Localisation Partner Survey - March 2022
Summary of responses

Executive Summary
Following on from a series of Partner Listening Forums across five different countries in 2019/2020, and the development of Integral’s Localisation Commitments, the Integral Programme Group (IPG) is keen to understand how Partners' experience of working with international organisations, and in particular with Integral Members, has changed. 41 Partners from ten different countries completed an online survey on the five Integral Commitments as well as additional questions on decolonisation of aid.

While responses to the survey show there was variation across Partners, overall the picture is of increasing power and decision making being held at a local level. Responses to disasters by Partners tended to primarily be led by staff who lived in the affected area, and Partners reported that affected communities locally coordinated the response, acting as locally as possible. Their experience of the role of international organisations was primarily one of support - whether that be funding, or filling skills and capacity gaps.

Support for capacity strengthening appears to have increased over the last two years, and responses from Partners suggest that this is not a donor driven process. Over a third of Partners felt that this focused mainly on needs they identified themselves with an additional half saying it was a mix of both them and their international partner identifying needs. Around 10% reported that the capacity strengthening had been driven by the need to use a donor framework or meet compliance requirements, and care should be taken to ensure that this is framed around doing things well.

I think it is right to be "Partnership" rather than "Donor & Beneficiary" because we partner to address issues in community

(Partner in India)

The area where Partners reported the least change over the last two years was around Commitment 3 - bringing Partner voices and capacities into international fora, coordination systems and to donors. However the majority of Partners reported that they felt able to participate and have their perspectives heard. When it comes to disaster responses a third of Partners reported that their Integral Member(s) had helped them coordinate their response with clusters/government/other responders. While the results are encouraging, there doesn’t seem to have been any significant increase in activity in this area by Integral Members since the adoption of the Integral Localisation Commitments. What further action could Members take to strengthen the voice of Partners in international fora?

Less change over the last two years was also reported in the area of transparent information sharing and shared decision making. For Commitment 4 we saw that Integral Members rated significantly less well than international partners generally. Only 24% of Partners said they had complete involvement in decision making with their Integral Member(s), compared with 37% feeling they had this with their international partners in general. This is an area for improvement.
Partners feel on the whole that programme risks are well shared, and that they receive good support from Members to meet compliance needs. Partners appreciated that compliance measures contribute to effective programming and practice, but many felt that these compliance measures were imposed by donors. A number stated a desire for more opportunities to discuss compliance requirements with their Integral Member. Consideration should be given to increasing opportunities for dialogue and how well compliance requirements are linked to the local context and values.

Partners generally do feel able to both provide and receive feedback, but their ideas aren’t always felt to be received and acted upon by their Integral Member(s). Only 41% said their Integral Member(s) explained why and how they made decisions that affected their organisation. This links closely to the CHS commitments (4: communication, participation and feedback and 5: complaints) and Members should consider how they could ensure improvements around accountability.

Partners reported a mixed picture around core costs - with more than half reporting flexibility and negotiation on core costs. There are limitations on what can be covered for around 40% of Partners, and 20% reported hard limits on core costs. While the majority of Partners did not see any significant change in either accountability or core costs in their partnership with Integral Members over the last two years, some did identify changes towards more flexibility.

Integral Members have identified Decolonisation of Aid as a key topic to explore together. Six questions were added to the end of the Partner survey to gather information on how power and attitudes are perceived in relationships with Integral Members. While fewer than half the respondents were familiar with the term ‘decolonisation of aid’, the responses show an encouraging picture where Partners feel they do hold power. The balance of power was felt to be held by Partners most often in three areas - recruitment and staffing, attitudes and values, and in funding and deciding how funds are used. However a significant minority (20%) felt that power on decisions about funding was held more often by international donors.

A number of areas for consideration have been highlighted in this report. Time will be spent in the April 2022 IPG meetings looking at some of these questions.

### Areas for further consideration by Integral Members

**General**
- What steps can we take as Integral to ensure regular discussion on localisation with all Partners?
- What does localisation mean in practice for the different levels in an international NGO?
- COVID has been identified as a factor in driving some of the changes Partners have seen in the last two years. How can we maintain those positive changes in a post-COVID era?

**Commitment 2**
- Where capacity strengthening has been driven by compliance requirements, how can Members ensure that this is truly focused on ‘doing things well’?
Commitment 3

- While we have an encouraging picture of representation in international fora, coordination systems and with donors, how can we ensure that this fully reflects the voice and capacities of local Partners, and isn’t more influenced by the needs of their international partners?
- With more than two thirds of Partners identifying no change in approach to Commitment 3 by their Integral Member since the adoption of our Localisation Commitments, what further action could Members take to strengthen Partners’ voices in international discussions?

Commitment 4

- How can we improve sharing decision making with Partners throughout the project cycle? What areas are key for Integral Members to focus on?

Commitment 5

- How can we ensure that Partners have adequate opportunities to discuss compliance together with their Integral Member, and that compliance requirements are well linked to the local context and values?
- How can Members improve communication to and from Partners, ensuring that ideas are received and acted upon, and Members more clearly explain decisions that affect their Partners.

Decolonisation of Aid

- Given the lack of familiarity among Partners, is there an opportunity for Integral Members to develop a short briefing on decolonisation of aid for use and discussion with their Partners?

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