

The ToGETHER Programme: LOCALISATION IN PRACTICE

CASE STUDY



Background:

The ToGETHER Programme, initiated in March 2020 and currently scheduled to run until April 2024, is a collaborative initiative dedicated to advancing the localisation of humanitarian action. Operating in nine countries, including Bangladesh, Colombia, DR Congo, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Myanmar, Pakistan, and Somalia, the program involves 38 local humanitarian partners and four international partners from Germany. With funding exceeding 17 million Euros from the German Federal Foreign Office, the program aims to enhance the institutional and operational capacities of participating partners, advocate for local leadership in the humanitarian system, and facilitate cross-border learning and exchange.

The primary goal of the ToGETHER Programme is to support local humanitarian actors in taking a leading role in the delivery of effective, timely, accountable, and principled humanitarian actions in their respective countries.

ToGETHER realises this through **four main components**:

- Promotion of Local leadership
- Capacity Strengthening and Sharing
- Flexible Funding for Humanitarian

Operations and Innovation (HOIFA)

- Exchange, Learning, and Localisation Advocacy

Governance:

Programme governance is structured to reflect the leading role of local actors. Country Steering Committees (CSC) at the national level are composed of senior management staff from each local partner. They set strategic directions, monitor actions, and approve Humanitarian Operation and Innovation Facility (HOIFA) funding. The Programme Advisory Committee at the international level is composed of representatives from each Country Steering Committee and international partners. It oversees overarching activities and strategic adjustments.

At programme start, local partners conducted a **capacity self-assessment** and developed **joint capacity strengthening plans** based on their priorities. Plans are jointly executed through tailored activities like training, workshops, peer learning, and mentoring.

The HOIFA provides **unearmarked, flexible funding** for emergency response activities and innovative humanitarian approaches. The funding

distribution is assessed and approved by Country Steering Committees at country and the Program Advisory Committee at global level.

Exchange, Learning, and Advocacy activities promote reflection, dialogue, and evidence-based learning at national, regional, and international levels. Continuous dialogue among involved stakeholders as well as other local and international organisations, donors, authorities, and relevant networks, is organised at all levels through different formats, such as workshops and conferences.

Localisation advocacy:

Through the program, local actors are emerging as ambassadors and experts of localisation. They jointly advocate for localisation agenda priorities such as **equitable partnership, flexible funding, and visibility**.

In Colombia, partners established a collaborative workspace, leading to the first Congress of Localised Humanitarian Action in 2022. Its second edition expanded to Latin America and the Caribbean.

Programme participants have actively voiced their insights and demands as featured speakers in prominent international workshops and conferences, including the European Humanitarian Forum and the Grand Bargain Annual Meeting.

Being invited to international events and included in coordination mechanisms has not only improved local actors' visibility but also their reputation and recognition as experts in their fields. Local partners confirmed that advocating, networking, and partnering has also significantly increased and impacted on their access to coordination and funding.

Coordination and influence:

Program partners' representation in humanitarian country coordination increased, senior representatives of their organisations have joined the Humanitarian Country Team or, different UN Clusters or were appointed members of the Board of Reviewers for the country's Humanitarian Fund.

In the DR Congo, ToGETHER partners initiated the creation of a single coordinating body for local and national NGOs, the National Council of Humanitarian and Development Forums in the DRC (CONAFOHD). Over the past two

years, CONAFOHD garnered influence and representation across all levels of humanitarian coordination. The forum has enabled local actors to guide decision-making, culminating in the inaugural national symposium on localisation in October 2023. Outcomes include CONAFOHD's acknowledgment as the voice of national NGOs and the adoption of a joint Localisation Manifesto, defining a joint vision for localisation.

In Indonesia, the program initiated the LokaNusa localisation forum, hosting monthly discussions on various topics. Within five months, over 50 civil society organisations joined the network, forming strong partnerships with key agencies and promoting information sharing and local actor participation in humanitarian coordination.

Flexible Funding and Organisational:

Local partners further benefit through the availability of flexible, unearmarked funding for innovative approaches and crisis response through HOIFA, receive infrastructural and technical support for organisational development and have access to platforms for knowledge exchange & learning. Active local partners not only increased their visibility on the international humanitarian stage over the past four years, but they also paved the way for long-term strategic partnerships and enhanced funding opportunities with a diversified partner and donor network.

In a nutshell

The ToGETHER Programme is an example of a robust framework for localisation in practice. Its unique governance structure, capacity strengthening approach, flexible funding mechanism and emphasis on eye-level collaboration between local and international partners are key to the program's success. This success is marked by the cultivation of trusting, sustainable partnerships, increased funding and policy influence for local actors and ultimately an improved effectiveness and appropriateness of humanitarian action through locally led and people-centred responses.