



WORLD HUMANITARIAN SUMMIT

REGIONAL CONSULTATION • Europe and Others • Budapest, 3-4 February 2015

Optional template for inputs from stakeholder consultation¹

Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe

Please send to: EOG@whsummit.org

Practical information

<p>Name of meeting: International conference on Changing Patterns of Humanitarian Aid – Putting it Back on its Feet? The role of local empowerment through international partnerships</p> <p>How can the World Humanitarian Summit process empower local actors?</p>	<p>Date(s) and location: Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe Berlin, Germany 18.09.2014</p>
<p>Countries represented: Germany, UK, Switzerland, India, Austria, Belgium, Kenia, Ethiopia, Colombia, Haiti, Philippines, USA</p>	<p>Number and types of participants: <i>(for example Total 13: 6 civil society organization representatives, 7 academics...)</i> Total: 110 Partner organizations: 10 German Federal Office: 2 ACT (Aprodev) and ACT Members (including DKH both from HQ and from Offices abroad): 54 Bread for the World: 7 Consultants: 2 Diaconia Germany (Social branch): 2 German NGO: 15 European NGO: 2 HAP: 1 German and Swiss “Politicians”: 5 Press: 2 UNHCR: 1 UNOCHA: 1 University: 3 Venro (German humanitarian NGO network): 2 Voice: 1</p>
<p>Contact details of meeting organizer: Daniela Simm Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe daniela.simm@diakonie-katastrophenhilfe.de</p> <p>Contact details of sender of this input: Daniela Simm</p>	<p>WHS themes discussed: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Humanitarian effectiveness <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reducing vulnerability and managing risk <input type="checkbox"/> Transformation through innovation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Serving the needs of people in conflict</p> <p>Other themes discussed (please specify): Partnership and local empowerment were the</p>

¹ This template is designed for stakeholders familiar with the humanitarian field, e.g. civil society, humanitarian organizations and donors. Not designed for discussions with affected communities. Stakeholders are of course welcome to send inputs in any format.



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main focus of the conference – therefore the WHS themes were discussed in a cross-cutting and not specific way. In the German Consultations for the European Consultation of the WHS-process, results of this conference were presented and there the four WHS topics were discussed from the perspective of local partnerships.

1. Background to the consultation

- What were the objectives of this consultation?
The conference aims at clarifying how humanitarian organisations can work towards an increasing empowerment of local actors in disaster prone and/or affected countries
 - Raising the awareness of the political problem and the inherent challenges and opportunities
 - Exploring concepts and strategies how to strengthen local capacities (political, professional, administrative, and logistic) before, during and after disaster in a medium and long-term perspective
 - Discussing conditions and criteria of partnership that respect local organisations as equals and empowers them and of adjusting humanitarian aid more consistently to such cooperation
 - Suggesting concrete ways forward in ‘empowering partnerships’ in aid programs and in advocacy

Three main questions guide the whole conference:

1) What is local empowerment?

- What are the main issues to be considered?
- What should be empowered? (Local NGOs, CBO, civil society organisations close to civil protection..., civil society)?
- How do we go beyond capacity building of local actors?
- How has the international debate evolved – ex. from Code of Conduct to Core Humanitarian Standards?

2) What are the roles and expectations towards local Partners?

- Diversity of local partners in the humanitarian aid (CBO, NGO, local authorities, sector ministries, churches)
- Stock taking concerning the current / future need and the current role of local actors
- Role of civil protection, local authorities, coordination bodies etc., volunteers, ACT fora, churches?
- How and where and who defines the goals?
- Who is deciding about partnerships?

3) What can be expected from international partnerships?

- What are the expectations of local partners towards an international humanitarian NGO, the international humanitarian system (UN, Red Cross etc.)?
- What should be changed?
- How important are the humanitarian principles in the definition and role perception of an international partnership?
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- Why are the stakeholders consulted important to the overall regional consultation process?
Because they link humanitarian perspectives from the Global North with the Global South and contribute from a diversity of perspectives and experiences.



- What was the methodology of the consultation? (Please attach list of discussion questions, background documents and/or surveys used.)

Panel and general discussions (see programme attached)

Here the main questions of the panels

Panel I: Local Empowerment and Cooperation with State Actors and International Actors in Large-scale Natural Disasters

How important is local empowerment and how can local structures and affected population be empowered (opportunities, risks, limitations) in a humanitarian aid setting?

- What is the importance of humanitarian principles in the response to in natural disasters in a changing world (mid-income countries like the Philippines)?
- What are the different expectations and roles of state actors, UN and national and international NGOs from the very disaster moment, rehabilitation and development?
- Have international actors become more open and sensitive towards local needs, interests and actors?
- Why are humanitarian NGOs needed? Should humanitarian aid not be provided by the Government?
- How could partnerships between local humanitarian NGOs and international humanitarian actors contribute to the empowerment of the affected civil society and the adequate cooperation with state actors?
- How can local structures and affected population move to the centre of international and national coordination?
- Who assumes responsibilities in Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)?
- Which risks and opportunities do humanitarian (local and international) NGOs face when increasing cooperation with public actors?
- What is the role/importance of DRR and Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development (LRRD) in this perspective?

Panel II: Empowerment through International Quality and Certification Processes

How can international processes on quality and certification lead to an improvement of humanitarian aid and how can they be used for empowerment of local actors?

- Role and challenges/limits for local actors?
- Role of international partnerships in this process?
- What are opportunities and risks arising from the actual process to joint standards and verifications/certification?
- How much quality is needed and achievable, if empowerment of local actors/civil society)? Or vice versa – does one exclude the other?

Panel III: Local Empowerment and Principled Humanitarian Aid in Armed Conflicts

How important and possible is empowerment in the context of principled humanitarian aid in armed conflicts and how can we achieve it?

- What is the importance of humanitarian principles in the response to armed conflicts in a changing world?
- Is effective life saving by neutral external actors not more than enough to wish?
- Does humanitarian protection need stronger international presence?
- How humanitarian protection can be provided by local or international actors?
- Which empowerment opportunities are we missing in these contexts?
- Are local actors only an instrument where foreigners are too insecure or have no access?
- How do new players act regarding partnership and empowerment?
- What is the specific role of faith based actors?
- How can an interreligious dialogue (LWF, Islamic Relief) lead to “principled” aid in disasters?



- How can local empowerment be achieved?

Panel IV: Relief by Local Humanitarian Organisations versus Provision by International Humanitarian Actors

How effective are humanitarian actors with different approaches (self implementation by international actors and implementation by local actors) and how are they dealing with the empowerment question?

- Which role does access play, are local partners only used if they have more access?
- Are international actors ready to be coordinated by local actors?
- Does capacity building need empowerment?
- Should and can international aid be sustainable if it comes in only as a case-by-case response?
- Are local actors in general more accepted and more accountable to people in need?
- How important is more direct funding to Southern actors? How strong is the competition for funding?

Consequences

- What are the main findings with regard to the three main questions (local empowerment, local organisations and international partnerships) of the conference and of the panels?
- What implications would empowerment of local organizations have on the humanitarian system?.
- What consequences for programming, planning and lobby/advocacy (including but limited to World Humanitarian Summit)?

2. Summary and main outcomes (across themes)

- What were the highlights, key messages and specific proposals from this stakeholder consultation that the regional consultation should consider?

Recommendations to the World Humanitarian Summit Process

1. Reaffirm the Principles of Partnership and extend them to all kinds of partnerships in the “extended” humanitarian system (between UN-agencies, international, national and local humanitarian organisations, affected communities and governments).
2. Reaffirm globally the humanitarian principles of humanitarian assistance as well as international humanitarian law, so that actors and sectors interfering in humanitarian assistance adhere to a commonly developed and agreed standard and cooperation mechanism that does include local organisations as well as international actors.
3. Commit governments to expand space for civil society in disaster/crisis prone and affected countries, so that empowerment of humanitarian actors and local communities can effectively lead to an improved resilience and capacity of local communities and population.
4. Advocate and coordinate that the summits and global events (like the World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, the Post 2015/Sustainable Development Goals Conference, the UNFCCC Conferences of Parties) in the upcoming months take proactively into account the humanitarian challenges and context (not only vice-versa).



3. Outcomes and recommendations specific to the WHS themes

HUMANITARIAN EFFECTIVENESS

Panel II: Empowerment through International Quality and Certification Processes – outcome in bullet points

Once the core humanitarian standards are agreed upon, certification procedures should be eased

Why is certification an option? Get better funding, global approaches, and profit for every organization, chance if global players would commit.

No standard should disempower – how to include grassroots’ organisations/CBOs? How to structure dialogue between governments, donors and NGOs?

Are iNGOs empowering their partners or are they afraid to loose their own power?

The quality and certification process has to:

- Be field based and not head office driven
- Be credible
- Be affordable also for local NGOs
- Not increase administrative burden
- Take into consideration the role of governments
- Define the core humanitarian standards, but also which of the technical standards (HAP, Sphere...) will remain
- Link to UN/European standards and reporting
- Include also man-made disasters

REDUCING VULNERABILITY AND MANAGING RISK

Panel I: Local Empowerment and Cooperation with State Actors and International Actors in Large-scale Natural Disasters – outcome in bullet points

- Partnership needs to have a ‘purpose’ of working together and not only instrumentally to obtain funding. It includes responsibilities on both sides.
- There is a need to differentiate between capacity building and empowerment, but also giving these actors a voice towards their governments and international actors. The national and local NGOs must be able to communicate, be listened too and make decisions.
- Importance of volunteers in disaster response, local networks are the first responders – Cash for work initiatives can contradict this approach.
- There is a need for capacity building not only of national and local NGOs but also of UN staff and iNGO staff to have a better cross cultural communication, openness and dialogue.
- There has to be coherence between the national policies and the international approach in the moment of a disaster, so that national and local NGOs do not feel ‘confused’ or disempowered. On the other side, capacity building to local government on humanitarian assistance and preparedness/prevention is required

TRANSFORMATION THROUGH INNOVATION



SERVING THE NEEDS OF PEOPLE IN CONFLICT

Panel III: Local Empowerment and Principled Humanitarian Aid in Armed Conflicts – outcome in bullet points

In armed conflict the application of humanitarian principles is crucial. Acceptance from (also armed) actors and local population is built on the fact that humanitarian assistance has no interest, is life-saving and protects people.

To gain access to the local population trust is required – trust is built on long term relationships and local presence is essential. This contrasts with short-term funding for protracted crisis.

Particularly in long protracted conflicts, both delivery or assistance and protection are required. Thus allowing a basic condition for the population to also be ‘empowered’ ... in order to not fall back again and again into the vulnerability.

Access is a problem for all humanitarian actors.

New actors/donors, like the Turkish government, do not necessarily build on the same values and principles for the delivery of humanitarian assistance – they have to understand the value/requirement of accountability, humanitarian principles and standards, needs assessment and profiling of the affected population. Space for civil society (humanitarian actors) is limited.

Empowerment of local affected population and CBOs is a mean for delivering adequate humanitarian assistance, based on dialogue and consultation on needs and ways of working. In protracted crisis there is a chance to establish partnerships and empower local structures.

Use the word empowerment in a careful way – international agencies (iNGOs and UN) are not in the condition to give power to the population.

Local partners are the bridge between international agencies and the local population.

CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES – Main focus of the conference

Local empowerment

Per definition, empowerment refers to promoting actions as well as strategies leading to an increase in autonomy and self-determination for people, communities and local actors (here in disaster response) and enabling them to defend their interests and rights in a self-determined way.

Empowerment is not only a process of gaining or re-establishing power, but also the spiritual/pastoral and psychosocial support and encouragement of powerless people and communities, to overcome their sense of powerlessness and dependency – thereby enabling them to acknowledge and use their own resources and options.

Empowerment means uncovering and valuing existing potentials and assets and encouraging people to develop their opportunities, make decisions and re-establish their freedom of choice, as well as an autonomous, self-determined lifestyle.

Moreover, social and societal empowerment addresses those, who have been excluded from decision-making processes through – for example – discrimination based on disability, ethnicity, religion, or gender.

Participants of the September conference agreed that empowerment of local communities and actors is important for adequate humanitarian assistance. It can be achieved by enabling communities and local actors to formulate their needs, be listened to, take part in decision making processes as well as in agreeing in ways of working with their governments and humanitarian actors.



In protracted crises and continuously disaster prone/affected countries, it is necessary to cooperate with local communities and actors in a mid and long-term perspective, so there is a chance for them to become empowered and to empower themselves, and for increasing the response, protection and preparedness capacity and hence increase their resilience. In sudden onset disasters, when neither national NGOs nor the international system reach the affected communities in the first two days, Community Based Organizations and other non registered networks play a crucial role in the first response toward communities. Empowerment for these cases includes the establishment or strengthening of community organisation, local networks and volunteers in disaster response.

Conference participants observed that in many disaster prone and affected countries the space for civil society is shrinking: governments apply increasing censorship and inequitable legislation for NGOs (both national and international). Empowerment of the local population and local actors is hence not always desired by governments. Humanitarian assistance that empowers local organisations and the local population will only be possible if civil society were to dispose of the required legal, political and security conditions.

Another observation at the September conference was that empowerment of especially vulnerable/affected segments of the population may contradict humanitarian principles, mainly in an armed conflict situation where part of the most vulnerable/affected might be considered by one war party as part of the conflict, or where the cultural system excludes part of the most vulnerable population from decision making processes. Therefore, context and conflict analysis is a crucial part of every humanitarian action - prevailing the humanitarian imperative and principles - so that in given cases local empowerment may be considered only in development work.

Finally, it has been concluded that in the World Humanitarian Summit process, the voice of affected and at risk populations has to be heard and an inclusive process (dialogue between the communities, international and local humanitarian actors as well as governments) should be ensured.

Partnership - local actors

A wide range of local actors exists in humanitarian assistance – local government and sectorial government agencies, national humanitarian NGOs, the military, private sector, community-based organisations or committees, networks, volunteers... - in every emergency/crisis context, a thorough mapping of actors has to be done, so that complementarity in action can be achieved.

Partnership has been defined within the Principles of Partnership (Global Humanitarian Platform 2007) between UN-agencies and non-UN humanitarian organisations as comprising equality, transparency, a result-oriented approach, responsibility and complementarity. Many international humanitarian NGOs and networks adhere to these principles and gear their cooperation with local partners towards these principles.

But the September conference made clear that from a faith-based perspective, partnership also implies sharing the need, the suffering, the joy, and the resources with local members, bringing about and lifting the potential of local partners and of the affected people, enabling them to walk their own way during and after a crisis.

Partnership in Humanitarian Assistance was therefore seen as reciprocal support and mutual choice: to give and receive money, knowledge, experiences, skills, capacity and share the



same vision. Partnership needs to have a ‘purpose’ of working together rather than only instrumentally being there to obtain funding. It includes responsibilities on both sides.

There was consensus among participants of the conference that local partners are crucial for humanitarian assistance, since in many cases they are (with the affected community) the first responders, have access to the population at their disposal and are often considered as being the bridge between the international humanitarian response (agencies) and the local population.

It was perceived that local partners face several challenges in humanitarian assistance:

- There is a lack of knowledge of the international humanitarian system and coordination mechanisms as well as access to those.
- Partnership means that assistance is not “conditioned”, but requires regular consultation, coordination and joined planning.
- The international humanitarian coordination system is sometimes contradictory to national/governmental legislation and programmes.
- There is an underfunding of capacity building and organisational development of local partners as well as for preparedness, resilience and rehabilitation of livelihoods in a mid-term and long-term perspective and for the first response in case of an emergency (“bridge budget”).
- Technical and administrative standards have been defined by international organisations/agencies and most local partners have not been involved in the discussion about standards, quality and verification. The current standards cannot be easily followed by small, sometimes unexperienced, local actors, and often apply better to natural disasters than armed conflict situations.
- There is shrinking space for civil society participation, governments and humanitarian actors treat civil society organisations as contractors and not as equal partners.

At the same time, international humanitarian organisations still experience challenges with local partnerships:

- When local partners do not adhere to humanitarian principles and standards (this is mainly a challenge in armed conflict situations).
- When local partners lack capacity for an adequate response in emergency situations (and there is no time to strengthen them beforehand).
- When or if humanitarian assistance is not covered by a partners’ mandate or when they have not sufficient experience at their disposal.
- When also national NGOs do often not reach and provide humanitarian assistance to communities within the first 2 days of an emergency.

The globally agreed Principles of Partnership have to be reinforced, operationalised and interpreted in every single context.



Expectation towards international partnerships

The international humanitarian system has to continue its reform, by improving access for local actors, install a bottom-up approach and take the voice of the affected population into consideration.

International humanitarian assistance has to abide by the humanitarian principles, as local governments and actors would resist accepting humanitarian actors if doubts existed about having a political or other agenda beyond the principled humanitarian assistance. Trust is the base of partnership, it is built on a common language, shares the same – humanitarian – principles and promotes/realises principled action on the ground.

International humanitarian actors should respect national rules and regulations of the host country. In case of disaster, coherence between national policies and the international humanitarian approach is vital, so that national and local NGOs do not feel ‘confused’ or disempowered.

There is a need for capacity building not only of national and local NGOs but also for UN and iNGO staff to gain a better cross cultural understanding, and intensify the dialogue between these groups.

International partners should contribute added value: funding is important, but also expertise, support, approaches, and in armed conflict protection is important.

In some countries/conflicts (such as Syria, Iraq) the absence of a common understanding of rights prevails; the humanitarian principles, and the Code of Conduct have to be interpreted according to the cultural context, therefore the dialogue between faith-based humanitarian organisations (Christian, Muslim...) in this regard would be a good chance for mutual learning and empowering of local organisations.

Internationally multi-annual finance mechanisms have to be developed which include capacity building and organisational development initiatives of local partners, e.g. foresee budget lines to increase preparedness and resilience and support empowerment of local civil society actors.

4. Any other recommendations, key facts, inputs, further consultations planned

Diakonie Katastrophenilfe will continue the partner dialogue and strengthening/develop further its conceptual, methodological and operational approach in partnerships with local actors and affected communities. In case of further interesting outcomes for the WHs-process, DKH will submit ideas through the remaining time of the consultation process.

Within the ACT Alliance DKH contributes to the participation in the WHS process.



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5. Direct quotes from participants²

See consolidated feedback form attached.

As it was not consulted with the participants, list with names of participants will not be provided, neither photos.

6. Suggested attachments

<input type="checkbox"/> List of participants	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Meeting agenda
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> List of facilitators, speakers, support staff	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> List of background documents
<input type="checkbox"/> Discussion questions, surveys used	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Full post-meeting report

Please e-mail this doc to: EOG@whsummit.org (by **10 Jan. 2015** if possible, to assimilate it in the background analysis for Budapest)

and thank you for cooperating in making humanitarian action better!

² To be used in reports and WHS communication. Please ensure participant agreement for using their quotes.