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# GLOBAL SUMMARY REPORT OF THE INTERNAL MID-TERM EVALUATION

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**Volume 1: Internal mid-term evaluation of the ToGETHER  
programme**

***On behalf of the ToGETHER programme's participating countries, local partner organizations, international partner organizations and the Programme Management Unit.***

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## Abbreviations

<b>EQ</b>	Evaluation Question
<b>CPU</b>	Country Project Unit
<b>CS</b>	Capacity Strengthening
<b>CSC</b>	Country Steering Committee
<b>GCPC</b>	Global Conference Preparation Committee
<b>HOIFA</b>	Humanitarian Operations and Innovations Facility
<b>LHP</b>	Local Humanitarian Partner
<b>PAC</b>	Programme Advisory Committee
<b>PFP</b>	Project Focal Point
<b>PMU</b>	Programme Management Unit
<b>PRM</b>	Peer Review Mechanism
<b>RPC</b>	Regional Programme Coordinator
<b>WG</b>	Working Group

## Executive summary

The “Towards Greater Effectiveness and Timeliness in Humanitarian Emergency Response” Programme, in short ToGETHER, promotes the localization of humanitarian action. It combines the efforts of 40 local and national humanitarian organizations from Bangladesh, Colombia, DR Congo, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Myanmar, Pakistan and Somalia, along with four international organizations from Germany (Caritas Germany, Deutsche Welthungerhilfe, Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe and Malteser International). The 40 Local Humanitarian Partners (LHPs) and the four international consortium partners create a space for complementary partnerships and promote local partners’ roles as leading actors in their countries’ humanitarian responses, putting localization - understood as transformation - into practice.

During their second meeting, the Programme Advisory Committee (PAC), composed of representatives from LHPs of all eight countries and the international consortium partners, decided to assess the programme’s progress in an internal evaluation. They wanted to find out whether the ToGETHER programme was meeting its objectives, generating the desired outputs and implementing its activities. They wanted to assess the programme’s quality and find out about obstacles and gaps, learnings and best practices. The internal evaluation was conducted halfway through the programme’s duration, with the intention to identify any needs for adjustments and changes for the second half of the running time of ToGETHER.

The primary users of the evaluation will be the PAC and Country Steering Committees (CSCs). They will implement the findings and recommendations on a strategic programme level and will decide on what to adopt and how. The operating units of the programme, such as the CPUs, CSCs, PMU, PFPs and RPCs will in turn implement the recommendations and decisions of the PAC in order to make changes in their support and services structure, whereas LHPs and especially CSC members will use it to influence decision making at CSCs and PAC level. Overall, after analysing the recommendations and results of the evaluation, all stakeholders will be able to adapt their own behaviour and the way they interact with each other.

Secondary users could be designers of similar future or follow-up programmes and stakeholders that might use the findings and recommendations for their advocacy work on localization. These stakeholders could also apply the learnings and best practices to their work and share them with their networks and the communities that are involved in the programme, which might even directly influence the implementation of projects in the respective countries. Additional secondary users could be communities that are working with the programme, the donor – the German Federal Foreign Office (AA), relevant international networks, such as NEAR or other country-specific networks, or even the broader public interested in localization.

This internal midterm evaluation was realised between August and mid-October 2022 and uses a dual approach: a.) country-specific evaluations and b.) an evaluation of global components/aspects. For the country-specific evaluations, the logframe was used as a reference framework in order to gain an overall picture of the progress of the country’s projects. This meant that countries decided on a selection of logframe elements and related evaluation questions (EQs) individually. On the global level, the call for EQs resulted in eight such questions, which – clustered according to various topics – also make up the structure of this report as follows: 1. PAC and LHPs’ local leader- and ownership (three questions), 2.

Programme structure, 3. Working groups (WG), 4. Capacity Strengthening (CS), 5. HOIFA, and 6. The ToGETHER programme's frameworks and tools.

Concerning the methodology, the country-level evaluations were guided by the CSCs, and coordinated by the CPU MEAL staff. They included document reviews, self-assessments (reviews), discussions and peer exchanges in workshops using different evaluation tools and field visits, Focus Group Discussions and Key Informant Interviews with HOIFA participants. For the global level, data sets from quantitative and qualitative surveys and semi-structured interviews were combined. A virtual and mostly quantitative LHP survey was conducted inviting two members per organization in order to have a representative evaluation from LHPs on the different EQs. All LHP staff who are not also PAC representatives were eligible to participate in the survey, and in most cases, a CSC representative and/or Project Focal Person (PFP) took part as well. Overall, the participation per country and organization was very high: 90% of L/NA participated with at least one member, and all countries were represented in the survey. Additionally, qualitative PAC member interviews were held on Teams/Zoom in which eight out of twelve participated. Two additional virtual surveys were conducted, one qualitative survey with the advocacy working group on its experience and know-how on advocacy and localization topics, and a mostly quantitative survey with the communications and again the advocacy working group about responding to the EQs that concern the Working Groups.

The ToGETHER mid-term evaluation, with its surveys, interviews and online survey forums, mostly revealed was a high degree of engagement and ownership within the programme, a mostly functioning communications and programme structure and much appreciated tools, such as the HOIFA or the capacity strengthening component.

Recommendations for improvements focused on additional and extensive capacity building to, for example, qualify more LHPs to not only participate in international events, but to also enable them to become confident advocates for the central issue of the programme – localization.

For the HOIFA, one of the central components of the programme, especially the LHPs agreed that they would like the approval process and release of funding to be simplified. The participating countries implementing HOIFA projects also recommend to extend the budget and duration of individual programmes, and to make HOIFA more flexible.

Other recommendations centre around structural changes to empower local and national actors. For example, LHPs should have a stronger influence on issues and decisions discussed and taken at the PAC level, or responsibilities and tasks among PAC representatives might be reconsidered, with a stronger involvement of L/NA and a reduced role for INGO members.

Curiously, there seems to be no ToGETHER-specific definition of how the programme sees 'localization,' and what it stands for, with for example no indicator for it in the logframe. For a new phase of the programme, one should therefore consider a debate on ToGETHER's own definition of 'localization' and/or introduce a clear indicator for it in the logframe.

# 1. PROGRAMME BACKGROUND AND EVALUATION CONTEXT

## 1.1 Programme background

The humanitarian system is looking for answers and solutions to relieve the immense and constantly growing humanitarian needs.

As part of local civil society, local actors are usually the first responders after a shock. They are present, have access and the necessary local knowledge to provide quick, effective, and adequate assistance to the affected populations. Despite fulfilling this crucial role, in many cases international humanitarian organizations still treat them as mere implementers of their strategic and operational decisions.

There needs to be a shift towards supporting local and national actors in their operational preparedness and response capacity, providing organizational and institutional resources and improving their access to flexible funding and relevant humanitarian coordination mechanisms. Equally important is a shift in roles the different actors assume within the humanitarian system.

The “Towards Greater Effectiveness and Timeliness in Humanitarian Emergency Response” Programme, in short ToGETHER, promotes the localization of humanitarian action. It combines the efforts of 40 local and national humanitarian organizations from Bangladesh, Colombia, DR Congo, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Myanmar, Pakistan and Somalia, along with four international organizations from Germany (Caritas Germany, Deutsche Welthungerhilfe, Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe and Malteser International).

The 40 Local Humanitarian Partners (LHPs) and the four international consortium partners create a space for complementary partnerships and promote local partners’ roles as leading actors in their countries’ humanitarian responses, putting localization - understood as transformation - into practice.

ToGETHER wants to move beyond organizational boundaries, allowing for all participating local and international partners to jointly develop approaches to humanitarian challenges. The programme offers opportunities for the international consortium partners to learn from local partners and to build lasting partnerships based on trust and respect. The programme and its success thus depend on the active cooperation of all stakeholders in a spirit of mutual engagement.

## 1.2 Context of the evaluation

The internal evaluation is a crucial component of the ToGETHER programme's Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning (MEAL) framework. Initially, during the program's design phase, two evaluations were outlined: one at mid-term and another at the program's conclusion. Given the extensive participation of Local Humanitarian Partners (LHPs) and the significant budget allocated for evaluations, the Programme Advisory Committee (PAC) was tasked with determining the necessity and timing of internal versus external evaluations, and reallocating any surplus budget to alternative activities. During their second meeting on

December 13-14, 2021, the PAC concluded that an internal mid-term evaluation would be conducted, with an external evaluation planned for the program's conclusion.

The concept for the internal mid-term evaluation was coordinated globally, guiding the countries on the evaluation process and reporting structure, and involving all countries in the formulation of the global evaluation questions and purpose.

The internal evaluation process in the eight countries and on the global level was realised between August and mid-October 2022. Results of the country evaluations fed into the preparation of the ToGETHER Global Conference of October 2022. The global evaluation results were presented during this international conference and offered food for thought for further formats and exchanges during and after the conference.

## 2. INTRODUCTION

### 2.1 Purpose of the evaluation and users of the evaluation

The purpose of this internal mid-term evaluation is to

- Assess the progress of the programme objectives and related outputs and activities.
- Assess the general programme performance and quality and identify potential gaps and obstacles.
- Provide data and evidence to help adjust the programme measures and approaches and provide recommendations, learnings and best practices for the remaining programme duration.

Overall, the users of the evaluation will be the various stakeholders of the programme who will benefit from the findings and recommendations that the evaluation generated. They will use them to change and transform and make progress towards a more effective, updated humanitarian system.

More specifically, the primary users will be:

- The PAC and CSCs who could use the findings and recommendations on a strategic programme level and take decisions on how to adapt the measures, mechanisms, tools and approaches. They could take decisions on budgets, policies, rules and regulations and adapt their behaviour and the way they interact with other stakeholders, including the donors.
- The operational units of the programme, such as the CPUs, PMU, or RPCs could use the findings and recommendations and the decisions of the PAC to change their support and service structure.
- The LHPs and especially the PFPs could use the findings and recommendations to influence and guide decision making at CSCs and PAC level and to adapt their behaviour and interaction with other programme stakeholders.

Secondary users will be:

- Designers of similar future or follow-up programmes who might use the findings and recommendations when designing processes.
- Certain stakeholders could use the findings and recommendations for their advocacy work on localization. They could also apply the learnings and best practices to their work and share them with their networks and different fora they are involved in.
- Communities that are involved in the programme, which, based on the country-specific evaluation results, might influence the implementation of projects in the respective countries.
- The donor of the programme, the German Federal Foreign Office (AA).

- Relevant international networks such as NEAR or other country-specific networks.
- The broader public interested in localization.

## 2.2 Content/scope of the evaluation

The internal midterm evaluation uses a dual approach: There are a.) country-specific evaluations and b.) an evaluation of global components/aspects. This seemed to be necessary as on the one hand the individual country projects need specific evaluation questions and criteria tailored to the country's specific implementation status and focus. On a global level on the other hand, structural and leadership issues or initiatives such as the Peer Review Mechanism, P-FIM, advocacy activities and MEAL play an important role in the ToGETHER programme and therefore deserved to be evaluated.

During the preparation phase, there were discussions about whether, at the country level, the evaluation should focus only on specific components such as capacity strengthening and exchange/advocacy/HOIFA, or whether it should produce results for all programme components. The logframe became the overall reference framework, allowing country-specific selections of logframe elements (outcome/outputs/indicators), however, and the development of related evaluation questions (EQs)<sup>1</sup>. The intention of following country-specific principles in this evaluation was not so much to compare each countries' progress but to gain evidence-based and helpful insights per country in order to be able to learn and to adapt projects accordingly during the remaining period of the programme.

Because no common EQ and criteria were defined, a direct comparison between countries was not possible. Still, integrating the most important country-specific findings and recommendations into this synthesis report is useful and complements the learnings from all the participating countries.

On the global level, the call for EQs resulted in eight global evaluation questions, which were clustered according to various topics.

Neither part of the evaluation strictly follows the structure of the OECD/DAC, but integrates its criteria into the assessment of the logframe elements and EQs whenever relevant. Since the LHPs – the most important stakeholders – did not have the chance to influence the programme's design phase, the evaluation did not assess the relevance of stakeholder involvement during this phase. It became clear, however, that any new phase or follow-up programme should approach this design phase differently.

For the various countries within the ToGETHER programme, the mid-term evaluation methodology was tailored to comprehensively assess project performance, identify achievements and challenges, and gain insights into the overall progress. In Bangladesh, the evaluation followed OECD/DAC criteria, with a specific emphasis on output indicators 1 & 3. This approach incorporates self-assessments, report reviews, and workshops to ensure a well-rounded evaluation process. For Colombia, there was a mixed approach, incorporating DAC criteria to focus on achievements, difficulties and challenges, but also aiming to highlight successes and providing recommendations that can be put into action.

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<sup>1</sup> For the country-specific scope and EQs, please refer to the country evaluation reports in Annex B.

In the Democratic Republic of Congo, the mid-term evaluation focused on humanitarian coordination, emergency preparedness and the usage of capacities acquired through HOIFA projects. The primary goal was to reassess the programme, delving into the underlying implementation issues to better understand its progress. Ethiopia's evaluation encompassed five implementing partners, with a strong emphasis on strategic priorities, MEAL systems, a Compliant Response Mechanism, and HOIFA. The participatory approach involved key stakeholders and beneficiaries for a more inclusive evaluation process.

In Indonesia, the mid-term evaluation used OECD/DAC criteria to meticulously review project performance. The evaluation not only facilitated learning within ToGETHER but also helped to make adjustments to the project approaches for optimal implementation. The CPU and CSC's joint organization ensured a comprehensive and collaborative evaluation. Also In Myanmar, the CPU organized the evaluation, together with LHPs, focusing on key aspects such as localization, identifying gaps, and revising the project implementation plan. Pakistan's evaluation was geared towards selecting outcomes and indicators, for which data was collected from September to October 2022.

For the Somalia ToGETHER programme, the internal mid-term evaluation spanned from July 2021 to September 2022. Its primary objective was to assess the effectiveness of interventions, analyze the application of skills acquired from HOIFA projects, and evaluate the outcomes of capacity-building training initiatives. Led by the CPU team, this evaluation actively engaged local humanitarian partners and DKH staff via a Zoom meeting held in October 2022. The overarching goal was to gain a thorough understanding of the project's advancement and its real-world impact.

Please find details at: <https://cloud.together.webmo.info/s/L9kZjFW8QfNFNzp>

## 2.3 Evaluation questions and criteria

As described above, the global EQs were generated through a broad call to which many countries responded with interesting questions. There was a strong interest to capture all EQs that truly address global topics, and they were formulated in a way that did not exclude any of the various submitted aspects. With respect of the submitters of the questions, the original formulations were changed as little as possible.

The EQs revolve around the main evaluation aspects/criteria:

- ➔ Local leadership / localization
- ➔ The effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, and sustainability of the programme or selected programme components
- ➔ The concept of capacity strengthening

The eight global level EQs were organized in the following thematic clusters:

### **PAC and LHPs' local leader- and ownership**

1. Is the PAC an effective committee to decide on strategic priorities, representing all interests and needs of the LHPs in-country; and is the PAC to be involved in operational processes or should other programme units take on this responsibility?

2. How can the PAC and other global ToGETHER initiatives be capacitated to promote localization among international donors and networks? Are PAC members already working in collaboration with other potential donors on the localization agenda?
3. To what extent does the set-up and concept of the ToGETHER programme allow LHPs to own processes, to understand and utilise opportunities and to take decisions?

### **Programme structure**

4. Does the overall structure and general set-up of the ToGETHER programme, with its units and committees (PAC, PMU, RPC, CPU, CSC), number of countries and number of consortia partners foster local leadership? Is it the adequate structure to reach the global objective of the programme, and does it make the programme effective, efficient and sustainable? What kind of changes would improve the actual situation or might be considered for a follow-up phase of the programme?

### **Working groups (WG)**

5. How relevant, effective and efficient are the various global WG and what kind of adjustments, if any, are necessary to improve their results, outputs and strategic and technical guidance?

### **Capacity strengthening (CS)**

6. To what extent do the LHPs own the concept of capacity strengthening and exchange (incl. its capacity-self assessment and CS-plans workstreams) and what are the benefits and/or challenges related to the concept?

### **HOIFA**

7. How relevant, effective, efficient and sustainable is the HOIFA concept (both nationally and globally), and does the learning aspect have an impact beyond the targeted partner organizations?

### **Global ToGETHER frameworks and tools**

8. To what extent have globally guided processes for the development and use of ToGETHER frameworks and tools (Webmo, global MEAL system, CRM policy, Peer Review Mechanism, Localization Framework, Advocacy Strategies etc.) been relevant and effective in their application and was the global level support sufficient in terms of quality and quantity?

## 3. METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Country-specific methodologies

The country level evaluations were guided by the CSCs and coordinated by the MEAL coordinators (some with the support of consultants). Methodologies included document reviews, self-assessment (reviews), discussions and peer exchanges in workshops using different evaluation tools and field visits or Focus Group Discussions and Key Informant Interviews with HOIFA participants.<sup>2</sup>

### 3.2 Methodology for global EQs

For the global level, data sets from quantitative and qualitative surveys and semi-structured interviews were combined. The following table provides an overview on how the data collection was realised:

Format name	Data subject/sample
A. Quantitative survey LHPs	<u>Two representatives per organization</u> (CSC representatives - in contrast to PAC members, PFPs, or other involved members)
B. Semi-structured interviews PAC	PAC representatives
C. Qualitative survey Advocacy Working Group members	Advocacy Working Group members
D. Quantitative survey WGs	WG members

For further orientation on the surveys, interviews and EQs, please refer to the ToR,<sup>3</sup> which include the questionnaires and interview guidelines for the global level internal evaluation.

<sup>2</sup> For the detailed methodologies please refer to the country evaluation reports in Annex B.

<sup>3</sup> Global mid-term evaluation ToR Annex C.

## 4. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

### 4.1 Findings of the global internal evaluation

As described in chapter 3, the responses to the global level EQs were collected by conducting three online surveys with LHP representatives, the Advocacy Working Group, members of other Working Groups (communication) or other organizational committees.

Additionally, in a Zoom call, the PAC members were asked about their opinions and recommendations regarding the EQs.

Please refer to the following table to see the respective participation in the surveys and interviews:

Method & Data subject	Contents	# of participants and % representation
<b>LHP survey</b> (Quantitative, digital)	All	36 respondents (of 75 invited) → 46%
		35 Local/National Partner Organisations (of 39 invited) → 90%
		8 Countries → 100%
<b>PAC interview</b> (Qualitative – Zoom/Teams call)	All	8 (of 12 PAC representatives) → 66%
<b>Advocacy Working group survey</b> (Qualitative, digital)	Localization	6
<b>Working Group survey</b> (Communication, Advocacy) (Quantitative, digital)	Working groups	13

Based on the above mentioned selection of participants for the survey, each LHP member organization (currently 39, as one organization was suspended from the ToGETHER programme at the time of the survey) was asked to provide two contacts. Three organizations could only name one representative to take part in the survey, so that 75 individuals were invited, of which 36 responded to the survey questions, representing 48% of the invited individuals. In terms of overall representation of the LHPs (39), 35 LHPs participated in the survey, representing 90% of the organizations. All eight countries were represented in the survey.

Below, the most important findings are summarized, structured according to the EQ clusters. The results from the three online surveys and the PAC interviews are captured under each cluster. Please refer to the annexes for the complete evaluation results.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> PPT on LHP survey results, MS Forms survey summary for Advocacy, Communications Working Group and GCPC, Minutes of PAC interviews.

### 4.1.1 PAC and LHPs' local leader- and ownership

**EQ 1:** Is the PAC an effective committee to decide on strategic priorities, representing all interests and needs of the LHPs in-country; and is the PAC to be involved in operational processes or should other programme units take on this responsibility?

The communication flow between the PAC, country structures and LHPs was the first important aspect treated in relation to this EQ. Overall, survey participants felt well informed about “what PAC members are deciding and discussing in their regular and ad-hoc meetings.” This is in line with the results from the qualitative PAC interviews stating that communication between PAC and country levels is good. The regular formats to inform LHPs about most of the PAC discussions and decisions are the regular CSC meetings, the CSC representatives, any other member of each organization and also the CPU. Only six out of 36 survey participants reported that they accessed their information by participating in the PAC meetings as observers or by going through the meeting minutes and recordings. PAC members confirmed that even though they regularly circulate minutes from their meetings, only very few follow-up discussions have taken place.

Regarding the communication *among* PAC representatives, the qualitative interviews with its members revealed some significant information: they regretted that communication among PAC members was limited to the regular meetings with only very little communication taking place outside of those meetings.

The second important aspect of the first EQ had to do with whether the PAC picked up on LHPs' interests. Here, 64% of the LHP survey participants responded that they had too little power, or no power at all, to influence discussions and decisions on the PAC level.

Nonetheless, regarding strategic country priorities, LHP survey participants were mostly satisfied with their PAC representative's selection and presentation of their strategic priorities at the regular PAC meetings.

The seemingly contradictory evaluations regarding the lack of power to influence the PAC's discussions and decisions, yet being satisfied with the strategic priorities, might relate to the following: At the time of the survey, four PAC meetings had taken place, in which the PAC's mode of operation, the global HOIFA and several other topics were mainly discussed in relation to country update presentations. On a global level, strategic priorities had not yet been defined at this point, but some discussions had taken place in the PAC meetings. Only a few of the PAC representatives had already presented their country-specific priorities. The relatively low score regarding having minimal power to influence PAC decisions and discussions may be disconnected from the subject of strategic priorities. Another explanation could be that the strategic priorities were not perceived as significant drivers in the program at the time of the survey.

In the PAC interviews, members admitted that the topic of strategic priorities, including their preparation on country level and presentation in the PAC, was realised very late. This process may therefore have been a bit disconnected from the very important capacity self-assessments that could have influenced the development of the strategic priorities.

Another element of the EQ focused on the PAC members' responsibilities, the committee's mode of operation and its function, which one third of the LHP survey participants stated was

unclear to them. The PAC representatives confirmed this lack of clarity and stated that they approve of the PAC concept, but see how its operationalization and responsibility distribution might not yet be transparent enough. Overall, however, LHP survey participants had a positive view of the effectiveness of the PAC.

In the qualitative interviews with PAC members, a frequently mentioned topic was the rotation of PAC representatives among the countries' LHPs, which was perceived as inefficient and hampering continuity. What PAC representatives appreciated was having a clear meeting structure with a fixed agenda, but they found that time was often too short.

Some of the international NGO PAC representatives participating in the interviews felt that they became too involved in specific issues such as ToR development and opted, also in light of localization objectives, for leaving this to the L/NA representatives.

**EQ 2:** How can the PAC and other global ToGETHER initiatives be capacitated to promote localization among international donors and networks? Are PAC members already working in collaboration with other potential donors on the localization agenda?

PAC representatives saw a huge potential for the PAC and other global ToGETHER initiatives in participating in further international events, particularly donor events, and in benefiting from INGOs' or L/NAs' networks. PAC representatives and members from the Advocacy WG mentioned the success of the Global Localization Advocacy Mission (GLAM)<sup>5</sup> and participation in other panel discussions as an example. The Advocacy WG survey results further suggest that concrete achievable advocacy goals and a framework/strategy still need to be defined. Their progress needs to regularly be monitored and findings from the advocacy canvas should be disseminated through a workshop with international donors and other networks. In general, the Advocacy WG identified the tools from the advocacy process (context analysis, canvas, action plan) as effective means for bringing localization forward. The Advocacy WG also considers the PAC to play an important role for promoting localization among international donors and networks. They do think, however, that the active participation and engagement of all PAC members is required in order to further enable the PAC's influence in localization. For them to participate in decision-making platforms and to be able to defend their interests, PAC members need to be well-informed and given room to speak.

Some participants in the survey raised the concern that there is still no clear understanding of what 'localization' actually means for the ToGETHER programme. Does it imply full compliance with what was agreed in the Grand Bargain and/or other forms of enhancing, strengthening, and promoting the capacities of local civil society organizations? And/or, as some have recommended, does 'localization' mean a concrete focus on the specific country activities, which were identified in the Advocacy Strategy? Others want to implement what has been agreed on in the 'advocacy demands,' such as equal partnerships, two-way accountability, and capacity sharing.

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<sup>5</sup> GLAM (8th and 9th of November 2021): Online event in which participants connected, interacted and learned from each other. Champions, advocates, and external guests discussed what localization and transformative change in the humanitarian system should look like and what we can do to promote it. For further information see here: [GLAM - together WebMo](#)

**EQ 3:** To what extent does the set-up and concept of the ToGETHER programme allow LHPs to own processes, to understand and utilise opportunities and to take decisions?

The LHP survey posed the question whether LHPs were able to influence and decide global level processes (not limited to PAC), and 53 % of the survey participants answered ‘not at all’ or ‘very little.’ Whenever influence or decision-making did happen, LHP survey participants named the CSC and/or PAC representatives and CPU as main references for this.

The majority of the LHP survey participants greatly appreciated the overall concept of the programme as being able to identify and utilise opportunities, benefiting the organizations and communities.

Ownership of the programme reached a high score in the LHP survey. This seems to contradict the results related to opportunities to influence and decide on global level processes. A hypothesis, which would require further investigation, could be that survey participants did not link the ownership question to global level processes but rather to their country-specific project and its implementation. Global level processes were perhaps not seen as levers of power and influence; instead, it might seem as if the radius where ownership can be exercised was always the country level.

#### **4.1.2 Programme structure**

**EQ 4:** Does the overall structure and general set-up of the ToGETHER programme, with its units and committees (PAC, PMU, RPC, CPU, CSC), number of countries and number of consortia partners foster local leadership? Is it the adequate structure to reach the global objective of the programme, and does it make the programme effective, efficient, and sustainable? What kind of changes would improve the actual situation or might be considered for a follow-up phase of the programme?

The structure of the programme, with the number and selection of participating countries, of the LHPs and the consortium partners, was rated positively. This was confirmed in the PAC interviews, which generally appreciated the ‘good proportion between LHPs and international consortium partners.’

The LHP survey identified the CSC and CPU as the most crucial units for the successful implementation of the programme, ranking them first. Following closely, the PFP and PAC were ranked second, with the PMU placed third. In qualitative interviews, PAC representatives emphasized the significance of the CSCs in preparing for PAC meetings and in decision-making at the PAC level. INGO PAC representatives also acknowledged the central role of the PMU but highlighted its potentially conflicting dual role. They noted that members assume PMU tasks while also serving as regional coordinators for Welthungerhilfe countries, leading to potential conflicts of interest.

The majority of the LHP survey participants found the programme structure to be effective and efficient. However, less than half felt that it enables LHPs to influence the programme’s strategy, to own running processes or to fully participate in operations on the global level. Here, the majority replied with ‘partially.’ Only a small percentage felt that the structure is sustainable, with a large majority perceiving it as at least partially sustainable.

### 4.1.3 Working Groups (WG)

**EQ 5:** How relevant, effective and efficient are the various global WG and what kind of adjustments, if any, are necessary to improve their results, outputs and strategic and technical guidance?

The LHP survey also evaluated the performance of both the Communications and the Advocacy WG regarding the aspects ‘knowledge about what the WG is doing,’ ‘added value of the WG,’ and ‘appreciation of initiatives/technical guidance/workstreams.’ Overall, the groups rated between medium and good performance. At the time of the survey, 69 % of the survey participants were also a WG member. As reasons for not being a member, survey participants named ‘not being aware that participation was possible’ (five answers) or ‘language barriers’ (4 answers). Some comments from the survey referred to an overall ‘not so active participation’ in the WGs but also mentioned their good outcomes and outputs.

Members of the Advocacy WG appreciated their work as effective and (slightly less) efficient. Positive effects were the opportunities to jointly explore advocacy areas and to brainstorm interventions, activities and how to prepare the advocacy strategy. Members stated that they learned from other countries’ approaches and experiences with advocacy initiatives and enjoyed connecting with international or other important networks, receiving their inputs, such as VENRO or NEAR. The Civil Society Academy’s involvement and the survey in July 2022 on WG member commitment were considered as important turning points for more concrete action and engagement. However, there were complaints about the fluctuating participation, which was and continues to be a challenge. One potential reason for this could be the absence of role allocations or work plans, or perhaps these were not adequately shared with all participants. Having clear role allocations and work plans could assist in enhancing the monitoring of effectiveness within the program.

Members of the Communications Working Group (WG) assessed their work as moderately effective and moderately efficient. The WG is valued as a significant platform for learning and exchanging communication ideas. Key outputs such as a communications strategy, plan, and various materials (either completed or in progress) were regarded as essential achievements of the WG. However, there were disappointments regarding fluctuating participation levels and the lack of finalized outputs. Additionally, the WG did not take ownership of producing the ToGETHER video, which was viewed as a missed opportunity. The frequency of meetings seemed to outweigh the actual output, which may explain the moderate assessment of the WG's efficiency and effectiveness.

### 4.1.4 Capacity Strengthening (CS)

**EQ 6:** To what extent do the LHPs own the concept of capacity strengthening and exchange (incl. its capacity-self assessment and CS-plans workstreams) and what are the benefits and/or challenges related to the concept?

Participating LHPs evaluated the CS component – including the capacity self-assessment – as highly relevant. To them, the overall process took place at eye-level, and a large majority perceived themselves as owners of the CS-process, including the CS-plan. The LHPs’ own

engagement in the two steps of the capacity self-assessment, and the development of the CS-plan were also rated very positively. The LHPs fully appreciated the overall benefits of the CS component for their organizations. An only slightly less positive rating was given to the coordination and support of the CPU, PMU and RPC (regarding the implementation of the capacity self-assessment and development of the CS-plan).

Some challenges that the LHP survey participants addressed were: implementation delays occurring because of (national) administrative procedures, time and budget insufficiencies, contractual barriers, security and inflation aspects, and identifying key actions. The qualified trainings and trainers were mentioned positively, although sometimes too many trainings were scheduled in one month.

#### 4.1.5 HOIFA

**EQ 7:** How relevant, effective, efficient and sustainable is the HOIFA concept (both nationally and globally), and does the learning aspect have an impact beyond the targeted partner organizations?

The LHPs rated the HOIFA component as highly relevant, efficient, sustainable and effective. They also strongly affirmed the statement ‘communities we assist and other stakeholders also benefit from the learning and innovation aspect of the HOIFA component.’

Challenges mentioned in the LHP survey revolved around the difficulties in identifying innovations for emergencies, funding limitations in general and funding for project management, especially regarding global HOIFA. There were complaints about long approval processes, delayed funds releases and unclear approval processes. The lack of skilled staff, quality monitoring of the interventions and too short project durations were also listed as challenges.

The PAC representatives confirmed the value of the HOIFA component, calling it ‘the most practical part of the programme.’ However, they mentioned similar challenges as the LHPs in their survey. They confirmed that the approval processes and funds releases for both the country- and global HOIFA funding were too long, funds in general too small and the innovation aspect not clear enough.

#### 4.1.6 Global ToGETHER frameworks and tools

**EQ 8:** To what extent have globally guided processes for the development and use of ToGETHER frameworks and tools (Webmo, global MEAL system, CRM policy, Peer Review Mechanism, Localization Framework, Advocacy Strategy etc.) been relevant and effective in their application and was the global level support sufficient in terms of quality and quantity?

The first item evaluated for this section was the Peer Review Mechanism (PRM), and 95% of the LHP survey participants were aware of its existence. According to the survey, the PRM is highly relevant for local/national organizations and overall was considered to have been effective in its first application. Global level support (PMU and consultants) was rated as good

in terms of quality, and slightly less so in terms of quantity. This positive assessment of the mechanism was confirmed in the PAC representatives' interviews.

Another tool/framework that the PMU introduced was the Localization Framework. Again, most (95%) of the LHP survey participants knew at least a little bit about the tool. They considered it as highly relevant for the local/national organizations while the effectiveness was not rated as positively, but still good. Important to note here is that, in order to be able to make use of the tool, 88% of the LHP survey participants would have appreciated more support from the PMU and/or CPU.

A service provider commissioned globally was involved in developing advocacy strategies for eight countries and one global strategy. Most survey participants (81%) were familiar with these strategies. Relevance, effectiveness, and support from the Programme Management Unit (PMU) and consultants received high ratings on average. The Advocacy Working Group (WG) appreciated the advocacy strategy process, including the use of tools such as context analysis, canvas, and action plans, as well as the facilitation provided by the Civil Society Academy at both national and global levels. The Civil Society Academy played a key role in creating a concise and comprehensive advocacy document tailored to each country's context, providing essential guidance for the localization programme and advocacy efforts.

P-FIM was a central element in the LHP survey as well as in the PAC interviews, be it as part of the HOIFA components or as a general approach on how to exchange and interact with communities. The method was appreciated as being innovative, at eye-level, people-centred and also an appropriate method for emergency situations.

## **4.2 Conclusions and recommendations from the global internal evaluation**

### **4.2.1 PAC and LHPs' local leader- and ownership**

While the communication and information exchange between the Programme Advisory Committee (PAC) and other stakeholders, especially the Local Humanitarian Partners (LHPs), were generally rated as satisfactory at the organizational level, some shortcomings in the flow, utilization, and dissemination of information were identified. The survey findings highlighted that the CSCs are seen as the primary interface for information flow globally, particularly facilitating communication between the PAC and the LHPs.

Recommendations regarding the information flow from the PAC towards other stakeholders focused mostly on reaching out more to LHPs, on a better consolidation and distribution of information and minutes at and from the CSC level, appropriate formats for information dissemination and a better handover between rotating PAC members.

On one hand, Local Humanitarian Partners (LHPs) express a sense of ownership over the programme and appreciate the opportunities it provides. However, they also desire greater influence and involvement in decision-making processes at the global level. Interestingly, in some instances, they do not perceive these processes as significant, yet they still seek to participate more actively in them.

Given these contradictory results, it might make sense to have another survey – anonymous this time - on how LHPs would like to exercise more power on the PAC level, how the PAC

should receive feedback and how to integrate these findings into the PAC's mode of operation. It might also be necessary to review the CSC- or other relevant formats. There should also be a follow-up on strategic priorities and how LHPs want them to evolve.

As the quantitative and qualitative evaluation results concluded in a need to clarify the PAC's responsibilities and mode of operation, it seems necessary to verify whether the existing PAC ToR are clear enough. Do they need to be reviewed or is this simply a problem of communication, information dissemination or any other challenge regarding access to documents and information. Since the international PAC representatives recommended to distinguish between PAC representatives of countries/L/NA and representatives of INGOs, one could consider reviewing the responsibilities and tasks among PAC representatives.

Especially the PAC members want more ad-hoc or regular exchanges among themselves, outside of the regular PAC meetings. They would also like to have the PMU and RPCs participating in the CSC meetings from time to time, in order to better understand national contexts and challenges. PAC members also recommended to keep the current PAC meeting modalities but to consider in-depth meetings in between the regular meetings (optionally also regional meetings). In the interviews, PAC members also recommended that all country representatives equally and actively participate in the PAC meetings. Regarding the role of the PAC, the LHP survey recommended that the committee should be a space for learning together, formulating the programme's work agenda according to the needs of LHPs in each country, and to take decisions on the programme and on problem issues.

By organizing more international events, PAC representatives see a potential for bringing the localization agenda forward. These events should include the participation of institutional donors and should let L/NA benefit from the INGOs' networks. Becoming part of international networks will also strengthen the L/NA's skills and abilities. Advocacy WG members recommended to create local and international synergies for their WG. By encouraging donors to make spaces available in programme preparation, offering direct funding and supervision to strengthen partner organizations and to raise their policy standards, the Advocacy WG sees a potential to strengthen localization. The group also recommended crowdfunding as well as building trust among NGOs and civil society stakeholders. There are individuals and companies who are willing to make huge humanitarian aid contributions but do not yet see NGOs as reliable channels of delivering aid. The Advocacy WG also suggested to identify localization best practices at country level and to share these in reports, videos and on social media. Members of the WG also recommend to identify the challenges and risks to localization (e.g. INGOs registering as locals on country level) and advocate on these issues as well as to further strengthen the localization campaign at country levels.

Pushing the localization agenda means that all PAC members must be actively involved and well-informed, in order to be able to defend their interests. It might therefore be useful to analyse potential barriers to acquiring capacities that hinder PAC members, and to find ways to overcome them. One Advocacy WG survey participant also suggested to have an orientation and study on the current situation of localization, its successes and challenges. The GMI study was supposed to fulfil this role, but difficulties in its implementation kept it from being distributed broadly and on time. Perhaps one could go back to this study and redistribute it. Another suggestion was to have an Advocacy WG in each country for local advocacy activities, which should, however, be integrated into the global ToGETHER programme and not remain isolated at country levels.

While the path ahead appears clear at the country level, there remains some ambiguity globally regarding the precise definition of localization, which the program aims to prioritize. To address this, it's suggested that a clear indicator relating to localization and advocacy be incorporated into the log frame. Alternatively, the Localization Framework indicator could be integrated into the Advocacy canvas, ensuring alignment with progress both at the country and global levels, as highlighted in the WG survey.

#### **4.2.2 Programme structure**

Overall, the current programme structure is very much appreciated and considered to be efficient, effective and in line with the planned objectives. Due to its different time zone and some language barriers, Colombia found it difficult to participate in global online meetings and other exchanges. When planning a new programme phase, one could consider including at least two countries with similar time zones and the same language.

#### **4.2.3 Working Groups (WG)**

Participation in the WGs, or even the mere awareness of the opportunities that such a participation offers, could be better.

If responsibility, engagement, and operational methods are enhanced, the Advocacy WG believes it can significantly contribute to advancing the localization agenda. The group suggests establishing clear policies and guiding principles, including assigning responsibilities and roles based on existing skills and capacities, implementing accountability measures, and establishing pathways towards greater sustainability. Developing and adhering to a specific work plan is deemed necessary, along with ongoing capacity building for advocacy to effectively address the complexity of the issues. It's possible that a dedicated and knowledgeable group of facilitators could enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the Advocacy WG, or an assessment could determine if the current mode of self-organization and rotating facilitation is more effective. The latter approach offers the advantage of accessing different skills and levels of commitment within the group. To address absenteeism during meetings, a mechanism for replacements should be established, and joint planning instruments should be utilized by the groups.

When WG participants are unable to join a meeting, a mechanism for replacements should be in place. Another tool that groups should use are joint planning instruments.

The Advocacy WG also recommends to establish local country Advocacy WGs with clear mechanisms that contribute to and link up with the work of the global Advocacy WG, connecting the global targets with the country WGs and their own initiatives.

Recommendations for the Communications WG resemble those for the Advocacy WG: here too, the rotating moderation should be reviewed. The PMU should become more involved as a coordinator or the group needs to find a fully dedicated coordinator elsewhere. The WG should develop clear, purposeful ToR with a work plan including milestones and a monitoring system. Incentives to improve participation could be more capacity support and reminders to participate. In general, communication-related trainings and other capacity strengthening measures should be considered.

The WG survey also allowed for comments on the preparatory group for the international conference (GCPC). As this was a temporary WG, tasked specifically with the preparation of

one event, results are not detailed in this report. They should be reviewed before launching preparations for the next international event, however, as some very relevant data was collected for this group and its work.

#### **4.2.4 Capacity strengthening and exchange**

Since the CS component was evaluated very positively, feedback and monitoring mechanisms should be set up for a better follow up on the realisation of the plans. For future programmes, more time should be allocated to prepare this component (identifying the right tool for the capacity self-assessment, conducting the self-assessment, identifying the CS measures on the individual organizational level and on the country level).

#### **4.2.5 HOIFA**

All evaluation participants very much appreciated the HOIFA component and would like to continue with it. They would like to extend the budget and duration of the individual implementations, however, and would like to have more budget flexibility, also for the project management costs. The scope of the HOIFA component should also be extended, with greater emphasis on inclusion. These recommendations suggest a communication gap with regard to the existing flexibility of the mechanism. A framework for the ToR was suggested for Global HOIFA, which can be adapted to country level requirements. The framework does not limit the individual budget amount per HOIFA project, nor does it stipulate a maximum duration. Furthermore, project management cost can be integrated.

PAC interviewees stated that the approval mechanism for Global HOIFA funds was still too lengthy and should be reviewed. Some would like to permit access to the Global HOIFA before the national HOIFAs are exhausted.

In general, the application and approval process should become easier and the transfer of funds faster. More innovation was requested, which needs to be defined first – what would this innovation look like.

Reviewing the HOIFA component was also suggested, for which one could use a peer exchange and assessment method.

#### **4.2.6 Global ToGETHER frameworks and tools**

Initiatives such as the PRM, the Localization Framework, the Advocacy Strategy and P-FIM exercises all turned out to be highly relevant. Applying the frameworks and tools effectively was also mostly evaluated very positively. After introducing a tool or mechanism, there should be a continual follow-up and support from the global level, the CPU or working group. Initiatives that were closely accompanied showed better results and more continuation than those that were only introduced and then transferred to an autonomous implementation and follow up of the partners/countries. A consultation on the degree of support or accompaniment needed might be helpful whenever a new method, mechanism or tool is launched.

Regarding the general peer exchange component, PAC interviewees recommended to have (more) exchanges between countries. These can be digital but should also occur in the form of visits, e.g. as South-to-South exchanges.

Several recommendations were about continuing with the P-FIM for community exchanges and some suggested using the method systematically to ‘understand context’ when starting or designing a HOIFA project. However, some countries did not yet systematically introduce the P-FIM and therefore might benefit from a review, in order to establish a clearer picture of the benefits of this method, its best practices and lessons learnt.

Overall, the Advocacy Strategy and the support of the Civil Society Academy, with its selection of tools, was appreciated. The process enabled countries to gain a compact and comprehensive working document, tailored to each country’s localization contexts. One suggestion was to consider involving donors in the context analysis process. It was recommended to focus on the concrete action plans now, introducing means for monitoring the effective promotion of localization and to (peer) review and disseminate results (also among international stakeholders and donors).

For the remaining project duration one could abandon the monitoring of the Localization Framework (as an implementation tool) and replace it with the Advocacy Canvas in the logframe and for monitoring purposes.

One PAC representative formulated the overall recommendation and wish that ToGETHER should become more than a programme – ToGETHER should become a *network*, or even better – a *movement*.

### 4.3 Summary table global internal evaluation

Sr. No.	Thematical cluster of EQ	Subtopic	Key findings/ conclusion	Recommendations
1	<b>PAC and LHPs' local leader- and ownership</b>	Communication	Communication from PAC to country and LHP level overall good with some weaknesses regarding dissemination of documentation.  Low communication among PAC members beyond regular PAC meetings.	1.1 Set up a clear communication mechanism for disseminating all PAC relevant documentation through the CSC level to the LHP level. 1.2 Encourage informal and frequent exchanges among PAC members.
2		Representation of LHPs' interests in the PAC	64% of the participants in the LHP survey responded that they did not have any power at all or too little power to influence the discussions and decisions on PAC level. A large majority of the LHP survey participants was rather satisfied with the selection and also the presentation of strategic priorities through the PAC representative.	2. Realise an anonymous survey on how LHPs would like to exercise more power on the PAC level, how to receive feedback from the PAC and integrate these wishes into the mode of operation of the PAC accordingly and, if necessary, CSC or other relevant formats.
3		PAC ToR	The PAC's responsibilities and mode of operation/function are not clear enough to all participants of the evaluation.	3.1 Verify if existing PAC ToR are clear enough and if necessary, review PAC ToR. 3.2 Also, distribute these PAC ToR again and consider a Q&A round by PAC representatives to other LHP participants (for both cases). 3.3 Review responsibilities and tasks among PAC representatives and distinguish between representatives of countries/L/NA and representatives of INGOs. Reduce tasks and involvement of INGOs in favour of L/NA empowerment.
4		Capacitating PAC and other initiatives to bring localization forward	Participation in international events are meaningful measures for capacitating PAC and other initiatives in terms of localization. Process on Advocacy Strategy with Civil Society Academy was an effective kick-off for country-specific advocacy strategies. There is no ToGETHER-specific definition of 'Localization,' and the logframe is missing a clear indicator on localization or advocacy.	4.1 Facilitate more participation of LHPs in international events and further capacitate PAC and other LHP representatives to take part in them. 4.2 Consider a debate on ToGETHER's definition of 'Localization' and/or introduce a clear indicator for localization/advocacy.
5	<b>Programme structure</b>	n/a	Overall, the current programme structure is very much appreciated as it is in line with planned objectives, is efficient and effective.	5. For a new programme it should be considered to have at least two countries in a similar time zone and with the same language to allow peer exchanges and learning among them.
6	<b>Working groups</b>	n/a	WGs have a huge potential for coordinating workstreams, initiatives and processes. The work of the Advocacy and Communications WGs was rated between medium and good regarding effectiveness and efficiency. Weaknesses were identified in equal and active	6.1 Review existing or develop clear ToR for the WGs, including a review of the moderation mode considering a fixed pool of moderators. Develop an action plan with milestones and a monitoring system.

			participation and engagement and missing policy and guiding principles, including responsibilities and role allocations as well as a clear workplan.	6.2 Continuous capacity strengthening regarding the WG topics.
<b>7</b>	<b>Capacity strengthening</b>	n/a	The capacity strengthening component is an overall highly appreciated programme component (relevance, eye-level with INGO, ownership, engagement, coordination and support through INGOs.	7.1 Set up a monitoring mechanism for assessing progress of the realisation of CS-plans. 7.2 For a new programme, more time should be planned for the entire capacity self-assessment and CS-plan process.
<b>8</b>	<b>HOIFA</b>	n/a	The HOIFA component is appreciated as highly relevant, efficient, sustainable and effective. LHPs confirmed that the communities they assist, and other stakeholders, also benefit from the HOIFA component.  Innovation aspect is not clear and only a few HOIFA projects included innovative aspects.  For country and global HOIFA, long approval processes and delays provoke problems for emergency projects. HOIFA funds are too small and not flexible enough.	8.1 Organise a general HOIFA review, introduce a peer exchange and learn from the first programme phase. 8.2 Develop a common understanding of 'innovative' HOIFA projects. 8.3 Review approval process and identify measures to simplify it, also for the release of funds. 8.4 Extend the budget and duration of individual implementations and have more budget flexibility, also regarding project management costs.
<b>9</b>	<b>Global ToGETHER frameworks and tools</b>	Peer Review Mechanism, Localization Framework, Advocacy Strategy, P-FIM	All frameworks/tools are highly appreciated in terms of relevance and effectiveness. For the Localization Framework, a large majority would have liked more support from the PMU and/or CPU for the application of the tool.  The Advocacy Strategy process with its tools (content analysis, canvas, action plan) supported by the Civil Society Academy was a very important approach for ToGETHER's advocacy activities, particularly in terms of concretising country-specific contexts. P-FIM is appreciated for being used in HOIFA projects and other community exchanges.	9.1 Organise reviews for all frameworks/tools to allow peer learning and exchange, and to enable scaling-up. 9.2 For new programmes: during the kick-off of a new framework/tool (and review), clarify the needs for support and accompaniment for the implementation. 9.3 For the remaining project duration: consider abandoning the monitoring of the Localization Framework (as an implementation tool) and replace it with the Advocacy canvas in the logframe and for monitoring purposes. 9.4 Focus on concrete action plans and introduce means of monitoring that demonstrate what an effective promotion of localization looks like; disseminate the results (also among international stakeholders and donors). 9.5 Further mainstream the P-FIM by using it in the HOIFA projects.