

# ROADMAP FOR FEMINIST LOCAL HUMANITARIAN LEADERSHIP

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## **Abstract**

Gender and power inequalities continue to shape humanitarian responses in Asia, both within crisis-affected communities and within the humanitarian system itself. These inequalities are deeply rooted, intersectional, and often reinforced by top-down international approaches. This roadmap sets out Oxfam in Asia's commitment to a feminist, locally led humanitarian system that centres crisis-affected people and recognizes gender and inclusion-focused civil society organizations (CSOs), especially feminist women's rights organizations (WROs), as leaders, not just implementers. Developed with feminist partners across Asia, the roadmap provides a shared vision and practical direction for transforming how power, resources and leadership are exercised in humanitarian action from 2025 to 2030.

# Contents

Acronyms	4
Overview of the 2025-2030 roadmap	5
What is feminist local humanitarian leadership?	6
Who are FLHL actors?	9
Pillar 1   Valued as responders, leaders & equal partners	14
Pillar 2   Enabled and resourced to respond	21
Pillar 3   Collectively lead for change	30
Pillar 4   Accountable for FLHL	35
Bibliography	43
Notes	45

# Acronyms

<b>ASEAN</b>	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
<b>AWID</b>	Association for Women's Rights in Development
<b>COR</b>	Cluster Operational Response
<b>CSO</b>	Civil Society Organization
<b>FLHL</b>	Feminist Local Humanitarian Leadership
<b>FTS</b>	Financial Tracking Service
<b>GAM</b>	Gender Age Marker
<b>GBV</b>	Gender-Based Violence
<b>GHT</b>	Global Humanitarian Team
<b>GiE</b>	Gender in Emergency
<b>GIO</b>	Gender Interest Organization
<b>HCT</b>	Humanitarian Country Team
<b>IASC</b>	Inter Agency Standing Committee
<b>INGO</b>	International Non-Governmental Organization
<b>LGBTQIA</b>	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual
<b>LHL</b>	Local Humanitarian Leadership
<b>SOGIESC</b>	Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, Gender Expression and Sex Characteristics
<b>SRHR</b>	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
<b>WLO</b>	Women-Led Organization
<b>WRO</b>	Women's Rights Organization

# Overview of the 2025-2030 roadmap

Oxfam in Asia and its partners recognize that gender and power inequalities persist both in communities affected by crises and within the broader humanitarian system. These inequalities are historically rooted, intersectional and layered – existing among diverse crisis-affected populations, between these populations and humanitarian actors, and even within humanitarian institutions themselves. As an international actor, Oxfam holds significant power, which it can either use to reinforce these inequalities or to transform them.

As part of its feminist approach,<sup>1</sup> Oxfam commits to leveraging its power to foster gender-transformative and socially inclusive change while promoting local leadership in humanitarian response.<sup>2,3</sup> Ultimately, this vision aims for all our responses to center 'crisis-affected women, men, girls and boys and people of diverse SOGIESC (sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics) in all their intersecting identities'.<sup>4</sup> Achieving this requires the consistent application of feminist principles – reflected in how we work, with whom we work, and what we work on together.<sup>5</sup>

This roadmap was developed with partners from a feminist, diversified network across Asia. Insights were drawn from consultations with partners and local actors from feminist networks, recommendations from various Asia regional workshops and convenings, inputs from Oxfam's Global Humanitarian Team (GHT) gender focal points, as well as contributions from partnership and Local Humanitarian Leadership (LHL) groups and Asia regional platform staff. These perspectives were carefully reflected upon and used as key references. It builds on the lessons, experiences and voices of Feminist Local Humanitarian Leadership (FLHL) actors in the region and is a second iteration of *The Roadmap Towards a Feminist Approach to Local Humanitarian Leadership and Partnerships in Asia* developed in April 2021.<sup>6</sup> The document integrates internal Oxfam policies, standards and frameworks alongside relevant external literature, referenced at the end of the text.

Oxfam aims to uphold humanitarian principles in all its responses, while simultaneously using a feminist approach. This not only requires us to tackle the inequalities and discrimination within the humanitarian system consciously, but also to openly recognize that – alongside commitment, innovation, care, courage and bravery – inequality and discrimination still exist in the humanitarian system. A feminist approach ensures that we take inequality and power into account and challenge the humanitarian principles to change and dismantle the very patriarchal and colonial systems from which the concept of humanitarian aid was born.

– Oxfam's Gender in Emergencies (GiE) Strategy 2022

# What is feminist local humanitarian leadership?

*A feminist approach calls for gender-transformative and socially inclusive change.*

- Oxfam's GiE Strategy 2022

This roadmap frames FLHL around three interlinked elements essential to driving change:

## 1 | Intersectional and locally led

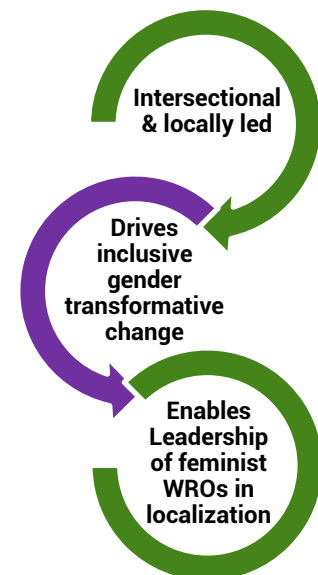
FLHL recognizes that gender and power inequalities are embedded in crisis-affected communities; therefore, our response should be intersectional – centred on the diverse and gendered needs of crisis-affected people.<sup>7</sup>

Oxfam and partners know that crisis impacts people differently and disproportionately based on their diverse identities – such as race, ethnicity, caste, class, age, SOGIESC and disability – which define the power assigned to different groups of people. It is also established globally that gender inequalities and social exclusion both drive and are made worse by crises. Therefore, an effective humanitarian response must enable affected communities to become active agents in their own survival and recovery.<sup>8</sup>

Despite this imperative, the global humanitarian system continues to fall short.<sup>9</sup> Crisis-affected populations frequently report that the system does not listen, learn or adapt to their realities.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, it fails to dismantle the unequal power structures that underpin many of the crises themselves. Meaningful accountability mechanisms must support people to influence decision-making without fear of retribution.

In Asia, local civil society organization (CSO) responders have echoed these concerns.<sup>11</sup> They point out that international actors often prioritize high-profile crises – those that attract media coverage or have dramatic mortality rates – leaving many vulnerable communities behind. When responses are initiated, they are often top-down and disconnected from local contexts.<sup>12,13</sup> Even when local partners are engaged, they are rarely involved in genuine co-creation.

By contrast, FLHL actors – whether or not they self-identify as feminist – are often the first responders. Despite limited resources, they act out of a deep, sustained commitment to their communities. These local CSOs are often composed of crisis-affected individuals themselves and are best positioned to understand and address complex, context-specific inequalities. As such, elevating local CSO leadership in humanitarian response is crucial to realizing FLHL.



## 2 | Gender transformative, socially inclusive

FLHL recognizes the pervasive gender and power imbalances in humanitarian systems, many of which are rooted in patriarchal and colonial legacies. Response strategies must therefore be explicitly gender transformative and socially inclusive, whether through targeted or mainstreamed approaches.

*A feminist approach ensures that we take inequality and power into account and challenge the humanitarian principles to change and dismantle the very patriarchal and colonial systems from which the concept of humanitarian aid was born.*

- Oxfam's GiE Strategy 2022

Centring people's diverse and gendered needs means embedding a gender and inclusion approach in all aspects of humanitarian work. This can take the form of:

- **Gender-targeted or gender-specific actions**, which directly aim to address gender and inclusion issues. These are typically led by feminist women's rights organizations (WROs) who specialize in specific thematic issues; or
- **Gender mainstreaming actions**, which do not aim to directly address gender or social inequalities but ensure that they are considered in the design and delivery of humanitarian responses. This is a mandate for all humanitarian actors who work with diverse groups in crises.

Globally, humanitarian responses remain inconsistent in addressing the gendered needs of marginalized and vulnerable populations.<sup>14</sup> While actors increasingly recognize the importance of integrating gender and inclusion, implementation remains inconsistent. Many interventions continue to focus on visible material aid, often neglecting the underlying power dynamics that shape how resources are accessed and distributed.

By ignoring these invisible power structures – many of which are rooted in entrenched gender norms – humanitarian actors create a disconnect between themselves and crisis-affected individuals, as well as within the communities they serve. Responses often remain gender-blind, applying one-size-fits-all approaches that fail to consider the differing needs of women, men, girls, boys and people of diverse SOGIESC. Consequently, rather than mitigating inequalities, these responses can inadvertently reinforce them.

Local feminist WROs play a critical role in challenging these systemic inequalities. They aim to develop and deliver gender-transformative and socially inclusive responses. Yet, despite their expertise and leadership, these organizations continue to face a lack of access to gender-relevant funding. This leaves many local CSOs – both those employing targeted approaches and those mainstreaming gender – in a position where they carry the mandate for transformative change but lack the resources to achieve it.

### 3 | Feminist WROs can lead in localization

An FLHL approach recognizes the unique challenges faced by feminist WROs, especially during crises and in restrictive civic environments. These organizations often face heightened risk and backlash due to the transformative nature of their work.

Despite their contributions, feminist WROs are not equitably benefiting from the global push for localization. Larger, male-dominated organizations continue to dominate funding and influence.<sup>15</sup> A truly feminist localization process must intentionally support feminist WROs through tailored partnerships that prioritize safety, flexibility and access to resources.

Oxfam acknowledges that power imbalances exist not just globally, but within the local humanitarian ecosystem – between governments and CSOs, among sectors and between large and small organizations. With this awareness, Oxfam collaborates with local CSOs as part of a feminist, diversified network, using an equitable partnership model that allows for tailored, adaptive and inclusive collaboration.<sup>16</sup>

Oxfam employs affirmative action for CSOs focused on gender and social inclusion – especially those that identify as feminist, women-led or WROs. These CSOs are essential actors in targeted, gender-transformative responses. At the same time, other local organizations that may not identify as feminist but still promote mainstream gender and inclusion are equally vital. These include development-focused CSOs, gender interest organizations (GIOs), women-led organizations (WLOs) and others.<sup>17</sup>

# Who are FLHL actors?

FLHL actors are individuals and organizations across the humanitarian system that contribute to making humanitarian response both locally led and feminist. While not all actors may explicitly identify as feminist, all humanitarian stakeholders are accountable to the gender and inclusion standards articulated in this roadmap.

These categories are grounded in the Oxfam in Asia (OIA) context and are not meant to rigidly classify actors. Rather, they serve as working definitions that will evolve. The aim is to clarify the roles and responsibilities of different actors in advancing FLHL.

**Table 1: Definitions of key actors in FLHL**

Actors	Description based on OIA context
<i>International humanitarian actors</i>	These are power holders in the humanitarian field – such as donor governments, UN agencies and international NGOs (including those who have localized into smaller legal entities) – who control and allocate humanitarian resources. They often receive the bulk of humanitarian funding and partner with local CSOs or national governments in humanitarian responses.
<i>Crisis-affected people</i>	While they are the main stakeholders in any humanitarian response, crisis-affected people are frequently sidelined by humanitarian actors. They are still seen as passive beneficiaries rather than active agents, leaders and partners in the humanitarian response process, and responses often fail to centre their diverse needs or meaningfully integrate gender and inclusion approaches.
<i>Gender and inclusion-focused CSO responders</i>	<p>The primary mission of these local CSOs is to address gender and/or inclusion issues. They have established experience and expertise in gender-targeted or gender-specific programming and influencing. These organizations recognize that crises are both drivers of and deepen existing inequalities. They therefore prioritize the needs of vulnerable and marginalized groups, including women, girls, boys, LGBTQIA+ individuals, and people with disabilities.</p> <p>Through community organizing and cultivating women's leadership, these organizations support women and young women leaders to engage in humanitarian responses and influence policy change. They work across stakeholders – from government to community actors – to embed gender and inclusion in response efforts.</p> <p>In the OIA FLHL mapping and consultations, these CSOs include feminist and WROs that identify as feminist, as well as others that do not use the label but engage in gender-focused work. Some are women-led or gender-interest organizations, while others may have inclusion-focused mandates.</p>
<i>All local CSO responders</i>	This group includes all local CSOs involved in humanitarian response – regardless of whether they are explicitly focused on gender and inclusion or self-identify as feminist or non-feminist. They include both gender-focused CSOs and those whose primary work may be in other areas, but that still integrate gender and inclusion considerations into their response. These actors understand that gender dynamics affect all aspects of crisis response and strive to embed that understanding across sectors and activities.

Source: This is the iteration of the FLHL Roadmap framework / first draft plus various FLHL consultations in the region, as well as all the context analysis on the topic, which are outlined in the document itself and references.

Notes: The above table describes the different FLHL actors who are actively taking part in the humanitarian action. These come out after the consultation and different organization are using these in their own way. The organizations and actors are discussed as International Humanitarian Actors, Crises-Affected people, Gender and Inclusion-focused CSO responders, and all local CSO responders who are FLHL actors at different levels.

**Table 2: Feminist local humanitarian leadership roadmap summary**

The FLHL Roadmap is organized around three interlinked pillars. Each pillar represents a core shift required in how power, resources and leadership are understood and practiced in humanitarian action.

	<b>Pillar 1</b> <b>Valued as responders, leaders and equal partners</b>	<b>Pillar 2</b> <b>Enabled and resourced to respond</b>	<b>Pillar 3</b> <b>Collectively lead for change</b>
<i>Change focus</i>	Remove the barriers to power faced by crisis-affected people and local CSO actors, especially feminist WROs, through equitable and tailored partnerships. This will enable them to lead in responding to their diverse needs in crises, and to call humanitarian power holders to share power.	Enable crisis-affected people and local CSO actors, especially feminist WROs, to claim their power to respond with a strong gender and inclusion approach. This will be realized through better quantity, quality and delivery of gender and inclusion resources by international humanitarian actors.	Mobilize the collective power of local CSO actors and feminist WROs to transform the humanitarian system to be locally led, feminist in practice, and rooted in gender and social justice.
<i>Feminist principles</i>	FLHL promotes equitable partnerships between international and local CSOs and crisis-affected people. These partnerships are grounded in mutual accountability and a shared commitment to driving gender-transformative and socially inclusive change in crisis responses.	FLHL enables local CSOs and crisis-affected people to more effectively access and control resources to advance gender-transformative and socially inclusive change in crisis response.	FLHL is driven by the collective leadership of crisis-affected people and local CSOs who shape the humanitarian system towards being locally led, driven by feminist principles, and committed to gender-transformative and socially inclusive change.
<i>Key barriers and issues</i>	A feminist, intersectional and locally led humanitarian system is held back by inequitable partnerships and selective crisis support. International actors often control program design and decision-making, while local CSOs are left to implement without meaningful input or shared accountability. Their contributions are routinely overlooked in communications, and they bear the brunt of flawed, externally driven programs. Feminist WROs face low trust and limited access to funding, despite leading vital gender-focused work. Humanitarian spaces remain exclusionary, structurally favouring international actors and sidelining local CSOs, especially feminist WROs, through technical and systemic barriers. Women leaders are often tokenized, with little power or sustained support to influence decisions. While	A feminist, intersectional and locally led humanitarian system relies on fair access to quality, tailored and flexible resources for local CSOs, especially feminist WROs. While commitments to gender and inclusion have increased, they remain poorly resourced and inconsistently prioritized. Funding flows are opaque, with no standardized tracking systems to determine how much funding reaches WROs or supports gender-targeted actions. Feminist WROs face steep barriers to access, burdensome requirements, short-term grants and inflexible modalities – while male-led organizations continue to dominate funding pipelines. Despite the centrality of their work, feminist WROs often receive token or project-based support, rather than long-term institutional investment. International actors rarely act	A feminist, intersectional and locally led humanitarian system is hindered by unequal access to power and platforms for local CSO responders, especially feminist WROs. Regional and international advocacy spaces remain largely inaccessible, often controlled by International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGO) and donors who act as gatekeepers. Local actors are excluded from formal decision-making platforms and face rigid donor requirements that few grassroots groups can meet. Competition with INGOs for visibility, especially in government forums, further sidelines CSOs' contributions and reinforces power imbalances. Feminist WROs also face political and cultural threats – such as red-tagging or backlash in high-risk contexts – that limit their ability to advocate safely. Without

	larger, male-led CSOs benefit from the localization agenda, feminist actors are marginalized. Political will on gender remains weak, with many international actors resisting gender accountability and delaying concrete commitments to inclusive humanitarian action.	as effective intermediaries that channel resources to local feminist organizations, and few use their influence to shift donor practices. This has left feminist and gender and inclusion-focused actors severely underfunded and unable to sustain transformative work, weakening the potential for inclusive, community-led crisis response.	meaningful access to advocacy spaces and decision-making, their perspectives and priorities remain underrepresented, weakening the impact of humanitarian action and slowing gender-transformative change.
Action areas	<p>Action 1: Promote meaningful participation and leadership of diverse crisis-affected people.</p> <p>Action 2: Transform ways of working in partnerships.</p> <p>Action 3: Improve practices on capacity building and sharing.</p> <p>Action 4: Change current practices on programming for gender and inclusion.</p>	<p>Action 1: Increase the quantity of funding for gender and inclusion.</p> <p>Action 2: Improve the quality of funding for gender and inclusion.</p> <p>Action 3: Build institutional, operational and programming capacity.</p>	<p>Action 1: Expand and strengthen platforms for gender and inclusion advocacy.</p> <p>Action 2: Support the Six-point Agenda for Women's Leadership in Humanitarian Systems in Asia.</p>
	<b>Goal A: International humanitarian actors must shift power</b>		
International humanitarian actors	Goal 1A: International humanitarian actors reform their policies and practices to proactively partner with crisis-affected people and local CSO responders, especially feminist WROs, and support these actors to lead in gender-transformative and socially inclusive crisis response.	Goal 2A: International humanitarian actors increase and improve the quality of the funding they dedicate to gender-transformative and socially inclusive crisis response, ensuring that local CSOs, especially feminist WROs, and crisis-affected people lead the response.	Goal 3A: International humanitarian actors align with the agendas set by local CSOs – especially feminist WROs – and crisis-affected people, promote these agendas, and revise policies and practices to support a feminist, locally led humanitarian system.
	<b>Goal B: Advance leadership of crisis-affected people in all their diversity</b>		
Crisis-affected people	Goal 1B: All FLHL actors (international and local) enable crisis-affected people, in all their diversity, to lead response efforts and centre their gendered needs and interests. They are treated as equal partners in humanitarian action.	Goal 2B: All FLHL actors (international and local) ensure that local CSOs and crisis-affected people in all their diversity have greater control over how resources are allocated to address gender and social inclusion in their communities.	Goal 3B: All FLHL actors (international and local) strengthen the collective organizing power and support the gender and social inclusion agendas of marginalized crisis-affected people, bolstering their influence and advancing these agendas.
	<b>Goal C: Strengthen targeted gender &amp; inclusion responses through tailored partnerships</b>		
Gender & inclusion-focused CSO responders	Goal 1C: Local gender and inclusion-focused CSO responders, especially feminist WROs, are genuinely recognized by all FLHL actors (international and local) as responders and partners. They are valued for their expertise in targeted gender and inclusion responses in crises.	Goal 2C: Local gender and inclusion-focused CSO responders, especially feminist WROs, have better access to and control over resources, enabling them to both deliver and sustain gender-targeted and gender-transformative responses. This is achieved through the support and allyship of all FLHL actors (international and local).	Goal 3C: Local gender and inclusion-focused CSO responders, especially feminist WROs, are connected through alliances and networks. They can therefore amplify the voices of marginalized, crisis-affected people in order to collectively influence the humanitarian system to be gender transformative and socially inclusive, with the support and allyship of all FLHL actors

			(international and local).
	<b>Goal D: Strengthen vertical &amp; inclusion mainstreaming through equitable partnerships</b>		
<i>All local CSO responders</i>	Goal 1D: Through equitable partnerships with international humanitarian actors, all local CSO responders are enabled to embed feminist principles and gender and inclusion across their humanitarian sectors and are accountable for doing so.	Goal 2D: Through equitable partnerships with international humanitarian actors, all local CSO responders receive sufficient resources to embed gender and social inclusion in all their humanitarian responses and across their sectors and are accountable for doing so.	Goal 3D: All local CSO responders are supported to advance the advocacy agendas of marginalized groups towards gender-transformative and socially inclusive change, across all humanitarian decision-making spaces and mechanisms.

Source: This is the iteration of the FLHL Roadmap framework / first draft plus various FLHL consultations in the region, as well as all the context analysis on the topic, which are outlined in the document itself and references.

Notes: This table summarizes the three main pillars of the roadmap, outlining the changes needed, feminist principles, key barriers, and priority actions to advance feminist leadership in humanitarian systems.

**Table 2: Roadmap indicators and goals across four pillars for advancing feminist local humanitarian leadership.**

	<b>Pillar 4</b> <b>Ability to safely seek accountability</b> <b>Roadmap indicators</b>		
	<i>Pillar 1</i> <i>Valued as responders, leaders and equal partners</i>	<i>Pillar 2</i> <i>Enabled and resourced to respond</i>	<i>Pillar 3</i> <i>Collectively lead for change</i>
	<b>Goal A. International humanitarian actors must shift power</b>		
<i>International humanitarian actors</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policies and mechanisms for tailored partnerships</li> <li>• Tailored partnership models</li> <li>• Long-term strategic partnerships</li> <li>• Systems to measure support for gender and inclusion outcomes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Percentage increase of gender and inclusion funding</li> <li>• Monitoring systems for gender and inclusion funding</li> <li>• Tailored funding modalities</li> <li>• Organizational self-assessment of partnership practices</li> <li>• Disaggregated tracking of funding to FLHL actors</li> <li>• Evidence of taking on brokering roles to enable direct funding access</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Humanitarian platforms engage local CSOs</li> <li>• Quantity of funding for advocacy</li> <li>• Agenda on gender and inclusion supported</li> </ul>
	<b>Goal B. Advance leadership of crisis-affected people in all their diversity</b>		
<i>Crisis-affected people</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perception of meaningful participation</li> <li>• Quality of accountability mechanisms</li> <li>• Quality of engagement of crisis-affected people in decision-making</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase in initiatives led by crisis-affected people</li> <li>• Funding for initiatives led by crisis-affected people</li> <li>• Self-perception of the quality of crisis-affected people's decision-making</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gender and inclusion advocacy led by crisis-affected people</li> <li>• Quality of engagement of humanitarian platforms with crisis-affected people</li> <li>• Self-perception of crisis-affected people on decision-making and agenda setting</li> </ul>
	<b>Goal C. Strengthen targeted gender and inclusion responses through tailored partnerships</b>		

<i>Gender &amp; inclusion-focused CSO responders</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-reports of tailored and equitable partnerships</li> <li>• Increased capacity building inputs</li> <li>• Self-reports on impacts of better partnerships</li> <li>• Perceived improvements in equitable partnerships</li> <li>• Perceived improvements in recognition and influence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased funding for gender-targeted action</li> <li>• Increased ratio of feminist WROs in humanitarian action</li> <li>• Quality of financial and non-financial support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stronger alliances for gender and inclusion</li> <li>• Increased engagement in humanitarian mechanisms</li> <li>• Increased financial and non-financial support for advocacy</li> <li>• Presence and diversity of supported advocacy platforms</li> </ul>
<b>Goal D. Strengthen gender &amp; inclusion mainstreaming through equitable partnerships</b>			
<i>All local CSO responders</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perceived improvements in equitable partnerships</li> <li>• Increased capacity for gender and inclusion mainstreaming</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased funding for gender and inclusion mainstreaming</li> <li>• Increased financial and non-financial inputs for gender &amp; inclusion mainstreaming</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased number of allies for gender and inclusion advocacy</li> <li>• Increased support for crisis-affected people-led gender and inclusion advocacy</li> <li>• Increase in humanitarian spaces' engagement with local CSOs</li> </ul>

Source: This is the iteration of the FLHL Roadmap framework / first draft plus various FLHL consultations in the region, as well as all the context analysis on the topic, which are outlined in the document itself and references.

Notes: This table outlines the roadmap indicators and goals under four pillars: (1) Valued as responders, leaders, and equal partners; (2) Enabled and resourced to respond; (3) Collectively lead for change; and (4) Ability to safely seek accountability. Each goal includes specific indicators such as partnership models, funding for gender and inclusion, advocacy engagement, and mechanisms for crisis-affected people's participation. The table highlights actions to shift power to local actors, advance leadership of crisis-affected people, strengthen gender and inclusion responses, and mainstream gender and inclusion through equitable partnerships.

# Pillar 1 | Valued as responders, leaders & equal partners

## Key issues

### Inequitable partnerships

#### Top-down approaches

Many local CSOs, including feminist WROs, report that partnerships with international humanitarian actors are characterized by top-down approaches. Local actors are seldom engaged in co-creating responses and are often excluded from program design – even in areas where they hold deep technical expertise, such as gender-based violence (GBV). Power is concentrated among international actors, who continue to control program design, resource allocation and decision-making during crises. These dynamics leave local CSOs with the burden of implementation, including bearing the blame for any flaws in externally imposed program designs. In some cases, inappropriate responses designed without local input have harmed communities, yet it is CSOs who risk losing the trust of the people they serve.

*No trust in women-led organizations for big projects, unlike mixed organizations that are led by men.*

– Respondent, mapping of FHLH actors, 2023

#### Lack of visibility and recognition

Local CSOs' contributions are often overshadowed by international partners and are invisible in public communications. This undermines the legitimacy of local actors and their ownership of humanitarian work.

#### Low trust in feminist WROs

Feminist WROs face unique barriers due to prevailing biases in the humanitarian system. To secure funding, these organizations are repeatedly required to prove their capacity. They are subject to burdensome reporting requirements and rarely recognized as humanitarian actors, even though their work directly addresses gender and power inequalities – areas essential to any inclusive crisis response. The lifesaving nature of their work, such as providing GBV and sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR) services, is often overlooked because it does not align with traditional definitions of humanitarian aid.

## Barriers to an intersectional and locally led response

### Selective support for crises

Despite mandates to address the diverse needs of crisis-affected people, international humanitarian actors continue to prioritize high-profile emergencies – those with significant media coverage or alarming mortality rates. As a result, local CSOs are left to respond to underfunded and underrecognized crises with limited resources. These CSOs are often not acknowledged as legitimate humanitarian responders, even as they fill critical gaps on the ground.

### Low priority for gender and inclusion

International humanitarian actors frequently fail to prioritize gender and inclusion in their responses. Gender and inclusion mainstreaming remains inconsistent, and funding for targeted gender actions is persistently inadequate. This leads to vulnerable groups – especially women and girls – being denied access to lifesaving services such as GBV and SRHR support. This neglect directly contradicts global commitments to gender-transformative and socially inclusive humanitarian action.

## Exclusion in humanitarian spaces

### Structural exclusion

Humanitarian coordination mechanisms remain largely inaccessible to local actors. Oxfam partners describe the system as designed by and for international actors, often excluding local CSOs through technical barriers such as language, process complexity or informal gatekeeping. Feminist WROs struggle to meaningfully engage in these platforms.

### Tokenism without influence

Women leaders from crisis-affected communities are occasionally given a seat at the table, but their participation is often symbolic, and they are not provided with the resources or capacity needed to shape decisions. Similarly, community-based groups that enter coordination spaces frequently lack the sustained support required to advocate for gender-transformative and inclusive humanitarian responses.<sup>18</sup>

### Unequal gains from localization

Feminist WROs and WLOs have not gained their fair share of benefits from the localization agenda. Larger, male-led and male-dominated organizations continue to receive the majority of resources and decision-making opportunities. Deeply rooted gender norms – where men and patriarchal mindsets are still widely viewed and dominated as default leaders – contribute to this disparity. The humanitarian field's bias toward material and 'lifesaving' responses marginalizes the contributions of feminist actors, despite their critical roles during crises.<sup>19</sup>

### Weak political will on gender commitments

Efforts to integrate gender into the localization agenda have been slowed by resistance from global leaders and donors. Many signatories to the Grand Bargain explicitly resisted self-reporting on gender commitments, such as tracking funding allocated to women's

organizations. They cited the 'lack of explicit gender commitments in the Grand Bargain' as justification for this resistance, despite existing global mandates. As a result, commitments to fund local WLOs remained optional until 2022.<sup>20</sup> This lack of political will resulted in weak accountability, although recent revisions – largely secured through feminist advocacy – have started to address these gaps.<sup>21, 22</sup>

## Pillar 1 goals

**Change focus:** Remove the barriers to power faced by local CSO actors by implementing affirmative action for those with targeted work on gender and inclusion, while challenging humanitarian power holders to redistribute power and holding them accountable.

**Feminist principles:** FLHL promotes equitable partnerships between international and local CSOs and crisis-affected people. These partnerships are grounded in mutual accountability and a shared commitment to driving gender-transformative and socially inclusive change in crisis response.

### Goal 1A: International humanitarian actors reform policies and practices for partnerships with local CSO responders

International humanitarian actors must reform their policies and practices to proactively partner with crisis-affected people and local CSO responders, especially feminist WROs, and support these actors to lead in gender-transformative and socially inclusive crisis response.

### Goal 1B: Enable the leadership of crisis-affected people in humanitarian response

All FLHL actors (international and local) enable crisis-affected people in all their diversity to lead response efforts, centre their gendered needs and interests and treat them as equal partners in humanitarian action.

### Goal 1C: Local gender and inclusion-focused CSO responders are valued as responders and for gender and inclusion work

Local gender and inclusion-focused CSO responders, especially feminist WROs, are genuinely recognized and valued by all FLHL actors (international and local) as responders and partners alongside other humanitarian actors. They are also valued for their expertise on gender-targeted gender and inclusion responses in crises.

### Goal 1D: All local CSO responders are better enabled to embed feminist principles and gender and inclusion

Through equitable partnerships with international humanitarian actors, all local CSO responders are enabled to embed feminist principles and gender and inclusion across their humanitarian sectors and are accountable for doing so.

## Action areas

### Action 1. Promote meaningful participation and leadership of diverse crisis-affected people

Ensure the full and meaningful inclusion, participation and leadership of women, those with diverse gender identities, marginalized groups and communities in decision-making forums, bodies and mechanisms, as emphasized in humanitarian feminist advocacy agenda development discussion workshops by Asian feminist humanitarian leaders. FLHL Advocacy agenda emphasizes the importance of fully including women, diverse gender identities, and marginalized groups in decision-making within humanitarian efforts. It highlights the need for CSOs to analyze and address gender-based barriers and to strengthen networks for collective action in response to shrinking civic spaces. INGOs should focus on building the leadership capacity of women and supporting feminist analysis throughout the humanitarian program cycle. Effective partnerships between CSOs and government actors are crucial for improving coordination and resource utilization in humanitarian responses. Finally, a clear framework defining the roles of all humanitarian stakeholders is needed to ensure coordinated efforts and uphold feminist principles in participation.

#### Guiding frameworks and normative references

##### *Oxfam GiE Standards*

**GiE Standard 1.1:** Categorized as a means of enabling transformative change, it emphasizes the importance of creating an environment where inclusive leadership and diverse voices can thrive. This includes embracing the freedom for all individuals – especially women and those from diverse SOGIESC – to express their views without fear of disapproval or retaliation. It also entails fostering positive, inclusive and collaborative leadership styles across all levels of Oxfam structures, partner organizations and the communities it serves.

GiE Standard 1.1 also calls for actively facilitating space for gender equality champions to lead, especially those from historically marginalized groups. This aligns with efforts to break down systemic barriers and challenge entrenched power dynamics in humanitarian settings. To this end, the standard encourages promoting positive forms of power, such as 'power with', 'power within' and 'power to', as guiding principles for leadership and engagement. These commitments are essential to advancing gender parity and social inclusion throughout humanitarian response systems.

### Action 2. Transform ways of working in partnerships

Local actors across Asia emphasize that meaningful change requires shifts in individual attitudes, organizational practices and partnership behaviours. They urge INGOs to recognize local organizations – particularly WROs and WLOs – as first responders and leaders, not merely as implementers. This will involve moving away from top-down approaches toward equitable partnerships rooted in power sharing, co-creation and shared decision-making throughout the project cycle.

In practice, this will look like partnership agreements that embed mutual accountability and shared leadership; the adoption of codes of conduct promoting respectful and non-paternalistic engagement; and the co-design, co-implementation and co-evaluation of programs in areas where local CSOs bring expertise, such as GBV and SRHR. It also

includes implementing risk-sharing mechanisms that acknowledge the exposure local actors face and supporting their protection, while consistently highlighting their contributions across all external communications.

As well as taking concrete actions to amplify local actors' voices in government and external spaces, INGOs should critically reflect on their own biases and behaviours in relationships with local actors. They should prioritize mutual learning and active listening to marginalized voices, especially women and girls, while recognizing and addressing power imbalances and the unique risks feminist WROs face.

#### Guiding frameworks and normative references

##### ***Oxfam GiE Standards:***

- Recognize the diversity, experience and priorities of WROs, WLOs and GIOs; engage without duplication.
- Map WROs and GIOs at the start of any response to understand their roles and aspirations.
- Prioritize partners with gender equality expertise and commitment to feminist principles.
- Support regional learning networks and feminist solidarity across countries.

##### ***Oxfam LHL Top Tips:***

- Co-assess partner capacities and needs rather than rely on one-sided due diligence.
- Ensure partnership agreements define shared values, roles, communications and accountability.

##### ***Oxfam Feminist Principles***

- Power sharing: Shift power by centring leaders from the Global South and of diverse gender identities.
- The personal is political: Behaviour and values of INGOs must reflect the systems they seek to transform.

### Action 3: Improve practices on capacity strengthening

Local actors call for a fundamental shift in ways of working that prioritizes building the long-term capacity of local organizations to operate independently and sustainably. They emphasize the need for technical assistance to enhance their skills in project design, financial management, proposal writing and communication. Support should also extend to helping local groups harness technology through relevant training and resources. INGOs are encouraged to facilitate peer-to-peer learning opportunities, allowing local organizations to exchange experiences and best practices, particularly in humanitarian advocacy, strengthening their leadership in disaster risk prevention, preparedness and risk mitigation.

#### Guiding frameworks and normative references

##### ***Oxfam GiE Standards:***

- Use participatory capacity-sharing methods like co-implementation and secondments.
- Provide training and mentoring on Gender in Emergencies before and throughout a response.

##### ***Oxfam LHL Top Tips:***

- Support self-assessments and joint capacity evaluations that identify strengths and areas for development.

## Action 4: Change current practices around programming for gender, Diversity and inclusion

FLHL actors consulted across Asia emphasized that programming for gender, diversity and inclusion must reflect the leadership, knowledge and lived experience of local actors, particularly feminist WROs, WLOs and gender and inclusion-focused CSOs. They called for international humanitarian actors to make specific changes in programming design, decision-making and data use, in line with Oxfam feminist principles and standards.

### Ways of working

To advance this shift, programming must be co-created with local organizations, moving away from top-down approaches and enabling shared decision-making at every phase of the program cycle. Local actors must be treated as leaders – not just implementers – with their contextual knowledge and expertise respected in setting agendas, shaping priorities and delivering gender-transformative work. Their lived experience, particularly those of women's organizations and other intersectional and marginalized groups, must be integrated throughout program design, delivery and evaluation. Programming should work through and strengthen existing community structures, aligning with long-term, community-led goals, rather than short-term project deliverables. Inclusive, community-based mechanisms such as GBV and SRHR watch groups should be supported, bolstering accountability and local monitoring. Joint needs assessments and gender-power analyses must be conducted alongside local humanitarian actors to shape more relevant, equitable responses.

### GBV programming as a targeted or standalone program

FLHL actors advocate that GBV be recognized as a standalone and priority issue, not a secondary concern. This entails ensuring sustained funding, developing survivor-centred referral pathways, maintaining safety protocols for both survivors and frontline responders and incorporating services that are inclusive of LGBTQIA+ people. Survivors' experiences must be documented ethically for use in advocacy and learning.

### Gender and inclusion data

Local actors highlight the critical need for disaggregated, evidence-based data to guide programming. WROs and CSOs must be equipped to conduct gender and power analyses, collect quantitative and qualitative crisis data, and translate findings into accessible formats in local languages. A feminist approach to data collection – grounded in ethics, confidentiality and safety – is essential, and any data sharing must uphold the privacy and rights of affected communities.

#### Guiding frameworks and normative references

##### **Oxfam Feminist Principles:**

*Nothing about us without us:* Ensure meaningful engagement of local communities, WROs, WLOs, GLOs and other diverse and intersectional groups across all stages of the humanitarian program cycle – from design and implementation to evaluation and learning. (See GiE Standard 1)

*GBV in emergencies:* Collaborate with feminist WROs, WLOs and GIOs, along with young people,

men and people of diverse SOGIESC, to transform social norms that sustain GBV. Ensure programming is resourced to support the strategic and immediate needs of survivors and communities. (GiE Standard 5.2)

### Capacity sharing in practice

#### ***Peer-to-peer learning between feminist WROs and humanitarians***

#### ***Secondment programs with partners to develop their own policies***

WROs and feminist network members can organize learning, sharing, exchange visits, and secondment to the national and INGOs to share experiences and gather knowledge on gender transformative humanitarian action led by them. Also, they can work together on developing different policies and guidelines, which are considered essential documents for an organization or network.

**Table 3: Do's and don'ts for humanitarian coordination from partnerships and LHL top tips**

Don't	Do
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exclude local voices: Do not neglect the participation of local and national actors in decision-making processes.</li> <li>• Undermine local leadership: Avoid undermining existing national or local coordination structures.</li> <li>• Limit contributions: Do not disregard local actors' inputs or require them to communicate in dominant languages.</li> <li>• Restrict policy influence: Do not allow donor, UN, government or INGO policies to inhibit the roles of national and local actors.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure representation: Actively involve local and national actors, including Oxfam partners, in coordination mechanisms (clusters, Humanitarian country team-HCT, meetings and advisory groups).</li> <li>• Advance inclusion: Prioritize WROs in coordination discussions.</li> <li>• Support existing structures: Strengthen local and national coordination structures and encourage government leadership in humanitarian responses.</li> <li>• Develop transition plans: Establish plans to transfer humanitarian leadership to national and sub-national authorities when feasible.</li> <li>• Broker collaborations: Facilitate networks and alliances among diverse actors (civil society, government, private sector, etc.).</li> <li>• Promote local expertise: Champion local contributions and women's leadership in humanitarian and development efforts.</li> </ul>

Source: Oxfam<sup>23</sup>

Notes: This table lists actions to avoid and recommended practices for equitable partnerships and inclusive coordination in humanitarian response.

# Pillar 2 | Enabled and resourced to respond

## Key issues

Consistent, sufficient and tailored funding for a feminist and gender-transformative humanitarian response remains out of reach for many local humanitarian partners. Despite the critical work led by feminist WROs – particularly on gender-targeted or gender-specific programming such as SRHR, GBV and psychosocial support – the humanitarian architecture has failed to adequately support or fund their efforts.

### Anti-gender backlash and the global funding landscape

There is a growing global backlash against gender equality and human rights, which has translated into funding cuts and regressive policy shifts. Across several countries, anti-rights and anti-gender movements have gained political ground, weakening public support and government accountability for gender justice.<sup>24 25 26</sup>

In humanitarian action, this has led to further marginalization of gender programming.<sup>27</sup> The Women's Refugee Commission highlights how major aid cuts, such as those by the US, have undermined GBV programming globally.<sup>28</sup> Similarly, a previous report from the Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID) already showed that funding to feminist movements remains disproportionately small, with just less than 1% of gender equality aid reaching feminist and WROs.<sup>29</sup> The more recent reduced funding environment and shrinking civic space further restrict the ability of WROs and GIOs to carry out long-term, rights-based humanitarian work.

### Poor funding of gender and inclusion in humanitarian action

The humanitarian system continues to fall short in resourcing local feminist WROs, who undertake vital gender-targeted and gender-specific work in emergencies.<sup>30</sup> These organizations are often the first to respond and possess deep contextual knowledge and long-standing community trust. Yet despite their crucial contributions to advancing gender equality, they operate with severely limited financial support.

A persistent and foundational problem is the absence of standardized, reliable data on gender-specific humanitarian funding. The Inter Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Gender with Age Marker (GAM), while designed to help measure such allocations, is inconsistently applied across humanitarian organizations, rendering its data unusable for comparative or global tracking.<sup>31</sup> Where attempts have been made to quantify gender-relevant funding, the numbers are starkly low. A recent study revealed that between 2018 and 2021, gender mainstreaming accounted for just 1.17% of total humanitarian funding, gender-specific programming for 0.99%, and GBV work for only 0.46%.<sup>32</sup>

## Gender-targeted or gender-specific funding

Feminist WROs working in critical sectors such as SRHR, GBV and psychosocial support face chronic underfunding. Global reports from UN Women and UNFPA show that funding for GBV rarely reaches even one-third of identified needs, while SRHR funding lags even further behind.<sup>33 34</sup> Compounding this issue, humanitarian actors may misclassify or overstate the degree to which programming is gender-targeted, masking the true scale of underinvestment.<sup>35</sup>

This funding gap contradicts both global humanitarian commitments and Oxfam's own GiE Standards. For example, GiE Standard 3.3 calls for a proactive approach to gender-transformative actions, and Standard 4.2 mandates the integration of GBV programming alongside Safe Programming. GiE Standard 6 explicitly requires resourcing for both gender-targeted and gender-mainstreamed actions. However, Oxfam itself faces challenges in tracking its financial commitments to gender-focused work. The organization does not tag its humanitarian budgets for GiE, making it impossible to measure progress systematically.

## Gender mainstreaming funding

Despite global consensus on the need to integrate gender across all aspects of humanitarian work,<sup>36</sup> financial allocations remain alarmingly low. Furthermore, there is no standardized mechanism for assessing how effectively gender mainstreaming is implemented in humanitarian responses.

In Oxfam, GiE Standard 3 mandates gender mainstreaming in all aspects of programming, with a suggested allocation of at least 15% of all humanitarian funding. However, as above, the organization struggles to measure and aggregate these expenditures across responses.

## Local CSOs are critically underfunded for gender and inclusion

While small amounts of funding are directed toward gender and inclusion in humanitarian response, local WROs remain largely invisible in efforts to track these funds.<sup>37</sup> In 2021, multilateral agencies received 83% of global gender-specific funding, NGOs received 13% and just 1.4% went to local and national organizations.<sup>38</sup> Yet these figures fail to clarify how much of that 1.4% was directed to feminist WROs, exposing the limitations of current data systems and highlighting how little funding actually reaches those working on the front lines.<sup>39</sup>

Data from the OCHA Financial Tracking Service (FTS) from 2019 to 2024 paints a similarly stark picture in Asia. National organizations received just 1.2% of humanitarian funding, and local organizations only 0.2%.<sup>40</sup> As with the 2021 global data, the amount of this funding that went to feminist WROs, WLOs and other GIOs cannot be identified due to the lack of proper identifiers or tracking mechanisms.<sup>41</sup> The majority of Grand Bargain signatories still do not track funds going directly to women-led or feminist local and national actors, underscoring the systemic neglect of these stakeholders.<sup>42</sup> Even OCHA's own public-facing databases do not disaggregate funding to local feminist organizations.

In addition to poor tracking, the practices of INGOs often exacerbate funding access issues. According to findings from our FLHL mapping, there are documented cases where INGOs compete with local feminist actors for humanitarian funding. This stems from a lack of recognition for the work of these WROs, insufficient awareness of power dynamics and

weak coordination. As a result, the work of feminist organizations is frequently sidelined, undermined or duplicated – further straining already scarce resources and delaying aid to affected communities.

Despite having FLHL as a priority, Oxfam's internal data also highlights major gaps. From 2022 to 2023, only 0.04% of its humanitarian funds were allocated to WROs and WLOs, amounting to US\$7.4m out of approximately US\$174m. While 24.8% of Oxfam's funding went to local CSOs – nearly meeting its internal commitment of 35% – only 17% of that went to women-led and feminist organizations.<sup>43 44</sup> These figures rely on proxy indicators, as the organization lacks standardized tools to determine precisely how much funding goes to each type of local organization.<sup>45</sup> Furthermore, Oxfam uses internal definitions of WROs, WLOs and GIOs that predate the IASC, and include a broader set of gender-interest organizations. This difference in classification adds complexity to any effort to harmonize tracking across organizations and systems. While some improvements are being made – such as through Country Operational Reports (COR) that now capture WRO-specific allocations – gaps remain.

In Asia, there have been promising shifts. For example, in the Pakistan flood response in 2022, 66% of Oxfam's humanitarian funding went to local CSO partners. However, it is impossible to track the proportion that went specifically to WROs and WLOs, highlighting the ongoing data and accountability gap, which challenges not only Oxfam but the rest of the humanitarian system.

## Rigid funding models for gender and inclusion

With nominal resources allocated to gender and inclusion work, access to flexible and sustainable funding remains a persistent barrier. In 2021, just 10 donors provided a staggering 89% of all gender-specific humanitarian funding, with the United States alone accounting for 28%. Together with the other top contributors – EU institutions, Norway, Canada, Japan, Sweden, Australia, UK, Germany and Italy – this leaves humanitarian actors heavily dependent on a narrow donor base, creating volatility and uncertainty in gender-responsive programming.<sup>46</sup> The issues with this reliance are highlighted by the recent dramatic cuts on humanitarian gender and inclusion from the US<sup>47</sup> – just one of the impacts of longstanding anti-rights and anti-gender trends that date back to the early 2000s.<sup>48</sup>

According to the 2024 Grand Bargain self-report, fewer than half of donors provided multi-year funding, and only four donors met the commitment of providing at least 25% of humanitarian funding to local and national actors as directly as possible. The report also highlights minimal progress on flexible and unearmarked or softly earmarked funding, reinforcing the highly restrictive nature of existing modalities. This rigidity particularly undermines local feminist WROs and GIOs, who are often unable to meet stringent requirements and face short-term project cycles that impede long-term planning and impact.<sup>49</sup> The short-term nature of funding – a barrier to gender-transformative programming – is still a common practice among donors, as it is defined by back donors, as in the case of Oxfam.<sup>50</sup>

CSO actors – especially feminist and WRO responders – across Asia reported that donor and INGO funding is frequently delivered in 'one-time, big-time' fashion – lacking continuity, institutional support or sustainability planning. Even where grants exist, they are often burdened with heavy branding requirements, inflexible timelines and technical conditions that local organizations struggle to meet. In addition to their limited duration and inadequate overhead coverage, feminist actors reported little access to institutional

funding that could advance strategic goals and support the broader women's rights agenda.<sup>51</sup>

Local organizations in Asia strongly advocate for funding modalities that are genuinely responsive to their needs: simplified grant applications and reporting requirements, faster disbursements and the use of local languages. They emphasize that timely and flexible funding is a precondition for effective and sustained gender-transformative action.

Oxfam is committed to improving the quality and equity of funding in humanitarian partnerships. This includes fostering equitable risk-sharing arrangements with partner CSOs and aligning efforts with the Grand Bargain commitments.<sup>52</sup> Progress toward these goals has been mixed, particularly in terms of delivering funding that reflects mutual accountability and shared responsibility. To advance this agenda, Oxfam is transitioning toward a confederated policy on indirect cost recovery, which aims to allocate at least 5% of humanitarian funding as flexible, unrestricted support to local partners – thereby enhancing their autonomy, sustainability and ability to deliver on gender and inclusion objectives.<sup>53</sup>

#### Guiding frameworks and normative references

##### ***External global policies and normative standards:***

- **Grand Bargain Commitment 2:** Endorses providing 25% of humanitarian funding to local and national actors, including feminist WROs, with quality funding that is multi-year, predictable and flexible.
- **Grand Bargain Commitment 6:** Encourages greater participation and leadership of local actors, especially WROs, in humanitarian decision-making, supported by equitable financing modalities.
- **IASC Policy on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls in Humanitarian Action (2017):** Urges humanitarian actors to ensure gender equality is adequately resourced in planning and response, including support for WLOs.
- **IASC Gender with Age Marker (GAM):** Provides tools for measuring gender responsiveness in programming, though limited uptake has restricted its potential for improving funding accountability.
- **IASC Guidance on the Provision of Overheads to Local and National Partners (2022):** Recommends fair allocation of indirect costs or overheads to local and national partners to strengthen sustainable and equitable partnerships in humanitarian action.
- **OECD DAC Recommendation on Ending Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment (2019):** Recommends resourcing gender-focused interventions, particularly for protection against GBV.
- **AWID's 'Where is the Money for Women's Rights?' initiative:** Highlights chronic underfunding of feminist WROs and advocates for direct, long-term core funding.
- **UN Women and UNFPA advocacy:** Emphasizes the systemic underfunding of GBV and SRHR responses in humanitarian settings, calling for increased investment.

##### ***Oxfam internal standards and policies:***

- **Oxfam GiE Standard 6:** Calls for effective resourcing for GiE, including both mainstreamed and gender-targeted/standalone funding, and adequate support for partner capacity and operational costs.
- **Oxfam GiE Standard 3.3:** Requires a proactive approach to gender-transformative programming, which necessitates adequate and flexible funding.
- **Oxfam GiE Standard 4.2:** Commits to integrating GBV programming and Safe Programming into humanitarian responses, requiring sustainable and predictable financial resources.
- **Oxfam Policy on Indirect Cost Recovery (in transition):** Aims to provide at least 5% flexible, unrestricted funding to local partners to support equitable risk-sharing and institutional

## Low support for operational capacity for gender and inclusion

Many local CSO responders operate with short-term and limited funding, which undermines the sustainability of their organizations. But while financial resources are vital, local CSOs' ability to deliver effective gender and inclusion work in humanitarian contexts also hinges on the strength, safety and resilience of their staff and systems. During humanitarian responses, teams are frequently overburdened, understaffed and emotionally taxed. The demand for psychosocial support is high, as staff regularly absorb secondary trauma from their frontline roles, especially in contexts of conflict and heightened GBV risks. For many, this results in burnout and exposure to safety and security challenges that are often left unaddressed.

Beyond formal staff, local CSO responders frequently collaborate with community-based organizations and volunteers from crisis-affected populations – including women, men, girls and boys – who play crucial roles in humanitarian response and often require their own forms of tailored support. Besides that, many women leaders are already capable of and have indigenous knowledge but the patriarchal system and institutional barriers are holding them back from playing their role efficiently and which is also undervalued by society.

Ultimately, strengthening the operational capacity of local humanitarian actors – especially feminist and WROs – requires a deliberate and sustained investment in both financial and non-financial resources. Actors across the region have raised clear asks: they need measures to help them invest in staff capacity and ensure retention, as well as specialized technical support to bolster both programming and institutional sustainability. These include strengthening skills in disaster risk management, gender-transformative and social inclusion work, negotiation, organizing, legal advocacy, leadership, communications and campaigning. Capacity building is also needed for operational areas like procurement, proposal writing, and financial and narrative reporting.

## Pillar 2 goals

**Change focus:** Equip local CSO actors, especially feminist WROs, with the power and resources to demand accountability from humanitarian power holders.

**Feminist principles:** FLHL enables local CSOs and crisis-affected people to more effectively access and control resources to advance gender-transformative and socially inclusive change in crisis response.

### Goal 2A: International humanitarian actors increase the quantity and quality of funding for gender-transformative and socially inclusive response

International humanitarian actors must increase and improve the quality of funding they dedicate to gender-transformative and socially inclusive crisis response. They must ensure that local CSOs – especially feminist WROs – and crisis-affected people lead the response.

## Goal 2B: Enable crisis-affected people to access and decide on the allocation of resources for gender and inclusion

All FLHL actors (international and local) ensure that local CSOs and crisis-affected people in all their diversity have greater control over how resources are allocated to address gender and social inclusion in their communities.

## Goal 2C: Local gender and inclusion-focused CSO responders have better access to and control over gender-targeted and transformative responses

Local gender and inclusion-focused CSO responders, especially feminist WROs, have better access to and control over resources to deliver and sustain gender-targeted and transformative responses. This is achieved through the support and allyship of all FLHL actors (international and local).

## Goal 2D: All local CSO responders are better resourced to mainstream gender and inclusion

Through equitable partnerships with international humanitarian actors, all local CSO responders receive sufficient resources to embed and be accountable for gender and social inclusion in all their humanitarian responses and across their sectors.

## Areas of action

### Action 1: Increase the quantity of funding for gender and inclusion

Feminist WROs have recommended an increase in funding for gender and inclusion programming, and specifically for feminist WROs and WLOs. They also highlighted the need to address biases that mean they are not taken seriously as legitimate humanitarian responders and are viewed as unable to manage large projects.

Moreover, one organization specifically recommended a standard ratio of funds be allocated in every crisis response to marginalized and vulnerable groups, such as women and people of diverse SOGIESC. This would address the inequity of humanitarian response, meeting FLHL actors' concerns around funds being distributed to specific areas rather than based on need.

#### Guiding frameworks and normative references

##### *Oxfam's GiE Standards*

- **GiE Standard 3:** Mandates that all Oxfam and partner programming integrate gender and inclusion as non-negotiables. This includes both mainstreaming GiE and delivering gender-targeted or standalone actions. The ultimate objective is to move toward gender-transformative change wherever contextually possible.
- **GiE Standard 6:** Reinforces the requirement for adequate and tailored funding for GiE, including core and project-based resourcing. It outlines key areas where funding must be

directed:

- Gender mainstreaming activities such as rapid gender and power analyses, inclusive staffing, community consultations and ongoing engagement.
- Standalone gender-transformative initiatives.
- Community-based projects led by women, girls and people of diverse SOGIESC.
- Flexible, long-term core funding for WROs.

## Action 2: Improve the quality of funding for gender and inclusion

Local CSO responders call on international humanitarian actors and partners to:

### Ensure flexibility in evolving crisis situations

Improve the flexibility of funding mechanisms to reflect the realities of working in humanitarian crises, allowing for timely and relevant responses. FLHL actors shared that stringent funding rules often hinder their ability to respond quickly and adapt to changing contexts. Donors must allow for adjustments in project plans and timelines, particularly when emergencies or unforeseen events occur.

### Provide core funding to cover operational and institutional needs

Local CSO responders emphasized the importance of core funding to sustain their organizations. Funding must include indirect costs such as those related to project management, staffing and logistics. These funds should not be limited to short-term initiatives but should support long-term institutional development, enabling local organizations – especially feminist WROs and WLOs – to build infrastructure, retain talent and respond effectively to future crises.<sup>54</sup>

### Offer multi-year funding to ensure continuity

Local actors shared that short-term grants do not allow for big, lasting change either in communities or within organizations. Multi-year funding arrangements offer the stability required for transformative work and institutional sustainability.

### Address safety and security concerns

Humanitarian actors must prioritize the safety and security of all local responders, especially women human rights defenders, who face unique risks. These risks are often concentrated in conflict zones, such as Myanmar, and are disproportionately shouldered by local organizations without adequate support. Safeguarding policies, GBV protection protocols and security planning must be built into funding frameworks to ensure safe operational environments.

### Simplify funding application and reporting processes

FLHL actors noted that funding standards and documentation requirements are often inaccessible or excessively burdensome. Requirements related to language, timelines, branding and reporting should be adapted to suit the capacities of smaller and local feminist organizations. Streamlining these processes will expand access and promote more inclusive participation in humanitarian action.

## Guiding frameworks and normative references

### **Partnerships and LHL Guides:**

- Advocates for quality funding through unrestricted funds and specific budget lines for core costs and support needs (e.g. security).
- Promotes jointly identified capacity-strengthening priorities and the provision of tangible assets to partners.
- Endorses multi-year funding approaches beyond single project cycles.

### **GiE Standards 1 and 6:**

- Emphasizes the provision of quality funding to feminist WROs that is long-term, flexible and includes core support.<sup>55</sup>
- Recommends regular internal reviews to reduce bureaucratic barriers and ensure streamlined partnerships with WROs, WLOs, GIOs and feminist networks.<sup>56</sup>

### **GiE Standard 4:**

Recognizes that feminist WROs are especially vulnerable to resistance and backlash in crises. Calls for the integration of risk mitigation and safety strategies into all response plans, ensuring that funding includes support for managing these challenges.

### **GiE Standard 6.1:**

- Urges periodic evaluation of Oxfam's funding and partnership procedures to eliminate red tape and facilitate more accessible funding pathways for feminist actors.

Source: Oxfam<sup>57</sup>

## Action 3: Build institutional, operational and programming capacity

Local CSO responders highlighted the importance of INGOs recognizing local organizations as equal partners – not merely as implementing agencies. They stressed the need for INGOs to share their technical expertise and provide deliberate support for strengthening the human resource capacity, institutional infrastructure and programming capabilities of local organizations. This support should aim to build long-term resilience and autonomy, enabling local actors to lead effective, sustainable and gender-transformative humanitarian responses.

**Table 4: Do's and don'ts in strengthening local humanitarian capacities**

Don't	Do
☒ Don't overlook local capacities: Neglecting local capacities can hinder effective responses.	✓ Conduct rapid mapping: Identify existing local actors, capacities and gaps.
☒ Avoid imposing objectives: Capacity strengthening should be demand-led, not dictated by external actors.	✓ Focus on WROs: Pay special attention to their resources and networks.
☒ Don't undermine local capacity: Refrain from recruiting partners' staff into Oxfam's response teams.	✓ Incorporate local input: Allow local partners to determine their capacity needs through self-assessment.
☒ Avoid short-term solutions: Focus on sustainable investments instead of quick fixes.	✓ Engage in reciprocal capacity assessments: Identify gaps for both international and local actors.
☒ Don't skip assessment processes: Failing to assess needs can result in ineffective	✓ Invest in sustainable capacity: Support long-term growth at sub-national or national levels.
	✓ Utilize diverse capacity-enhancement

<p>interventions.</p>	<p>approaches: Implement learning initiatives, mentoring and seconding experts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Establish various partnering approaches: Collaborate beyond single projects with a network of local actors.</li> <li>✓ Budget for long-term resources: Allocate funds specifically for sustainable capacity sharing.</li> <li>✓ Define transition options early: Plan for shifts to advisory roles in capacity-strengthening efforts.</li> </ul>
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Source: Oxfam<sup>58</sup>

Notes: This table provides practical advice for INGOs and partners on building sustainable capacity for local actors, emphasizing feminist principles and long-term investment.

# Pillar 3 | Collectively lead for change

## Key issues

### Unequal access to power and platforms in humanitarian advocacy

Although local CSO actors on FLHL engaged by Oxfam in Asia have limited regional and international engagement, they see the importance of participating in humanitarian spaces to promote feminist humanitarian advocacy. Local CSO responders view advocacy as a long-term response to crises, focusing on livelihood, disaster preparedness and crisis management. They also emphasize the role of INGOs in helping local organizations gain recognition from government institutions and establish sustainable partnerships. INGOs are therefore urged to invest in the issues raised by local CSOs. The issues are mentioned below:

#### **Restricted access to regional and international platforms**

Local CSO responders face persistent challenges in establishing networks and leading change. Many shared that access to regional and international forums is often limited or conditional, dependent on invitations from INGOs or donors. This gatekeeping severely undermines their visibility, credibility and influence in shaping humanitarian responses.

#### **Exclusion from humanitarian decision-making spaces**

Local CSO responders, especially gender and inclusion-focused groups and feminist WROs, highlighted their limited access to formal decision-making platforms in the humanitarian system. Additionally, they face rigid donor requirements and bureaucratic hurdles that many grassroots organizations are unable to meet. Fragmented coordination among actors further highlights the need for inclusive and well-resourced networks that can drive collective progress.

#### **Competition with INGOs and exclusion from consultations**

Competition from INGOs, especially for government engagement in regional spaces such as ASEAN, further marginalizes the critical contributions of local actors. The exclusion of local voices from key consultations limits the reach and relevance of advocacy efforts and allows INGOs to claim the credit and recognition for humanitarian programming, reinforcing power imbalances.

#### **Government-related barriers to women's leadership**

Government structures also pose obstacles. There is limited institutional support for increasing women's leadership within governance systems, and gender-responsive policies remain underdeveloped. Feminist WROs specifically raised the urgent need to identify and support gender champions in relevant government agencies to facilitate more inclusive and effective local humanitarian responses.

## Cultural and political risks to feminist advocacy

In some high-risk and conflict-affected contexts, feminist WROs and other gender and inclusion-focused actors are subjected to serious threats such as red-tagging and struggle with the politicization of humanitarian aid. These risks obstruct their ability to deliver humanitarian action as well as advocate safely and effectively. Feminist WROs reiterated that uplifting local voices and ensuring their meaningful participation in humanitarian processes is not just a matter of principle but a prerequisite for genuine, gender-transformative change.

## Pillar 3 goals

**Change focus:** Mobilize the collective power of local CSO actors and feminist WROs to transform the humanitarian system into one which is locally led, feminist in practice and rooted in gender and social justice.

**Feminist principles:** FLHL is driven by the collective leadership of local humanitarian actors who shape a humanitarian system that is locally led, driven by feminist principles and committed to gender-transformative and socially inclusive change.

### Goal 3A: International humanitarian actors promote and support the agenda of local CSOs, especially feminist WROs

International humanitarian actors align with the agendas set by local CSOs – especially feminist WROs – and crisis-affected people. They promote this agenda and revise policies and practices to support a feminist, locally led humanitarian system.

### Goal 3B: Elevate the collective power of crisis-affected people in gender and inclusion advocacy

All FLHL actors (international and local) strengthen the collective organizing power and support the gender and social inclusion agendas of marginalized crisis-affected people, bolstering their influence and advancing these agendas.

### Goal 3C: Local gender and inclusion-focused CSO responders are connected and collectively lead for change

Local gender and inclusion-focused CSO responders, especially feminist WROs, are connected through alliances and networks. They can therefore amplify the voices of marginalized, crisis-affected people in order to collectively influence the humanitarian system to be gender transformative and socially inclusive, with the support and allyship of all FLHL actors (international and local).

### Goal 3D: All local CSO responders have the capacity to support the gender and inclusion advocacy agenda of marginalized groups

All local CSO responders are supported to advance the advocacy agendas of marginalized groups towards gender-transformative and socially inclusive change across all humanitarian decision-making spaces and mechanisms.

# Areas of action

## Action 1: Expand and strengthen platforms for gender and inclusion advocacy

Support the establishment and long-term sustainability of inclusive platforms that promote gender-transformative and inclusive humanitarian action. These platforms must ensure that the advocacy efforts of local CSO responders – particularly feminist WROs, WLOs and GIOs – are visible, resourced and connected to humanitarian coordination mechanisms at local, national, regional and international levels.

Local actors stress that such platforms are essential not only for influencing policy and practice but also for knowledge exchange, solidarity and visibility. INGOs and donors must ensure these platforms are inclusive, supportive and free from INGO dominance, enabling local leadership to shape and lead humanitarian dialogue.

### Types of platforms local CSO responders recommend supporting

#### Community-centred platforms:

- Safe spaces: Especially for women in crisis contexts, enabling them to speak freely and safely.
- Communities of practice: Government-supported spaces for local actors to share good practices and challenges, ensuring context-specific humanitarian responses.
- Platforms for women's voices: Structures that ensure women's needs and perspectives are meaningfully included in humanitarian coordination mechanisms.

#### Feminist and CSO-led platforms:

- Peer learning forums: Platforms to share experiences and lessons that improve crisis response strategies.
- Feminist dialogue spaces: Forums for WROs to lead conversations around advocacy, challenges and strategies. These must prioritize feminist participation and not be dominated by INGOs.
- Government engagement spaces: Direct dialogue between local NGOs and government actors, where INGOs use their leverage to amplify – not replace – local voices.

#### Regional and international advocacy platforms:

- Support the representation of feminist humanitarian actors in regional and global forums and facilitate their access. Participation must be independent, with local actors able to assert their priorities without INGO gatekeeping.

## Action 2: Support the Six-point Agenda for Women's Leadership in Humanitarian Systems in Asia

### Roadmap for Feminist Local Humanitarian Leadership (2025–2030) Oxfam in Asia

Oxfam in Asia and its partners recognize that gender and power inequalities persist both in crisis-affected communities and within the humanitarian system. These inequalities are

historically rooted, intersectional and layered; they exist among diverse populations, between affected communities and humanitarian actors, and within humanitarian institutions themselves. As an international actor, Oxfam holds significant power and can either reinforce these inequalities or help transform them.

This roadmap reflects Oxfam's commitment to a feminist approach to humanitarian response. It provides a shared vision for a feminist and locally led humanitarian system, one that centres crisis-affected people in all their intersecting identities and recognizes gender and inclusion-focused CSOs not only as responders, but as leaders.

Developed with partners from a feminist and diversified network across Asia, the roadmap builds on earlier work and integrates internal Oxfam policies alongside relevant external literature. Oxfam and its partners commit to advancing this agenda together with local actors across Asia. Six-Point Advocacy Agenda for Women's Leadership in Humanitarian Systems in Asia (2026) provides a feminist roadmap for action across data, participation, GBV response, humanitarian reform, accountability and feminist frameworks. It calls on international actors to recognize and resource the leadership of feminist WROs and GIOs in humanitarian systems.

#### **Six-point advocacy agenda for women's leadership in humanitarian systems in Asia (2026)**

- Agenda 1: The need for evidence-based disaggregated data, both quantitative and qualitative, during a crisis/disaster for effective policy formulation, programming, monitoring and evaluation.
- Agenda 2: Ensure/Lobby the full and meaningful inclusion, participation, and leadership of women, those with diverse gender identities, marginalized groups, and communities in decision-making forums/bodies/mechanisms.
- Agenda 3: The need for more effective policies and mechanisms to prevent and respond to GBV with a sustained referral mechanism and resources.
- Agenda 4: The fourth agenda addresses internal issues within the humanitarian system, specifically the unequal power dynamics between international humanitarian organizations and local women's rights/humanitarian organizations. The goal is to make this relationship more symbiotic through these specific agendas.
- Agenda 5: Ensure transparency and accountability by using international humanitarian laws, principles, and mechanisms to sanction the weaponization of humanitarian aid and open humanitarian corridors to ensure delivery of aid through CSOs/NGOs
- Agenda 6: The need for a framework to redefine humanitarian using a feminist lens.

### **What is feminist local humanitarian leadership?**

Feminist local humanitarian leadership (FLHL) brings together three interlinked elements. First, it must be intersectional and locally led, recognizing that communities are not passive beneficiaries but active agents in their own recovery. Local CSOs, often composed of crisis-affected individuals themselves, are well positioned to understand and address the complex, context-specific inequalities present in their communities. However, international responses often remain top-down and disconnected from local realities.

Second, FLHL must be gender transformative and socially inclusive. Many humanitarian responses continue to focus on visible material aid while neglecting the underlying power dynamics that shape access to and control over resources. Whether through gender-targeted actions or mainstreamed approaches, humanitarian actors must embed gender and inclusion across all sectors. Feminist WROs play a critical role in leading this work but continue to face significant funding and access constraints.

Third, FLHL recognizes that feminist WROs can lead in localization. Despite their essential contributions, larger, male-dominated organizations still dominate decision-making and funding flows. A truly feminist localisation organisation's process must intentionally support feminist WROs through tailored partnerships that provide flexibility, safety and equitable resource access.

Guiding frameworks and normative references
<p><b>External normative frameworks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The IASC Policy on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls in Humanitarian Action (2020):</b> Mandates the leadership and participation of women and marginalized groups throughout all stages of humanitarian action.</li> <li>• <b>IASC Guidance: Engagement, Participation and Decision-Making by WLOs in Humanitarian Action (2024)</b></li> <li>• <b>The Grand Bargain and IASC Commitments on Localization and Participation:</b> Emphasizes shifting power and resources to local actors, particularly WLOs, to strengthen locally led humanitarian responses.</li> </ul> <p><b>Oxfam GiE Standards</b></p> <p>Oxfam's GiE Standards provide internal commitments aligned with these global frameworks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>GiE Standard 1.2:</b> Recommends concrete actions to identify and nurture partnerships that drive gender transformation. It calls on Oxfam to build strong connections with feminist WROs, informal collectives, social movements, activists and even religious actors where relevant. It emphasizes supporting marginalized communities to understand their rights and to engage meaningfully in political, economic and social life. This standard promotes collaboration with WROs, WLOs and GIOs to support advocacy and amplify social change, recognizing the capacities already present within these groups. It further encourages Oxfam and partners to adopt networking models that foster learning and peer exchange across regions and countries, strengthening collective feminist impact</li> <li>• <b>GiE Standard 6.2:</b> Explicitly calls for Oxfam to work with feminist WROs, WLOs and GIOs in identifying opportunities, alliances and networks that can drive gender-transformative change, particularly within humanitarian spaces and systems.</li> </ul>

**Table 5: Do's and don'ts for inclusive humanitarian networks**

Don't	Do
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Token participation of women in the network</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Only national and power-centric network</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No representation of local and WROs/WLOs/GLOs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Provides a feminist roadmap for action across data, participation, GBV response, humanitarian reform, accountability and feminist frameworks.</li> </ul>

Notes: This table contrasts actions to avoid and recommended practices for building inclusive humanitarian networks. The "Don't" column lists practices such as token participation of women, power-centric networks, and a lack of representation of local and feminist organizations. The "Do" column highlights positive actions, including providing a feminist roadmap for action across data, participation, GBV response, humanitarian reform, accountability, and feminist frameworks.

# Pillar 4 | Accountable for FLHL

Pillar 4 cuts across Pillars 1 to 3 and reflects the ability of affected communities and local CSO actors to hold power holders accountable to the standards they are committed to. It also calls for improving those standards in ways that reflect the lived realities and needs of crisis-affected people on the ground.

Accountability is foundational for FLHL. Yet local CSO responders, including feminist WROs, continue to face barriers in safely asserting their rights and demanding accountability across humanitarian systems. Pillar 4 recognizes that without robust and inclusive accountability mechanisms, the leadership and contributions of local actors, especially feminist WROs, will be unrecognized and unnoticed.

## Barriers to safe accountability

FLHL actors have flagged the lack of access to humanitarian coordination mechanisms, the disproportionate amount of recognition and credit given to INGOs, and the failure to provide platforms for local actors to challenge or reshape decision-making processes. The risk of backlash, surveillance and reprisals, especially in politically sensitive environments, further inhibits their ability to hold systems accountable. These risks are particularly acute for women human rights defenders, as captured in Agenda 4.D of the Six-Point Agenda, which calls for co-created and context-responsive safety protocols.

## Poor accountability in funding systems

Funding systems themselves lack accountability to local actors. Many organizations cannot track or trace the amount of funding that is allocated for gender and inclusion in a given response. INGOs and donors often lack the means – or will – to disaggregate data by actor type (e.g. feminist WROs), making it nearly impossible to monitor equitable access. This is why tracking disaggregated funding and adopting subjective indicators – such as perceptions of fairness, recognition and influence – are core components of the roadmap.

## Lack of feminist accountability frameworks

Local feminist actors stress the need for humanitarian systems to adopt feminist accountability frameworks that are grounded in rights-based, participatory and community-driven approaches. As outlined in Agenda 5, accountability must centre transparency in decision-making, uphold international humanitarian and human rights law and actively prevent the weaponization of aid, especially in contexts where civic space is shrinking. Women, refugees and undocumented migrants are often excluded or silenced in humanitarian settings, underscoring the urgency of civil society-led delivery and monitoring mechanisms.

# Accountability indicators

## Pillar 1: Valued as responders, leaders and equal partners

Strengthening accountability not only requires tracking how much and how well funding is delivered, but also whether FLHL actors feel genuinely included, valued and protected in humanitarian systems. The roadmap indicators aim to bridge this gap by offering structured impact and outcome measures that reflect both quantitative outcomes and lived experiences.

Changes under Pillar 1 are expected to lead to new practices among international humanitarian actors. These include the adoption of policies and mechanisms for tailored, equitable and flexible partnerships with local CSO responders, especially local feminist WROs. Targets on key changes are directed towards the number of responsive partnership models that are sensitive to the specific needs of smaller, gender and inclusion-focused local organizations – particularly those that embed equitable ways of working, such as co-creation practices, throughout the partnership cycle. Similarly, international actors are expected to forge more long-term strategic partnerships with local CSOs before crises hit, and to use standardized tools to measure how their support enables gender and inclusion outcomes across their partnerships.

The impacts of these changes on crisis-affected people will be reflected in improved perceptions of meaningful participation and leadership in humanitarian response processes. Crisis-affected people may also report increased access to inclusive and safe accountability mechanisms, which meet the needs of diverse groups. In addition, a growing percentage of women, men, girls, boys and people of diverse SOGIESC, alongside the organizations representing them, will be actively engaged as equal partners in crisis response planning and implementation.

Moreover, feminist WROs and gender and inclusion-focused CSOs are projected to see key changes in how they experience and navigate humanitarian partnerships. These include a higher number of feminist WROs reporting improved access to tailored and equitable partnerships with international actors, alongside a measurable increase in the technical, financial and capacity-building support they receive for gender and inclusion-focused work. Staff members of these organizations are also expected to report a greater sense of safety, support and recognition due to more equitable partnership practices. They may also perceive improved recognition and influence over humanitarian decision-making and can name the specific enabling mechanisms and behaviours that have contributed to this shift.

Local CSO responders, more broadly, are expected to report being more widely recognized as equal partners in humanitarian response planning and implementation. Many are likely to observe and contribute to revisions in partnership policies that ensure more equitable roles for local CSOs across all sectors. Furthermore, a growing number of local CSOs are projected to experience increased support from international actors around integrating feminist principles and gender and social inclusion into their programming.

**Table 6: Pillar 1 Accountability Indicators**

	Pillar 1 Valued as responders, leaders and equal partners
<i>International humanitarian actors</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Policies and mechanisms for tailored partnerships</b> The number of policies and mechanisms adopted by international humanitarian actors for tailored, equitable and flexible partnerships with local CSO responders, especially local feminist WROs.</li> <li>• <b>Tailored partnership models</b> The number of partnership models adopted that are responsive to the specific needs of smaller, gender and inclusion-focused local organizations; and the partnerships integrating co-creation practices across the partnership cycle.</li> <li>• <b>Long-term strategic partnerships:</b> The number of long-term strategic partnerships established by international humanitarian actors with local CSO responders and gender and inclusion-focused organizations before crisis onset.</li> <li>• <b>Systems to measure support for FLHL in GiE integration</b> International humanitarian actors apply standardized tools and benchmarks to assess how their support enables gender and inclusion outcomes across all partnerships with FLHL actors.</li> </ul>
<i>Crisis-affected people</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Perception of meaningful participation</b> The number of crisis-affected people reporting meaningful participation and leadership roles in humanitarian response processes.</li> <li>• <b>Quality of accountability mechanisms</b> The number of accessible and inclusive accountability mechanisms established are appropriate to the needs of diverse groups.</li> <li>• <b>Quality of engagement of crisis-affected people in decision-making</b> A percentage increase in crisis-affected people (disaggregated by gender, age, disability and SOGIESC) and groups that represent them are engaged as equal partners in crisis response planning and implementation.</li> </ul>
<i>Gender and inclusion-focused CSO responders</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Self-reports of tailored and equitable partnerships</b> The number of gender and inclusion-focused CSOs, especially feminist WROs, reporting improved access to tailored and equitable partnerships with international humanitarian actors.</li> <li>• <b>Increased capacity sharing inputs</b> An increase in the percentage, volume or number of initiatives providing technical, financial and capacity-strengthening support to gender and inclusion-focused CSOs, especially feminist WROs, for targeted gender and inclusion work.</li> <li>• <b>Self-reports on impacts of better partnerships</b> The percentage of feminist WRO staff reporting an increased sense of safety, support and recognition linked to changes in partnership practice with international humanitarian actors.</li> <li>• <b>Perceived improvements in equitable partnerships</b> Feminist WROs report an improved quality of partnerships with international humanitarian actors, including changes in ways of working, inclusion in decision-making and mutual recognition of expertise.</li> <li>• <b>Perceived improvements in recognition and influence</b> Staff and leadership of feminist WROs and WLOs report that their contributions to humanitarian response and gender-transformative programming are increasingly recognized and supported. They can identify the enabling mechanisms, behaviours or platforms contributing to this shift.</li> </ul>
<i>All local CSO responders</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Perceived improvements in equitable partnerships</b> The number of local CSOs reporting recognition as equal partners in humanitarian response planning and implementation.</li> <li>• <b>Perceived improvements in equitable partnerships</b> Reports by local CSOs on the number of partnership policies revised to ensure equitable roles for local CSOs across all sectors.</li> <li>• <b>Increased capacity for gender and inclusion mainstreaming</b> An increased percentage of local CSOs perceive improved support from international humanitarian actors to integrate feminist principles and gender and social inclusion into their work.</li> </ul>

Source: This table has been designed based on the online consultation of local women rights activists, organizations, Practitioners, Oxfam staffs and subject matter specialists.

Notes: This table outlines indicators for tracking progress in partnerships, participation, and recognition of feminist WROs and local CSOs in humanitarian systems.

## Pillar 2: Enabled and resourced to respond

Changes under Pillar 2 are expected to result in key shifts in how international humanitarian actors fund and support gender and inclusion work. These include a measurable increase in the amount and percentage of funding allocated to gender and inclusion efforts, particularly among local partners and feminist WROs. Monitoring systems should be in place to track and report funding flows in a disaggregated way, distinguishing between mainstreaming and targeted funding. Tailored funding modalities should also become more widespread, offering flexible, multi-year support; simplified requirements; and institutional backing that meets the realities of local CSOs, particularly those working at the intersection of gender and inclusion.

International humanitarian actors are also expected to regularly assess their own internal practices – identifying barriers to equitable partnerships, taking clear steps towards enabling behaviours and holding themselves accountable. This includes documenting how they have acted as intermediaries to facilitate direct funding access for local feminist and WROs.

The effects of these changes on crisis-affected people are expected to manifest in an increased number of locally led initiatives and greater resources directed toward addressing gendered and social inclusion needs. Crisis-affected individuals and groups are expected to report increased opportunities and mechanisms for exercising decision-making power in the design and implementation of aid.

Meanwhile, feminist WROs and gender and inclusion-focused CSOs are projected to see major shifts in how they access and experience humanitarian funding systems. These include an increase in the proportion of humanitarian funding dedicated to targeted gender and inclusion programming, a growth in the representation of feminist WROs among humanitarian partners and improvements in both financial and non-financial support tailored to their specific institutional needs.

Finally, all local CSO responders are expected to experience a rise in the quantity and quality of support they receive for mainstreaming gender and inclusion into their work. These improvements include both direct funding and technical or capacity-building assistance, contributing to a stronger enabling environment for inclusive, locally led humanitarian action.

**Table 7: Pillar 2 Accountability indicators**

Pillar 2 Enabled and resourced to respond	
<i>International humanitarian actors</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Percentage increase in gender and inclusion funding</b> An increase in the amount and percentage of funding allocated by international humanitarian actors to gender and inclusion mainstreaming and targeted actions among local partners, especially local feminist WROs.</li> <li>• <b>Monitoring systems for gender and inclusion funding</b> The number and quality of monitoring systems in place to track, measure and report on gender and inclusion funding flows – disaggregated by mainstreaming and targeted funding.</li> </ul>

Pillar 2 Enabled and resourced to respond	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Tailored funding modalities:</b> The number of funding partnerships that provide multi-year, flexible modalities; simplified requirements; core institutional support; and capacity building for local CSOs, especially local feminist WROs.</li> <li>• <b>Organizational self-assessment of partnership practices</b> International humanitarian actors regularly assess and identify internal practices, policies and behaviours that hinder equitable partnerships with local actors, including feminist WROs. They can articulate the concrete actions being taken to shift toward enabling approaches.</li> <li>• <b>Disaggregated tracking of funding to FLHL actors</b> Humanitarian actors track and report funding to local CSOs in a way that is disaggregated by actor type (e.g. feminist WROs, WLOs, GIOs) and apply this data to improve equitable resource flows.</li> </ul> <p>Evidence of brokering roles to enable direct funding access International actors demonstrate how they have acted as intermediaries to enable direct funding access for local feminist and WLOs, as documented in program reports or agreements.</p>
<i>Crisis-affected people</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Increase in initiatives led by crisis-affected people</b> The number of local crisis-affected individuals or groups supported with resources to lead in designing and implementing solutions that address their gendered and social inclusion needs.</li> <li>• <b>Funding for initiatives led by crisis-affected people</b></li> <li>• <b>The volume and type of resources allocated</b> directly to crisis-affected individuals or their representative organizations to support community-driven initiatives.</li> <li>• <b>Self-perception of the quality of crisis-affected people's decision-making</b></li> </ul> <p>The percentage of responses that demonstrate the practice of sharing decision-making with crisis-affected people in the design and delivery of aid.</p>
<i>Gender and inclusion-focused CSO responders</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Increased funding for gender-targeted action.</b></li> <li>• <b>An increase in the percentage of total humanitarian funding</b> directed to targeted action on gender and inclusion via gender and inclusion-focused CSO responders, especially feminist WROs (with disaggregated data).</li> <li>• <b>Increased ratio of feminist WROs in humanitarian action</b></li> <li>• <b>An increased ratio of feminist WROs</b> represented among local CSO humanitarian partners.</li> <li>• <b>Quality of financial and non-financial support.</b></li> </ul> <p>The number of flexible, long-term funding mechanisms and non-financial support programs (i.e. capacity sharing, accompaniment) tailored to the needs of gender and inclusion-focused CSOs, especially feminist WROs.</p>
<i>All local CSO responders</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Increased funding for gender and inclusion mainstreaming.</b></li> <li>• <b>An increase in the amount and percentage of humanitarian funding</b> allocated to support local CSOs in mainstreaming gender and inclusion across sectors.</li> <li>• <b>Increased financial and non-financial inputs</b> for gender and inclusion mainstreaming</li> <li>• <b>An increased number of technical and capacity-building inputs</b> provided to local CSOs to strengthen their capabilities around gender and inclusion mainstreaming in humanitarian action.</li> <li>• <b>The number of local CSO-led projects receiving direct funding</b> for</li> </ul>

	<b>Pillar 2</b> <b>Enabled and resourced to respond</b>
	gender and inclusion mainstreaming initiatives.

Source: This table has been designed based on the online consultation of local women rights activists, organizations, Practitioners, Oxfam staffs and subject matter specialists, etc.

Notes: This table lists indicators for funding quality, flexibility, and access for local CSOs and feminist WROs, as well as measures of participation by crisis-affected people.

### Pillar 3: Collectively lead for change

Under Pillar 3, changes are expected in how international humanitarian actors engage with and support the leadership and advocacy of local actors. These include a measurable increase in the number of humanitarian coordination platforms that engage local CSOs, particularly feminist WROs, in agenda-setting and decision-making. An increase in the volume and flexibility of resources allocated for advocacy will enable local organizations to sustain their engagement across local, national and regional spaces. International actors are also expected to adopt and support advocacy agendas, such as the Six-point Agenda for Women's Leadership, and to reflect these in their own coordination and decision-making structures.

For crisis-affected people, these changes will lead to the emergence of new or strengthened locally led advocacy groups that are focused on gender and inclusion. Crisis-affected people may also self-report on their heightened influence in decision-making processes within humanitarian coordination platforms, and a rise in the number and quality of mechanisms where their voices are heard and taken into account.

It is expected that feminist WROs and gender and inclusion-focused CSOs will also see significant changes in their ability to lead and influence humanitarian systems. These include strengthened networks and alliances, an increased presence in humanitarian coordination mechanisms and greater access to financial and technical resources that support their advocacy agendas. These actors are also expected to benefit from platforms that allow for sustained dialogue, learning and organizing across local to global levels.

All local CSO responders are likewise projected to experience higher engagement in humanitarian decision-making spaces. This includes a greater number of allies joining efforts to promote gender and inclusion, more joint advocacy campaigns and increased access to formal roles in coordination platforms. These collective gains signal a growing recognition of local actors not only as implementers but as leaders and changemakers in shaping a more inclusive and accountable humanitarian system.

**Table 8: Pillar 3 Accountability Indicators**

<b>Pillar 3</b> <b>Collectively lead for change</b>	
<i>International humanitarian actors</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Humanitarian platforms engage local CSOs</b> The number of humanitarian platforms and decision-making mechanisms that include and are influenced by crisis-affected people, as well as local CSOs and feminist WROs.</li> <li>• <b>Quantity of funding for advocacy:</b> The volume and type of resources provided to support the sustained and meaningful advocacy of these actors in humanitarian platforms.</li> <li>• <b>Agenda on gender and inclusion supported</b> The number of priorities and agendas of crisis-affected people and gender and inclusion-focused local CSOs (including feminist WROs) that are reflected in the coordination and decision-making reforms adopted by international humanitarian actors.</li> </ul>
<i>Crisis-affected people</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Gender and inclusion advocacy led by crisis-affected people</b> The number of new or strengthened groups or networks led by crisis-affected people advocating for gender and inclusion in humanitarian settings.</li> <li>• <b>Quality of engagement of humanitarian platforms with crisis-affected people</b></li> <li>• The number of humanitarian platforms where crisis-affected people are represented and able to raise their priorities and issues.</li> <li>• <b>Self-perception of crisis-affected people on decision-making and agenda setting</b></li> <li>• The number of crisis-affected people reporting improved influence in agenda-setting and decision-making processes at humanitarian coordination levels.</li> </ul>
<i>Gender and inclusion-focused CSO responders</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Stronger alliances</b> The number of active alliances or networks formed or strengthened among gender and inclusion-focused CSO responders and feminist WROs.</li> <li>• <b>Increased engagement in humanitarian mechanisms</b> The number of gender and inclusion-focused CSOs participating in humanitarian coordination platforms and mechanisms.</li> <li>• <b>Increased financial and non-financial support for advocacy</b> The number of technical, financial or institutional support programs enabling gender and inclusion-focused CSOs to advocate and influence humanitarian systems.</li> <li>• <b>Presence and diversity of supported advocacy platforms</b> FLHL actors report increased support for platforms that allow for advocacy, learning and influencing across local, national, regional and humanitarian coordination spaces, including those led by feminist and community-based groups.</li> </ul>
<i>All local CSO responders</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Increased number of allies for gender and inclusion advocacy</b> An increased number of local CSOs advocating for gender-transformative and socially inclusive humanitarian reform.</li> <li>• <b>The number of local CSOs – not focused on gender &amp; inclusion work – who support the gender agenda as allies of feminist WROs in advocacy.</b></li> <li>• <b>Increased support for gender and inclusion advocacy led by crisis-affected people</b> The number of joint advocacy initiatives or campaigns led by local CSOs to amplify marginalized voices in humanitarian spaces.</li> <li>• <b>Increased engagement of humanitarian spaces with local CSOs</b> The percentage of humanitarian coordination bodies where local CSOs have a formal role in agenda-setting and decision-making on gender and inclusion.</li> </ul>

Source: This table has been designed based on the online consultation of local women rights activists, organizations, Practitioners, Oxfam staffs and subject matter specialists, etc.

Notes: This table highlights indicators for advocacy, representation, and resource allocation to support feminist WROs and local CSOs in influencing humanitarian systems.

## Guiding frameworks and normative references

Agenda 1 of the Six-Point Agenda for Women's Leadership in Humanitarian Systems in Asia: Calls for the use of gender and inclusion data to inform humanitarian decision-making. It emphasizes the importance of evidence-based, disaggregated data collection while ensuring privacy, data integrity and the participation of local actors in data gathering and analysis.

Oxfam's GiE Standards: Advocate for the integration of feminist accountability principles throughout humanitarian response. Specifically, the standards emphasize working with feminist WROs, WLOs and GIOs to monitor and influence decision-making systems, and to ensure accountability structures are locally led, inclusive and transparent. These commitments also reinforce the role of local actors in generating evidence and shaping response models based on grounded realities – ensuring that accountability is not an external imposition, but a co-owned process that strengthens gender-transformative outcomes.

- GiE Standard 7.1: Underscores the need to build evidence that informs humanitarian actions and stresses the value of rights-based and community-driven approaches in data systems.
- GiE Standard 7.2: Calls for the continuous measurement of change, not only to monitor progress but to contribute to long-term transformation. This standard reinforces the importance of integrating learning, feedback and accountability mechanisms that reflect the lived experiences of local actors.

## Accountability in practice

### ***Partnership learning reviews: Bangladesh Rohingya response***

Bangladesh's experience with annual reviews facilitated by a third party to cultivate a safe space for partners to express how Oxfam can be a better partner. The methodology is centred on making a safe space for partners to share insights. Learnings from this have been leveraged for institutional shifts in partnership practices and to develop and harvest models for equitable partnerships.

This roadmap reflects Oxfam's commitment to a feminist approach to humanitarian response. It provides a shared vision for a feminist and locally led humanitarian system, one that centres crisis-affected people in all their intersecting identities and recognizes gender and inclusion-focused CSOs not only as responders, but as leaders. It is a transformative approach grounded in feminist principles where locally led women's rights and similar kinds of organizations and leadership will play a vital role in the humanitarian crisis and action. The FLHL roadmap for Asia is a living document which will be updated from time to time with the changing context, which will contribute to making the just, equal and inclusive humanitarian transformation and system change.

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# Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Oxfam. (2022-2025). Gender in Emergencies Strategy and Standards, p. 9:  
'Oxfam aims to uphold humanitarian principles in all its responses, while simultaneously using a feminist approach. This not only requires us to consciously tackle the inequalities and discrimination within the humanitarian system, but also to openly recognize that – alongside commitment, innovation, care, courage and bravery – inequality and discrimination still exist in the humanitarian system. A feminist approach ensures that we take inequality and power into account and challenge the humanitarian principles to change and dismantle the very patriarchal and colonial systems from which the concept of humanitarian aid was born.'
- <sup>2</sup> Clearly articulated in Oxfam's Gender in Emergencies Strategy and Standards and the Four Pillars of Humanitarian Approach which includes Community Engagement (Communities in crisis are the central actors in their own survival and response), Safe Programming (Oxfam wants to ensure that humanitarian work does not inadvertently cause harm); Partnerships and Local Leadership (Oxfam envisions working within collaborative and inclusive humanitarian ecosystems); and Feminist Approach (Oxfam seeks to challenge the root causes of inequalities grounded in gender norms).
- <sup>3</sup> Oxfam's Gender in Emergencies Strategy and Standards is framed to be applied across the nexus of humanitarian, peace and development.
- <sup>4</sup> Oxfam. (2022-2025). Gender in Emergencies Strategy and Standards, op. cit.
- <sup>5</sup> The streams of work towards these are outlined in Oxfam's key policies, strategies and standards, including among others the Oxfam in Asia Strategy, Maria Libertad Mella - FLHL Framework Draft for Oxfam in Asia, Gender in Emergencies Strategy and Standards 2022-25, Humanitarian Approach and Feminist Principles.
- <sup>6</sup> The Roadmap Towards a Feminist Approach to Local Humanitarian Leadership and Partnerships in Asia (April 2021).
- <sup>7</sup> Oxfam. (n.d.). Gender Justice & Women's Rights. Accessed 4 August 2025. <https://policy-practice.oxfam.org/gender-justice-womens-rights/> 'We center the experiences and voices of women, women's rights and feminist organizations who play an essential role in promoting gender equality and realizing women's rights to dismantle the inequalities that shape the experiences of all women and men around the world. All of our work on gender justice and women's rights puts intersectional feminism at the centre, ensuring that it is strengthened at every stage.'
- <sup>8</sup> Oxfam's Humanitarian Approach, Pillar 1: Community Engagement
- <sup>9</sup> Core Humanitarian Standards' Alliance. (2022). The Humanitarian Accountability Report. Accessed 4 August 2025. <https://www.chsalliance.org/get-support/resource/har-2022/>
- <sup>10</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>11</sup> Oxfam and Women's Legal and Human Rights Bureau (2022). Mapping of Local Actors and Initiatives in Feminist Local Humanitarian Leadership in Asia.  
  
Local CSO actors reached in this study either self-identify as feminist and/or women's rights organizations (WROs), such organizations may also be women-led organizations (WLO) while other organizations identify themselves based on the focus of their work (i.e. development, community and rural development, or with specific vulnerable groups such as marginalized and vulnerable groups, including women, children, people with disabilities, ethnic minorities, the elderly and migrant workers).
- <sup>12</sup> Oxfam. (2022-2025). Gender in Emergencies Strategy and Standards, op. cit.
- <sup>13</sup> Oxfam and Women's Legal and Human Rights Bureau (2022). Mapping of Local Actors and Initiatives in Feminist Local Humanitarian Leadership in Asia; and Oxfam. (2022-2025). Gender in Emergencies Strategy and Standards, op. cit.
- <sup>14</sup> Mayholga, T., Patterson, C., Lenhardt, A., & Brewster, K. (2021). Gender transformative change in humanitarianism: Views from the inside (Rep.). Women's Refugee Commission. Accessed 4 August 2025. <https://www.womensrefugeecommission.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Gender-Transformative-Change-in-Humanitarianism-View-from-Inside.pdf>
- <sup>15</sup> Oxfam and Women's Legal and Human Rights Bureau (2022). Mapping of Local Actors and Initiatives in Feminist Local Humanitarian Leadership in Asia; Angelina Nyajima (2022). Is the localisation agenda working for women-led organisations? ODI HPN. Accessed 4 August 2025. <https://odihpn.org/en/publication/is-the-localisation-agenda-working-for-women-led-organisations/> Issue 85 - Article 1-Is the localisation agenda working for women-led organisations?  
  
June 24, 2024-Angelina Nyajima (Under the paragraph of WLO experiences of localization: As men-led national organisations have increased their operational capacity and resource base through localisation structures, they too often become additional tiers between WLOs working at community level and the international actors that we seek to coordinate and partner with to scale our programming and influence humanitarian decision-making.
- <sup>16</sup> The Oxfam in Asia strategy on partnerships prioritizes work with feminist WROs and aims to foster a 'feminist diversified network in the region.' In addition, the FLHL Mapping document showed that the trends in such work are done by organizations who self-identify as feminist women's rights organizations (WROs).

- <sup>17</sup> Based on definitions from Oxfam's Gender in Emergencies Strategy and Standards; and Oxfam and Women's Legal and Human Rights Bureau (2022). Mapping of Local Actors and Initiatives in Feminist Local Humanitarian Leadership in Asia.
- <sup>18</sup> Oxfam and Women's Legal and Human Rights Bureau (2022). Mapping of Local Actors and Initiatives in Feminist Local Humanitarian Leadership in Asia.
- <sup>19</sup> N. Tulay-Solanke (June 24, 2024). Humanitarian Practice Network, Issue 85, Article 11. Creating Space for Gender in the Grand Bargain. Accessed 4 August 2025. <https://odihpn.org/publication/creating-space-for-gender-in-the-grand-bargain-and-the-humanitarian-system/>; and Oxfam and Women's Legal and Human Rights Bureau (2022). Mapping of Local Actors and Initiatives in Feminist Local Humanitarian Leadership in Asia.
- <sup>20</sup> Bennett & Spencer, The Grand Bargain at a Crossroads, ODI HPG; V. Metcalfe-Hough, W. Fenton and F. Manji. (2023) The Grand Bargain in 2022. ODI HPG. Accessed 4 August 2025. [https://media.odi.org/documents/HPG\\_report-Grand\\_Bargain\\_2023\\_master\\_rev.pdf](https://media.odi.org/documents/HPG_report-Grand_Bargain_2023_master_rev.pdf)
- <sup>21</sup> N. Tulay-Solanke (June 24, 2024). Humanitarian Practice Network, Issue 85, Article 11. <https://odihpn.org/publication/creating-space-for-gender-in-the-grand-bargain-and-the-humanitarian-system/> - by the FOGG, but now the COP on Gender
- <sup>22</sup> Feminist Humanitarian Network. (2024). Statement to the Grand Bargain Community of Practice on Gender. IASC. Accessed 4 August 2025. <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/sites/default/files/2024-10/FHN%20Statement%20Grand%20Bargain%20Community%20of%20Practice%20on%20Gender.pdf>
- <sup>23</sup> Top Tips: Partnerships & Local Humanitarian Leadership (LHL) in Oxfam Humanitarian Programming.
- <sup>24</sup> Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID). (2021). Rights at risk: Time for action – Observatory on the Universality of Rights trends report 2021. <https://www.awid.org/ours-2021>
- <sup>25</sup> UN Women. (2025, May). At a breaking point: The impact of foreign aid cuts on women's organizations in humanitarian crises worldwide. United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women). <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2025/05/at-a-breaking-point-the-impact-of-foreign-aid-cuts-on-womens-organizations-in-humanitarian-crises-worldwide>
- <sup>26</sup> Overseas Development Institute (ODI) (2023). There's Not Enough Money – So Why Spend it on Gender Equality and Justice? Accessed 4 August 2025. <https://odi.org/en/insights/theres-not-enough-money-so-why-spend-it-on-gender-equality-and-justice>; Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID) (2020). Where is the Money for Women's Rights? Factsheets. Accessed 4 August 2025. <https://www.awid.org/publications/where-money-womens-rights-factsheets>
- <sup>27</sup> UN Women. (2025, May). At a breaking point: The impact of foreign aid cuts on women's organizations in humanitarian crises worldwide. United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women). <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2025/05/at-a-breaking-point-the-impact-of-foreign-aid-cuts-on-womens-organizations-in-humanitarian-crises-worldwide>
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- <sup>31</sup> UN Women and UNFPA (June 2020). Funding for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls in Humanitarian Programming. Accessed 4 August 2025. [https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/GEEWG\\_UN\\_WomenUNFPA.pdf](https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/GEEWG_UN_WomenUNFPA.pdf); Development Initiatives (April 2022). Funding for Gender-Relevant Humanitarian Response Report. Accessed 4 August 2025. [https://devinit.org/files/documents/1152/funding\\_for\\_gender-relevant\\_humanitarian\\_response.pdf](https://devinit.org/files/documents/1152/funding_for_gender-relevant_humanitarian_response.pdf)  
Reports from these show that while gender markers like the IASC GAM are used on the UN OCHA Financial Tracking System (FTS), they are applied only to a limited subset of project-based appeals and often label all projects as gender-relevant without distinguishing between gender-targeted and mainstreamed funding. UN Women and UNFPA analyses show this leads to significant overstatements of gender-targeted funding. Additionally, tracking gender financing globally is hindered by the lack of interoperability between FTS and the OECD DAC Creditor Reporting System (CRS), due to missing shared identifiers and mismatched data structures. This results in fragmented, inaccurate reporting of gender-related humanitarian funding.
- <sup>32</sup> Development Initiatives (April 2022). Funding for Gender-Relevant Humanitarian Response Report.. op. cit.
- <sup>33</sup> OCHA Financial Tracking Service.
- <sup>34</sup> UNFPA (2024). Humanitarian Action 2024 Overview. Accessed 4 August 2025. <https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/UNFPA%20HAO%202024-Deliverable-Final%20PDF%20report-07.12.23%20%281%29.pdf>

- <sup>35</sup> UN Women and UNFPA (June 2020). Funding for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls in Humanitarian Programming, op. cit.; Development Initiatives (April 2022). Funding for Gender-relevant Humanitarian Response Report, op. cit.
- <sup>36</sup> IASC Gender in Humanitarian Action Handbook; IASC GEEWG Policy; Oxfam. (2022-2025). *Gender in Emergencies Strategy and Standards*, op. cit.
- <sup>37</sup> A. Nyajima. (2024) Is the localization agenda working for women-led organisations? Humanitarian Practice Network. Accessed 4 August 2025. <https://odihpn.org/en/publication/is-the-localisation-agenda-working-for-women-led-organisations/>
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- <sup>39</sup> Figure 2.9 in Development Initiatives (April 2022). *Funding for Gender-Relevant Humanitarian Response Report*, op. cit.
- <sup>40</sup> Figure 2.2 in Development Initiatives (April 2022). *Funding for Gender-Relevant Humanitarian Response Report*, op. cit.
- <sup>41</sup> Oxfam. (2024). *Grand Bargain Self Report 2024*, op. cit.
- <sup>42</sup> Development Initiatives (April 2022). *Funding for Gender-relevant Humanitarian Response Report*, op. cit.
- Current systems do not adequately track funding passed from first recipients to local and national actors, including women-led organizations. Despite Grand Bargain commitments to allocate 25% of funding as directly as possible, this has not been met. Improved reporting by UN agencies and INGOs, using platforms like FTS and IATI, is needed to assess the volume, flexibility and duration of funding flows. Establishing a common definition for WROs/WLOs is also critical for accurate tracking and accountability.
- <sup>43</sup> Oxfam. (2024). *Grand Bargain Self Report 2024*, op. cit. Based on this report for the year, the percentage of funding that went to WLO and WROs are only based on proxy data and so are not exact and is based on different pre-IASC definitions of WLOs. Definitions used to calculate are internal to the organization that include GIOs. Nonetheless, the total volume estimated that went to LNAs is at 43,577,609 (or 24.8% of total humanitarian funding) while 7,425,238 was estimated to have gone to WLOs and WROs, totaling to 17% if calculated from these figures.
- <sup>44</sup> Oxfam. (2024). *Grand Bargain Self Report 2024*, op. cit.
- <sup>45</sup> Based on the total approximate volume of humanitarian funds at around 174m, from which the 24.8% or 43,577,609 of funding from LNAs was taken.
- <sup>46</sup> Development Initiatives (April 2022). *Funding for Gender-relevant Humanitarian Response Report*, op. cit.
- <sup>47</sup> Women's Refugee Commission. (2025). How U.S. Aid Cuts Are Threatening GBV Prevention and Response. Accessed 4 August 2025. <https://www.womensrefugeecommission.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/How-US-Aid-Cuts-Are-Threatening-GBV-Prevention-and-Response.pdf>; Center for Global Development. (2024). USAID Cuts: New Estimates at the Country Level. Accessed 4 August 2025. <https://www.cgdev.org/blog/usaids-cuts-new-estimates-country-level>
- <sup>48</sup> Overseas Development Institute (ODI) (2023). There's Not Enough Money – So Why Spend it on Gender Equality and Justice? Accessed 4 August 2025. <https://odi.org/en/insights/theres-not-enough-money-so-why-spend-it-on-gender-equality-and-justice>; Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID) (2020). Where is the Money for Women's Rights? Factsheets. Accessed 4 August 2025. <https://www.awid.org/publications/where-money-womens-rights-factsheets>
- <sup>49</sup> UN Women (2019). Technical Guidance Note on Gender and the Localization Agenda. Accessed 4 August 2025 <https://glocalisation.ifrc.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/13082019-FV-UN-Women-Guidance-Note-Summary-Localisation.pdf>
- <sup>50</sup> Oxfam. (2024). *Grand Bargain Self Report 2024*, op. cit.
- <sup>51</sup> Oxfam and Women's Legal and Human Rights Bureau (2022). *Mapping of Local Actors and Initiatives in Feminist Local Humanitarian Leadership in Asia*, op. cit.
- <sup>52</sup> Oxfam. (2024). *Grand Bargain Self Report 2024*, op. cit.
- <sup>53</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>54</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>55</sup> Standard 1.2 of Oxfam. (2022-2025). *Gender in Emergencies Strategy and Standards*, op. cit.
- <sup>56</sup> Standard 6.1 of Oxfam. (2022-2025). *Gender in Emergencies Strategy and Standards*, op. cit.
- <sup>57</sup> Oxfam. Top Tips: Partnerships & Local Humanitarian Leadership (LHL) in Oxfam Humanitarian Programming. Accessed 4 August 2025. <https://webassets.oxfamamerica.org/media/documents/Partnership-LHL-TopTips-PUBLISHED.pdf>
- <sup>58</sup> *ibid.*

# Acknowledgements

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The Feminist Local Humanitarian Leadership (FLHL) roadmap was developed to support a gender-transformative, feminist and locally led humanitarian system in Asia. It examines the barriers and enabling factors affecting the engagement and leadership of women's rights organisations (WROs), women-led organisations (WLOs), gender-led organisations (GLOs), other intersectionally marginalised groups and local leaders in humanitarian action.

We thank Maria Libertad, Gender Lead, Global Humanitarian Team (GHT), who initiated this work and drafted the first version of the FLHL roadmap for Asia. The current roadmap builds on this foundation.

The roadmap was developed through the engagement of local actors, with support from countries across Asia. Clementine Novales worked as a consultant to document the FLHL roadmap. The design and documentation process followed feminist principles, which are reflected throughout the report. A series of online consultations were held with feminist local leaders, women's rights, women-led and gender-led organizations, network members and Oxfam staff from the Asia Regional Platform, the Global Humanitarian Team, and country, regional, affiliate and global levels. Participants shared valuable insights based on their experience. The report also draws on Oxfam policies, research findings, and meeting and workshop reports as secondary sources.

We are grateful to feminist activists across Asia and to global leaders who contributed to this work. We also thank the communities working on the ground to advance an inclusive and equitable humanitarian system, whose voices and experiences are central to this roadmap.

This is a living document and will be updated periodically to reflect changing contexts and humanitarian systems.

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