

Country-Level Dialogue in Localization

COLOMBIA

1. Introduction

Colombia, historically, has presented significant humanitarian Challenges. An internal conflict that as extender for more than 60 years, with a Peace Agreement with the main illegal armed group signed 4 years ago but with significant challenges in its implementation, and new and different illegal armed groups conformed, still causes significant affectation to Colombian population through confinement, internal displacement and social leaders killings, affecting more than 80,000 people during 2020. These, added to a huge inequality and poverty conditions, and lack of access to basic services such as health, safe water, education and electricity, and historical risk related to natural disasters given the geographic characteristics of the country and lack of urban planning.

Besides, during the last years, Colombia has been part of a significant population mobilization from Venezuelans that are migrating looking for better opportunities, remaining or transiting through Colombia in very vulnerable conditions, requiring urgent humanitarian assistance and in some cases, social integration approaches. Currently, there are 1.700.000 Venezuelans living in Colombia (Migración Colombia).

During the 2020, the Sanitary Emergency due to COVID-19 has not only widened this previous humanitarian challenges for Colombians but also for Migrants. The lack of economic opportunities given the quarantine and closures, has increased in five points the unemployment in Colombia,

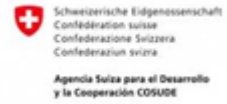
Lastly, the Rainy Season, strengthened by La Niña Phenomenon has affected more than 66 thousand families in different regions, and Huracán IOTA passing through San Andrés and Providencia Islands, left more than 98% of Providencia's infrastructure destroyed, and more than 6,000 people affected.

These significant humanitarian challenges, since a couple of years has promoted the increase of humanitarian organizations working in Colombia, international organizations but also local and community based, that are co-working in the field to better respond to the population needs. This, has required huge coordination efforts from UN and government, in order to make sure the articulation within the humanitarian organizations is guaranteed.

This context, makes evident the need for Localisation, in order to increase the information exchange and collaboration between humanitarian agents and improve the localization of the actions, and the strengthening of local actors capacities and representation. Nevertheless, the issue had not been an issue widely discussed in a local level and hence this context made important a nomination and further implementation if Country-Level Dialogues in Localization.

2. Co-Facilitators:

1. Colombian Red Cross National Society



2. Swiss Embassy in Colombia- Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation COSUDE
3. OCHA- Colombia
4. Pastoral Social/Caritas Colombia

3. Objectives:

- To share with Main Humanitarian Actors in a National Level information about Grand Bargain and Localisation.
- To create awareness of the compliment of the Grand Bargain and Localization Commitments
- To receive National and local feedback for current localization processes and identify gaps and challenges for the implementation of the commitments.
- To promote awareness in different levels on the importance of Localization in Colombia.

4. Activities implemented:

- **Socialization in Humanitarian Country Team:** On march 23rd, the Country Level Dialogue Colombia Plan of Action was socialized in the extended Humanitarian Country Team monthly meeting, with the participation of more than 40 humanitarian actors in Colombia.

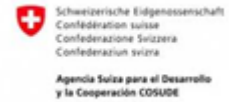
The participants included head of delegations UN Agencies, Local actors and donors, who fully supported the action plan.

- **Online Survey:** Based on the information of the Resource Kit, and on reference information sent by the Localization Workstream team members, an Online Survey was designed to gather important information on how localization looks like in Colombia's Humanitarian scenario.

The online survey included 28 questions regarding the different variables of Localization. It was sent through OCHA communication mechanisms to all the members of the Humanitarian Country Team and Local Coordination Teams. 71 responses were received from different type of organizations (Government, Donors, International NGOs, National NGOs, Local and community organizations).

- **Research on previous Studies:** In order to have a baseline on the process and acknowledge the efforts made by other actors to study and analyze localization in Colombia, 6 papers were reviewed and main recommendations and results were analyzed as part of the process:

- *Partnerships and Security Risk Management: from the local partner's perspective. GISF, 2020.*
- *Security Management and Capacity Development: International agencies working with local partners. GISF, 2012*
- *Anchored in Local Reality: Case Studies on Local Humanitarian Action from Haiti, Colombia, and Iraq. OXFAM and Feinstein. 2020*
- *Country-level Financing Solutions for Local Actors Case studies: Colombia, Ethiopia and Ukraine, IFRC. 2019*



- *Working together within the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement in armed conflict and other situations of violence, BRC and ICRC, 2018.*
- *Colombia Humanitarian Fund 2009-2018, OCHA, 2018.*

- **National Localization Workshop and Dialogue**

With the participation of more than 130 representatives from humanitarian organizations in the country, the 27th of May 2021 was held a National Localization Workshop and Dialogue virtually.

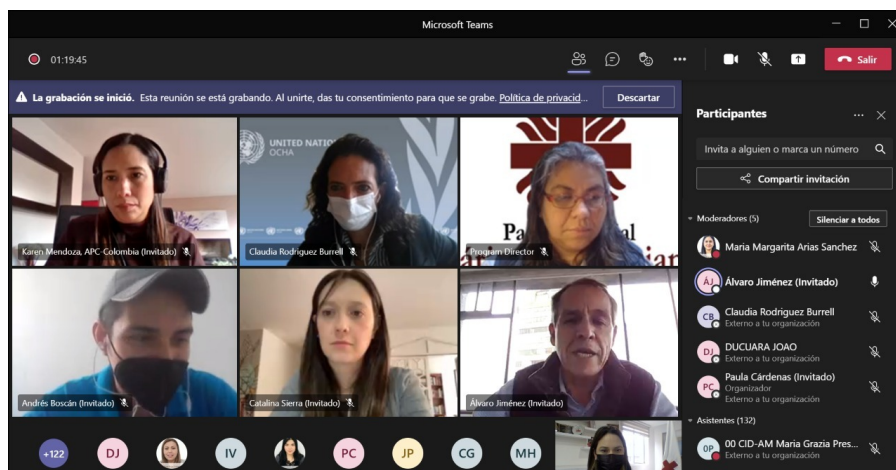
The event had as objective to discuss with different actors, the main gaps, challenges and opportunities of the implementation in Colombia of the Localization Commitments.

The Workshop had three parts:

1. INTRODUCTION: Where general GB and localization context and main advances of Country- Level Dialogues in Colombia, including the results of the Online-Survey.

2. PANEL: With participation of representatives from the National Government, Donors, Local NGO, and, International NGOs, and moderated by OCHA- Colombia, a Panel was implemented with orientation questions including all the variables of the Localization Commitments.

3. WORKGROUPS: Based on the different variables of localization, it was discussed with all the participants on the main advances and challenges to achieve the commitments and expected results.



5. What's Next

The action plan includes an implementation of 1 or two local level Workshop during the second semester of 2021, in order to deepen the conversation and the input for decision making.

6. Main Results and Recommendations

Based on the implementation of the different activities, hereby we would like to express

the main results and recommendations:

RESULTS

1. General Knowledge on Localization:

- International humanitarian actors in Colombia have a significant knowledge on the GB and Localization, while within local actors, the information and awareness on localization decreases the more local the actor is.

2. Financing and Capacity Strengthening:

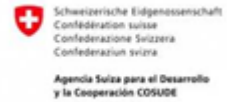
- There is a challenge from local actors to access direct funding for their humanitarian actors. There is an interest in increasing this direct funding, but some of the barriers include administrative capacities of the local actors.
- This funding is mostly addressed to humanitarian activities, and institutional strengthening investment is increasing, but still needs to be broadened.
- Very limited funding is multi-annual, or flexible to the local actors needs.
- There is a great advance on pool funds, but the role of the organizations that access this funding still is being labeled as “implementing partners” and not as peer.

3. Partnerships

- Although there is an interest of all types of humanitarian actors to promote direct partnerships with local actors, the conditions for the local actors are not enough to be considered as peer partners, but as “sub contractors” or “implementing partners”.
- There is a need of strengthen dialogue and communication of international and local actors, to jointly analyze better the context and the needs of population in need.
- There is a limitation from humanitarian donors and partners to understand security context in field.
- Significant administrative procedures still limit adequate partnerships.

4. Coordination, Participation and Visibility:

- There are strong coordination mechanisms in a national and local levels for humanitarian actors.
- Nevertheless, some local actors (including governmental actors) state that these mechanisms are not accessible to all.
- Also, there are also some limitations on the visibility provided in communication pieces and reports of the local actor, and in the involvement of local actors in the formulation and evaluation on local interventions, as well as in the administrative procedures they have to comply.
- Colombian Government through its Cooperation Agencies are promoting mechanism to promote local funding and institutional capacities’ strengthening, but the local humanitarian actors perceive the efforts could be stronger.



RECOMMENDATIONS

- An important way to promote the implementation of Localization Commitments in Colombia, is to guarantee different levels of actors (especially local and community actors) are aware, and involved with the localization topic, on its importance and committed to their implementation. Further training, discussions and events should be guaranteed to make it happen in all levels and with all type of actors.
- Partnerships with local actors need to guarantee more equal conditions and labeling as peer partners.
- Communication, visibility to local actors and common dialogue need to be strengthened, as well as common implementation of formulation, and evaluation processes in all the phases involved in a partnership.
- Financing to institutional strengthening should be increased, but also flexible multi-year financing, covering indirect costs and the changing needs of the local actors.
- Coordination mechanisms should be accessible to different actors, in a national and local level, including local governments and community owned and based organizations.
- Planning mechanisms promoted by the government and humanitarian architecture should better include local partners, and Government information on Cooperation should be accessible to local and community actors.
- Security issues in Colombia should be receiving a higher priority. Common responsibilities, common evaluation, and inclusion of security strengthening should be part of every partnership with local actors.
- Investment should be increased in terms of social innovation.