
LET US LEAD

A case study on the engagement of local and national non-government organizations in the humanitarian coordination architecture for the Syrian refugee response in Jordan

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The decade-long Syria crisis remains one of the world's worst humanitarian emergencies. In response, the international community has established a complex humanitarian coordination architecture that operates within Syria and across neighbouring countries. Despite the critical role played by local and national non-government organizations, their leadership and engagement remain limited, and they lack adequate resources and support to reach their potential. 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.

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ACRONYMS

| | |
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| 3RP | Syria Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan |
| CBO | Community-based organization |
| GoJ | Government of Jordan |
| HC | Humanitarian Coordinator |
| HIMAM | Coalition of Jordanian Human Rights Civil Society Organizations |
| HPF | Humanitarian Partners Forum |
| INGO | International non-government organization |
| JHF | Jordan Humanitarian Fund |
| JIF | Jordan INGO Forum |
| JONAF | Jordanian National NGOs Forum |
| JRP | Jordan Response Plan |
| LHL | Local humanitarian leadership |
| L/NA | Local/national actor |
| L/NNGO | Local/national non-government organization |
| LGBTQI+ | Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex |
| NGO | Non-government organization |
| OCHA | United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs |
| RC/HC | UN Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNHCR | United Nations Security Refugee Agency |
| WASH | Water, sanitation and hygiene |
| WLO | Women-led organization |
| WRO | Women's rights organization |

INTRODUCTION

The decade-long Syria crisis remains one of the world's worst humanitarian emergencies. Since the outbreak of the Syrian civil war in 2011, thousands of people have lost their lives, and many more have been injured. According to the United Nations (UN), 13.4 million people in Syria are in need of humanitarian assistance and protection.¹ The conflict has displaced over six million people inside Syria, and over five million people have fled the country as refugees.² In response to the enormous influx of Syrian refugees in the Middle East region, the international community has established a complex humanitarian coordination architecture that operates within Syria and across neighbouring countries.

Local and national actors (L/NAs) play a key role in humanitarian action, and are often the first and best responders when a crisis strikes.³ L/NAs already provide leadership for the Syrian refugee response in Jordan; 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.⁴ L/NAs must drive the direction of policies and programmes in the emergencies and 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. L/NAs have long called for greater leadership in humanitarian responses. Commitments such as the Agenda for Humanity, the Grand Bargain and the Charter for Change have accelerated efforts to ensure responses are 'as local as possible, and as international as necessary'.⁵ However, transforming the system also 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.

METHODOLOGY

This case study summarizes research undertaken on the engagement of L/NAs in the international humanitarian coordination architecture for the Syrian refugee response in Jordan. The research explores the barriers and enablers for the leadership, representation and participation of local and national NGOs (L/NNGOs). Oxfam reviewed academic and grey literature from publicly available sources on relevant themes, including localization,⁶ local humanitarian leadership (LHL)⁷ and humanitarian coordination architecture,⁸ with a particular emphasis on publications focused on the Jordan context. The review primarily covered English language documents published between 2015 and 2021.

The research also draws upon five semi-structured key informant interviews with representatives from four L/NNGOs and one UN agency, which Oxfam conducted virtually between December 2021 and January 2022. Oxfam offered access to an Arabic-speaking interpreter; however, all the informants chose to conduct their interviews in English. Participating L/NNGOs included one royal-affiliated organization and two women-led and women's rights organizations (WLOs/WROs). Oxfam selected these organizations based on their current or previous relationship with Oxfam, and/or their familiarity with the humanitarian coordination architecture in Jordan.

CONTEXT

Jordan is one of the countries most affected by the Syria crisis, hosting the second highest share of refugees per capita globally.⁹ Syrian refugees now make up more than 10% of Jordan's population, with the majority living outside of formal camps in urban areas.¹⁰ Jordan currently hosts 760,000 refugees and asylum seekers, including 673,000 people from Syria, along with 87,000 people from countries such as Iraq, Yemen and Sudan.¹¹ The country is also home to more than 2 million registered Palestine refugees, including around 18,000 Palestine refugees from Syria.¹² Jordan faces a complex set of development challenges,¹³ worsened by the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.¹⁴

A 2021 CIVICUS report on civic freedoms downgraded the situation in Jordan from 'obstructed' to 'repressed' and warned civil society space is shrinking, with increasing curbs on freedom of association and expression, peaceful assembly and the internet.¹⁵ Legislation such as the 2008 Law on Societies (revised in 2009) heavily restricts the activities of L/NNGOs, particularly WLOs, WROs and organizations working on LGBTQI+ issues.¹⁶ Government authorities have introduced new limitations 'under the banner of preventing terrorism, political disorder and security challenges',¹⁷ and the registration and operations of L/NNGOs are closely monitored, further constraining L/NNGO activities.¹⁸

Since the beginning of the Syria crisis, humanitarian agencies have scaled up operations in Jordan and a flood of new NGOs and community-based organizations (CBOs) has appeared.¹⁹ By 2020, more than 6,500 NGOs were registered with the Ministry of Social Development.²⁰ Humanitarian actors also include Western and Gulf donors, UN agencies, multilateral institutions, NGOs, CBOs and private sector entities.²¹ The profile of NGOs is diverse, including INGOs, L/NNGOs, royal-affiliated organizations (who often receive preferential treatment)²² and Islamic and Christian faith-based organizations.²³ There are also various NGO working groups and forums operating in the country, including the Jordan INGO Forum (JIF), the Jordanian National NGOs Forum (JONAF) and the Coalition of Jordanian Human Rights Civil Society Organizations (HIMAM).

OVERVIEW OF HUMANITARIAN COORDINATION ARCHITECTURE

The Government of Jordan (GoJ) plays a leading role in humanitarian leadership, decision making and planning for the Syrian refugee response, in coordination with the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), and in partnership with donors, UN agencies, NGOs, refugees and host communities.²⁴ In 2014, the GoJ created the Jordan Response Platform for the Syrian Crisis, comprising 11 task forces, a secretariat and the Jordan Response Information Management System. The Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation leads the preparation of the Jordan Response Plans (JRPs) every two years and is responsible for granting project approval to humanitarian actors responding to the crisis.²⁵

First developed in 2015, many considered the JRP ground-breaking, as the first nationally led response plan of its kind.²⁶ Key frameworks guiding the response include *Jordan 2025: A National Vision and Strategy*, and successive JRPs (the current one covers 2020–22).²⁷ In 2020, the GoJ revised the JRP to focus on seven sectors (reduced from 12): public services, education, health, economic empowerment, social protection and justice, shelter, and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH).²⁸ Jordan is one of five countries (along with Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon and Turkey) included in

the UN-led Syria Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP), which was launched in December 2014 with a rolling two-year timeframe.²⁹

The UN Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator (RC/HC) and the UNHCR Country Representative co-chair the Humanitarian Partners Forum (HPF, similar to a Humanitarian Country Team), which includes representatives from donors, UN agencies, JIF and JONAF.³⁰ UNHCR is responsible for managing the Za'atari, Azraq and Emirati Jordan camps,³¹ while UN agencies and NGOs lead sector and sub-sector working groups in coordination with government line ministries.³² The Inter-Sector Working Group links the sectors and reports to the Inter-Agency Task Force.³³ In 2019, the RC/HC also established a Cross-Border Task Force to oversee the strategic coordination of cross-border operations as part of the Whole of Syria approach.³⁴

MAIN FINDINGS

MODEST LEADERSHIP, REPRESENTATION AND PARTICIPATION OF L/NNGOS IN DECISION MAKING AND COORDINATION MECHANISMS

International actors headquartered in the Global North continue to dominate the humanitarian coordination architecture in Jordan. In recent years, there has been modest progress by international actors to promote greater leadership, representation and participation of L/NNGOs in decision making and coordination mechanisms, including the HPF, sector working groups and UN pooled fund governance structures. However, some L/NNGOs felt disillusioned about the lack of progress on global localization commitments. One L/NNGO explained: 'Localization has lost momentum in Jordan. We feel that sometimes localization is only a slogan'.

The HPF is the primary strategic humanitarian forum for the refugee response in Jordan, where donors and UN agencies represent 78% of the membership (28 seats).³⁵ The JIF and JONAF make up the remaining 22%, with four seats each.³⁶ In addition to increasing the representation of L/NNGOs on the HPF, in 2021, two-thirds of the forum's meetings included strategic discussions led or co-led by L/NNGO representatives.³⁷ A Localization Task Team of the HPF co-chaired by UN Women, JIF and JONAF is currently working to translate the Grand Bargain commitments into concrete actions.³⁸

UN agencies hold all the sector lead roles in Jordan, although INGOs also co-lead several sectors.³⁹ UN agencies and royal-affiliated L/NNGOs co-lead the Food Security Sector and the Protection Sector. On the Jordan Humanitarian Fund (JHF) Advisory Board, donors and UN agencies account for 67% of the membership (eight seats); while INGOs and L/NNGOs represent the remaining 33%, with two seats each.⁴⁰ The JHF requires that Advisory Board sector review committees must include at least one L/NNGO representative to determine funding allocations to prioritized activities and sectors.⁴¹

The participation of L/NNGOs in the humanitarian coordination architecture in Jordan has improved, although engagement levels are lower than the global average and it remains difficult for L/NNGOs to influence coordination mechanisms in the same way as their international colleagues. L/NNGOs account for 31% of members in sector and sub-sector working groups in Jordan, compared with the global average of 44%.⁴² In a more positive trend, L/NNGOs outnumber other actors in the Health Sector and Child Protection Area of Responsibility, and are equally represented with INGOs in the WASH Sector.⁴³

JONAF, royal-affiliated organizations, and larger well-established organizations primarily dominate L/NNGO leadership, representation and participation in the humanitarian coordination architecture in Jordan. Engagement with the GoJ remains limited, as national authorities or line ministries do not formally participate in the HPF, sector and sub-sector working groups, or JHF Advisory Board.⁴⁴ Gender-disaggregated data for membership of humanitarian coordination mechanisms was unavailable, and gender or other inclusion considerations did not feature prominently in the literature review or key informant interviews.

Some L/NNGOs perceived the humanitarian coordination architecture to be complex, inaccessible or primarily serving the interests of international actors. L/NNGOs found JRP planning processes sporadic, inconsistent and having short-term vision, with limited entry points for influence and engagement. Several WLOs and WROs felt that the GoJ deliberately excluded them from the processes for expressing 'controversial' views during previous consultations. The relevance of planning processes and incentives for engagement was also a key issue. One Irbid-based L/NNGO felt that as they primarily delivered projects outside the capital of Amman, the JRP was less relevant for their work.

L/NNGOs working on 'sensitive' issues face backlash from the GoJ, along with conservative religious, tribal and community groups.⁴⁵ This is particularly problematic for WLO/WROs and L/NNGOs working on human rights, secularism, gender equality and access to justice. One WLO/WRO explained that a UN agency refused to sign a memorandum of understanding with them, given their relationship with the GoJ on refugee and protection issues, and some INGOs had avoided working with them due to pressure from the Ministry of Interior. One WLO/WRO reported verbal and physical harassment from religious groups and media. Organizations working on LGBTQI+ issues face the possibility of legal action from the GoJ.

International actors' perceptions and assumptions regarding L/NNGOs were influential, particularly those related to their commitment to humanitarian principles and level of capacity.⁴⁶ There were concerns regarding the perceived politicization of L/NNGOs and their ability to respond to humanitarian needs in an independent, impartial and neutral manner.⁴⁷ However, several interview respondents felt that the perceptions of L/NNGOs had improved in recent years,⁴⁸ and that this had accelerated opportunities for greater localization of the humanitarian coordination architecture in Jordan.

A range of practical and logistical barriers also limit the leadership, representation and participation of L/NNGOs in the humanitarian coordination architecture in Jordan. The sheer number and diversity of L/NNGOs can make it difficult for international actors to identify appropriate focal points for engagement. A chronic lack of staff resourcing and sustainable funding hinders L/NNGOs' ability to participate. International actors host most coordination meetings in English and the use of humanitarian jargon and acronyms is common, with limited resourcing for interpretation and translation services.⁴⁹

There are a number of enabling factors which have promoted greater LHL in Jordan. Genuine commitment and leadership from international actors such as the RC/HC and the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) have been crucial in carving out space for L/NNGOs. However, several L/NNGOs felt that the localization agenda in Jordan was 'personality driven', rather than being rooted in institutional reform. The use of evidence has helped build the argument for localization and demonstrate incentives, particularly to donors. One UN agency interview respondent noted that their programme costs reduced by 45% when awarding direct funding to L/NNGOs, compared with sub-granting arrangements.⁵⁰

The HPF has advocated to the GoJ and donors on some of the specific access constraints and bureaucratic impediments faced by humanitarian agencies, including L/NNGOs, working in Jordan. International actors are actively seeking out and supporting L/NNGOs for leadership positions in humanitarian coordination mechanisms to increase levels of representation, and are working to increase the provision of translation and interpretation services to facilitate more meaningful participation and engagement by L/NNGOs. OCHA has also recognized the challenge in identifying

suitable partners, given the large number of humanitarian actors operating in Jordan. To address this, it has created a Humanitarian Partners Directory that is available in English, and will soon be available in Arabic.⁵¹

LACK OF QUALITY AND SUSTAINABLE FUNDING FOR L/NNGOS

International actors, particularly UN agencies, continue to dominate the humanitarian financing landscape in Jordan, and most L/NNGOs receive very limited direct funding. While overall humanitarian financing for the Syria crisis continues to grow, it is declining for some countries in the Middle East region. Humanitarian financing for the response in Jordan reached an all-time high of \$1.2bn in 2019,⁵² before falling to \$775m in 2021.⁵³ In 2021, L/NNGOs received a mere 7% (\$56m) of total humanitarian funding in Jordan.⁵⁴ Of this, just 13% (\$7m) was awarded directly to L/NNGOs, with the rest awarded through partnerships with international actors such as UN agencies and INGOs. In 2021, JHF allocations totalled \$2m, with just 15% (\$300k) of this funding going directly to L/NNGOs.⁵⁵

The lack of sustainable, multi-year funding for L/NNGOs is a fundamental obstacle to greater localization of the humanitarian response in Jordan.⁵⁶ In 2021, just over half of the partnership agreements between international actors and L/NNGOs were multi-year in duration, with almost one-fifth of such agreements for less than 12 months.⁵⁷ However, the average duration of JHF partnership agreements in 2021 was just eight months.⁵⁸ Given the protracted nature of the crisis, intersecting humanitarian and development needs of refugee and host populations, and the time required to secure government project approvals, the duration of funding remains prohibitive.

One of the key barriers for improved access to direct funding for L/NNGOs is that donors often lack the staffing or financial resources to manage a multitude of small grants.⁵⁹ Donors may also have to contend with an unfavourable domestic legislative and policy environment that restricts their ability to fund L/NNGOs directly. Instead, donors rely on intermediaries such as UN agencies and INGOs to broker funding to L/NNGOs.⁶⁰ Rigorous donor compliance requirements pose particular challenges for L/NNGOs. One WLO/WRO recounted their experience of contacting the JHF each year to express their interest in applying for funding, only for OCHA to advise that the L/NNGO still failed to meet the minimum due diligence criteria, particularly the required mandatory policies and manuals.

Most L/NNGOs interviewed appeared to be familiar with the country funding landscape, key donors and their priorities, and the different funding opportunities available. However, L/NNGOs found funding proposal and application procedures to be complex, often with short, fixed deadlines. Language barriers were a regular hindrance for L/NNGOs, with many donors requiring proposals in English. Another concern raised was the lengthy periods and delays between the submissions of proposals, and interruptions in funding leading to breaks in programming. The JHF demonstrated examples of good practice, as OCHA publishes strategy allocation papers and proposal templates in Arabic, and provides training, workshops, and communication materials tailored to L/NNGOs.

All L/NNGOs raised concerns about inadequate coverage of overhead costs such as staff salaries, basic infrastructure and office supplies, which in turn undermined their institutional sustainability. In cases where international partners did not share or cascade overhead costs, L/NNGOs lacked the bargaining power to negotiate more favourable terms. One L/NNGO said that: 'We don't have a formula for cost sharing, so we are not good at advocating'. Some international actors do offer funding mechanisms that permit L/NNGOs to claim eligible overhead costs. These include the JHF and UNHCR Project Partnership Agreements, which allow L/NNGO partners to claim a maximum of 7% and 4%, respectively, of the total project budget for administrative or indirect costs.

The GoJ retains close regulatory oversight over the operation of NGOs in the country. WLOs, WROs, refugee-led organizations and those working on LGBTQI+ issues face particular restrictions in

obtaining registration,⁶¹ and humanitarian actors must seek prior approval for all projects receiving international funding.⁶² Delays in securing government project approval are common, and approval can take up to six months.⁶³ These L/NNGOs can be subject to increased scrutiny and delays, while royal-affiliated organizations are often able to negotiate better terms and circumvent bureaucratic impediments through personal connections.⁶⁴

Several L/NNGOs acknowledged that international actors already do, and should continue to, play a valuable role in leading negotiations with the GoJ on access and operational challenges. For example, in 2021 donors and UN agencies included L/NNGOs in their request to the GoJ for an exemption to the foreign funding approval process. L/NNGOs also noted that additional support for independent (non-royal) organizations, WLOs, WROs, refugee-led organizations and organizations working on LGBTQI+ issues was a key priority to support the effective leadership, representation and participation of L/NNGOs.

INEQUITABLE PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN INTERNATIONAL ACTORS AND L/NNGOS

Given the continued challenges faced by L/NNGOs in Jordan to access direct funding from donors, the dominant model of partnership is between UN agencies and L/NNGOs. As large bureaucracies, UN agencies and INGOs can be resistant to change, worried about losing their own reach and influence, and reluctant to share power, decision making and funding.⁶⁵ Shrinking levels of humanitarian financing and waning donor interest in humanitarian needs have exacerbated this dynamic. This has led to partnerships between international and local actors in Jordan often being characterized by tightly controlled sub-contracting relationships, rather than equitable and genuine collaboration.

These types of transactional partnership arrangements rarely allow the opportunity for L/NNGOs, particularly smaller, grassroots organizations, to be involved in project planning, design and decision making.⁶⁶ International actors often fail to appreciate the strategies and priorities of L/NNGOs, and instead seek to impose their own approaches and activities. There are limited opportunities to co-design projects and proposals, which can sometimes lead to conflict when, as one WLO/WRO explained: 'We don't obey what they ask for'. Significant pressure is also placed on L/NNGOs to achieve quick results, on ambitious beneficiary targets.⁶⁷

The inflexibility of donor funding and compliance mechanisms, and risk aversion, present substantial challenges for L/NNGOs. International actors often require partners to adhere to a complex series of policies and processes, which creates a significant administration burden. One L/NNGO recounted an experience working with a large INGO in which the INGO expected the L/NNGO to finance activity costs upfront, and seek reimbursement several months later. When the L/NNGO attempted to negotiate changes to this arrangement, the INGO threatened to cut off support if the L/NNGO did not comply: 'We were told we were a high-risk partner and we should feel privileged to be getting the funding'.

Some international actors also demonstrated a tendency to play a gatekeeper role in managing engagement and visibility between L/NNGO partners and donors.⁶⁸ One WLO/WRO explained that in one of their funding arrangements with an INGO partner, the GoJ rejected their request for project approval. However, the INGO partner encouraged the L/NNGO to continue to deliver the proposed activities, and then removed any reference to their collaboration in the final donor reports. Opportunities to participate in joint meetings between donors and INGO partners were limited. One WLO/WRO explained: 'It's better if we're part of these conversations from the beginning, but very few invite us'.

Some L/NNGOs have responded to these experiences by being more selective with the donors they work with, preferring to seek out long-term partnerships with international actors who share a

common vision and approach. L/NNGOs supported a continued (and in some cases expanded) role for international actors in Jordan, feeling they could add value in negotiations with the GoJ, amplify the voices of civil society, support advocacy efforts on 'sensitive' issues, provide technical and advisory support, and strengthen the capacity development of L/NNGOs. L/NNGOs also wanted to see donors take more leadership to drive the agenda to promote more equitable and genuine partnerships.

LIMITED INVESTMENT IN LONG-TERM INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY STRENGTHENING OF L/NNGOS

Limited access to direct funding, short-term agreements, insufficient coverage of overheads, and issues with staff turnover and retention continue to stifle the organizational development of L/NNGOs in Jordan. These challenges are particularly pertinent for WLOs and WROs, who reported a chronic lack of access to sustainable funding to support their ongoing operations and activities.⁶⁹ For international actors, the main barriers to long-term L/NNGO capacity strengthening include short-term planning and funding cycles, lack of expertise, and limited resources, rather than a lack of interest.⁷⁰

International actors consider issues related to risk management to be one of the key obstacles to localization in Jordan.⁷¹ The most commonly cited capacity gaps for L/NNGOs include project management, monitoring and reporting, proposal development, technology skills, financial management, and institutionalized systems and policies.⁷² L/NNGOs often lack the time and resources to participate in capacity-strengthening initiatives,⁷³ a problem exacerbated by the lack of funding for overheads.⁷⁴ L/NNGOs can also be reluctant to admit to gaps in their capacity and to request additional support.⁷⁵

Despite the strong demand from L/NNGOs for capacity-strengthening support, a recent analysis found that just one in five projects between international actors and L/NNGOs in Jordan includes a 'serious capacity-building element'.⁷⁶ The needs and priorities of international actors or the latest humanitarian buzzwords can drive the focus of capacity-strengthening initiatives,⁷⁷ leading L/NNGOs to perceive these efforts as top-down and one-way.⁷⁸ Training also tends to be generic and geared towards transferring technical knowledge, rather than cultivating skills to promote broader institutional strengthening.⁷⁹

There was little acknowledgement that capacity strengthening requires a certain competency which not all organizations possess.⁸⁰ A lack of coordinated approaches has limited the cumulative impact of previous capacity-strengthening initiatives, and it is common for international actors to duplicate efforts.⁸¹ There is also limited evidence of training providers carrying out follow-up exercises or evaluations with participants on the impact of these initiatives, or providing ongoing support to apply their learning.⁸² For L/NNGOs who had received capacity-strengthening support, there is often no clear pathway for 'graduation',⁸³ where L/NNGOs may be able to access larger or longer grants based on a reduced risk profile.

While many L/NNGOs in Jordan already possess strong capacity, some gaps do exist and more targeted, longer-term support is required to strengthen their institutional capacity. It is important that international actors recognize that L/NNGOs can also offer significant value and expertise based on their knowledge of the context and access to communities. International actors should therefore prioritize reciprocal approaches with L/NNGOs that are demand-driven. The most effective mechanisms identified to strengthen the capacity of L/NNGOs in Jordan include on-the-job training, mentoring and coaching delivered by a native Arabic speaker.⁸⁴ International actors should also consider the issue of staff retention and sustainability when designing capacity-strengthening initiatives.

TARGETED RECOMMENDATIONS

ALL INTERNATIONAL ACTORS TO:

- Fulfil existing commitments to the Grand Bargain and Charter for Change and ensure that at least 25% of humanitarian funding is shared directly with L/NNGOs. This should include support for efforts to agree on a common definition and methodology for calculating that percentage.
- Create spaces for regular dialogue within humanitarian coordination mechanisms on issues of colonialism, racism, power and patriarchy to reflect on how these dynamics continue to drive inequitable partnerships between international actors and L/NNGOs, and to identify opportunities for reform.
- Ensure the equitable and meaningful participation of women and men from L/NNGOs representing local civil society and marginalized groups in leadership, decision making and coordination of the humanitarian response. International actors should reinforce the role and capacities of L/NNGOs in line with Grand Bargain commitments. Specific funding to support L/NNGO positions in these mechanisms is also crucial.
- Advocate to the GoJ for more inclusive JRP planning processes that amplify the roles, views and contributions of L/NNGOs.
- Promote a stronger enabling environment for local humanitarian leadership. This includes continuing to advocate to the GoJ for assistance in resolving the access and bureaucratic impediments that affect the operations and effectiveness of L/NNGOs, including issues related to registration and project approval.
- Review the use of existing language, including acronyms and jargon, in humanitarian operations, and commit to phasing out terms such as 'aid', 'beneficiaries', 'developing countries', 'capacity-building' and 'the field'.
- Improve reporting of direct and indirect funding flows to L/NNGOs, including WROs and WLOs, using OCHA's Financial Tracking System.

DONORS TO:

- Make greater levels of direct, flexible and multi-year funding available to L/NNGOs. Take steps to address specific barriers faced by L/NNGOs by reviewing due diligence requirements, making proposal applications available in Arabic, and providing technical support and feedback during proposal development.
- Increase the volume of annual funding contributions to the JHF to provide greater resources for L/NNGOs and support investment in innovative funding modalities to promote greater localization, resilience and sustainability of the response.
- Provide dedicated funding to support simultaneous interpretation and translation services in humanitarian coordination mechanisms including the HPF, sector and sub-sector working groups, and the JHF Advisory Board.
- Reform partnership policies and guidelines to include requirements for international actors to demonstrate evidence of equitable, genuine and strategic partnerships with L/NNGOs in proposals, and share overhead costs with partners.

UN AGENCIES AND INGOS TO:

- Develop multi-year plans to strengthen the capacity of L/NNGO members in the HPF, sectors, and the JHF Advisory Board. Where possible, elevate national staff of UN agencies, INGOs or L/NNGOs to sector leadership positions.
- Pursue equitable, genuine and strategic partnerships with L/NNGOs that include opportunities for joint project planning and decision making, support for overhead costs, and investments in capacity-strengthening initiatives that are defined and prioritized by L/NNGOs. UN agencies and INGOs should prioritize support for WLOs, WROs and independent organizations in Jordan.
- Support stronger linkages and collaboration between international NGO forums such as JIF, and national NGO forums such as JONAF and HIMAM.

HPF TO:

- Undertake an annual mapping of L/NNGOs to identify priorities for capacity-strengthening initiatives, and encourage joined-up and coordinated approaches by international actors.

JHF TO:

- Increase the average JHF project duration to 12 months, and influence updates to the Country-Based Pooled Fund Global Guidelines to increase the maximum project duration from 12 months to 24 months.
- Develop strategies to increase the number of L/NNGO partners eligible to receive funding. Take steps to address specific barriers faced by L/NNGOs by reviewing due diligence requirements (specifically related to mandatory policies and manuals), and providing technical support and feedback during proposal development.

L/NNGOS TO:

- Advocate for equitable levels of L/NNGO representation on humanitarian leadership, decision making and coordination forums, including the HPF, sector working groups, and JHF Advisory Board. L/NNGOs should encourage a particular focus on the role of WROs, WLOs and Jordanian women leaders.
- National NGO forums such as JONAF should facilitate opportunities for L/NNGOs to agree on key messages in pre-meetings and consultations ahead of humanitarian decision-making processes, including the preparation of the JRP, and HPF and JHF Advisory Board meetings.

NOTES

- 1 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
- 2 Ibid.
- 3 Local and national actors 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 case study specifically focuses on the engagement of L/NGOs.
- 4 H. Slim. (2021). *Localization is Self-Determination*. *Frontiers in Political Science*. Retrieved 10 January 2022, from <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpos.2021.708584>
- 5 V. Barbelet. (2018). *As Local as Possible, as International as Necessary: Understanding Capacity and Complementarity in Humanitarian Action*. Overseas Development Institute. Retrieved 10 January 2022, from https://odi.org/documents/5889/As_local_as_possible_as_international_as_necessary_understanding_capacity_and_comp.pdf
- 6 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>
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