



Title:

From rhetoric to action: local actors driving the participation revolution

Sponsors and Organizers:

Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, Ground Truth Solutions, International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (IFRC)

Date and Time: Tuesday, 19 June 2018, 18:00 – 19:15

Place: Conference Room E, UN Secretariat, New York

This is one of the side-events to be convened during the ECOSOC Humanitarian Affairs Segment, in keeping with this year's theme: *Restoring humanity, respecting human dignity and leaving no one behind: working together to reduce people's humanitarian need, risk and vulnerability.*

Background and objectives

At the onset of most crises and disasters, affected communities are themselves first responders. However, as a crisis evolves, and international humanitarian actors come in to respond, local actors and communities are too often left behind. But when local actors and communities are not in the driving seat, humanitarian action cannot truly restore humanity, respect dignity and reduce need.

In 2016, the High-Level Panel on Humanitarian Financing called for more support to national first responders and for a 'participation revolution'—ensuring that affected people are at the centre of all responses and drive the way humanitarian interventions are made. The World Humanitarian Summit and the Grand Bargain which followed, underlined this as a priority to restore humanity, respect dignity and help reduce humanitarian needs. Two years on, ECOSOC HAS offers an important opportunity to take stock of progress made to date. Notably, how the localization and participation revolution workstreams of the Grand Bargain promote and sustain local capacity to achieve the goals of the 2030 Agenda.

To bridge the development and humanitarian divide, local actors and communities must be in the driving seat of humanitarian action. But for this to happen, the humanitarian sector must move from rhetoric to practical actions.

Drawing from practical experience by different actors, the side-event will propose and discuss concrete solutions for local actors to drive community engagement in humanitarian responses.

Discussion points

- How can we leverage the unique advantage of local actors to engage communities affected by crises more effectively?

- What have we learned from local organizations about how best to increase their capacity and improve relations with the international players? What do they like most / least about the status quo, and how to optimize arrangements?
- How can we empower local actors in becoming the main agents for seeking feedback from communities and ensuring that the wider humanitarian community adapt its aid delivery accordingly?
- What are the best practices and examples of concrete solutions for local actors to drive community engagement in humanitarian responses?
- What are some of the challenges faced by donors, international actors and local actors towards providing more support and funding tools to local and national responders?

Intended outcomes/conclusions/recommendations

The event will outline progresses made to date and existing challenges which need to be addressed. Key recommendations will be made by each panellist, and recommendations from the audience will be captured. Outcomes will be shared with the Grand Bargain workstreams and a blog co-written by Ground Truth and IFRC will disseminate the recommendations to a wider audience.

Format

No formal presentations will be made by panellists. Instead, each panellist will be asked to make two main points on how to ensure that local actors drive the participation revolution (one solution and one current challenge to be addressed), based on their experience and expertise. An interactive discussion will then ensue to delve further in the issues presented, with active contributions from the audience.

Chair and moderator:

- **Chair:** Jemilah Mahmood, Under-Secretary General, IFRC
- **Moderator:** Philippe Besson, Head, Multilateral Division, Swiss Agency for Development & Cooperation

Panel composition:

- *MD Belal Hossain, Bangladesh Red Crescent Society*
- *Sikander Khan, Deputy Director, Office of Emergency Programmes, UNICEF*
- *Sittie Nurdayhannah Mohamad, Al-Mujadilah Development Foundation, Philippines*
- *Nick Van Praag, Ground Truth Solutions*

Background Material

[Mainstreaming Accountability to Affected People: An Operational Study, Kenya Red Cross/CDA](#)

[How to Manage and Establish a Systematic Community Feedback System, A guide by IFRC/Ground Truth Solutions](#)

[Tracking Migrant Perception in Italy, A case study by IFRC/Ground Truth Solutions](#)

Contact

For more information, please contact:

Philippe Besson, Head, Multilateral Division, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), philippe.besson@eda.admin.ch, Phone: +41 58 480 16 04, Mobile: +41 79 515 40 45

Alexandra Sicotte-Lévesque, Manager, Community Engagement, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Mobile: +41 79 724 2046, Email: alexandra.sicottelevesque@ifrc.org