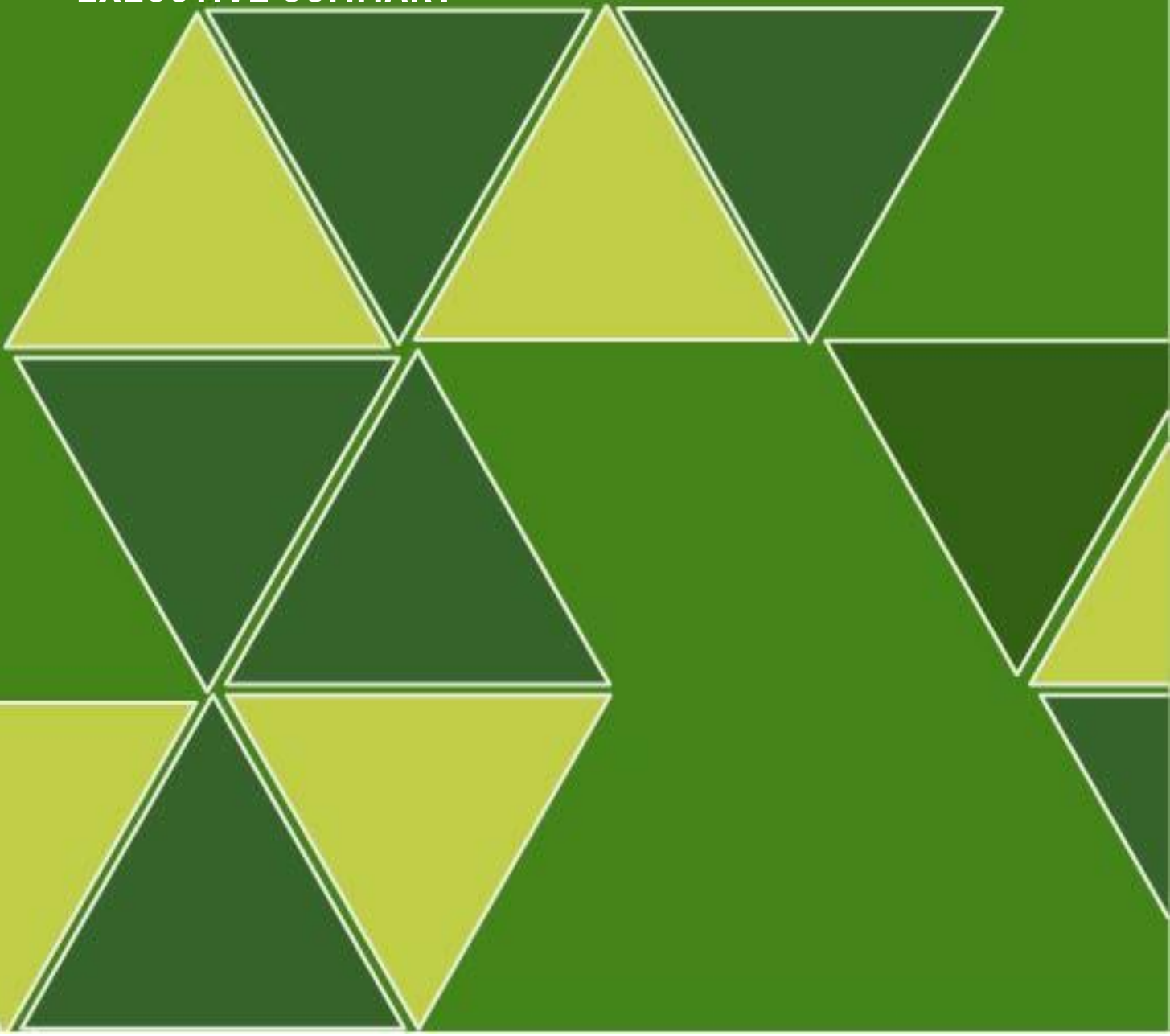


ROADMAP FOR FEMINIST LOCAL HUMANITARIAN LEADERSHIP

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



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Executive summary

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 civil society organizations (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.

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 women's rights organizations (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 localization process must intentionally support feminist WROs through tailored partnerships that emphasize flexibility, safety and equitable resource access.

Strategic framework and actor roles

This roadmap outlines three pillars of change, each focused on shifting how power, resources and leadership are understood and practised in humanitarian action. Underpinning this roadmap is the recognition of different types of FLHL actors, based on working definitions from the Oxfam in Asia context:

- International humanitarian actors include donor governments, UN agencies and INGOs. These actors control the bulk of humanitarian funding and often dominate decision-making processes, even when working with national governments or local CSOs.
- Crisis-affected people are the key stakeholders in any humanitarian response, yet responses frequently fail to reflect their diverse needs or support inclusive decision-making.
- Gender and inclusion-focused CSO responders are those whose primary mission is to address gender inequality and social exclusion. These actors often respond early in crises, support local leadership and engage across stakeholders to embed gender and inclusion in humanitarian responses.
- All local CSO responders, regardless of their thematic focus, are also included within the FLHL framework. While many do not explicitly define themselves as feminist or gender focused, they strive to embed these principles in their response efforts, and their participation is critical to driving FLHL at scale.

Pillar 1: Valued as responders, leaders and equal partners

Many local CSOs report that partnerships with international humanitarian actors are characterized by top-down approaches, with local actors often excluded from program design and decision-making. Gender and inclusion remain low priorities, and women and marginalized leaders are often excluded or tokenized.

This pillar calls for international humanitarian actors to reform policies and practices, enabling crisis-affected people and local CSOs, especially feminist WROs, to lead in gender-transformative and socially inclusive response. FLHL actors must treat crisis-affected people as equal partners, genuinely value feminist and gender-focused CSOs for their expertise and support local CSOs to embed gender and inclusion in their work.

To track these shifts, the roadmap identifies key indicators including the meaningful participation of crisis-affected people and local CSOs, especially feminist WROs, in decision-making spaces; more equitable, co-created partnership practices; and greater value placed on local expertise, particularly on gender and inclusion, in program design and implementation.

Pillar 2: Enabled and resourced to respond

Despite the centrality of their work, funding for feminist and gender-targeted work remains limited, inconsistent and difficult to access. Humanitarian actors often lack systems to track funding to gender or inclusion efforts, while available data consistently shows that very little reaches local feminist actors directly.

This pillar emphasizes that crisis-affected people and local CSOs must have greater access to and control over humanitarian resources. Feminist WROs and other gender and inclusion-focused actors must be resourced to not only deliver, but to sustain and lead gender-transformative responses, while local CSOs must be supported to mainstream gender and inclusion across their programming.

Indicators under this pillar monitor both the quantity and quality of funding reaching feminist

WROs and local CSOs. This includes tracking increases in core, flexible and long-term funding; reductions in administrative barriers; the presence of internal systems to monitor gender and inclusion financing; and investment in staff wellbeing, leadership and institutional resilience.

Pillar 3: Collectively lead for change

Feminist WROs, as with local CSO responders, frequently face exclusion from decision-making and advocacy spaces. Structural and cultural risks, including political backlash, also restrict the ability of feminist actors to advocate safely. Despite this, many local actors see advocacy as core to their crisis response and stress the importance of strengthening networks and platforms.

This pillar calls on international humanitarian actors to recognize and support the leadership of local CSOs, crisis-affected people, and feminist WROs across all advocacy and coordination mechanisms. Local actors must be connected through strong alliances and enabled to collectively influence humanitarian systems in ways that promote gender-transformative and socially inclusive change.

To assess progress under this pillar, indicators cover the extent to which feminist and gender-focused CSOs are leading advocacy efforts; the availability and inclusivity of platforms for organizing; support mechanisms that address safety and political risk; and the alignment of international actors with advocacy agendas set by local organizations and crisis-affected people.

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