STGM

Consultation Meeting Report

"Localization in Türkiye"

From the World Humanitarian Summit to Today

24 May 2022
Ankara

Contents

Abbreviations

ALNAP	Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action
CSDC	Association of Civil Society Development Centre
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DI	Development Initiatives
HAG	Humanitarian Advisory Group
IKGV	Human Resource Development Foundation
LAG	Localisation Advocacy Group
LNHA	Local and National Humanitarian Actors
NEAR	Network for Empowered Aid Response
NRG	National Reference Group
METU	Middle East Technical University
SOHS	State of the Humanitarian System
STL	Support to Life
TMK	Refugee Council of Türkiye
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

About Localisation Advocacy Group

Localisation Advocacy Group (LAG) is an independent and local initiative that works on localisation to support improving humanitarian aid and human rights work in Türkiye.

LAG advocates that humanitarian aid and human rights work should build on local capacity and strengthen the local. It makes recommendations on durable and sustainable local solutions to improve the lives of disaster and conflict affected groups, particularly Syrian refugees in need of international protection by responding to their needs and guaranteeing their fundamental rights and freedoms. LAG works to strengthen local organisations and improve their coordination by advocating for the need of strong local leadership.

To ensure fair and equal collaboration between local organisations and UN agencies, international NGOs and donors, LAG advocates for equal and strategic partnerships as opposed to a subcontracting model. It works to ensure that more funds reach local organisations and affected communities at times of crisis.

 LAG first formed in 2016 with the initiative of Support to Life (STL) and expanded its work with the inclusion of many other local and national civil society organisations. Since 2021, The Civil Society Development Centre (STGM) hosts the group's secretariat.

Members of the Localisation Advocacy Group

- Support to Access Association
- Youth Development and Initiative Association
- Migrant Solidarity Association
- Support to Life (STL)
- Research Centre on Asylum and Migration (IGAM)
- Human Resource Development Foundation (IKGV)
- Women's Solidarity Foundation (KADAV)
- Innovation for Development (I4D)
- KAOS-GL Association
- Red Umbrella Sexual Health and Human Rights Association
- Kırkayak Culture Association
- Global Mind Association
- Mavi Kalem Association
- Maya Foundation
- Menekşe Organization Social Assistance and Solidarity Association (Violet Syria)
- Association for Solidarity with Refugees (Mülteci-DER)
- Refugee Support Association (MUDEM)
- Refugee Rights Türkiye
- Nirengi Association
- Association for Solidarity with Asylum Seekers and Migrants (SGDD/ASAM)
- Association of Civil Society Development Centre (STGM)
- Community Volunteers Foundation (TOG)
- Refugee Council of Türkiye (TMK)
- International Children Rights Ambassadors Association (ICHILD)
- International Blue Crescent Relief and Development Foundation (IBC)
- Vatan Derneği (Watan)
- Yuva Association

Introduction

LAG saw the need to come together with UN Agencies, international NGOs, and donors to create a space for dialogue on how best to promote and operationalize a locally-led humanitarian system in Türkiye and the region. Some progress has been made on the route to localization but much still remains to be done. The LAG brought together the key local and international players of the humanitarian community in a consultation event. The meeting took place in Ankara on 24 May 2022, a date intentionally selected to mark the 6th anniversary of the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) held for the first time in Istanbul in 2016. The Grand Bargain – the most important outcome of the WHS – attempts to institutionalize localization within collectively-set and action-oriented agendas. The 24 May consultation event focused on the Türkiye reflections of the global commitments on localization. This report presents the program and outcomes of this consultation meeting.

This report is prepared by the Civil Society Development Centre (STGM), which has undertaken the secretariat for the Localisation Advocacy Group.

Please send an email to ceren@stgm.org.tr to let us know your opinions or to reach LAG.

About the Meeting

Objectives and Method

On 24 May 2022, the Localisation Advocacy Group (LAG) held a meeting titled "Localisation in Türkiye: From the World Humanitarian Summit to Today" to share the developments and good practices vis-à-vis localisation efforts in Türkiye and across the world, discuss the barriers and opportunities facing localisation, and put forward plans, commitments, and recommendations for the future.

LAG had the following objectives in holding the meeting:

- To introduce the Localization Advocacy Group to the international humanitarian community in Türkiye

- To evaluate the state of localization in Türkiye and discuss the challenges and opportunities for a more locally-driven response

- To introduce the National Reference Group as one of the main commitments of the Grand Bargain[1] 2.0 framework

The in-person meeting held in Ankara brought together members of the Localisation Advocacy Group including local and national NGOs, refugee-led organizations, women's organizations, and local CSO networks, along with UN agencies, international NGOs, and donors. The meeting comprised of plenary sessions, breakout rooms and presentations. The facilitator utilized anonymous digital data collection methods.

Participants

A Planning Committee, comprising LAG members, handled the meeting's planning process. Fifty-four stakeholders participated in the meeting including international stakeholders, a diverse group of CSOs in Türkiye, and networks bringing together refugee and host community organisations. The list of participants is available in ANNEX 1.

Sessions and Outputs

The meeting program consisted of sessions structured on the topics listed below:

- Opening, introduction, expectations and contributions

- The concept of localisation, LAG presentations and latest research findings

- Six components of localisation – Evaluation of the status quo

- Desired changes and opportunities

- Planning of future steps and presentation of the National Reference Group (NRG)

Annotated agenda of the meeting is available in ANNEX 2.

1   https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/grand-bargain-official-website/grand-bargain-20-structure

Session 1: Opening, introduction, expectations and contributions

Following a brief introduction of the participants, the agenda was provided. Each participant was asked to evaluate their organization on the two questions below. The facilitator used anonymous digital data collection methods for collecting answers.

- **Is localisation on the agenda of your organisation?**

It has been seen that localisation is on the agenda of most organisations present at the event. Equal partnerships, strengthening local capacity for ensuring sustainability, and meaningful engagement in decision-making mechanisms to produce locally-driven solutions were the focus of participants. Shortly, the common agenda of the meeting participants was to find ways of developing effective solutions while introducing a change in the balance of the power within the humanitarian system.

In addition, the organizations underlined the importance of the following issues within localization:

- Sustainability of local organizations

- Strengthening advocacy capacity at the local level and roadmap for localization

- Expectations from international partners included multi-year budgets and funds, flexible funding, equal and strong partnerships, participation in decision-making processes, and locally-driven coordination

The meeting pointed to the significant fact that the topic of localisation is a priority for almost all participating organisations.

- **Are you aware of the National Reference Group?**

The main goal of the meeting was to present and introduce the "National Reference Group" (NRG), as mandated by Grand Bargain 2.0. It became clear from the responses to this question that the National Reference Group is not known to many of the participants and organizations at the meeting. Therefore, it was important to provide a broad background to the idea of the National Reference Group and its role within the Grand Bargain.

Session 2: The Concept of Localisation, Presentations by LAG and Latest Research Findings:

A representative of one of LAG's strategic partners delivered a presentation titled "Localization: How did the Concept Emerge and Evolve?" The presentation highlighted the failure of the conventional workings and approach of the humanitarian system. CSOs from the Global South cannot find space for their voices to be heard and their actions to be visible in the humanitarian system as it currently stands. There are barriers to access funds, problems in partnership quality, coordination mechanisms with little presence of CSOs, and lack of investment in strong, healthy local organizations.

The present system is ineffective and inefficient because it is too centralized and top-down. Today, efforts to improve the lives of people affected by disasters and conflict is defined in the humanitarian system as 'localization', which has now taken its central place in discussions of humanitarian transformation as the solution for a more effective, efficient and accountable humanitarian system. In other words, localization means giving more initiative, resources and power to local organisations within the humanitarian system.

Following this introduction, LAG Localization Coordinator delivered a presentation introducing the establishment, evolution, current membership, and achievements of the Localization Advocacy Group, along with its mission, vision, strategic priorities, goals and values.

Following this background information on the concept of localization and the LAG, two research studies on localization conducted in Türkiye were presented. The first research titled 'Funding Flows from International to National Actors Involved in Refugee Response in Türkiye' was conducted by Development Initiatives and TMK and delivered by Prof. Şerif Onur Bahçecik, a faculty member at METU Department of International Relations and Asian Studies Center.

The research aimed to provide proof of the level and the quality of the financing received by local and national humanitarian actors (LNHA) in 2019 and 2020 and the quality of partnerships and financing models between national and international actors. The targeted outputs of the research study were presented as follows:

1. Identifying key donors in Türkiye and the amount of direct and indirect funds that reach LNHA and displaying the distinctions in the fund flows to Türkiye-based organisations, including those led by refugees and women.

2. Providing an analysis of financial regulations, including the quality of international funds received by LNHAs, budget flexibility and the extent to which the streamlining process is phased in from financial intermediary to final recipient organisations; and presenting

an overview of the quality of partnerships between international actors and LNHAs.

3. Identifying the main financing and mechanisms available in Türkiye for different LNHAs, their level of accessibility and which type of financing and mechanism proves to be the most successful in channeling funds to local actors.

The second research study was delivered by Sema Genel Karaosmanoğlu, the director of Support to Life (STL). In partnership with NEAR, STL conducted the Türkiye case study in the first-ever chapter on localization in ALNAP's "State of the Humanitarian System Report 2022". Looking at all aspects of localization, presentation of the research outcome included challenges linked to the current power imbalances and how much still needs to be done in order to make progress on operationalizing a locally-led humanitarian system in Türkiye.

Both reports are published and available via the links below:

1-Funding Flows from International to National Actors Involved in Refugee Response

2-State of the Humanitarian System Report, ALNAP, 2022

Session 3: Six Components of Localization- Evaluation of the Status Qua Localisation Performance Measurement Framework

In this session, desired change statements and signs of success were introduced to the participants. Localisation was evaluated under 6 components in reference to the Localization Performance Measurement Framework (LPMF)* as developed by the NEAR network in 2019.

1. Partnerships

Desired Change
Equal and fair partnerships

Success Criteria
- Quality and complementary partnerships
- A shift from project-based to strategic partnerships
- Engagement of partners throughout the project cycle

2. Funding

Desired Change
Improvements in the quantity and quality of funding for local organisations

Success Criteria
- Quantity of funding
- Access to direct funding
- Quality of funding
- Risk management

3. Capacity

Desired Change
Effective support for strong and sustainable institutional capacities for local organisations, and consideration of their institutional capacities by INGOs/UN

Success Criteria
- Local leadership
- Organizational development
- Quality standards
- Sustainability of human resources

4. Coordination

Desired Change

Greater leadership, and influence of local organisations
in humanitarian coordination mechanisms

Success Criteria

- Leadership of coordination
- Inclusive coordination
- Collaborative and complementary response

5. Policy, influence, and visibility

Desired Change

An increased presence of local organisations in international policy discussions and
greater public recognition and visibility for their contribution to humanitarian response

Success Criteria

- Influence in policy, advocacy, and standard setting
- Visibility in reporting and communications

6. Participation of affected populations
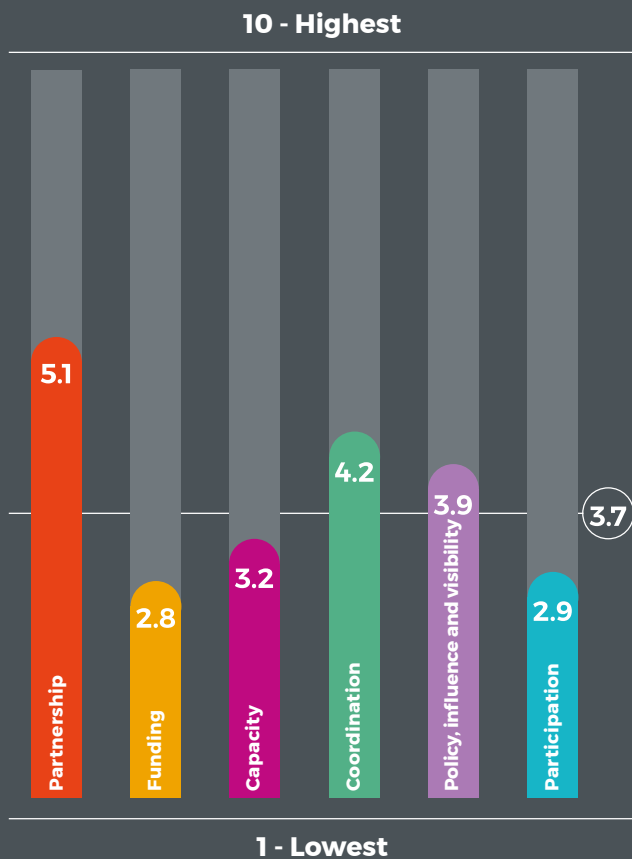
Desired Change

Fuller and more influential involvement of affected
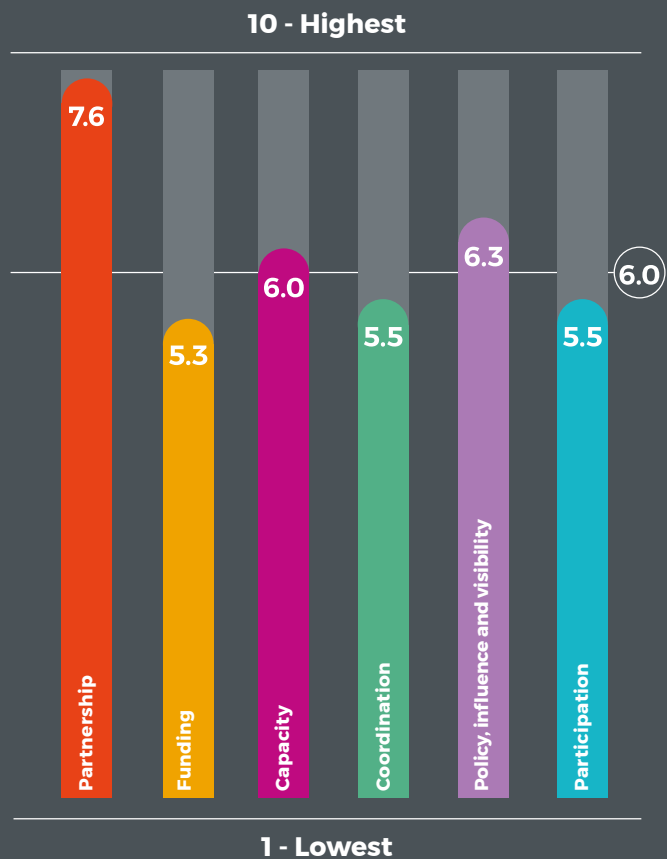communities in humanitarian programs

Success Criteria

- Participation of affected communities in humanitarian response
- Engagement of communities in humanitarian policy
  development and standard-setting processes

Self-Rating on Localisation Performance by Local Organizations

Local organizations Evaluation Results

10 - Highest

- Partnership: 5.1
- Funding: 2.8
- Capacity: 3.2
- Coordination: 4.2
- Policy, influence and visibility: 3.9
- Participation: 2.9
- (3.7)

1 - Lowest

International Organization Evaluation Results

10 - Highest

- Partnership: 7.6
- Funding: 5.3
- Capacity: 6.0
- Coordination: 5.5
- Policy, influence and visibility: 6.3
- Participation: 5.5
- (6.0)

1 - Lowest

The results show that the ratings of local organisations for all components are below 5 out of a 10-point rating scale, whereas the ratings of international organisations are all above 5 using the same scale. The component of "partnerships" is rated the highest by both local and international stakeholders. Similarly, performance on the component of "funding" received the lowest ratings from both groups.

These ratings point to the differences in the perception and experience of international and local stakeholders. The feedback given by the participants in this session underlines the diverse practices and perceptions vis-à-vis localisation, while also stressing the importance of working together. Most respondents suggested engaging in dialogue to have a more in-depth discussion about these ratings and the outlining causes.

At the end of the session, participants were asked to rank the 6 components in order of priority. The final ranking was determined by the joint votes of local and international participants. The top three components in the ranking were Funding, Partnerships and Coordination, with Capacity being a close runner up.

The session ended with a breakout in which meeting participants were divided into three groups to discuss the desired changes and opportunities under the headings of Funding, Partnerships, and Coordination.

Session 4: Desired Changes and Opportunities

The meeting participants identified the short, medium and long-term goals of change and opportunities with respect to the three prioritized components of localization. Then, each group summarised the group discussions in the plenary session.

Funding

Desired change:

- Providing increased direct funding to local organisations.
- Providing increased multi-year project funds.
- Increasing the quality of funding by ensuring indirect costs are covered by project budgets.
- Ensuring overheads are passed on from intermediaries to local partners.
- Donors providing flexibility in budget lines and expenditures.
- Enabling local partners to set aside reserve funds to manage their risks.
- Expanding the base of local CSOs that are able to comply with and therefore access humanitarian funding through capacity investment in their financial and governance structures.
- Establishing alternative sources of funding, including a locally-led pool fund mechanism, designated to the strict access of local organisations.
- Removing legal barriers to fundraising within the Turkish law of associations and foundations
- Allowing investments and endowments to ensure the financial sustainability of local organizations.

Challenges:

- The political climate in Türkiye has a negative impact on Europe-based funds.
- Legislation on fundraising, corporate social responsibility or crowdfunding is insufficient; on top of that, organizations do not have enough information about the legislation.
- There are no tried-and-tested examples of a locally-led pool fund mechanism specific to local organizations.
- Recent amendments made to the Law on Associations and the Aid Collection Law create legal problems for organisations in terms of fundraising.
- Donors allocate fewer funds for core funding and indirect budget items that relate to the basic needs of CSOs (such as capacity investments).
- Local CSOs face difficulties in transferring resources from project funds to cover institutional expenses, including vehicles, equipment, office rent, investments in digital infrastructure, protection of personal data, staff care, safety, security and risk management.
- Local organisations lack direct funding and resources due to the restrictions imposed by donor rules.

Opportunities:
- CSOs have achieved improvement in the use of funds, proving they can absorb larger chunks of humanitarian funding.
- Local organisations have significant assets and opportunities they can mobilise, such as long-term dedicated staff and volunteers, the effects of which can be multiplied and scaled up as a result of more humanitarian funding flowing to these CSOs.
- CSOs have developed their internal systems of accountability, including financial management, procurement standards, quality management, CoC/PSEAH, MEAL systems, etc.
- Local organisations have strengthened their capacities, and consequently, they are at a level to effectively manage more funds.
- Because of the presence of a strong civil society, Türkiye has an enabling environment to establish locally-led funding mechanisms.

Needs:
- There is a need for an initiative and coordination on setting up an alternative funding mechanism and understanding locally diverse ways of managing resources. In addition, experience sharing on good practices and solidarity with other local groups is important.
- Direct financing to local organizations is a need. It is a fact that donors working more closely with local organizations will strengthen the humanitarian work they support through local partners.
- International organizations need to understand the risks they are transferring to local partners.
- Intermediaries and donors need to understand government liabilities in the Turkish context and how their decisions can do more harm than good to local organizations who are trying to abide by Turkish legislation.
- An alternative national-based pool system for funding should be developed with initial seed money from international organizations and potential donors.
- As a key agenda for the advocacy platform in the medium-term, it is necessary to prioritise that local organisations receive funding over more than one year and that funding tools are better customised for the local. In addition, donor support should be continuous.
- While the majority of humanitarian funding is channelled to creating impact and resilience, a larger portion of funds needs to be invested in institutional development to support the credibility and sustainability of local organisations.

Partnerships

Desired change:
- Adding clauses to contracts/project agreements that will legally protect local organizations from the additional risks they take while implementing projects.
- Eliminating clauses in project agreements that override the autonomy of local organizations.
- Mapping local organisations and their areas of expertise in order to engage more strategically with Türkiye-based organizations.
- Improving the quality of partnership between local organizations and donors by reducing the hierarchical relationship between the two.

- Finding ways of sharing risks in the partnership between international organizations and their local partners.
- Redefining partnership and its specificities for each party in the partnership through the principle of complementarity.
- Resolving the language barrier between the international organisation and its implementing partner.
- Revising the Law of Associations to better meet the needs of CSOs and their partnerships with international organizations.

Challenges:
- Fixed partnership contracts and their annexes signal an unequal, one-way relation.
- Local partners have no say regarding the form of the project agreement and transfer of risks, and it is mandatory to sign the contracts without any discussion.
- Local organizations feel disempowered and threatened in their relationship with international partners.
- Grounds for dialogue, discussion, reflection and reconciliation are lacking between funders and local organisations.
- In order to combat the language barrier in partnerships, international organisations sometimes recruit national staff who are more junior than the staff of their local partners, which risks creating a patronising relationship.

Opportunities:
- Partnership models that are already going well are being replicated and further developed.
- International partnerships that focus on capacity investment are being established and expanded.
- National NGOs forge innovative partnerships and act as intermediaries for mentorship to strengthen refugee-led organisations and local initiatives.
- International organisations are partnering with consortia of local organizations.

Needs:
- It is necessary to define complementarity by asking what purpose the partnership serves and what it means for local organisations.
- Strategic partnerships can be achieved by removing the hierarchy between funders and recipient organisations, which requires a shift in the organisational culture and capability of international partners.
- The Law of Associations should be revised according to local needs, making it easier to partner with international organisations.
- There is a need to develop relations with public institutions on a legal basis and at the level of cooperation.
- International organisations need to understand points of risk for local organisations and how their partnership practices cause harm to local partners.
- There is a need to use local languages to strengthen partnerships without undermining the dignity in the partnership.

Coordination

Desired change:
- Defining and bringing clarity to the objectives and priorities of the coordination mechanism.
- Enabling local organisations to host and lead coordination meetings.
- Providing designated funds and staff for local organisations to lead coordination mechanisms, while empowering them to fill this role.
- Ensuring local CSOs as well as affected communities are represented and actively engaged in coordination fora and decision-making structures.
- For a more effective coordination and supporting resilience at the local level, increasing the interaction between humanitarian aid, development and social cohesion actors.
- Supporting and reinforcing existing local coordination networks and consortia of local organisations.
- Acknowledging the critical role of local organisations not only at national level coordination fora but also promoting them at global cluster coordination level such as the Global Protection Cluster.
- Developing public policies so that host states have an effective say in cluster coordination mechanisms for crisis relief and recovery.

Challenges:
- Local organisations are not recognised and acknowledged for the immense work they do during crisis situations and are overlooked in coordination fora.
- There is no UN cluster coordination in Türkiye that covers all stakeholders.
- The integration of local actors into cluster coordination mechanisms is disorganised.

Opportunities:
- With the strengthening of national NGOs, many have become active in coordination fora and have the potential to take a more active role, provided funding and coaching is provided.
- Existing strong networks such as the Localisation Advocacy Group/LAG and the Refugee Council of Türkiye/TMK prove that networks of local organisations are ready to lead cluster coordination mechanisms.

Needs:
- Coordination mechanisms need to be mapped.
- It is necessary to establish a coordination mechanism that involves humanitarian and development actors, local CSOs and public agencies.
- International organisations need to recognise and accept existing local coordination networks and local organisations as key stakeholders.
- For coordination mechanisms to strengthen local leadership, allocation of resources for the employment of staff and the development of coordination capacities and protocols need to be provided.
- It is very important to bring the Grand Bargain 2.0 discussions at the global level to the local/national level so that local advocacy activities by local actors can move the localisation agenda forward.

Session 5: Planning Next Steps – the National Reference Group (NRG)

The session started by a background to the National Reference Group as mandated by the Grand Bargain 2.0 framework. A video presentation on the National Reference Group was delivered by the Policy Advisor of the NEAR network in which she mentioned that National Reference Groups aim at having local actors and national CSOs effectively lead the humanitarian and development coordination and operational work in country. Ideally representing the full diversity of stakeholders, NRGs will provide a platform to identify the needs of local actors and key stakeholders and the steps to take for promoting a more locally-led response in country. She added that NEAR network and its secretariat are ready to provide any assistance needed in support of launching the NRG in Türkiye.

After this brief introduction to the session, participants were asked for the need and their interest in establishing a National Reference Group in Türkiye. The majority of meeting participants agreed to the need to establish a platform in which all groups of stakeholders come together to discuss the challenges and opportunities around localisation. Many also showed interest in taking part. The results of the short survey conducted during the meeting also supported this trend.

In order to follow up on the need and interest for the formation of a National Reference Group in Türkiye, LAG committed to preparing the foundation for the initiation of the group. This included the plan to bring together LAG and TMK members as well as all other interested local organisations to draft an initial term of reference (ToR) for the NRG. Once prepared, as the next step, LAG committed to sending the ToR to all key stakeholders in Türkiye as potential members of the NRG. Upon receiving their feedback and finalising the ToR, LAG will take the lead in launching the National Reference Group for Türkiye in the coming months.

It was appreciated by all participants that such events organised with the participation of different stakeholders are extremely valuable and productive in providing a great opportunity for local organisations, UN agencies, international NGOs and donors to come together, listen to each other and exchange ideas. LAG was urged by participants to maintain the contact and to continue its lobby activities at different levels in order to increase the interest of international organisations and donors on localisation and to put localisation on the agenda of all international stakeholders.

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Annex-2 Workshop Program

Localization in Turkey from the World Humanitarian Summit to Today Workshop
24 May 2022/Ankara

09.00 – 09.30	Registration
09.30 – 10.15	Introduction, Expectations and Contributions, Presentation of the Program Ceren Can (LAG Coordinator) Stefano Calabretta (EUD) Musa Çopur (Moderator)
10.15 – 11.00	Ömer Kaya (IRC) *"What is Localization, How Did Localization Concept Emerge and Evolve?"* Ceren Can (LAG Coordinator) *"History, Members, Current Situation and Future of Localization Advocacy Group in Turkey and International Developments"* Refugee Council of Turkey and NEAR *"Recent Research"*
11.00 – 11.30	Break
11.30 – 13.00	Sema Genel Karaosmanoğlu (STL) *"The Six Component of Localization – Evaluation of the Status Quo"*
13.00 – 14.00	Lunch Break
14.00 – 15.00	*"Desirable Change and Opportunities"*
15.00 – 15.20	Break
15.20 – 16.20	*"Planning of the Future Steps"* NEAR – Presentation of the National Reference Group
16.20 – 16.30	Closing

USTGM
Association Of Civil Society Development Center

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