

Lesson learned and challenges : Localization campaign in Rohingya response

# GOING AGAINST THE TIDE: HOLDING ACCOUNTABILITY FROM DEMAND SIDE

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# Background and the process- 1

- Local activist leaders have been exposed to global discourse on Development Effectiveness, Principle of Partnership, World Humanitarian Summit, Charter 4 Change and Grand Bargain, supported and with blessing of some international leaders.
- Country wide campaign partly supported by Oxfam ELNHA. Moral support from C4C leaders in London and by some international and regional networks
- Rohingya response taken as a laboratory.
- Formed CCNF during September 2017 with local and national NGOs including local CSOs.
- Deliberately have not taken any donor support for long run.
- Hectic lobby and campaign for easing process for project and expatriate visa process in the beginning of Rohingya influx August 2017. Maintain positive engagement with government and international agencies.



# Background and the process- 2



## Two prong approach;

- Mobilization in grass root for greater acceptance for the Refugees among the local communities and
- Bringing all stakeholders in dialogue for releasing tensions, mitigating communication gaps and introducing possible path of localization.

Donor supported NGO Platform came in the middle of 2018, we have joined there with aim to have dialogue with INGOs and not to create extra tension, to reinforce local effort rather than for replacement

# Key Principles in our Campaign



- positive engagement but without abandoning critical perspective, e.g., we support most of the UN position, we first held rallies to bring UNHCR in fore front, but we insist and continue in demanding aid transparency of them,
- inclusiveness and complementarity, e.g., we believe in need of UN and INGOs but only monitoring and technical assistance, Local NGOs CSOs and Local Government should be in leadership,
- relation with local government and media (in three level i.e., in local, national and international level),
- Individual level lobbying to INGOs, UN and donor agency leaders.

# Lesson learned - 1

- GB field demonstration mission have had a great influence.
- Have been able to created space due to the participatory attitude of Top UN leader in country.
- Extra ordinary support from local, national and international media, especially from the “The New Humanitarian”, C4C London Group, some international leaders, and A4EP.
- Extra ordinary support from local government leaders.
- Have been continuous and consistence as because in our key leader’s organization we have solid own funding base.
- Knowledge and creative communication based campaign.
- Strong research based with scientific social research methodology.



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## Shift Rohingyas from tourist town

*Cox's Bazar civil society members call upon govt amid ecological, economical concerns*



Rohingya refugees, who crossed the Myanmar border two days ago, walk after they received permission from the Bangladesh Army to continue on to the refugee camps in Cox's Bazar yesterday. Photo: Reuters/AFP

Our Correspondent, Cox's Bazar

## Lesson learned - 2

- Strong challenge from non-signatories with counter narratives on anti-localization.
- Strong resistance from national staff of international agencies and miss-interpretation of localization.
- Worries on losing power in fact which is a false premise, rather they will be benefitted in rooting sustainability and accountability.
- Do not want to come with countering the argument rather than try to brand us as “Aggressive and Alarming”.
- Most of the expatriate hardly have any knowledge on localization discourse, it is the reason they consider us as “Fighting for own territory”. They are in false premise “as we are NGO we are brother and sister”.



# Lesson learned - 3

- But we need unity and diversity with different role as we have common civil society space.
- Dilemma between “Business vs and Localization” model.
- Dilemma between capacity “Development and Convergence” model
- Most of the agencies have lack of complain response and policy on protecting whistle blower. Little of accountability frame work among agencies.
- Some of the agency started propaganda against us, started threats officially, cancelling partnership without any reasons, with a pre-text to wipe out us from Rohingya response.



# Achievement so far-1

- Have been succeeded to give memorandum to Mr Mark Ioo Cook, UNSG and UN Security Council in the beginning but the opportunity have shrink down now.
- 25 % allocation for host communities bringing the flights in notice of the agencies.
- Grand Bargain field mission in Cox's Bazar and its progressive and most appropriate recommendations.
- Space for local and national NGO representative in in Strategic Executive Group (SEG) formed by UN RC, reform in HCTT, but no space in ISCG or in Cox's Bazar level coordination.
- Donor group in Dhaka given us space collectively to listen our concern amidst opposition from others.





# Achievement so far-2

- UNRC and SEG have formed localization task force and entrusted to give report in next three months.
- Succeeded to facilitate peaceful co-existence so far in bringing local government, local media and local opinions leaders in the dialogue level and engaging them different campaign promoting human and refugee rights.
- Nationwide campaign in collaboration with national level media, during 20<sup>th</sup> June world refugee day both in 2018 and 2019 on “Think Alternative, Not only on Repatriation”.
- Development of “Charter of Accountability and Charter of Expectations” through country wide campaign and participatory process of discussion, where 700 local NGOs CSOs have had participated, and declared in a national conference held on 6<sup>th</sup> July 2019, initiated an institution to continue the mobilization Bangladesh CSO NGO Coordination Process ([www.bd-cso-ngo.net](http://www.bd-cso-ngo.net))



# Future and challenges-1

- Localization and Whole of Society Approach (Worse) is indispensable not only to meet dwindling situation of aid but also to meet long term protracted crisis and facilitate human dignity of the Rohingya refugee.
- International agencies who are the signatories should conduct national level orientation on GB, PoP and Development effectiveness discourse to their staff in national level and should come up with their own approach of localization in public and have dialogue with local localization activists. It will minimize gaps in understanding and also maximize team spirit as a part of common NGO and CSO sector.
- Need to redefine the Power, dilemma in “Facilitation vs commanding “approach, international agencies have to be re-oriented on this.
- Partnership Policy based on criteria, long term vision, implementation with free from conflict of interest of the funding agency staff, practice in transparently and competitively.



# Future and challenges-2

- Introduction of Bangla in Coxsbazar and national level among all international agencies.
- Commitment for localization by policy and planning should be from Headquarters level.
- UN Role should be as ANIMATOR, not as referee or as competitor, they are in best place to do this.
- Strong role from INGO leaders in country level especially from the C4C signatories.
- Simplified localized complain response mechanism and whistle blowing policy.
- Environment recovery and NGO pooled fund to promote local CSO NGOs in Cox's Bazar as the district has low growth of NGO CSOs in history and also in development index.
- Salary frame work (not the salary structure), revising the present high trend, ethical recruitment policy for all.



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## Put pressure on international community on Rohingya repatriation, demand civil society, NGOs



Rohingya refugees in a camp near Bangladesh's border with Myanmar. Photo: Afp/munir Uz Zaman

Civil Society members and NGOs today demanded the government should continue pressure on international community to repatriate Rohingya refugees to Myanmar.

Addressing at a human chain in front of Jatiya Press Club, they urged government to give Rohingya refugees human dignity and to pressure the international community to ensure trial of Myanmar Army in international court.

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