

Pakistan Flood - Appeal from Avaaz

Conversation between Marcus (Global Network) and Luis Morago at Avaaz held on the afternoon of Thursday 26th August

Avaaz remain interested in exploring further this innovative “**disintermediation**” approach to the distribution of humanitarian appeal monies (i.e. "cutting out the middleman") by transferring monies direct to community-based groups.

Removal of traditional international intermediaries in the supply chain (INGOs) has several advantages both from a cost efficiency perspective as well as from an operational effectiveness perspective.

It gives “resource providers” a simpler and more direct channel to provide support to local level “community-based implementers”. It is more cost-efficient because distribution channels are streamlined and the fees charged by intermediaries can be sharply reduced.

There are a range of reputable “remittance” services available throughout Pakistan whom are able to transfer monies internationally to local destinations.

In terms of an external “global humanitarian response” to a major disaster this type of direct approach is not historically used.

In principle it should be possible to directly provide funding raised from the Avaaz international appeal directly to a number (for example 25) grassroots community-based civil society organisations responding to the crisis

The Global Network could support this process is connecting Avaaz to a network of community-based CSOs.

Mapping of local CSOs could be undertaken by the pakreport.org project whom have an in-country presence and whom have expressed an interest in doing – initial discussions held with Terry Gibson.

Preference would be given to identifying and supporting credible and trusted local community-based civil society organisations whom have an established relationships and local-level presence within affected communities, whom have not only set up for a disaster response but also have a long term commitment to keep working in these areas during the recovery / rehabilitation phase.

“Build back safer” (DRR) principles must be incorporated into the Avaaz-funded response / recovery activities.

Avaaz has several concerns that would need to be addressed:

1. Any monies allocated would need to be used in accordance with the mandate with which it was raised i.e. 100% of the funds raised will go directly to helping Pakistanis cope with this disaster and strengthen their local systems.
2. Transparency and accountability: In a country where corruption is not unusual how can we best ensure the monies allocated are used appropriately without out becoming overly bureaucratic ? A minimum degree of reporting and monitoring is required. In a innovative “disintermediation”

approach **how will this be done and by whom (traditionally this has been the role of the INGO intermediary) ?**

3. Capacity: Like the Global Network, Avaaz has minimal internal capacity to be able to administer the disbursement and monitoring of individual grants down to the local level. **Whom would actually do this - either internationally or nationally?**

4. Up until now Avaaz has had no previous experience of working with the Global Network membership – this is a degree of risk when working with untried partners

Provided we can answer the above concerns Avaaz would be open to receiving an outline proposal from the Global Network

DRR Advocacy – Marcus outlined a case for Avaaz promoting disaster risk reduction approach with the humanitarian response / recovery interventions ; It is becoming increasingly apparent that the human, social, economic and environmental losses due to the heavy monsoon rains could have been substantially reduced had disaster risk considerations been incorporated into socio-economic development policies and practices.

Avaaz is a strong advocate of human rights :- citizens safety and protection from disasters is one of the most fundamental human rights that State authorities have a sovereign responsibility for.

Challenge is to ensure a potential DRR advocacy message are relevant and of interest to the Avaaz membership and current campaigns.

Marcus outlined the strong overlap and similarities between disaster risk reduction, climate adaptation, vulnerability and poverty alleviation

Marcus is currently drafting an article explaining the relevance of these connections within the Pakistan flood context.

For the moment we need to answer the questions around the administering of the financial transfers and the monitoring / reporting requirements thereafter.

Please can you send me your thoughts / suggestions soonest. Providing we can answer Luis's concerns I would be happy to develop an outline proposal for formal consideration by the Avaaz team.

Warm regards
Marcus

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