local actors to remain agile.

Key comparative advantages of national and local NGOs

In Myanmar, local organisations have often provided an appropriate and rapid response, providing assistance within 24/48 hours of a disaster. During this critical period, the perception of local organisations is that the international humanitarian system is focused on preparing funding requests and is held up by logistical and political issues while they are fully engaged in the response.

Local NGOs move fast, and distribute resources and provide unconventional assistance before they have all the information about needs that the international aid sector requires. They question the need to use logical frameworks and work plans when there is no information available and when time is a crucial resource. They also argue that flexibility should be at the centre of aid planning and implementation and that funding mechanisms should allow this.

Respecting Humanitarian Principles: a key challenge in the localisation debate in Myanmar

Many international stakeholders express concern about whether humanitarian principles, particularly impartiality and neutrality, will be respected by local organisations. Indeed, local organisations (Community Based Organisations and Civil Society Organisations) are rooted in their historical, cultural and religious constituencies and have to report back to them in formal and informal ways. IDP camps in Kachin State are frequently populated by people from one church group, as they move to the closest institution that shares their faith¹. However, local organisations all claim that they respond to humanitarian needs wherever these are to be found and not only on the basis of religious membership. They have to present reports to the government informing them about their work in non-governmental areas and explaining how their response is in accordance with humanitarian principles. This also means that a lot of transparency and communication efforts are necessary, even at the check point level. On the other hand, some national organisations are concerned about whether UN agencies are genuinely neutral, as they feel that their links with the government are too close and they feel that the international community is too complacent. Some national organisations also raised the question of which humanitarian principles should be respected most: are neutrality and impartiality more important than humanity?

Finally, the understanding of neutrality and impartiality may have to be questioned in the context of the localisation debate: are they principles that have to be applied at all levels, including the local level, or do they only have to be applied at higher levels (e.g. crisis or country level)? In other terms, does the cumulative action of various partial CBOs and CSOs, working with their specific constituencies in a

given area achieve a certain level of impartiality and neutrality in that area? Can impartiality and neutrality be the result of a jigsaw of non-neutral interventions? One is tempted to say yes, although research in other contexts, such as Somalia, would be useful to establish whether or not it is true.

The balance of power

Money is a central issue in the localisation debate globally and in Myanmar. Access to direct funding is a central demand of the main national organisations, especially since their collaboration in Kachin State to respond to the displacement crisis through the Joint Strategic Team (JST), a coordination mechanism that was created by national actors. There is an increasing number of funding windows open to them, such as the Myanmar Humanitarian Fund, HARP, CERF, etc. Some key humanitarian donors in Myanmar are still reluctant to fund national and local organisations directly: the donors' procedures and stringent accountability measures mean that they generally prefer to finance international agencies (UN and NGOs) who meet their due diligence standards. If these organisations then decide to work with local NGOs, it is they who then have to take the burden of ensuring financial and legal responsibility as grantees. In contrast to humanitarian donors, some development donors work with national and local NGOs in a more systematic manner. USAID has made it a development priority and wants to invest massively in capacitating the civil society sector. But they have only succeeded in providing one US grant for a local NGO so far, as processes are complex and require a high level of legal and organisational expertise.

Managing large scale responses is often extremely challenging for local NGOs who often only have a limited absorption capacity, and require significant supervision or support, although some of the bigger ones, including those in the JST, try to promote the image of strong and capable national NGOs. One of the constraints for donors is the number of individual projects their staff can manage. Transaction costs are often the same for small and large programmes. Working with national and local NGOs often requires a multiplicity of small contracts to be managed by overstretched donor staff. The "quick fix" to avoid these high transaction costs is often to contract one large institution, such as a UN agency or a large international NGO to manage all the contractual relations with these local NGOs. The Myanmar Emergency Response Fund, managed by OCHA is one of these mechanisms, but despite being a fund for rapid disbursement in emergency situations, it is significantly hindered by a slow, cumbersome, bureaucratic process. Therefore, only agencies who are able to advance the funds for a number of months (and the patience to persevere) can really use it. Local NGOs tend to only be able to access it in a limited manner due to the cumbersome procedures and the eligibility criteria (including having a bank account).

All over the world, UN agencies implement their programmes through NGOs (both national and international). Ensuring proper administrative, financial and human resources management, as well as financial and operational upwards and downwards accountability, is already a challenge for well-established international NGOs. It is even more complicated for national and local NGOs, as staff competency and commitment, and the ability to access the appropriate hardware and software systems is often a significant constraint.

In their quest for accountability, international donors impose substantial management, due diligence, and reporting requirements which already affect the whole aid sector: there are many more contract managers, reporting officers and communication officers than there used to be in international organisations. Many national and local NGOs would be put at risk if these constraints were applied to them. One of the hottest issues in the localisation debate concerns the fixed percentage of budgets that can be shared as overhead costs, as this is an essential source of funding to help NGOs to develop. Some donors, NGOs and UN agencies have stringent rules on how overhead costs should be shared, particularly regarding what can be allocated to direct and indirect expenditures. This means that national and local NGOs are unable to develop learning mechanisms, strong governance structures, etc., which are often financed by these overhead costs.

Localisation and humanitarian architecture

Before Cyclone Nargis, humanitarian action in Myanmar was subject to a stringent regime of constraints and organisations delivering assistance to border areas were often based in Thailand. The situation started to change with Cyclone Nargis and the gradual opening of the country to a greater influx of humanitarian actors and greater acceptance of humanitarian aid on the part of the government. Before 2009 and Cyclone Nargis, there was no RC/HC in Myanmar. Convincing the government to allow this position to be created was a great achievement. Since then, the structure of the humanitarian sector in Myanmar has evolved. Having initially been relatively traditional, with an RC/HC, and a Humanitarian Country Team made up mainly of UN agencies and big international NGOs, in 2016, and after vigorous lobbying, 4 national NGOs became standing members of the HCT.

National and local NGOs do not appreciate the cluster coordination system as it corresponds more to the silo-based approach of INGOs and UN agencies rather than their holistic approach. Local actors often do not take part in all the clusters and working groups set up by OCHA due to a lack of interest or manpower. In addition, the local NGO representatives we spoke to during the study indicated that one of the key components of coordination for them is the

fact that they work with state technical departments and municipal institutions which are less central to international agencies' coordination approach.

The use of social media has become a key component of the information sector in Myanmar and national and local NGOs use them a great deal. The potential of Facebook or other social networks in terms of monitoring and reporting was mentioned several times by interviewees during the field visits we carried out for the « More than the money » project. This seems to be becoming more and more important in contexts like Myanmar where increasingly “connected” local actors are the main aid deliverers and international stakeholders have much more limited access.

Capacity strengthening

Significant investment has been made and is still needed to strengthen the capacity of national and local NGOs so that they are able to comply with international donor requirements and humanitarian technical standards. The capacity of NGOs in Kachin and Shan States is now relatively good, but as reported by several interviewees, it is weaker in the South and even weaker in Rakhine State, where the presence of local aid actors is much more recent.

A number of experiences in Myanmar have shown that capacity building cannot be limited to training alone. Rather, it requires a multi-pronged approach that includes day to day accompaniment, sharing of know-how, coaching, on-the-job training, and embedding international staff within national and local NGOs. Some national organisations also send staff to do a European Master's degree to ensure they have internal knowledge of humanitarian concepts and aid architecture. In general, in Myanmar, long-term relationships are required to establish trust and confidence and to build the capacity of local NGOs over the years. Short-term contracts and the constant renewal of inexperienced international staff, which is a frequent characteristic of humanitarian action, seems to have been avoided in Myanmar to a great extent, with longer-term contracts making it possible to keep experienced staff in the country. However, it is important to also point out the problem of “brain drain”, whereby staff from local NGOs are recruited by international NGOs, UN agencies and the private sector.

Conclusion

In Myanmar, local and national organisations have become more structured and want to be at the centre of the humanitarian response, based on their critical role in aid delivery. They have succeeded in gaining a place in the Humanitarian Country Team at both national and state levels after many years of advocacy on their part and on the part of a few international organisations, such as Trócaire Myanmar. Some of the strongest national NGOs want to see themselves at the centre of the humanitarian response in the future.

The momentum that exists around localisation allows for innovations in terms of financing, and managing and coordinating humanitarian aid. But it could also bring difficulties of different kinds that could have a negative impact on the overall image of the aid community (reputational, humanitarian principles, etc.). In the months and years ahead, the quality of the aid localisation process will depend on new approaches being carefully piloted (financial flows, reporting procedures, M&E, etc.) and lessons being shared within Myanmar and beyond.

François Grünwald - Executive Director, Groupe URD

This article is based on a research project conducted for Trócaire with the support of Irish Aid. A synthesis report, which concerns both Myanmar and DRC, is available at the following link: <http://www.urd.org/Study-on-localisation-More-than>

¹ See « Faith-based humanitarianism in northern Myanmar », Edward Benson and Carine Jaquet in “Faith and responses to displacement”, *Forced Migration Review*, November 2014.



© Groupe URD

Local actors: key resources and supporters in protection

Réiseal Ní Chéilleachair & Dr. Fiona Shanahan

When we need help, we go local

When people are in crisis, they usually seek support from those closest to them, within their own families, social groups and communities. The continuity of presence and consistency of support, regardless of scale or statistics, is what often sets a local actor apart from an international actor. In protection work, local is key; it is where trust sits.

As part of Trócaire's commitments to localisation and to deeper and more rooted protection support for and with communities, the organisation has recently conducted research in Myanmar, DRC and Lebanon with local NGOs who are delivering protection responses in hard-to-reach, inaccessible or complex urban environments.

For localisation to be meaningful, our research suggests that a 'localised response' must mean that initiatives are designed by local NGOs from the ground-up to ensure a good fit between the support needed and the support offered. It is also important to acknowledge that in the protection sector, the vast majority of frontline responders are local women. This is particularly the case in gender-based violence (GBV) response services but also evident more broadly across traditionally female dominated fields, such as mental health and psychosocial support. These women face significant barriers within the humanitarian sector. Local NGOs often deliver responses where access is complicated, there are few if any specialised agencies to take referrals, and programme participants and staff encounter significant risks.

Complex challenges

Local NGO responders delivering protection services, including GBV response, experience significant challenges. In the contexts studied, local NGO protection actors face access difficulties, including negotiations with armed actors for access to populations in need. Complex patterns of violence in conflict-affected protracted contexts impact on service delivery, particularly when supporting individuals who have experienced multiple and cumulative, potentially traumatic events.

Increasing caseloads and frequent new arrivals to camp or host community settings over a prolonged period also takes its toll on frontline workers, many of whom are from the conflict-affected community. It can also be challenging for local NGOs to assert or retain technical autonomy and control over programming, in contexts where there can be considerable perceived pressures on local NGOs to implement models or methodologies promoted by international agencies.

Do No Harm

Recognising the capacity of local NGOs engaged in protection work and working in cooperation is key. In an under-resourced sector, local NGOs have to make difficult choices on who to work with and how. Local NGOs are often placed under pressure that challenges their expertise and shifts the power dynamic from the local to the international.

Short-termism in thinking and planning can negatively impact on the relationship between a local actor and a community, or an individual who depends on continuous support within a community.

Local NGOs aren't a proxy for communities nor are they a carbon copy of INGOs. They are individual entities with their own identities and motivations that are not always directly aligned with the priorities of people and communities affected by crisis, but sometimes also look to address longer term strategic objectives. Partner support, in the spirit of localisation, should recognise and respect the broader objectives of local NGOs, and avoid cyclical (or one-off) short-term initiatives that do not effectively support partners to strengthen their operational and institutional capacities.

Short-term thinking in protection programming can not only damage the fabric of the relationship between a local NGO, communities and individuals, but can ultimately weaken an NGO. A protection grant that requires heavy human resource inputs for a short period of time, raises expectation from programme participants of continuous support, and undermines the capacity of the local NGO to maintain standards and systems.

Protection work is human resource intensive. Maintaining skilled and experienced staff requires sustainable funding, job security, recognition of the risks protection staff face and mechanisms to minimise such risk. The spectrum of local NGOs working in protection is enormous, and while no two agencies are the same, all protection actors face similar issues in relation to ratios of human resources (incl. professionalization, support and supervision) to programme inputs and the difficulties associated with funding service provision consistently. In protection work, the quality and consistency of funding will determine the effectiveness and impact of the response, the care and support available to staff and the long-term health of the local NGO.

In our recent research on localisation¹ with Groupe URD, a comprehensive set of recommendations was presented. Specific to protection work, the following should be considered minimum requirements in support to local NGOs in protection programming.

- Avoid cyclical short-term project-based approaches that do not effectively support partners to strengthen their operational and institutional capacities;
- Commit to partnerships beyond the length of a contract via a Memorandum of Understanding that captures shared ambitions and goals, linked to longer term strategic objectives;
- Work with partners to develop institutional funding strategies that include analysis on minimum core costs required for 'lean' periods (i.e. in between grants);
- Promote smart, strategic capacity support - capacity-strengthening, (both technical and organisational) must be strategic and complimentary, supporting the strategy of the organisation, beyond the lifetime of any one particular grant;
- Acknowledge the cost of engagement to local actors - Engage in discussion with local actors to understand the steps in securing funding, the logistical challenges of maintaining a consistent presence within the cluster system, the cost of this and develop an understanding of how local organisations cover these costs to respond to varied demands from donors and partners.

Réiseal Ni Chéilleachair, Humanitarian Policy Adviser, Trócaire
Dr. Fiona Shanahan, Protection Adviser, Trócaire

¹ <https://www.trocaire.org/resources/policyandadvocacy/more-than-the-money-localisation-practice>



© Sophie Dupont - Trocaire

Localisation: moving from commitments to implementation

In the Grand Bargain, donors and international humanitarian actors (UN Agencies, INGOs, IFRC and ICRC) recognized that:

"National and local responders comprising governments, communities, Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies and local civil society are often the first to respond to crises, remaining in the communities they serve before, after and during emergencies."

They committed to:

"making principled humanitarian action as local as possible and as international as necessary recognising that international humanitarian actors play a vital role particularly in situations of armed conflict. We engage with local and national responders in a spirit of partnership and aim to reinforce rather than replace local and national capacities."

There now needs to be some significant (but not overwhelming) changes to how we all do our work, in order to line up practice with rhetoric.

Why Localisation?

Local and national actors are crucial to humanitarian response. They are there before any of the international actors arrive and long after they leave. Local action is not a "nice to have" add on to a relief operation that is a distant second consideration to getting aid out – it is a critical vehicle for that lifesaving action and even more so, in preventing crises where possible. The reality is that, the vast majority of crises never receive international support and attention. In these instances, local actions by local actors, based in and made up of members of the community, are saving lives and helping people to prepare and to rebuild again and again. In the crises that do receive international support and attention, assistance is often branded as international, but it is in fact local and national actors doing the work.

Local humanitarian action is core to the Red Cross and Red Crescent model of humanitarian action. National Societies' volunteers are present in communities around the world working in the community for the community, before, during and after crises. The IFRC was established to support, coordinate and represent these actors. It is because of this that we have taken on the role, alongside the Swiss Government, of co-chairing the Grand Bargain workstream on providing more support and funding tools to local and national responders.

In theory, the international humanitarian community has long recognized the specific comparative advantages of local humanitarian actors, while also highlighting the complementary value of international actors. It is widely recognized that local actors are fast because they are close, that local actors often have access that no international actor can achieve and that local actors have a strong understanding of local circumstances, politics and culture. We also know that local actors are in a strong position to link preparedness, response and long-term recovery, to make resilience real. The advantages of supporting and building upon this local capacity, rather than pushing it aside, is acknowledged in many of our fundamental normative and guidance texts, from UN General Assembly Resolution 46/182 of 1991, to the RC/RC NGO Code of Conduct of 1994, to the Principles of Good Humanitarian Donorship of 2003.

A strong push for progress on an old issue

Despite this, local actors, while playing a significant role currently, are not receiving the support they need to meet their full potential and to maximize effective humanitarian response. The international humanitarian machine sweeps in for a crisis and disregards and often undermines local capacities. Funding priorities are dramatically skewed, partnerships are very unequal, and capacity investments remain very modest. We can and must do better. This is where the Grand Bargain commitment regarding Localisation - "making principled humanitarian action as local as possible"- is so important.

Grand Bargain signatories agreed to more support to local and national actors through specific commitments in the areas of funding, coordination, partnership and capacity building. See opposite figure:



These are individual commitments by each signatory, but they will be difficult to meet in isolation. If donors continue to hold international partners directly responsible for detailed results, the latter will find it difficult to enter into flexible agreements with local actors. If international actors do not cooperate in promoting the role of local actors, donors will find it difficult to identify and support the strongest and most effective partners. If local actors themselves are not brought into the dialogue, they will continue to be the object rather than a crucial protagonist in the debate.

The role of the workstream

We see the role of workstream 2 of the Grand Bargain on more support and funding tools for local and national responders as a means for signatories to work together to bridge these potential gaps. It should facilitate implementation of these commitments, including through facilitating agreement on common terms and approaches, disseminating best practices and collaboratively developing guidance. We also want to ensure transparency of the work of the workstream and to ensure that the voices of local actors are heard and able to influence the discussions, not only there, but in other Grand Bargain workstreams.

Facilitating the conversation

There has been significant global interest in this issue. We are aware of a number of national level initiatives to hold national conversations to discuss what Localisation means in their context and what they would like to see change in terms of greater support to local and national humanitarian actors. At the same time, there have also been national and regional level research projects asking this question (see, for example, the research by the Australian Red Cross: <https://www.redcross.org.au/getmedia/fa37f8eb-51e7-4ecd-ba2f-d1587574d6d5/ARC-Localisation-report-Electronic-301017.pdf.aspx>). The workstream organized 3 global level multi-stakeholder meetings over 2016 and 2017 to explore what Localisation can and should look like, how to move forward on implementation, what it means for local actors in particular (giving them a platform to raise their suggestions and concerns with signatories).

The challenge now is connecting all of these conversations - national, regional and global conversations - ensuring that each is aware of the other and can influence each other.

Moving forward, the workstream has agreed to include some representative local actors in regular teleconferences and hopes to include them in all activities under the workplan. The workstream also aims to hold a number of webinars, open to anyone who can access an internet connection, in order to inform interested stakeholders around the world of what is happening at the global level and invite those who have been engaging on this issue to share their work and opinions via the website (still being developed). Language is going to be a key issue that will need to be addressed, which will be challenging given limited resources, so we will be seeking creative solutions to this.

Clarifying the commitments

One of the most important commitments of the grand bargain is to achieve, by 2020, a global, aggregated target of at least 25 per cent of humanitarian funding to local and national responders, as directly as possible. However, the text does not explain precisely what “directly as possible” means, in terms of funding or who is considered to be a “local or national actor”. Acting in support of the workstream, the IASC Humanitarian Financing Task Team established a working group that looked into this issue, surveying a large number of stakeholders (including many local and national actors) in order to develop proposed definitions. Any definitions that are chosen have implications for what signatories are committed to, therefore it was essential that all signatories agree to the definitions. After substantial discussion, a definition of local and national actors was agreed and the decision was made to track funding that goes directly from donors to local and national actors, funding that goes via a pooled fund and funding that goes via one intermediary, before making a final decision on whether or not one intermediary would or would not be considered as direct as possible.

Good practices around implementation

We are already seeing some innovative good practices from various Grand Bargain signatories. For example, there has been some progress around accessibility of pooled funds to local and national actors and around support for capacity strengthening. A number of UN managed country-based pooled funds have specific windows for local and national actors. For example, in Nigeria there is a specific window for capacity building. The START network, a collaboration of INGOs and NNGOs, has developed its own pooled funds and there is discussion around an NNGO-led pooled fund. IFRC and ICRC have also established a new National Society Investment Alliance, devoted to long-term institutional capacity strengthening of National Societies.

There have been a number of initiatives undertaken by humanitarian coordination bodies at a global level and in the field, as well as some initiatives to enhance cooperation with government actors. The Global Cluster Coordination Group (GCCG) has a Localisation working group that is developing practical approaches to strengthen the participation of national civil society actors in coordination and reinforce collaboration with national authorities. UNICEF has recruited a dedicated Localisation focal point to support the UNICEF-led clusters and sub-clusters to improve their work with local actors.

In the Turkey-based humanitarian operation for Syria, OCHA has dedicated staff working on strengthening the participation of local NGOs in coordination and response. They have provided support to Syrian NGOs to facilitate their familiarity with humanitarian coordination, such as clusters, the HCT and on humanitarian principles, and supported the establishment of a Syrian NGO forum to promote coordination between Syrian NGOs as well as with bodies such as the HCT. Outreach by cluster coordinators and OCHA to Syrian NGOs has led to a high degree of participation in coordination, including the co-leadership by national NGOs of 3 clusters. Cluster meetings are held in Arabic or are translated using interpretation equipment purchased by OCHA and made available for all clusters.

Similarly, a number of national governments have implemented disaster laws in order to facilitate international disaster relief and clarify coordination structures and processes. This year marks the 10-year anniversary of the Guidelines for the Domestic Facilitation and Regulation of International Disaster Relief and Initial Recovery Assistance, which has so far inspired new laws and procedures in 30 countries. National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies are currently offering support to their authorities in developing similar law and procedures in 45 countries.

Looking ahead – capturing good practice and developing guidance

The workstream workplan looks at identifying and capturing good practices and sharing what is found. The workstream supported a Localisation-focused interagency mission to Gaziantep, Turkey, to collect good practices, after which a webinar was held to discuss findings, and further such missions are planned. The workstream hopes to identify “demonstrator countries” and to undertake outreach to local actors, including governments, in particular through regional meetings. The workstream also aims to coordinate experience sharing and research in order to reach common understandings of how best to achieve Localisation goals, and to support the collaborative development of guidance on how to implement the commitments.

*Kirsten Hagon
Senior Analyst, Humanitarian Policy - International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies*

The International Committee of the Red Cross and the localisation of aid: striving toward meaningful complementarity

Jérémie Labbé

In 2015, the International Red Cross Red Crescent Movement (hereafter “the Movement”) sent a strong message of support for strengthening the role of local and national actors in responding to humanitarian needs¹. For a century and a half, the Movement – a humanitarian network composed of 190 National Societies, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) – has embodied a spirit of meaningful complementarity between local, national and international levels of response, guided by its Fundamental principles.

Localisation is a good thing², as it recognizes the central role local and national actors have always played in responding to humanitarian needs and proposes to provide greater support to that role. It values State responsibility and sovereignty, timeliness of the response and sustainability, cultural sensitivity and agency of affected communities. Yet, while localisation often makes full sense in natural disaster response and development contexts, it is not always adequate in armed conflict and other situations of violence.

In the ICRC’s experience, two important qualifications must be borne in mind, that turn on issues of capacity and of humanitarian principles. In certain situations, local capacity may be so weakened or destroyed that it cannot respond sufficiently to meet people’s needs. In other situations, it may be strong enough but too politically biased, corrupt, restricted or intimidated to respond impartially in all areas affected by an armed conflict. The challenge for the ICRC is thus to make wise and principled judgments on localisation in conflict, and to contribute its experience to advance the localisation discussion in a meaningful manner.

In September 2017, the ICRC organized an internal workshop, facilitated by Groupe URD, with the following objectives: 1) to take stock of the institution’s experience in engaging with and supporting local and national actors, both within and outside the Movement; 2) to identify areas where the ICRC could improve its own practice; and 3) to draw from its operational experience in order to inform the localisation discussion as it moves forward.

Although the ICRC is first and foremost a direct implementer of humanitarian assistance and protection programs, it has a long track record of meaningful engagement and partnership with local and national actors in a variety of ways. The modalities and depth of engagement depend on the type of activities (e.g. assistance, protection or even promotion of international humanitarian law and prevention of IHL violations) and on the type of context (e.g. protracted conflict, on-going hostilities, post-conflict or urban violence). Support may take many different forms: from long-term commitment to strengthen the capacities of a National Society to sustained engagement with National IHL Committees to enable national authorities to live by their international obligations.

This workshop enabled the ICRC to reflect on opportunities to better support local and national actors to play their rightful role, both as responders and as duty-bearers. It also helped to identify risks associated with localisation for impartial humanitarian action, for instance in contexts where national authorities are a party to an armed conflict or where civil society is fragmented and polarized due to conflict dynamics.

The on-going localisation discussion provides momentum for the ICRC to look more deeply into its operational practice of engagement with a variety of local and national actors across different contexts. This will enable the organisation to improve its own practice, but also to constructively contribute its rich operational experience in conflicts to inform the wider localisation debate.

The ICRC is committed to contribute its experience in three areas which it will further explore in 2018:

- To better unpack what meaningful complementarity of local, national and international action actually means in practice. The ICRC is actively supporting a research project commissioned by the British Red

Cross that will look at how the various components of the Movement operate in a complementary fashion in different contexts affected by conflict or organized violence.

- To shed some light on what localisation means in terms of protection and prevention of IHL and human rights violations, an area that is often ignored in localisation discussions that tend to focus on humanitarian assistance and overlook the role of local and national authorities.
- To explore in more depth the applicability of humanitarian principles to local actors in all their diversity (National Societies, local and national authorities, civil society organisations, private sector, etc.) and what it means in terms of localisation.

It is hoped that this will contribute to better understanding of how to make principled humanitarian action “as local as possible”, while unpacking what “as international as necessary” concretely means, especially in armed conflict and other situations of violence.

Jérémie Labbé

Policy Adviser, International Committee of the Red Cross

¹ International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement message to the World Humanitarian Summit, Resolution 3 adopted at the Council of Delegates of the International RCRC Movement, 7 December 2005, available at: http://rcrcconference.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/CD15-R3-message-to-WHS_EN.pdf

² In the Grand Bargain, Commitment 2, signatories commit to provide more support and funding tools to local and national responders “in making principled humanitarian action as local as possible and as international as necessary.”



© Seyim Turkmani

Localisation as self-criticism: three tales from a Colombian aid worker

Gabriel Arturo Rojas Andrade

This short article deals with the concept of Localisation from a self-critical perspective. It is not an academic piece on Localisation but rather a reflective piece from a personal point of view. Localisation is a personal issue. We can write about it in a distant way, saying it is the new trend in the humanitarian world, as stated at the World Humanitarian Summit, or we can start looking at the international aid industry in a more critical way, asking ourselves if the supposedly altruistic way of living that is required by our jobs is taking away resources from those who really need it, in favour of our comfort and quality of life.

Is this not about you?

Localisation is an exercise in self-criticism for humanitarian and development workers. If we take it seriously, Localisation is directed against an industry and a way of life, is directed against thousands of careers defined by a top down perspective of intervention in crisis contexts. Engagement with local and national authorities and organizations in these contexts is always based on an antagonistic relationship between those who receive aid and outsiders bringing resources and knowledge. These outsiders try to adapt their private lives to exotic contexts. And this costs a lot of money. It is not that workers from the humanitarian and development industries do not enjoy their role as foreign aid providers, with adventurous spirits, willing to leave all their comforts behind for a cause. They do like it, because, actually, they do not abandon everything, all the time: they might get a car for themselves, they might spend part of the month in the best offices in town, and they might get to sleep in really comfortable beds near refugee camps. And there is a sense of sacrifice, which is quite fulfilling and well nurtured by international NGOs and UN agencies, because -when expats devote their lives to a cause based on the principles of humanitarian intervention- they deserve good working conditions in order to accomplish their task. And that costs a lot of money.

I know about this. I have made a living from international cooperation in Colombia for the last eight years. Money from donors has paid my bills, my daughter's education and even my own studies: it is my way of making a living. But I am Colombian. In the broader sense of capacity building, all the money that has been invested in the projects in which I have participated has helped this local individual to have enough knowledge to take care of himself and be ready to lead local institutional responses to our changing crisis context. And yet, there are still expats in Colombia. Money for peace building is being sent in vast amounts and a whole infrastructure is being set up throughout the country. Not for

a humanitarian response, but a development response. And so, the cycle begins again. And all these Colombian professionals who have built careers out of international cooperation will, again, get new jobs for international NGOs or UN agencies. But never -never ever- in a top position. These are reserved for the professionals of the Global North willing to sacrifice everything to live in my country.

If the problem of Localisation is how to straightforwardly direct resources to national and local institutions and organizations, then it concerns the jobs of thousands of people who will have to give up a certain standard of living in order to allow people born in exotic contexts to make changes themselves. In order to strengthen the capacity of the State to effectively satisfy the rights of those affected by a crisis, whether it is a post-conflict or a natural disaster situation, many professionals from the Global North need to take a step back. Obviously, such a move raises many questions. Are the locals ready? If they had all this mess before we arrived, how are they going to manage the resources that our donors send them? Who will be responsible for the accountability of goals, indicators and expenses? What about corruption? Can they do it without us? Can they do it without audits?

The unease that is evident here shows that behind the question of how to effectively allocate resources in local initiatives (instead of spending a lot of money on processes and aid infrastructure), there is a presumption of incapacity. Indeed, the whole capacity building discourse shows that aid is based on the idea that the affected population cannot do it by themselves.

This short article deals with the concept of Localisation as self-criticism by describing three experiences I have had as a local aid worker in Colombia, the challenges I have observed in the last eight years regarding getting resources to those really affected by crisis situations, and the struggles of national and grass roots organizations to survive in the humanitarian and development system. Therefore, this is not an academic piece on Localisation but rather a reflective piece from a personal point of view. Localisation is a personal issue. We can write about it in a distant way, saying it is the new trend in the humanitarian world, as stated at the World Humanitarian Summit, or we can start looking at the international aid industry in a more critical way, asking ourselves if the supposedly altruistic way of living that is required by our jobs is taking away resources from those who really need it, in favour of our comfort and quality of life.

Where to put the stickers

Under a suffocating sun at noon in San Francisco, a small town in the Department of Antioquia in Colombia, I was about to deliver a hundred wheelchairs to people with disabilities. This was one of the components of a project funded by an international donor that aimed to promote the autonomy of people with disabilities who had been victims of the armed conflict. The other three components of the project were training in human rights and health services, rehabilitation services and seed capital and technical assistance for small businesses for people with disabilities. The integrated approach of the project was designed to make a significant difference to the lives of the participants. It aimed to help them overcome the vulnerability caused by the armed conflict and the barriers imposed by state institutions that were not able or willing to effectively protect the rights of people with disabilities.

As the coordinator of one of the components of the project, I was accompanying an activity by one of the three national NGOs in charge of the implementation. The international State donor entrusted the funds to an international NGO that did not have much experience regarding disability but was more reliable in terms of handling money from the donor. The Colombian organizations, on the other hand, were experts in working with different aspects of disability, but were not that experienced in working with international funds. Eight local organizations were sub-contracted to deliver services in the field.

The wheelchairs were ready to be delivered to the participants. They had been imported from Germany and brought from Bogota, and I had helped to put them together. The participants and their families were quite anxious, as the selection process had been long and had required at least two previous encounters with a series of health professionals and psychosocial preparation. However, the director of the project had not arrived yet. He was not Colombian. For the purpose of neutrality and impartiality, the international NGO had hired an international officer with no experience in the Colombian context and its health system. He knew about coordination in general and earned three times more money than any of the experienced national officers working on the ground. When the director of the project finally arrived he started asking the participants questions and took many pictures with them. Finally he inspected the wheelchairs and asked us if we had followed the approved marking and branding plan that the donor demanded. I looked at the local team who had been working all morning preparing the event and the wheelchairs not knowing exactly how to explain to them that we could not deliver the assistance devices if they did not have the donor's logo on them and we did not display a message saying, "this event is possible thanks to the generous support of the people of the...". So we had to spend the next two hours putting stickers with the donor's logo on

each wheelchair, making sure they stuck properly. Afterwards, the director was pleased. More pictures were taken and the already exhausted participants finally received their wheelchairs.

We had spent a year preparing, six months filling in the paperwork to sub-contract the local organizations and another couple of months working directly with the communities and participants to finally deliver the wheelchairs and start the other components of the project. We worked with two thousand direct participants. Through the different components of the project, each one of them received less than one thousand dollars. Meanwhile the total budget of the project was five million dollars, from which the international NGO kept a twenty per cent overhead. The eight subcontracted local organizations in charge of the actual implementation and the direct work with the participants knew about this overhead and the high salaries of the team from the international NGO. Meanwhile, they were subjected to a lot of pressure to keep a limited budget, small salaries for their local professionals in the field and regular audits (five of them during the life of the project).

The sticker experience is just one of many stories regarding the relationship between international donors, international NGOs and national organizations and professionals. In a country like Colombia, which has received a great deal of attention from the humanitarian and development systems over the last three decades, this relationship is tense. Over and over again, communities have witnessed international officers from different international organizations asking for new stickers to be put on wheelchairs, banners or buildings, and asking them to mention donors in a particular way during workshops or the hundreds of events victims of the armed conflict attend. Meanwhile, people's lives do not change significantly. When a project ends, they continue to struggle to survive in their regions together with local NGOs and local and qualified professionals who find themselves unemployed as soon as the sticker is gone.



© Gabriel Arturo Rojas Andrade

Paying for the director's salary from our own pockets

We panicked: we were unable to provide evidence of the food and transport we had given to the community during a series of focal groups carried out along the border between Colombia and Ecuador. We had not collected the signatures of all the participants. People interested in our research had just started to show up on a daily basis. They wanted to tell us about their experience in crossing the border between Colombia and Ecuador. We paid for their transport and food. We needed the information in order to write the book we expected would be a useful advocacy tool in dealing with the Ecuadorian government and its asylum system. Our hypothesis as a national NGO working on research was that there was a continuity of non-protection on both sides of the border because neither of the governments was interested in improving the livelihoods of people living in the peripheral areas of either country.

During the fieldwork I had received a call from the international donor's finance officer asking what we were doing in terms of the signatures of people getting money for transport. I did not pay much attention. I could not even hear her properly in the improvised camp where I was. I was getting the information, not asking for signatures and attempting to treat people in a respectful way. When we got back to Quito, quite happy with the trust we had built in the community and the information we had gathered, a concerned finance officer of the international NGO received us. He asked us for the signatures of every single person we had given food and money for transport. We told him we had the signatures of the community leaders (five of them, and we had interviewed and given food and money for transport to more than a hundred people). It was not enough. He looked at us with suspicion and told us that, without all the signatures, the expenses were not eligible. Our budget as a national NGO was quite limited already. Actually, the survival of our office depended on the work we had just carried out on that project. We discussed the situation with our team. The only way was to pay for it from our own resources.

The problem was not that we had made a puerile mistake by not having minimum accountability standards regarding the donor's money. We learnt that quickly. The actual problem was that our sustainability as a national NGO depended on a project that was asking us to pay from our own pockets for an activity that we considered essential to accomplish our advocacy objective.

We paid. Our three hundred thousand euros budget was enough to finish the research. We published the book and it was used for policy making and regarded as a good piece of research in terms of methodology and information gathering. The donor was pleased. We never spoke again about the signatures. Neither did we speak about the fact that our budget as a

national NGO, including the salaries of four members of the team, all of our fieldwork, publications, an international conference, and all of the focus groups in the field, cost the same as the salary of the director of the project. All of it: three hundred thousand euros for three years. That was his salary and that was the cost of our entire operation for three years. We never asked for the director's signature though.

Mocoa: double affectation, double standard of response

In April 2017 a huge landslide of mud, rocks and gushing waters swept away homes and cars and killed at least 400 people in the southern city of Mocoa in Colombia. Government agencies, land use experts, and environmental organizations had said for years that Mocoa could face dangerous flooding. Many who lived in the most vulnerable areas were aware of the warnings, even if they didn't heed them. Nothing was done to prevent the disaster as the city continued to spread into the floodplains west of downtown. When a month's worth of rain fell in a single night, the long-predicted disaster took place.

The Mocoa situation combined the need for a swift national institutional response with the strong presence of humanitarian organizations and the beginning of a post-conflict scenario that requires a multidimensional approach between humanitarian needs and development strategies. It is also an example of a new challenge in aid response because it requires preparation for double affectation scenarios in which events associated with climate change overlap with general violence in a post conflict context.

The Colombian conflict has caused a long humanitarian crisis. Different forms of violence have had terrible consequences for the environment and social cohesion and have affected the livelihoods of victims and communities. The number of victims is overwhelming: more than 8 million people are registered as victims in the Colombian State database. 7.1 million people have been internally displaced. Many of these people still live in rural areas, and are dependent on seriously affected peasant economies. Others have moved to cities and many of them wish to return to their places of origin if the right conditions are given.

The Peace Agreement of 2016 between the National Government and the FARC rebels has created new opportunities to enhance institutional presence in zones that have traditionally been affected by armed confrontations. This could increase the economic potential of affected zones in different sectors. This is the case for Putumayo department, of which Mocoa is the capital. Indeed, one of the zones in which the former FARC rebels gathered before handing over their guns in the first semester of 2017 was in Putumayo.

As FAO has suggested, the challenge of bringing stability to the Colombian territory as a whole, and increasing dynamism in different rural sectors, is also an opportunity to

rebuild affected areas. This has to be done taking into consideration climate variability, which is also an urgent issue in the country, as the Mocoa disaster showed.

Colombia is tenth in the world in terms of economic risk due to two or more dangers caused by natural disasters. The study of natural disasters carried out by the World Bank in Colombia claims that nearly 85% of the population and 86.6% of assets are located in areas exposed to one or more natural threats.

In this context, as soon as the landslide occurred, the national institutions were swift to make Mocoa a political priority. President Santos went to Mocoa twice in May 2017 and said that the municipality was going to be better off than before the disaster. He established a unified command in the town that centralized all the national and international aid, and named the Minister of Defence as executive representative in charge of the reconstruction of the city. Eight months later, the reconstruction efforts are quite slow, all the media attention has stopped, most of the international aid has gone and people in Mocoa are living in similar conditions to those that existed before the landslide: with limited access to water, food and employment. The peacebuilding efforts are also threatened by the fact that the implementation of the Peace Agreement has not been as fast as expected and the normative and institutional reforms needed to start structural changes in the country are facing the traditional problems of bureaucracy and corruption that have defined the political arena in Colombia. These challenges have come together with new forms of violence that have emerged during the post-conflict period. New armed groups have begun to fill the space left unoccupied by the FARC, threatening populations and establishing control over territories in order to continue trafficking drugs and other illegal goods.

When I arrived in Mocoa to interview different stakeholders in order to measure the effectiveness of the humanitarian response, scepticism was already in the air. I got there exactly a month after the landslide. Some people were already returning to their homes (located in high risk areas) and trying to find ways to continue their lives. Others were still looking for their relatives beneath the rocks. But most people felt that the government was not fulfilling the expectations created by the President's visits. I attended a general meeting organised by the Senate in order to evaluate the quality of the humanitarian response by the government. The people who spoke repeatedly complained about the lack of planning and the arbitrariness of the prioritization efforts in terms of aid. One week before the President personally inaugurated the new aqueduct. People laughed ironically and with resignation saying that all that the President did was to paint an old water hydrant red and claim that there was water for the whole city. It was not true. I stayed for four days and could only get water from containers gathering rain outside the hotel.

When I talked to local leaders (presidents of local community juntas), they said they felt neglected. They were not consulted when counting people in their own neighbourhoods. The relationship they had with government representatives was one of suspicion and lack of trust. The leaders also complained about people not affected by the disaster receiving aid and the lack of information about prevention and reconstruction efforts. But at the same time everyone sustained that the solidarity of the Colombian people in other parts of the country was impressive. It was Colombian civilians who gave the most aid and Colombian volunteers who coordinated the distribution of food and shelter in the most straightforward way.

Meanwhile, the army of international humanitarian organizations that arrived in Mocoa within days of the landslide were already leaving when I arrived. They said that their donors had given them specific resources for specific purposes. After they had distributed tents, WASH services, food and radios they had to leave. They said that the Colombian government was already in charge, that at the beginning there had been a lot of confusion, but later all the aid had been centralised and they reported to the government. I tried to speak to representatives of the government saying that I was part of an international research organization evaluating the effectiveness of the humanitarian response. They asked me to present a formal request and gave me a leaflet.

Eight months later, people I met in Mocoa tell me they are recovering by themselves. Surviving with what they have. They do not expect anything from the government or international humanitarian and development organizations. When they see a foreign person (whether from Bogota or abroad), they just do not care. The future, some say, depends only on them.



© Gabriel Arturo Rojas Andrade

Re-localise yourself

I went to France to share this information and had a great summer getting to know the south of the country while working as a research visitor in the international organization that asked me to do the interviews in Mocoa. Then I came back to Colombia, found a new job in an international agency with a good salary and got to know new people affected by natural disasters or the new violence of the post conflict scenario. Currently I am meeting people in the same places in Colombia where I started working eight years ago. Almost nothing has changed in terms of vulnerability in these places. People live in the same harsh conditions that I have described so many times in reports, baselines and indicators. One thing has changed though: me. I am better off, living in better conditions, getting better jobs and more money for my work. Do not get me wrong, it is still not anything like the money earned by an international aid worker who comes to Colombia to save the country from itself, but I am doing pretty well.

We are a central part of the problem and maybe we are the ones who have to localize differently if we want to change the industry.

If stories like mine show what is going to happen to humanitarian and development resources in the post conflict context of Colombia, clearly we are doing something very wrong. The task we face as aid workers is how to allocate these resources effectively to respect the rights of those who need them, instead of just taking a big part of the money for ourselves. I know this may sound an over simplistic way of addressing the issue. But the three brief stories I have told you are tiny examples of a way of living, and a way of understanding our job, that does not focus on what is most important: the fact that

we are a central part of the problem and maybe we are the ones who have to localize differently if we want to change the industry.

*Gabriel Arturo Rojas Andrade
PhD in Law, Los Andes University*



© Gabriel Arturo Rojas Andrade

Aid localisation in Nepal following the earthquake of 25 April 2015

François Grünewald

Nepal – which has recently been through a civil war (1996 to 2006) – is a country where there are numerous risks, particularly due to its geopolitical situation in relation to China and India. Nepal's civil society, which is influenced by the caste system, but also by a long tradition of solidarity, was immediately on the front line of the response to the series of earthquakes that began on 25 April 2015. Individuals, local NGOs, religious institutions and village and district authorities rescued injured people from the rubble, provided first aid, collected and distributed blankets and clothes, etc. International NGOs, particularly those who had been running risk and disaster management programmes, were quickly mobilised in support of their Nepalese partners, in coordination with the National Disaster Management Unit and the United Nations system. Other international organisations, however, who were often new to Nepal, arrived in the villages and carried out distributions with very little, if any, consultation of the local authorities or the population. This caused resentment among Nepalese associations and local authorities, though the extraordinary hospitality and kindness of the Nepalese people helped to smooth things over somewhat.

The decentralised administrative system (village and district development committees) is very politicised, which can lead to problems of independence and impartiality. These committees were very involved in assessing needs and they attempted to establish local coordination mechanisms which international organisations who were new to Nepal sometimes took some time to understand. Nepalese NGOs were often key actors in isolated areas that could only be reached after hours of driving on difficult roads, or even hours on foot in the mountains. The living conditions in these areas remain very harsh and are made worse by monsoon rains and the cold during the winter months. These NGOs are highly exposed to political pressure and the interests of powerful people in villages and therefore have to operate in a highly complex socio-political environment. This has been made worse by the fact that two of the last stages of the peace process – the local and representative elections – only took place very recently, and those who were elected are only just becoming familiar with their responsibilities, even though many of them have civil society and NGO backgrounds. Indeed, many of these new representatives began their involvement in the public arena in the non-profit sector, advocating for change¹. As such, it will be interesting to see how they will operate now that they have “stepped through the looking glass”.

Few donors chose to specifically target national NGOs to implement the response to the 2015 earthquake despite the advocacy of the powerful Federation of Nepalese NGOs. Some nevertheless did in a strategic manner. Thus, the Fondation de France, which specialises in collecting and redistributing public funds, adopted a multi-faceted approach which consisted of: 1) targeting both large, well-known Nepalese NGOs (THEWA and ARSOW) and a myriad of small NGOs, 2) setting up a technical support and advice mechanism for building reconstruction, and 3) supporting the Federation of Nepalese NGOs in its advocacy work vis-a-vis the national authorities, international NGOs and the United Nations. This approach was first adopted after the 2004 Tsunami, then in Haiti after the 2010 earthquake and in the Philippines after the typhoons in 2011, 2013 and 2014. It helped to identify: 1) numerous advantages of supporting national NGOs, such as the quality of the assessments, the strong societal anchorage and the capacity to maintain a presence in very difficult areas, 2) risks in terms of the ability to scale up programmes, programmes being exploited by local interests and problems of integrity, and 3) lessons for future large-scale disasters. It is clear, for example, that it is possible to transfer significant funds via national NGOs, if the appropriate support mechanisms are put in place (e.g. technical and resource management mechanisms), as well as the appropriate monitoring and learning mechanisms. In terms of aid localisation, generosity and lucidity are not contradictory.

François Grünewald - Executive Director, Groupe URD

¹ After the 2015 earthquake, Nepalese NGOs played a key role in pushing for the ratification of the national law on disasters which had been on the table for more than ten years..

Definitions and debates

From commitments to action: Progress Report 2016-2017

Charter for Change, June 2017, 28 p.

In this report, the Charter4Change signatory organisations present the progress made and the challenges involved in the implementation of the eight commitments of the Charter for Change launched at the World Humanitarian Summit in May 2016 with a view to aid localisation. The eight commitments concern: financial flows and tracking ; partnerships ; recruitment ; advocacy in favour of national organisations ; equality in decision-making ; capacity support ; and better communication on the role of local organisations.

http://cafod.org.uk/content/download/42149/478066/version/2/file/C4C_ProgressReport_2017_WEB.pdf

Localisation and Locally-led Crisis Response: A Literature Review

Imogen Wall, Kerren Hedlund, Local to Global, May 2016, 46 p.

Examining existing literature, the review explores the meaning of the term “localisation” and how “localisation” differs from “locally-led” and the importance of using the terms correctly. The authors attempt to define who local actors are, what it means to support these actors in practice, what the issues at stake are, and what works in the field. Using examples and case studies, the authors present a number of key aspects of locally-led responses.

http://www.local2global.info/wp-content/uploads/L2GP_SDC_Lit_Review_LocallyLed_June_2016_final.pdf

Rhetoric or reality? Putting affected people at the centre of humanitarian action

Dayna Brown, Antonio Donini, ALNAP Study, ALNAP/ODI, octobre 2014, 88 P.

This study focuses on the discussions that took place at the 29th annual ALNAP meeting where the theme was the involvement of crisis-affected people in humanitarian action. The participants addressed issues of engagement, accountability and participation, and all agreed that the question of “how” to involve people is often covered, but the reasons “why” they should be involved are not sufficiently addressed. The meeting also insisted on the importance of being more attentive to the different stakeholders concerned, such as local organisations, civil society, and states.

<http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/alnap-rhetoric-or-reality-study.pdf>

Relations between international and local actors

Localisation of Aid: Are INGOS Walking the Talk?

Shifting the Power Project, Start Network, November 2017, 16 p.

Following on from the debates at the World Humanitarian Summit on aid localisation, this report analyses the activities of international NGOs: are their words being followed up with actions? What are the current issues at stake, and what good practices exist in terms of relations between international NGOs and local organisations? The report shows that NGOs need to improve their partnerships with local and national organisations, and adapt their communication and their fund-raising methods.

<https://start-network.app.box.com/s/1ova6blkv9vwkwq8o6xbdf6o5ig9rkp1>

Opportunity Knocks: Realising the potential of partnerships in the Nepal earthquake response
ActionAid, CAFOD, CARE, Christian Aid, Oxfam, Tearfund, November 2016, 8 p.

The six NGOs behind this publication present the lessons learned from the response to the 2015 earthquake in Nepal. The authors argue that the response, which was directed by the Nepalese government and delivered by local organisations, with international NGOs playing a supporting role, could be a model for future responses. The report underlines that the international humanitarian community needs to invest more in reinforcing the capacity of local organisations, both in terms of preparedness for future disasters and the delivery of emergency responses. More generally, the authors want to provide practical support to help efforts to localise humanitarian response.

<https://www.care-international.org/files/files/2016OpportunityKnocksFULLreport.pdf>

Involvement of local actors and communities

Local communities: first and last providers of protection, Forced Migration Review
Issue 53, Refugee Studies Centre, October 2016, 84 p.

The main theme of this issue of the *Forced Migration Review* is the role of local communities in protecting people affected by, or under threat of, displacement. Indeed, it is often people's immediate community that provides the first, last and perhaps best tactical response. The different articles analyse the capacity of communities to organise themselves before, during and after displacement in ways that help protect the community. These refer to experiences in different countries around the world such as Sudan, Colombia, Yemen, Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

<http://www.fmreview.org/sites/fmr/files/FMRdownloads/en/community-protection.pdf>

The role of local governments

Urban planning following humanitarian crises: Supporting local government to take the lead in the Philippines following super typhoon Haiyanaid
E. Parker & al., IIED, June 2017, 44 p.

In recent years, there has been increasing awareness of the importance of humanitarian agencies supporting and collaborating with local governments in order to restore city functions following humanitarian crisis. This research aimed to identify, document and disseminate learning from UN-Habitat's experience providing urban planning support to three Local Government Units after super typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines. The UN agency was successful in helping them draw up useful Recovery and Rehabilitation Plans. However, it was not able to secure adequate, long-term funding in order to secure longer-term positive impacts for the cities' poorest residents.

<http://pubs.iied.org/pdfs/10813IIED.pdf>

Case studies

Aid localisation in the response to hurricane Matthew in Haiti
Nawal Karroum, Groupe URD, December 2017, 50 p.

This report analyses the progress made and the difficulties encountered in terms of localisation during the response to hurricane Matthew in Haiti. It aims to contribute to the current debate within the international community on localisation and the issues that this raises. After an initial chapter in which localisation is situated in the context of the response to hurricane Matthew in Haiti, the report describes the specific characteristics of the actors involved and their respective positioning vis-à-vis localisation. It then goes on to explore the reality and operational application of the localisation process in this precise context. Lastly, it describes the factors that underlie the relation between localisation and resilience in Haiti.

http://www.urd.org/IMG/pdf/LocalisationHaitiReponseMathieu_GURD_2017.pdf

More than the Money – Localisation in practice

Véronique de Geoffroy, François Grünewald, Réiseal Ni Chéilleachair, Groupe URD, Trocaire, June 2017, 39 p.

This study explores the issue of aid localisation in the context of the commitments of the World Humanitarian Summit and the Grand Bargain. It is based on two case studies, Myanmar and the Democratic Republic of Congo, two countries that have gone through humanitarian crises caused by internal conflicts. The report includes recommendations for Trocaire on how to further strengthen partnership work with local actors in humanitarian settings.

http://www.urd.org/IMG/pdf/More_than_the_money_-_Full_Report.pdf

The localisation of international aid in the conglomeration of Tripoli

Nawal Karroum, Groupe URD, January 2017, 50 p.

This study looks at aid localisation in Lebanon, which has been directly affected by the repercussions of the Syrian war. It was carried out in Tripoli, the second largest city in the country, in connection with the Syrian refugee crisis: Lebanon currently hosts around 1.5 million Syrian refugees, which represents almost a third of its total population. Tripoli, for its part, has seen its population grow by 35 to 50 % in the last five years, notably due to the arrival of a large number of refugees. Aid localisation is one of the main commitments of the Grand Bargain, and more broadly, of the World Humanitarian Summit. As there is not yet any shared definition of this concept, it is understood here to mean “the reinforcement of the role of national actors in humanitarian responses”. The main findings of the study concern humanitarian principles, funding, visibility, results, the importance of “doing no harm”, capacity building, partnerships and coordination.

http://www.urd.org/IMG/pdf/19072017_Localisation_de_l_aide_Tripoli.pdf

We know our wounds : National and local organizations involved in humanitarian response in Lebanon

Luz Saavedra, Country Study, ALNAP, ODI, May 2016, 48 p.

This report focuses on the work carried out by eleven national and local Lebanese NGOs involved in the humanitarian response. Based on their experiences, it aims to improve understanding of their motivations and strategies, the context in which they work and the obstacles that they encounter. It is part of a broader research project by ALNAP on the actions of national and local NGOs in response to disasters and emergencies. Another case study on Colombian NGOs is also available at the following address:

<http://www.alnap.org/resource/22462>

Funding for local and national NGOs

Independent Grand Bargain Report

Derzsi-Horvath, J. Steets, L. Ruppert, GPPI, Inspire Consortium, June 2017, 92 p.

This independent evaluation looks at the progress made by the Grand Bargain signatories one year after its adoption, with its general objective of improving aid delivery and effectiveness. The different workstreams were analysed and, although positive, progress has been uneven. The areas in which there has been the most progress are localization, cash programmes and reporting requirements. Much less progress has been made on management costs, participation, the funding allocation system or the humanitarian-development nexus. The report includes recommendations for the signatories to continue to work towards change in the spirit of the Grand Bargain adopted in May 2016.

http://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/nn_-_grand_bargain_report_final.pdf

From Grand Bargain to beneficiary: An analysis of funding flows through the humanitarian system
T. Mowjee, L. Poole, B. Willitts-King, HPG Commissioned Report, HPG, ODI, May 2017, 28 p.

This study analyses funding flows that circulate in the humanitarian system. It aims to answer the following questions: what proportion of funding from donors actually reaches beneficiaries? What is the total cost of each step in the chain? What is the total volume of funding used by local partners? What is the main role of each actor in the chain? This analysis will contribute to discussions linked to the Grand Bargain about the direct funding of local actors and improving the transparency and effectiveness of the humanitarian system.

<https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/resource-documents/11588.pdf>

The Grand Bargain – A Shared Commitment to Better Serve People in Need
Istanbul, Turkey, The World Humanitarian Summit, 23 May 2016, 17 p.

The Grand Bargain is a series of reforms of humanitarian funding which was launched at the World Humanitarian Summit. Thirty donors and humanitarian organisations agreed to 51 “commitments” aimed at improving the effectiveness of emergency aid. Of the ten areas covered, two are analysed in greater depth: transparency and the funding of local and national humanitarian aid agencies. Regarding transparency, the members of the group committed themselves to “publish timely, transparent, harmonized and open high-quality data on humanitarian funding within two years”. NGOs from the Global South, for their part, should receive more direct funding. The other areas concern: cash-based programming, the reduction of duplication and management costs, needs assessments, the participation of affected people, multi-year planning and funding, the earmarking of donor contributions, harmonising reporting requirements, and enhancing engagement between humanitarian and development actors.

https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/grand_bargain_final_22_may_final-2_0.pdf

Consult the full bibliography on the Groupe URD website:

<http://www.urd.org/Bibliography-on-Aid-localisation>

Events

Humanitarian Networks and Partnerships Week (HNPW), 5-9 February 2018, Geneva

The Humanitarian Networks and Partnerships Week (HNPW), co-chaired by OCHA and the UK's Department for International Development (DFID), is an annual event held in Geneva in the first week of February. Since 2015, this event provides a unique forum for humanitarian networks and partnerships to meet and address key humanitarian issues.

The next HNPW will take place at the International Conference Centre in Geneva from 5-9 February 2018. More than 30 Networks and Partnerships are expected to participate, and hold their annual meetings during the week. An Inter-Network Day will take place on Wednesday, 7 February and it will offer participants from all backgrounds and sectors the opportunity to learn, exchange knowledge and network.

<http://www.unocha.org/humanitarian-networks-and-partnerships-week-hnpw>

Workshop/debate on localisation, 27 February 2018, Paris

In connection with this special issue of *Humanitarian Aid on the Move* and our work on this topic in recent years, Groupe URD is holding a workshop/debate/aperitif at the Maison des Métallos (Paris 11^{ème}) on 27 February 2018.

For more information, contact: jtaisson@urd.org

15th DIHAD, 5-7 March 2018, Dubai

The 15th Dubai International Humanitarian Aid and Development Conference and Exhibition will focus on theme: "the sustainability of emergency aid; the intensifying search for the appropriate strategies, methodologies and resources to meet the global humanitarian challenges in the years ahead."

More information on the agenda: <http://dihad.org/conference-program-2018/>

DIHAD is the largest gathering of the Humanitarian sector in the MENA region. The 2018 edition of the event is expected to welcome more than 500 exhibiting companies and 15,000 attendees from 150+ countries.

To register: <http://dihad.org/registration/>

4th French National Humanitarian Conference, 22 March 2018, Paris

The French National Humanitarian Conference (CNH), created in 2011, is one of the main French platforms for humanitarian actors to meet, exchange and discuss. It takes place every two years in the presence of the French Minister of Foreign Affairs and formalizes the government's implication in debates about humanitarian challenges.

The 4th edition of this event, which will be held on 22 March in Paris with an opening speech by the Minister, will be an opportunity to formally endorse France's new Humanitarian Strategy (2018- 2022) and to debate its main themes: International Humanitarian Law and the protection of civilians, integrating humanitarian aid into the broader framework of the humanitarian-development continuum, aid localisation, and funding.



Groupe URD

Groupe URD (Urgence – Réhabilitation – Développement) is a non-profit research, evaluation and training institute. Its main objective is to help improve humanitarian practices in favour of crisis-affected people.

Further information:

www.urd.org

Humanitarian Aid *on the move*

Humanitarian Aid on the move - a bilingual biannual review – aims to share the results of work on important issues currently facing the sector. We regularly invite external contributors and provide links to other publications. To propose an article, contact Jeanne Taisson: jtaisson@urd.org

Further reading on certain topics and full articles by the authors can be found on the Groupe URD website:

www.urd.org/Humanitarian-Aid-on-the-move

Contacts

To receive the online version:

www.urd.org/Humanitarian-Aid-on-the-move

To propose an article:

Contact Jeanne Taisson

jtaisson@urd.org

Produced with support from :



Director: François Grünewald
Editorial board: François Grünewald,
Véronique de Geoffroy, Jeanne Taisson
Editorial Secretary: Jeanne Taisson
Translation : Etienne Sutherland

Printed by: Transcopy
Design by: Concept image

ISSN : 2261-7132
Legal deposit: September 2012