LOCAL HUMANITARIAN LEADERSHIP INDEX

A snapshot of progress towards local humanitarian leadership outcomes in the humanitarian coordination architecture in Jordan, Lebanon and Syria

This index outlines what needs to change in order to achieve local humanitarian leadership in the Syria crisis response. It summarizes research undertaken on the engagement of local and national actors in the international humanitarian coordination architecture in Jordan, Lebanon and Syria, and is accompanied by three country case studies. The index is designed to support local and national non-government organizations to advocate for reforms so they can increase their engagement within the humanitarian coordination system, and use these spaces to advocate for their desired changes in the response. Donors, UN agencies and INGOs bear the main responsibility for enabling those reforms. The recommendations in each section provide practical solutions to address the barriers and challenges identified in the research.
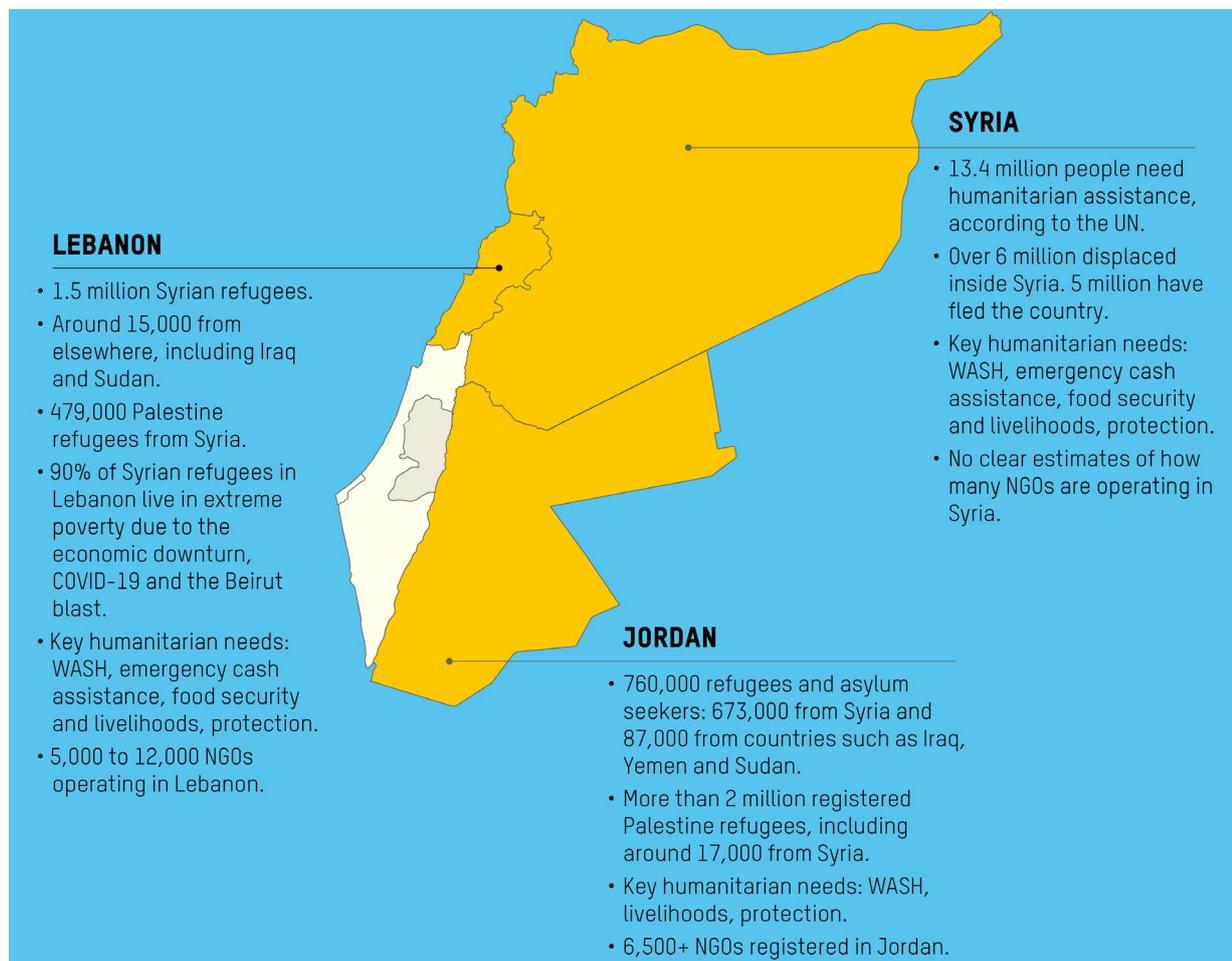
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INTRODUCTION

In emergencies where the national government is unwilling and/or unable to bring humanitarian relief to affected people, international support is required. In an attempt to reform a humanitarian system often perceived as patriarchal, colonial and not fit for purpose, the United Nations (UN) Secretary General has called for an approach that is 'as local as possible and as international as necessary'. Despite a raft of global commitments to 'localization',[1] 'local humanitarian leadership'[2] and 'local humanitarian action'[3] such as those under the auspices of the Agenda for Humanity, the World Humanitarian Summit's Grand Bargain and the Charter for Change, the international humanitarian coordination architecture remains highly institutionalized.

A relatively small number of organizations headquartered in the Global North, including donors, UN agencies, international NGOs and the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement, continue to dominate the humanitarian agenda, along with its leadership, decision making and funding. Even with significant UN reforms over the past 25 years, the role of local and national actors (L/NAs)[4] and affected people and their communities in shaping humanitarian response remains limited. Direct funding to L/NAs comprises just 3.1% of all global humanitarian assistance, despite Grand Bargain commitments made in 2016 to increase the proportion to 25%.[5] L/NAs represent just 6% of membership across 29 Humanitarian Country Teams (HCTs) around the world.[6]

L/NAs play a key role in humanitarian action, and are often the first and best responders when a crisis strikes. L/NAs already provide leadership in responses; however, they lack adequate resources and support. While the recent COVID-19 pandemic has further underscored the need for local leadership, international humanitarian actors including donors, UN agencies and international non-government organizations (INGOs) continue to overlook the existing capacities of L/NAs, such as non-government organizations (NGOs) and government agencies, to lead and implement effective humanitarian programming. Supporting the leadership of L/NAs is a moral imperative to ensure their self-determination.[7] L/NAs must drive the direction of policies and programmes in the humanitarian contexts in which they operate.

Shifting power and resources to L/NAs is fundamental to rooting out the systemic racism and colonial assumptions embedded in these global structures and processes. Transforming the system demands fundamental changes in the existing humanitarian coordination architecture, and requires that international actors consciously cede power, resources and decision making to local and national counterparts. Oxfam is committed to amplifying the priorities and perspectives of L/NAs, and addressing the challenges they face in effectively engaging with coordination structures as an essential component of progressing commitments towards greater local humanitarian leadership.

THE SITUATION IN LEBANON, JORDAN AND SYRIA

SYRIA

- 13.4 million people need humanitarian assistance, according to the UN.
- Over 6 million displaced inside Syria. 5 million have fled the country.
- Key humanitarian needs: WASH, emergency cash assistance, food security and livelihoods, protection.
- No clear estimates of how many NGOs are operating in Syria.

LEBANON

- 1.5 million Syrian refugees.
- Around 15,000 from elsewhere, including Iraq and Sudan.
- 479,000 Palestine refugees from Syria.
- 90% of Syrian refugees in Lebanon live in extreme poverty due to the economic downturn, COVID-19 and the Beirut blast.
- Key humanitarian needs: WASH, emergency cash assistance, food security and livelihoods, protection.
- 5,000 to 12,000 NGOs operating in Lebanon.

JORDAN

- 760,000 refugees and asylum seekers: 673,000 from Syria and 87,000 from countries such as Iraq, Yemen and Sudan.
- More than 2 million registered Palestine refugees, including around 17,000 from Syria.
- Key humanitarian needs: WASH, livelihoods, protection.
- 6,500+ NGOs registered in Jordan.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Domain	Key indicators	Jordan	Lebanon	Syria
	1.3 Evidence that L/NAs meaningfully participate in and inform the preparation of Humanitarian Needs Overviews (HNOs)	🔴	🔴	🟠
	2.1 Percentage of L/NAs represented in HCTs	🟠	🟠	🟡
	2.2 Percentage of L/NAs leading or co-leading clusters or sectors	🔴	🟠	🟠
	3.1 Percentage of total direct humanitarian funding awarded to L/NNGOs	🟣	🟣	🟣
	3.2 Percentage of OCHA Country-Based Pooled Fund (CBPFs) awarded directly to local and national NGOs (L/NNGOs)	🟢	🟢	🟢
	4.4 Perception that partnerships between international actors and L/NAs are equitable, ethical, genuine and complementary	🟠	🟠	🟠
	5.3 Extent to which localization objectives and indicators are integrated into humanitarian coordination accountability mechanisms, such as annual workplans and performance plans of senior humanitarian officials	🟣	🟣	🟣

CONTEXT

The index and accompanying case studies focus on the experiences of local and national NGOs (L/NNGOs) responding to the Syria crisis in Jordan, Lebanon and Syria. The decade-long Syria crisis remains one of the world's worst humanitarian emergencies. According to the UN, 13.4 million people in Syria are in need of humanitarian assistance and protection.[8] The conflict has displaced over six million people inside Syria, and over five million people have fled the country as refugees.[9] In response, the international community has established a complex humanitarian coordination architecture that operates within Syria and across neighbouring countries. This index aims to provide a snapshot of progress towards local humanitarian leadership outcomes, specifically within the humanitarian coordination architecture for the Syria crisis.

The UN-led Whole of Syria (WoS) approach provides an 'umbrella structure' for coordination, co-led by the UN Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator (RC/HC) in Damascus and the UN Regional Humanitarian Coordinator (RHC) in Amman.[10] Delivering a principled humanitarian response in Syria from Damascus remains challenging,[11] and continued support for humanitarian actors, including L/NNGOs, to provide cross-border assistance to the North East and North West is crucial. L/NNGOs already provide leadership for the Syria response and deliver the majority of humanitarian assistance inside Syria;[12] however, they lack adequate resources and support. The 2020 3RP Syria Crisis Annual Report found that L/NNGOs received just 4% of total funding, compared with 82% for UN agencies and 14% for INGOs.[13]

While varying in nature and degree, the context in all three countries is characterized by shrinking civil society space and mounting restrictions on the humanitarian operations of L/NNGOs. In Jordan, there are increasing constraints on freedom of association and expression, and L/NNGOs working on 'sensitive' issues such as human rights and gender equality often face backlash from the government and conservative religious, tribal and community groups. In Lebanon, the fallout from the socio-economic collapse, Beirut blast and COVID-19 pandemic has increased government scrutiny of L/NNGOs. In Syria, L/NNGOs face major bureaucratic impediments related to humanitarian programming. In both Jordan and Syria, the government closely monitors the registration of L/NNGOs, and delays in project approvals are common.

ABOUT THE INDEX

The index is structured around the five elements of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Humanitarian Programme Cycle: needs assessment and analysis; strategic response planning; resource mobilization; implementation and monitoring; and operational review and evaluation. Each element outlines the outcomes or desired changes that need to occur to contribute to achieving local humanitarian leadership. In the spirit of minimizing duplication, this index builds upon several existing global and country-specific localization measurement frameworks and indicators.[14] Each outcome is categorized into one of seven local humanitarian leadership 'dimensions' or areas of change,[15] and scored using a 'traffic light' code.

To rate highly on the index with a 'good' or 'fair' score, country-level humanitarian coordination structures need to provide meaningful opportunities for L/NNGOs to: engage in the development of humanitarian planning processes and policies; promote L/NNGO representatives into leadership and decision-making roles; offer adequate direct, flexible and multi-year funding to support L/NNGOs to deliver humanitarian assistance and protection to affected populations, while investing in their long-term institutional sustainability; and support equitable, ethical, genuine and complementary partnerships between L/NNGOs and international actors. Humanitarian coordination structures also need to incorporate a focus on local humanitarian leadership in monitoring, evaluation and accountability mechanisms for the response. Countries with no or limited progress in these areas were assessed as such and given a 'poor' or 'very poor' score.

Across the index, some important aspects of local humanitarian leadership were not assessed, including most notably the participation of affected people in humanitarian response. Instead, this was assessed indirectly

through the ability of L/NNGOs to effectively engage in the humanitarian coordination system and represent the views of affected people and their communities. Issues such as these were not included for a number of reasons, including that a particular issue was not linked closely enough to the Humanitarian Programme Cycle, the scope of the research limited the ability to assess the issue adequately, or the available public information was of inadequate quality and accuracy to be assessed.

The index is designed to be used by Oxfam to support L/NNGOs to advocate for reforms to increase the engagement of L/NNGOs within the humanitarian coordination system and allow these groups to utilize these spaces to advocate for desired changes in the response. The audience for the reforms is donors, UN agencies and INGOs. The recommendations in each section provide practical solutions to address the barriers and challenges identified.

METHODOLOGY

The index summarizes research undertaken on the engagement of L/NAs in the international humanitarian coordination architecture for the responses in Jordan, Lebanon and Syria, and is accompanied by three country case studies. The research explores the barriers and enablers for the leadership, representation and participation of L/NNGOs. Oxfam reviewed academic and grey literature from publicly available sources on relevant themes, including localization,[16] local humanitarian leadership[17] and humanitarian coordination architecture,[18] with a particular emphasis on publications focused on the Jordan, Lebanon and Syria contexts. The literature review primarily covered English language documents published between 2015 and 2021, and is available upon request.

The research also draws upon 17 semi-structured key informant interviews with representatives from 15 L/NNGOs, one stakeholder convening platform and one UN agency, conducted virtually between December 2021 and January 2022. This included interviews with five representatives from Jordan, six representatives from Lebanon, five representatives from Syria and one representative working across the Middle East region. Oxfam offered access to an Arabic-speaking interpreter; however, all participants chose to conduct interviews in English. Participating L/NNGOs included women-led organizations (WLOs), women's rights organizations (WROs), disabled people's organizations (DPOs) and refugee-led organizations (RLOs).

Oxfam selected participants based on their current or previous relationship with Oxfam's humanitarian response to the Syria crisis, and/or their familiarity with the humanitarian coordination architecture in Jordan, Lebanon and Syria. Oxfam interviewed some L/NNGO informants in their capacity as UN cluster/sector leads or members of UN pooled fund advisory boards, rather than as representatives of their own organizations. Given the important role that L/NNGOs play in delivering the humanitarian response inside Syria as well as cross-border assistance, Oxfam selected representatives from several operational hubs for the Syria response. Due to the restrictive operating context, Oxfam was unable to interview L/NNGOs in North East Syria, but included one L/NNGO registered in Damascus and delivering programmes in North East Syria.

HOW TO READ THE INDEX

Domain of change						
Capacity	Funding	Leadership	Participation	Partnership	Policy	Visibility

Scoring				
Good	Fair	Some progress	Poor	Very poor

Acronyms

3/4/5W: Who does What Where (When) (for Whom)

3RP: Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan – Syria Crisis

DPO: Disabled people's organization

CBPF: Country-Based Pooled Fund

EOC: Emergency Operation Cell – Lebanon

ERP: Emergency Response Plan – Lebanon

FTS: Financial Tracking Service

GBV: Gender-based violence

GoJ: Government of Jordan

GoL: Government of Lebanon

GoS: Government of Syria

HC: Humanitarian Coordinator

HCT: Humanitarian Country Team

HNO: Humanitarian Needs Overview

HPC: Humanitarian Programme Cycle

HRP: Humanitarian Response Plan

IASC: Inter-Agency Standing Committee

JIAF: Joint Inter-sectoral Assessment Framework

JoRISS: Jordan Response Information System for the Syria Crisis

JRP: Jordan Response Plan

LCRP: Lebanon Crisis Response Plan

L/NA: Local/national actor

L/NNGO: Local/national non-government organization

NGO: Non-government organization

OCHA: Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

OPR: Operational Peer Review

RLO: Refugee-led organization

ToR: Terms of Reference

TWG: Technical Working Group

WLO: Women-led organization

WRO: Women's rights organization

1   NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Domain	Key indicators	Jordan	Lebanon	Syria
	1.1 Evidence that common humanitarian standards, tools and policies have been contextualized	🟠	🔴	🟠
In 2021, the COVID-19 pandemic prompted IASC to release several global guidance notes to promote the involvement of L/NAs in the HPC, with specific reference to joint inter-sectoral analysis and data collection.[19] OCHA templates for consolidated needs assessments and HNOs contain some reference to localization, although this is not a core focus. The 2022 Regional Needs Overview has been contextualized for the 3RP. The JIAF was launched in 2020 to analyse the multiple needs of affected populations in a crisis. In 2021, Syria was one of the pilot countries for the rollout of this tool. In 2021, the HCT's Jordan Localisation Task Team co-chaired by UN Women, Jordan INGO Forum and Jordan National NGO Forum led the development of a MEAL Framework for Localisation of Humanitarian Action in Jordan.			
	1.2 Evidence that key documents have been translated or developed by L/NAs	🔴	🔴	🟠
	OCHA's 2022 HNO template is available in relevant official and local languages including Arabic, English and French. However, other OCHA guidance to inform needs assessments, including the Operational Guidance on Coordinated Assessments in Humanitarian Crises, Multi-Sector Initial Rapid Assessment Guidance and JIAF, are only available in English. Country-level HNOs for 2021 are only available for Syria; these are published in Arabic and English. The 2022 3RP Regional Needs Overview is contextualized for the 3RP Syrian Crisis Response, but along with the majority of related documents is only published in English.			
	1.3 Evidence that L/NAs meaningfully participate in and inform the preparation of HNOs	🔴	🔴	🟠
	Details on the number of L/NAs that participate in the preparation of HNOs, including JIAF teams, coordinated assessments, secondary data reviews and validation processes, were generally not readily available for Jordan, Lebanon and Syria. The 2021 HNO for Syria provided background on consultations undertaken with humanitarian actors and affected people and their communities, including an outline of NGO engagement in needs assessments that informed the preparation of the document. However, the specific number or proportion of L/NNGOs that participated in the preparation of the HNO, a disaggregation of INGOs and L/NNGOs, or analysis on the types of NGOs that contributed (for example, WLOs, WROs, DPOs or RLOs) were unavailable.			
	1.4 Evidence that the institutional and technical capacity needs of L/NAs are reflected in HNOs	🟣	🟣	🔴
	The 2022 3RP Regional Needs Overview includes a section on enhancing local and national capacities. The focus of this document is on capacity improvement for public institutions and services; however, there is no reference to the institutional and technical capacity needs of NGOs, particularly L/NNGOs. The 2021 HNO for Syria briefly references aims to strengthen community health organizations in Syria.			

Recommendations

- IASC to translate key humanitarian policy and planning documents into official and local languages, including Arabic, English and French, and share documents on relevant online information platforms and websites.
- IASC to update HNO templates to include specific guidance on the participation and engagement of L/NAs.
- HCTs to ensure HNOs include political economy analysis that reflects the enabling environment for L/NAs, including civic space and bureaucratic impediments that affect the operations and access of L/NAs.
- HCTs to ensure that HNOs reflect the institutional and technical capacity needs of L/NAs.

2 STRATEGIC RESPONSE PLANNING

Domain	Key indicators	Jordan	Lebanon	Syria
⊢⊨	2.1 Percentage of L/NAs represented in HCTs	🟠	🟠	🟡
	While L/NA membership of HCTs in Jordan, Lebanon and Syria is above the global average,[20] L/NAs continue to be significantly underrepresented in these countries compared with donors, UN agencies and INGOs. L/NNGOs on HCTs make up just 11.1% of members in Jordan, 14.3% of members in Lebanon and 15% of members in Damascus.[21] L/NNGOs represent 30% of HCT members in Gaziantep.[22] In Jordan and Lebanon, there is equal representation of INGOs and L/NNGOs in coordination forums.[23] Government authorities are not represented on HCTs.[24] Disaggregated data on the representation of women or other underrepresented groups was unavailable.			
⊢⊨	2.2 Percentage of L/NAs leading or co-leading clusters or sectors	🔴	🟠	🟠
	In Jordan, L/NNGOs hold 4% of sector lead roles.[25] In the Lebanon EOC, L/NNGOs hold 6% of cluster lead roles and in the LCRP, UN agencies commonly lead sectors, although 41% of sector leads are from the GoL.[26] In Damascus, UN agencies lead all sectors, as NGOs are ineligible to co-lead sectors. In Gaziantep, 12% of cluster leads are from L/NNGOs.[27]			
⊢⊨	2.3 Evidence that HRPs and cluster/sector strategies recognize the leadership of L/NAs and complement pre-existing humanitarian coordination forums and response mechanisms	🟢	🟡	🟠
	The 2021 HRP Annotated Template provides guidance to highlight complementarity and linkages between the HRP and Red Cross/Red Crescent plans, development assistance frameworks and government plans; and to consider the availability, capacities and contributions of local partners and government in the planned response. The GoJ led the development of the JRP, in partnership with donors, UN agencies and NGOs. The LCRP was a joint effort between UNHCR, UNDP and the GoL, which outlines objectives to 'support and reinforce the response capacity of national/local institutions and national/local humanitarian actors'. However, OCHA continues to lead the Lebanon ERP. The UN consulted with the GoS on the development of the HRP, noting the government's 'primary responsibility for the protection and well-being of all Syrians'.			
👥	**2.4 Evidence that L/NAs participate in the preparation of HRPs**	🔴	🔴	🔴
	The 2021 HRPs for Jordan, Lebanon and Syria, and the 2021 3RP all noted that a diversity of stakeholder groups were consulted in the development of the plans, including host governments, donors, UN agencies and NGOs. However, none of the plans offered publicly available details on the disaggregation of stakeholder groups engaged, such as INGOs, L/NNGOs, WLOs, WROs, DPOs or other underrepresented groups. There were also no detailed lists of organizations or participants provided. IASC guidance references tracking HRP scoring on localization, but this was not publicly available.			
⚙️	**2.5 Evidence that the institutional and technical capacity needs of L/NAs are reflected in HRPs and cluster/sector response plans**	🟠	🟡	🟣
	There was some evidence that HRPs reflected the institutional and technical capacity needs of L/NAs. One of the key principles identified in the LCRP is to 'enhance the localization of the response with national actors, including local authorities'. Similarly, the 2020 Syria HRP 'underscores the humanitarian community's continuous commitment to the localization of aid, including the development of institutional and NGO capacity'. While the JRP makes brief reference to supporting local governance and municipalities, strengthening civil society and a 'localisation approach', the document provides no further details. There was also no reference to the capacity needs of L/NAs in the LCRP.			

Recommendations

- IASC to revise HCT ToR to include equal number of seats per constituency, including donors, UN agencies, INGOs and L/NNGOs, with guidance on transparent and inclusive processes for identification and selection of members.
- IASC to introduce measures to track and report on diversity and inclusion in humanitarian coordination mechanisms in the annual survey on IASC coordination structures at country level.
- HCs to ensure that all clusters/sectors have ToRs and strategies in place that recognize the importance of local humanitarian leadership and include clear, time-bound actions to promote greater localization.

- HCs to ensure that HCTs and clusters/sectors have strategies and annual work plans that document effective and inclusive ways of working (agendas, minutes, transparent decision making, and other good practices for meetings).

3   RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

Domain	Key indicators	Jordan	Lebanon	Syria
💰	**3.1 Percentage of total direct humanitarian funding awarded to L/NNGOs**	●	●	●

The percentage of total direct humanitarian funding awarded to L/NNGOs for the Syria crisis has increased slightly. In 2018, which is the first year funding disaggregated by recipient was available in 3RP Annual Reports, L/NNGOs received just 1% of funding ($20.5m).[28] In 2020, this increased to 4% of funding ($132.3m), compared with 82% ($2.6bn) for UN agencies and 14% ($459.3m) for INGOs.[29] In 2021, just 5% of funding ($95.4m) under the Syria HRP went to L/NNGOs, with the majority going to UN agencies and INGOs.

Domain	Key indicators	Jordan	Lebanon	Syria
💰	**3.2 Percentage of OCHA CBPFs awarded directly to L/NNGOs**	●	●	●

In 2021, OCHA allocated a significant proportion of CBPF funding to L/NAs. This included 34% of funding in Jordan, 35% of funding in Lebanon, 18% of funding in Syria, and 56% of funding for Syria cross-border operations. While OCHA has met or exceeded its Grand Bargain commitments to increase funding to L/NAs in all CBPFs excluding the Syria Cross-Border Fund, OCHA continues to award the majority of allocations to UN agencies and/or INGOs. There is also more that can be done to promote access and inclusion of L/NAs. Findings from a literature review and key informant interviews suggest that high levels of competition and rigorous due diligence and capacity assessment requirements continue to pose a significant barrier for many L/NAs, particularly the requirement to demonstrate evidence of mandatory policies and manuals.

Domain	Key indicators	Jordan	Lebanon	Syria
💰	3.3 Percentage of funding to L/NNGOs that is multi-year	●	●	●

Globally, donors have increased the proportion of humanitarian assistance provided as multi-year funding since 2016, despite a reduction in 2020. In 2020, 42% of funding analysed by one study was categorized as multi-year funding 'that lasts for 24 months or more from the start date of the original funding agreement'.[30] However, it is difficult to understand how much of this funding is supporting the Syrian refugee response. The Syria 3RP and OCHA's FTS do not provide a breakdown of multi-year funding. Currently OCHA CBPFs limit funding agreements to a maximum of 12 months duration. However, findings from a literature review and key informant interviews indicate that access to sustainable multi-year funding continues to be one of the biggest challenges facing L/NNGOs in Jordan, Lebanon and Syria.

Domain	Key indicators	Jordan	Lebanon	Syria
⫟	**3.4 Percentage of L/NNGO members on OCHA CBPF advisory boards**	●	●	●

In 2020, L/NNGOs held 16.7% of seats on the JHF Advisory Board, 15% of seats on the LHF Advisory Board, and 18.8% of seats on the Syria Cross-Border Humanitarian Fund Advisory Board.[31] L/NNGOs are not represented on the Syria Humanitarian Fund Advisory Board due to GoS restrictions.[32] The JHF and LHF Advisory Boards allow for equal INGO and L/NNGO representation, with two and three seats allocated to each respectively.[33] No data was available on the representation of women or other underrepresented groups.

Recommendations
• Donors to increase volume, proportion and quality (flexible, multi-year) of humanitarian funding to L/NNGOs in line with Grand Bargain commitments, including increased contributions to OCHA CBPFs. • OCHA to continue efforts to make CBPFs more accessible to L/NNGOs, including a review of the due diligence and capacity assessment processes. • OCHA to increase representation of L/NNGOs, including women and other underrepresented groups, on CBPF Advisory Boards. OCHA should also introduce measures to track and report on diversity and inclusion of CBPF Advisory Boards. • All humanitarian actors to improve their publishing of data on the OCHA FTS including disaggregation by recipient, such as WLOs, WROs, DPOs and RLOs.

4   IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

Domain	Key indicators	Jordan	Lebanon	Syria
	4.1 L/NAs attend and actively participate in humanitarian coordination mechanisms	🔴	🔴	🟠
The 2020 IASC Global Review of Cluster Composition (which included assessment of Lebanon and Syria) found that L/NAs made up 44% of all participating organizations in clusters. However, L/NAs made up just 7% of participating organizations in TWGs, and leadership roles are limited. While a breakdown of data for Jordan, Lebanon and Syria was unavailable, there were some notable examples of good practice identified in the literature. Almost 70% of the Syria GBV Sub-Cluster's members are L/NNGOs, who lead task forces and are part of decision-making processes.			

Domain	Key indicators	Jordan	Lebanon	Syria
	4.2 Percentage of coordination meetings and documents available in official/local languages	🟠	🟠	🟠
The 2020 IASC Global Review of Cluster Composition (which included assessment of Lebanon and Syria) reported that around one-third of clusters/sectors did not use official or local languages in meetings, instead relying on English. In these cases, clusters/sectors only offered translation services around half the time. A literature review of sources focused on the Syria crisis found that a reliance on English, frequent use of humanitarian acronyms and jargon, and limited translation and interpretation services were also common barriers for L/NA participation in Jordan, Lebanon and Syria.			

Domain	Key indicators	Jordan	Lebanon	Syria
	4.3 Extent to which monitoring of humanitarian response information on 3/4/5Ws matrices and other data collection platforms is inclusive of the contributions and activities of L/NAs	🟡	🟠	🟠
While many L/NAs are engaged in the development of humanitarian assessment, strategy and planning initiatives of HNOs and HRPs, they remain limited in their ability to influence data analysis and validation, decision-making and approval processes. In a literature review of sources focused on the Syrian refugee crisis, L/NAs often described information sharing as a 'one-way flow' and extractive in nature, or felt that their contributions were often 'disregarded and considered unreliable or unsound'. While the centralized JoRISS platform is relatively easy to navigate and is available in both Arabic and English, the multitude of information-management platforms for Lebanon and Syria are more complicated, and do not include disaggregation of the type of actor delivering the response. These platforms are exclusively available in English.			

Domain	Key indicators	Jordan	Lebanon	Syria
	4.4 Perception that partnerships between international actors and L/NAs are equitable, ethical, genuine and complementary	🟠	🟠	🟠

Findings from the literature and key informant interviews suggest that partnerships between international actors and L/NAs are inequitable and primarily characterized by 'subcontractor' type relationships. L/NAs frequently lack the access and required institutional capacities to influence programme planning and decision making. International actors continue to undermine the role of L/NAs by not passing on overheads and failing to invest in long-term and sustainable partnerships.

Domain	Key indicators	Jordan	Lebanon	Syria
🔍	**4.5 Perception that international actors recognize, highlight and make visible the role L/NAs play in humanitarian response**	🟠	🟠	🟠

Findings from a literature review and key informant interviews suggest that while there are some examples of good practice, many international actors fail to recognize the role of L/NAs in humanitarian response. L/NAs are often not provided with visibility of, or the opportunity to meaningfully contribute to, donor reports. It was also common for international actors to play the role of 'gatekeeper' when it came to donor engagement.

Recommendations

- Donors to provide dedicated funding to support interpretation and translation in humanitarian coordination forums.
- OCHA to ensure that humanitarian response information on 3/4/5Ws matrices and other data collection platforms includes disaggregation of the type of actor delivering the response (including WLOs, WROs, DPOs and RLOs).
- International actors to pursue equitable, genuine and strategic partnerships with L/NAs that include investments in long-term and demand-driven capacity-strengthening initiatives to promote sustainability.
- IASC to update guidance on composition of HCTs to include equitable representation of L/NAs where possible, and update guidance on cluster/sector co-leadership to include L/NA representation where possible.

5   OPERATIONAL PEER REVIEW AND EVALUATION

Domain	Key indicators	Jordan	Lebanon	Syria
⊣⊢	**5.1 Extent to which international actors prioritize leadership of L/NAs from the outset of the humanitarian response, including evidence of transition and handover plans**	🔴	🟠	🟣

IASC guidance requires HCs and HCTs to initiate coordination architecture reviews annually to ensure that cluster coordination structures remain 'fit for purpose' and to determine if they should continue, adjust or transition/deactivate, based on an analysis of the context and national coordination capacity. The 2020 IASC Global Review of Cluster Composition (which included assessment of Lebanon and Syria) found that just one-quarter of HCTs oversaw reviews of coordination architecture during the course of the year, while fewer than half of the clusters/sectors performed a monitoring review. Although the GoJ and GoL already play a strong leadership role in the Syrian crisis response, the research identified limited examples of transition and handover plans in place. One example is the LCRP Food Security Sector, which notes the importance of linkages with GoS national social assistance programmes to facilitate transition. No transition or handover plans are available for Syria, given the current political and humanitarian context.

Domain	Key indicators	Jordan	Lebanon	Syria
👥	**5.2 Evidence that effective engagement of L/NAs is considered in all humanitarian review and evaluation activities including Operational Peer Reviews and Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluations**	🟣	🟣	🟡

The most recent OPR for Whole of Syria occurred in June and July 2015. The OPR team was led by OCHA's Senior Transformative Agenda Implementation Team, with representatives from an NGO network, an INGO and two UN agencies. While the full report is not publicly available, the brief summary did not reference engagement with L/NAs. In 2014, OCHA commissioned a joint evaluative effort known as the Syria CALL Initiative on behalf of the Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluations Steering Group. Members of the Steering Group include ALNAP, IFRC and six INGOs. This report did assess the quality of partnerships between donors, INGOs and NGOs, although no L/NNGOs were part of the Steering Group. In July 2017, the Peer 2 Peer Project organized a learning mission to Gaziantep to look at how the humanitarian leadership of the cross-border operation to northern Syria had prioritized a localization agenda, and had put significant effort into making sure L/NAs were strategically and operationally integrated in the humanitarian response.

Domain	Key indicators	Jordan	Lebanon	Syria
	5.3 Extent to which localization objectives and indicators are integrated into humanitarian coordination accountability mechanisms, such as annual workplans and performance plans of senior humanitarian officials	●	●	●

According to the 2020 IASC Global Review of Cluster Composition (which included assessment of Lebanon and Syria), 'HCTs use tools such as HCT Compacts and HCT ToRs to ensure roles and responsibilities are clearly articulated and to provide a basis for periodic reviews of HCT performance'.[34] At the time of reporting, most HCTs had ToRs in place, although in many instances these may predate the IASC Standard ToR for HCTs published in 2017. Around half of HCTs had established an HCT Compact, which sets out the key commitments of HCT members; however, just 38% had workplans and 74% undertook an annual performance monitoring review. Oxfam was unable to locate publicly available copies of HCT ToRs or Compacts for Jordan, Lebanon or Syria. While it is reasonable to assume that full performance plans of senior humanitarian officials, such as the Regional HC, HC or Deputy HC would not be available publicly, summaries of performance objectives, key commitments or priorities were also unavailable.

Recommendations

- Donors to support assistance for Early Recovery and Resilience and commit to funding all activities identified as part of the HRP, including early recovery and livelihoods activities, on the basis of need, regardless of who is in control.
- HCs and HCTs to ensure that all humanitarian review and evaluation activities include monitoring and assessment of progress on localization. This should include a specific focus on localization in ToRs, collection and analysis of disaggregated data, and inclusion of L/NA representatives on steering committees and in-country advisory groups.
- HCs and HCTs to ensure that all HCTs and clusters have updated and publicly available ToRs, Compacts and workplans in place that are inclusive of localization objectives.
- HCs and HCTs to ensure localization is integrated into accountability mechanisms such as HC performance appraisals and annual coordination architecture reviews, and share a summary of annual performance objectives and assessments, key commitments and priorities with humanitarian partners via public letters, videos or webinars.

NOTES

1 Localization is understood by Oxfam as the 'process through which a diverse range of humanitarian actors are attempting, each in their own way, to ensure local and national actors are better engaged in the planning, delivery and accountability of humanitarian action, while still ensuring humanitarian needs can be met swiftly, effectively and in a principled manner'. Oxfam Canada. (2019). *A Feminist Approach to Localization: How Canada can Support the Leadership of Women's Rights Actors in Humanitarian Action*. Retrieved 10 January 2022, from https://www.oxfam.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/a-feminist-approach-to-localization.pdf.

2 Local humanitarian leadership (LHL) is understood by Oxfam as 'local humanitarian actors (whether civil society, government or both) leading humanitarian response and ensuring it is fast and appropriate and meeting the needs of the affected population'. LHL 'refers to a transformed humanitarian system: one which is collaborative, inclusive, agile and diverse in nature, and where aid decision-making processes are equitable and closer to affected people. "Localization" is therefore part of the process towards that transformation, and not necessarily an end in itself.' Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). (2017). *Localising the Response*. Retrieved 10 January 2022, from http://www.oecd.org/development/humanitarian-donors/docs/Localisingtheresponse.pdf.

3 The global humanitarian coordination architecture is primarily composed of the Emergency Relief Coordinator, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) and the Global Clusters. This case study will specifically focus on some of the key humanitarian coordination mechanisms including Humanitarian Country Teams, cluster/sector working groups and United Nations (UN) humanitarian pooled funds. International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA). (2017). *The IASC and the global humanitarian coordination architecture: How can NGOs engage?* Retrieved 10 January 2022, from https://reliefweb.int/report/world/iasc-and-global-humanitarian-coordination-architecture-how-can-ngos-engage.

4 L/NAs are not a homogenous group and can include a diverse range of organizations such as local and national organizations, civil society organizations, faith-based organizations, Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies, and local and national government authorities. This index specifically focuses on the engagement of L/NNGOs.

5 Development Initiatives. (2021). *Global Humanitarian Assistance Report*. Retrieved 10 January 2022, from https://devinit.org/resources/global-humanitarian-assistance-report-2021/.

6 Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC). (2020). *Global Review of Cluster Composition*. Retrieved 10 January 2022, from https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/2021-07/IASC%20Coordination%20Structures%20at%20Country%20Level%20in%202020.pdf.

7 H. Slim. (2021). *Localization is Self-Determination. Frontiers in Political Science*. Retrieved 10 January 2022, from https://doi.org/10.3389/fpos.2021.708584.

8 United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). (2021). *Humanitarian Needs Overview – Syrian Arab Republic*. Retrieved 10 January 2022, from https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/syria_2021_humanitarian_needs_overview.pdf.

9 Ibid.

10 A.J. Clements, E. Ismail Abu Mohammed, S. Yousef and J. Wellard. (2021). *Localisation in Humanitarian Leadership: Profiling national NGO engagement in international humanitarian coordination structures in the MENA region*. ICVA. Retrieved 10 January 2022, from https://www.icvanetwork.org/uploads/2021/07/ICVA_MENA-Localisation-Report.pdf.

11 D. Gorevan, M. Hemsley and R. Sider. (2020). *Hard Lessons: Delivering assistance in government-held areas of Syria*. Norwegian Refugee Council and Oxfam. Joint Agency Briefing Paper. July. Retrieved 10 January 2022, from https://www.nrc.no/resources/briefing-notes/hard-lessons---delivering-assistance-in-government-held-areas-of-syria/. DOI: 10.21201/2020.6249.

12 C. Els, K. Mansour and N. Carstensen. (2016). *Funding to national and local humanitarian actors in Syria: Between sub-contracting and partnerships*. Copenhagen: L2GP. Retrieved 10 January 2022, from https://www.local2global.info/humanitarian-economy/funding-syria/.

13 United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR). (2021). *2020 Annual Report: 3RP Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan in Response to the Syria Crisis*. Retrieved 10 January 2022, from https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/86636.

14 The measurement frameworks and indicators that were consulted include the Seven Dimensions of Localisation and Emerging Indicators developed by Global Mentoring Initiative (GMI) under the Start Network's Disaster and Emergencies Preparedness Programme (DEPP); Localisation Performance Measurement Framework developed by Network for Empowered Aid Response (NEAR); Global Localisation Framework developed by Christian Aid, CARE, Tear Fund, ActionAid, CAFOD and Oxfam; Empowering Local and National Humanitarian Actors (ELNHA) Theory of Change Phase 2 – 2019 developed by Oxfam; Strengthening Participation, Representation and Leadership of Local and National Actors in IASC Humanitarian Coordination Mechanisms developed by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC); Measuring Localisation: Framework and Tools developed by the Humanitarian Advisory Group; How to Promote Gender-Response Localization in Humanitarian Action by UN Women; Pathways to Localisation developed by ECHO consortium; Guidance Note on Localisation developed by the Grand Bargain; and other relevant frameworks, initiatives and commitments including the Grand Bargain, Charter for Change and Principles of Partnership.

15 Drawn from the Seven Dimensions of Localisation and Emerging Indicators developed by Global Mentoring Initiative (GMI) under the Start Network's Disaster and Emergencies Preparedness Programme (DEPP).

16 See endnote 1.

17 See endnote 2.

18 See endnote 3.

19 See Strengthening Participation, Representation and Leadership of Local and National Actors in IASC Humanitarian Coordination Mechanisms, interim guidance on Localisation and the COVID-19 Response, a Step by Step Guide to the Humanitarian Programme Cycle, and other system-level efforts including guidance by the Global Protection Cluster on how localization can be integrated into the Humanitarian Programme Cycle.

20 According to the 2020 IASC Global Review of Cluster Composition (which included assessment of Lebanon and Syria), L/NNGOs held an average of 6% of seats globally on Humanitarian Country Teams. Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC). (2020). *Global Review of Cluster Composition*. Retrieved 10 January 2022, from https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/2021-07/IASC%20Coordination%20Structures%20at%20Country%20Level%20in%202020.pdf.

21 A.J. Clements, E. Ismail Abu Mohammed, S. Yousef and J. Wellard. (2021). *Localisation in Humanitarian Leadership.* Op. cit.

22 Ibid.

23 Ibid.

24 Ibid.

25 Ibid.

26 Ibid.

27 Ibid.

28 United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR). (2019). *2018 Annual Report: 3RP Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan in Response to the Syria Crisis.* Retrieved 10 January 2022, from https://reliefweb.int/report/turkey/3rp-regional-refugee-and-resilience-plan-response-syria-crisis-2018-annual-report-enar.

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34 Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC). (2020). *Global Review of Cluster Composition.* Op. cit.

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