



Strengthening Leadership of Local and National Actors in Humanitarian Coordination: Practical Case Studies

Global Cluster Coordination Group - Localization Working Group

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Strengthening leadership of local and national actors in humanitarian coordination – Practical examples

The Localisation Agenda conceptualised initially by the [Grand Bargain](#) in 2016, recognises the need to have equitable opportunities for Local and National Actors¹ (LNAs) including Women Led Organisations² (WLOs), Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs)³ and other diversity groups to play leadership roles at national and sub-national levels clusters / Areas of Responsibilities (AoRs), and have a seat at the table when strategic decisions are made (for example, in Strategic Advisory Groups (SAGs) or technical working groups (TWiGs)). This practical guide aims to highlight practical examples from humanitarian clusters⁴ on how they have promoted LNAs leadership to inspire other clusters/AoRs to do the same in line with the IASC guide⁵.

Who is the target audience for this guide?

This guide is intended to be useful for:

- Cluster coordination teams including coordinators, co-coordinators, information management officers (IMOs).
- Cluster partners intending to promote leadership of LNAs in humanitarian coordination.
- LNAs aspiring or seeking leadership in humanitarian coordination mechanisms

Why we should promote and strengthen LNAs leadership in humanitarian coordination?

- ✓ LNAs bring contextual understanding and expertise essential for effective decision-making in crisis that international capacity can complement. WLOs and OPDs are uniquely positioned to bring the perspectives and needs of women, girls, and people with disabilities into coordination spaces.
- ✓ An LNA in a leadership position could encourage other LNAs to become involved in the cluster / AoR. LNAs can support the engagement of national networks and share contextual knowledge and best practice experiences to enhance locally led humanitarian response and nexus with development.
- ✓ LNAs represent local community and could support the mobilisation of the affected population to better voice their needs and to achieve community driven action in cluster-led processes, including HNO and HRP.
- ✓ LNAs understand cultural norms, ethnic dynamism of their contexts, they can communicate in local languages.

¹ The IASC considers LNAs to be state authorities of the affected aid recipient country engaged in relief, whether at local or national level, and organisations engaged in relief that are headquartered and operating in their own aid recipient country and which are not affiliated to an international NGO

² The IASC defines WLO as an organisation with a humanitarian mandate and/or mission that is (1) governed or directed by women; or 2) whose leadership is principally made up of women, demonstrated by 50 per cent or more occupying senior leadership positions.

³ The Disability Reference Group (DRG), part of IASC defines Local / national OPDs as any organizations or associations led, directed, and governed by persons with disabilities that are entrenched, committed to, and fully respect the principles and rights enshrined in the CRPD. A clear majority of their membership should be recruited among persons with disabilities themselves. Please click [here](#) for more details

⁴ For the sake of conciseness, the term 'cluster' in this document should be understood to include AoRs.

⁵ [IASC Guidance on Strengthening Participation, Representation and Leadership of Local and National Actors in IASC Humanitarian Coordination Mechanisms.](#)

- ✓ In the absence of international coordinators/ actors (e.g., during the COVID pandemic or when the CLAs are recruiting), LNAs can support the normal function of the humanitarian coordination, increasing sustainability, predictability, continuity, and longevity of leadership.
- ✓ Strengthening LNAs leadership in humanitarian coordination enables the opportunity to transition to national leadership and shifting power and responsibility of humanitarian action to national actors. Read more in this one pager: [Shifting Power Dynamics: Exploring the Impact of Women-Led Organisations' Leadership in GBV Coordination\(1\)](#)

Different types of shared leadership arrangements with LNAs

1. Lead / Co-lead of Clusters / AoRs by LNAs

A Cluster Lead / Co-lead Agency is a humanitarian organisation endorsed by the IASC to lead or co-lead a country-level cluster, based on the recommendation of the residence coordinator (RC) or humanitarian coordinator (HC) following consultations with the Humanitarian Coordination Team (HCT). The Country Representative/Director of the CLA is accountable to the RC/HC for the cluster's functioning and for serving as Provider of Last Resort. In some contexts, a government line ministry or national agency is the lead or co-lead and retains accountability to their constituents instead of the Relief Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator (RC/HC). Below are tools / templates and case studies from different clusters to enable LNA lead / co-lead cluster / AoR.

Terms of Reference for the Coordination Structure of the Child Protection Working Group for South Kivu, DRC

Check out the [Inter-Agency toolkit on localisation in humanitarian coordination\(2\)](#) page 77



Case Study 1:

Co-leadership of Ethiopia Nutrition Cluster by UNICEF and ENCU

In Ethiopia, the Nutrition Cluster is led by the Emergency Nutrition Coordination Unit (ENCU) a government unit and supported by UNICEF. ENCU is housed within the [Ethiopian Disaster Risk Management Commission\(2.1.\)](#) (EDRMC). It leads cluster coordination in addition to being the technical emergency nutrition arm of the Government of Ethiopia (GoE). As such, the ENCU leads and coordinates nutrition partners at federal, regional and district levels for a coherent, effective emergency nutrition preparedness and response to save lives and improve the nutritional status of vulnerable populations during emergencies. There are sub-national ENCU (RENCU) coordination staff (coordinators and IMO from

government) in 6 regions of Ethiopia. UNICEF as a CLA, supports at subnational level the RENCU teams in the coordination functions.



Case Study 2:
Co-Leadership of Coordination Approach with National or Subnational Health Authorities and the Health Cluster

According to the [Health Cluster Guide\(2.2.\)](#), “where the national or subnational health authority is willing to engage in the leadership of coordination of the response but does not have the capacity to fully lead the response, WHO should aim to establish a co-leadership approach with the health authorities.” In line with this guidance, and as indicated in the [Health Cluster Dashboard\(2.3.\)](#), 4 out of the 29 active health clusters are currently co-coordinated by the Ministry of Health.

2. National Co-Coordination of Clusters/AoRs by LNAs:

Based on the [definitions paper\(3\)](#), endorsed by the Global Cluster Coordination Group (GCCG) in March 2023, a cluster co-coordinating partner (CCP) is one or more humanitarian organisations or government entities that is selected by the Cluster Lead Agency (CLA) **through a consultative process to provide leadership support** to the cluster at national and/or subnational levels. This optional role can strengthen cluster leadership but does not replace the core accountabilities and responsibilities of the designated CLA as noted above. **It is recognised as good practice that this role is carried out by a local or national actor.** There have been different examples of how Clusters and AoRs have been able to support co-coordination by LNAs and below are some useful tools and resources to allow duplication by other clusters at the country level.

Examples of the process to establish / select a L/NA Co-Coordinating Partner	• South Sudan National NGO Co-Coordinator Process (3.1.) • South Sudan CP AoR selection criteria for National NGO Co-coordinator(4)
Examples of Co-Coordinating Partner ToRs	• South Sudan Education Cluster(5) • Nigeria CP AoR NGO Co-coordinating Partner Terms of Reference(6) • South Sudan Food Security and Livelihoods Cluster(6.1.)
Examples of Co-Coordinator ToRs	• South Sudan Education Cluster(7) • South Sudan Gender Based Violence AoR Co-coordinator ToR(8)

	• Mali GBV AoR Co-Coordinateur ToR(8.1.). As well as the Detailed Guidance (22.)
Examples of Co-Coordinator and Cluster Lead Agency MoUs	• South Sudan Education Cluster(9)
Draft Budget Template	• South Sudan Education Cluster(10)
Draft Expression of Interest	• South Sudan Education Cluster Email(11) and Online Eoi Form PDF(11.1.) • GBV AoR Call for Expression of Interest Template(11.2.)
Steps in Supporting a Women-led Organisation as a Co-Coordinator of a GBV Coordination Group (GBV AoR Guidance for coordinators and member organisations)	• Guidance(11.3.)
Disability Inclusive Humanitarian	• Engaging with organizations of persons with disabilities in humanitarian action - tipsheet(12.)



Case Study 3: South Sudan Education Cluster

The South Sudan Education Cluster (SSEC) has been responding to the changing and diverse needs through a coordinated approach and **promoting local leadership in cluster coordination**. Full case study, and suggested approach, is available [here\(12.1.\)](#), in **English, French and Spanish**. In 2022, a Cluster Co-Coordinator hosted by the national organisation Universal Network for Knowledge and Empowerment Agency ([UNKEA](#)) was appointed, after a competitive process, at national level funded by DANIDA and Education Cannot Wait (ECW). The co-co-ordinator spoke to the GEC about the impact of local leadership on service delivery and how this yields more sustainable education outcomes for children and the community. "It's important to have local partners participate in coordination because this enforces trust within the communities, and also ensures collective action or responsibility by the national actors." [South Sudan Education Cluster Local Leadership Case Study \(youtube.com\)](#)



Case Study 4: The Nigeria Child Protection Area of Responsibility (CP AoR) co-coordinated by [Goal Prime Organisation Nigeria](#) (GPON), a national NGO from Nigeria

The Nigeria CPAoR, under the leadership of the Government of Nigeria, Ministry of Women's Affairs and Social Development and UNICEF, reached a consensus on the need to have a National NGO co-coordinate the AoR in 2019. The first step was to create a Terms of Reference through a participatory process. One of the requirements included in the terms was that the applicants should be from National

NGOs and be active in the Child Protection AoR coordination mechanisms. Through a competitive, open and transparent process, Grow Strong Foundation, a National NGO was selected to co-coordinate the Nigeria Child Protection AoR in 2019. This was the first time a national NGO had been selected to co-coordinate the Child Protection AoR mechanism in Nigeria. After Grow Strong Foundation's term as co-coordinator elapsed, another National NGO co-coordinator, Goal Prime Organisation Nigeria (GPON), was elected in August 2022.



Case Study 5:

The Yemen GBV Area of Responsibility (GBV AoR) co-coordinated by Yemen Women's Union (YWO)

The [Yemen Women's Union \(YWU\)](#) a national Women Led Organisation (WLO) from Yemen, has co-coordinated the national-level GBV AoR since 2019. YWU was not selected through a competitive process, but based on their established partnership with UNFPA, wide geographical reach and close ties to community-based support structures and women's networks. While the co-coordination at the national level has proven to be very strong and based on equal partnership, the GBV AoR in Yemen adopted a competitive and transparent selection process when opening a co-coordination position this year at the sub-national level, in Marib. This helped garner buy-in and acceptance among the working group members when YWU emerged as the strongest candidate and took on co-coordination at the sub-national level as well.



Case Study 6:

Co-Coordinator by a national actor for the FSL Cluster in South Sudan

The South Sudan Food Security and Livelihoods Cluster (FSLC) is co-coordinated by SAADO, a national NGO from South Sudan. SAADO has co-coordinated the national-level FSLC since 2023 and was selected through a competitive process, based FSLC partners election. This helped to strengthen local and operational coordination in country, increase buy-in and acceptance among the Local partners as well as raising accountability. The FSLC also set up a localisation taskforce led by NNGO SAG members, aimed at supporting and advancing localisation in line with the Global FSLC 2023-25 strategy and the 2023 South Sudan HCT localisation strategy, the FSL C regards localisation as a sustainability strategy to achieving food security through active participation of the communities and local actors (CBO's, NGOs, local authorities and private sector in the project life cycle and advocating for a project to address key institutional capacity gaps of National NGOs.

3. Sub-national Co-Coordination by LNAs:

The above processes and tools to establish a co-coordinator at the national level can also be used at the sub-national level to support local and national actors take on co-coordination opportunities. Sometimes sub-national coordinators are double-hatting in their roles and are less formalised than the coordination team at the national level. However, to recognise the importance of their contributions and to give additional formal recognition, it is recommended that sub-national coordinators and the organisations hosting them, have their roles and responsibilities documented. Click on the links below for useful tools and templates in selecting LNA co-coordinating partners at sub-national level.

Example of selection criteria for sub-national co-coordinating partner

- Click [here\(13.\)](#) to access Nigeria Wash cluster example when selecting a National NGO to co-coordinate Wash sector in Yobe State, Nigeria
- [Sudan Health Cluster Sub-national Co-coordination presentation on Roles, Responsibility, Accountability, Selection criteria, Process of Selection\(13.1.\)](#)

Example of TOR, call for expression of interest and for sub-national WLO co-coordinator selection criteria

- [South Sudan GBV AoR Call for expression of interest for WLO Co-coordinator in Warrap State \(including ToR and selection criteria\)\(13.2.\)](#)
- [Yemen GBV AoR Call or expression of interest and ToRs for WLO co-coordinator in Marib\(13.3\)](#)



Case Study 7: DRC Education Cluster scale up in Goma

In Goma, DRC in 2023, the Education Cluster was supporting the scale up of the humanitarian response in line with the increasing needs and the establishment of the ECW First Emergency Response fund. Through collaboration with LNAs that were actively participating at the sub-national level, the DRC Education Cluster supported the national organisation [AIDES](#) from DRC, to host a sub-national co-coordinator in Goma that was financially supported through Save the Children. This aims to ensure that the leadership and decision making was informed by an individual and an organisation embedded into the local context.



Case Study 8:

Taimako Community Development Initiative⁶ (TCDI) Co-coordinate WASH Sector in Yobe State, Northeast Nigeria

In North East Nigeria with the cluster system in place since 2016, the WASH Sector coordination struggling in one the three states (Yobe) were reinforced in 2023 by adding a co-coordinating National NGO, **Taimako Community Development Initiative** (TCDI www.taimakocdi.org.ng) to support the platform led by UNICEF with the Ministry of Water Resources. The initiative came from the sub sector platform itself having collectively selected the most active organisation, based on its WASH operational footprint and coordination capacity. Taimako Community Development Initiative's formal proposition with justification criteria for co-coordination in Yobe State was submitted on 3rd July 2023 to the WASH Sector Coordinator, then unanimously endorsed by all Strategic Advisory Group (SAG) members on 11th July 2023. Click [here\(13.4.\)](#) to access the criteria applied in selecting TCDI as a sub-national co-coordinating partner



Case Study 9:

Women for Change expand co-coordination from the sub-national level in Warrap State, to national level co-coordination in Juba

In February 2022, the GBV AoR at sub-national level in Warrap State, South Sudan opened a co-coordination role for a WLO. An expression of interest was published and ten WLOs applied. Women for Change (WFC) was selected by an inter-agency selection committee. They joined the GBV Working Group as a second co-chair, providing leadership alongside the group's chair (the Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare) and co-chair (The Organisation of Children in Harmony – TOCH), a male-led organisation. Some challenges included negotiating equal roles for the two co-chairs, so that WFC was not only doing the administrative work (for example, communications and taking minutes). Mitigation steps included setting a timetable with the co-lead to share the responsibilities and alternate key tasks such as co-chairing, minute taking, and sharing outcomes with working group members and the national GBV AoR. After two years of successful co-coordination, WFC submitted an expression of interest for the role of national-level co-coordinator when the role was opened in early 2024 and was selected through a competitive selection process. The [full case study\(14.\)](#) is available, along with the [WLO Leadership in Coordination Resource Package\(15.\)](#) that captures the local co-leads' challenges and successes. The package contains resources on how to establish more equitable co-coordination and how to create space for women's leadership.

⁶ <https://taimako.himtech.com.ng/>



Case Study 10: Sub-National LNA Co-Coordiators with the Sudan Health Cluster

In the Sudan Health Cluster, six sub-national co-coordinators support operations—five in the Western zone and one in the Central zone. Since late 2024, two positions in the Western zone have been held by local/national NGOs (L/NNGOs): [SUDO](#) and [DCD](#). The selection process included Expressions of Interest, nominations, CV reviews, interviews, and final announcements in collaboration with Sub-National Health Cluster Darfur partners. Newly appointed co-coordinators undergo integration, with performance monitored over 5–11 months, renewable based on evaluations. Globally, there were 120 sub-national health cluster coordination hubs in 2024, with 41% co-coordinated by the Ministry of Health and 10% by L/NNGOs. The GHC Localization Strategy aims to increase LNA co-coordination to 50% of sub-national hubs and at least 30% of national clusters by 2025. Next steps in Sudan include capacity-sharing, integration activities, and regular meetings to enhance communication and strengthen collaboration.

4. LNAs Membership in the country and global level Strategic Advisory Groups (SAGs) clusters

The overall aim of SAG is to promote and drive the implementation of the cluster / AoR strategy, ensuring that the decisions taken, and the pursuing actions represent the diversity of the cluster partners. LNAs should be encouraged to participate by ensuring they have membership in the SAGs. This facilitates their engagement and their influence in planning processes and helps instil a sense of ownership that can help promote continuity given the high level of INGO and UN staff turnover. Click on the links below for useful tools and templates in integrating LNAs in SAGS.

Strategic Advisory Group (SAG) template	Click here(16.)
Terms of Reference for the South Sudan Food Security Livelihood- Cluster SAG	Click here(17.)
CCCM Cluster Yemen SAG – Terms of Reference	Click here(18.)
Ethiopia Health Cluster SAG – Terms of Reference	Click here(18.1.)



Case Study 11:

LNAs membership in Global Wash Cluster SAG

The Global WASH Cluster (GWC) has 2 national actors as members of the Strategic Advisory Group (SAG) out of 12. The members provide strategic oversight and guidance to the GWC's Cluster Advocacy and Support Team (CAST) and represents the members to the GWC. While the CAST decides on day-to-day operational matters of the GWC, the SAG ensures decisions are based on the best available information and are in the best interests of the affected populations served by the GWC and its members, aligning strategic and operational plans and priorities with the wider water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) sector. For more information on the SAG, please refer to the [terms of reference\(19.\)](#)



Case Study 12:

South Sudan Education Cluster

In late 2023, the South Sudan Education Cluster (SSEC) revised the [Terms of Reference of its Strategic Advisory Group \(SAG\)\(20.\)](#) to explicitly encourage gender parity and representation of women and national and local organisations, including women's organisations. The Cluster organised an election to select new SAG members. Of the 12 SAG members, 4 are local organisations and 1 represents the Ministry of Education (42% local). 4 of the SAG member representatives are women, with one of these representing a local Women-Led Organisation, [Mission Trust Aid](#) from South Sudan. This has significantly amplified the voices of diverse women and girls in this crucial strategic platform for over 100 organisations members of the Education Cluster and supported all partners to better centre the specific experiences, needs, barriers and risks for South Sudanese girls in the EiE response.



Case Study 13:

Women-led organisations core membership in the global GBV AoR

In late 2021 and 2022, the GBV AoR undertook a comprehensive revision of its global governance structure to address diversity and inclusion. This process focused on enhancing the participation of local organisations, revising membership criteria, and strengthening influence in decision-making. With localisation at the forefront of its agenda, the GBV AoR issued a call for membership applications specifically targeting local and women-led organisations in Somalia, Nigeria, and South Sudan, to have their voices and opinions integrated in this revision. The [application criteria \(found here\)\(21.\)](#) was updated to reflect to be more inclusive of local and national actors.

After the evaluation of 30+ applications, two women-led organisations from Nigeria and South Sudan were selected as GBV AoR members. These organisations are now members of the GBV AoR strategic and decision-making body and have influenced the revision of the governance structure to accommodate local and women-led organisations participation. These two WLOs are setting up a localisation task team in collaboration with an INGO GBV AoR member.



Case Study 14: Ethiopia Health Cluster SAG

In 2024, FIDO, an Ethiopian national NGO, was a member of the Ethiopia Health Cluster Strategic Advisory Group (SAG). Its representative has also actively contributed to the strategic guidance provided by the GHC Localization Steering Group, which developed the Health Cluster Localization Strategy in 2024. Globally, in 2024, 60% of the 29 activated health clusters had a Strategic Advisory Group (SAG), with LNAs representing, on average, 20% of their membership—matching the percentage of INGOs. As outlined in the [GHC Localization Strategy\(21.1\)](#), the goal is to increase the proportion of SAG members who are LNAs to 30% by the end of 2025.

5. L/NA leadership of Technical Working Groups:

Technical Working Groups (TWGs) are small, task-oriented, and time-limited. They are established by cluster coordinator(s) or the Strategic Advisory Group only if there is a need to support specific technical or thematic areas of work within and/or between clusters (e.g., to develop minimum standards). The deliverables of a Technical Working Group (TWG) are typically set out in ToRs; the group dissolves when these are completed. Some clusters TWGs have LNAs as chairs while others as co-chairs depending on contexts. Click on the links below for useful tools and templates in integrating LNAs in TWGs.

Sample ToRs for GBV national coordination group

Check out [Inter-Agency toolkit on localisation in humanitarian coordination\(2.\)](#) page 82



Case Study 15: Local Women's Led Organisations leading Technical Working Groups (TWGs)

In the Ukrainian Education Cluster, the local Women's Led Organisation named [Montessori Ukraine](#), which operates across various regions of Ukraine, including Mykolaiv, Kharkiv, Sumy, Chernihiv, and Dnipro, focusing on supporting children affected by conflict, has set up and led the TWG on Early Childhood Development which was previously not active but is a priority given the impact of the war on Ukrainian children of all ages. The impact of this seems to be an increased focus of this topic across the cluster but importantly this has brought in more local engagement in the topic of Early Childhood Development as well as mainstreaming of women's rights in cluster leaderships and processes.



Case Study 16:

[Local NGOs co-chairing Technical Working Groups \(TWGs\) in the Northwest Syria health cluster\(21.2\):](#) In 2024, across the 29 health clusters, 93% had Technical Working Groups (TWGs), with 14% of these TWGs co-chaired by national NGOs. In Northwest Syria, the health cluster had eight TWGs co-chaired by local and national NGOs. These NGOs, identifying themselves as LNAs, included SRD (Primary Health Care and Trauma/Disability), UOSSM (MHPSS), SEMA (NCD), SIG (Vaccination), and AFAQ (RCCE). Their expertise demonstrated genuine leadership in the technical health response.

6. L/NA leadership during the Humanitarian Programme Cycle (HPC) processes

Local and national actors also play a key leadership role in HPC processes, below are some examples across the HPC.

⇒ PREPAREDNESS



Case Study 17: National Authority and Nepal Red Cross Society (NRCS) lead Shelter Cluster Nepal on preparedness

In Nepal, there is a Cluster-like mechanisms inherited from the Cluster wide activation in 2015 following a series of large earthquakes. Between 2016 and 2021, several contextual coordination mechanisms were put in place following the Cluster deactivation through co-leadership between UN agencies, INGOs and

the National Government. In 2022, a request was made to transition to a local coordination leadership and the [Nepal Red Cross Society](#) (NRCS) took the lead of the Shelter Cluster-like mechanism jointly with the National authorities, back-up by IFRC and the Global Shelter Cluster. Since then, NRCS and the authorities have coordinated responses to earthquakes and floodings including preparedness and contingency planning activities.



Case Study 18:

In South Sudan, the OCHA Country Based Pooled Fund in 2024 was reserved for rapid response to new and sudden onset emergencies. Given that this fund is a significant funder of local actors, it has been highlighted as a key resource to involved local actors in humanitarian preparedness. See page 4 of the [OCHA Country Based Pooled Fund Global Guidance document\(21.3. English, French, Spanish & Arabic\)](#) for their localisation requirements.

⇒ NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND ANALYSIS



Case Study 19:

In Cameroon, as education is at the heart of the separatist conflict, the access and presence of education actors in communities is limited and communities often have distrust for outsiders. Therefore, for the Northwest and Southwest regions of Cameroon, a Joint Education Needs Assessment was organised, led predominately by local and national actors who either had a presence or had links to all the communities. This allowed for a more holistic, informed process of data collection analysed by local actors to better inform the response, and priorities.



Case Study 20:

Establishment of Disability, Age, and Inclusion Working Groups in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh

The establishment of disability/age and disability/inclusion working groups, co-chaired or co-led by local Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs), has significantly contributed to the Humanitarian Programme Cycle (HPC), influencing both the needs and response plans. In Bangladesh, following the sudden influx of over seven hundred thousand refugees into the Cox's Bazar district in 2017, a group of four local and international NGOs recognized the urgent need for a disability and age-inclusive response.

These organizations collaborated to promote inclusivity through capacity development, advocacy, technical support, and enhancing data collection on persons with disabilities (PWDs) and older persons, ensuring that their needs were integrated into the humanitarian response.

In 2018, these four NGOs established the Age and Disability Working Group (ADWG), a unique initiative that brought together a diverse membership of humanitarian actors. This included local OPDs, local NGOs, and representatives from various humanitarian sectors, all committed to fostering an inclusive response that addressed the specific challenges faced by PWDs and older persons. By engaging OPDs as active members in the ADWG, the group has demonstrated a practical model for future working arrangements, ensuring that local actors—particularly those representing marginalized groups—are at the forefront of humanitarian decision-making processes.

⇒ **STRATEGIC RESPONSE PLANNING**



Case Study 21:

The Northwest Syria Education cluster strategy development process was locally led and owned, with local organisations organising and driving the process. This meant that the strategy was more based on local evidence and inclusive by focusing on learning and well-being in high need areas from before and after the 2023 earthquake. The NWS Education Cluster mobilised and utilised the capacities of all education actors resulted in a national level strategy development workshop for education partners and stakeholders, with an additional five local workshops in Arabic held by local partners to ensure reflecting local level inputs, participation, consultation and decision making.

⇒ **ADVOCACY AND RESOURCE MOBILISATION**

Financial sustainability of Co-Coordinator role is a major consideration. The Cluster Coordinators and CLAs need to strategically support the National Co-Coordinating Partner in this as well as supporting the advocacy with donors for any relevant funding application. Check out [Inter-Agency toolkit on localisation in humanitarian coordination\(2.\)](#) Page 50 - Advocacy tool regarding direct and multi-year funding for LNAs. UNICEF and Save the Children (Education CLAs) advocacy support in South Sudan led to the CCP receiving multi-year funding through the Education Cannot Wait Multi-Year (ECW MYRP).



Case Study 22:

The GBV AoR has tested different funding models to sustain WLO Co-coordination roles. In Yemen and Sudan, UNFPA has raised funds for the WLO Co-Coordinator position. In Somalia and South Sudan, the GBV AoR has partnered with Trocaire; Trocaire both provided the funds to the selected WLO Co-coordinator and ongoing support and mentoring to the WLO Co-coordinator.



Case Study 23:

In South Sudan, the Education Cluster managed a pooled funding mechanism set up through Save the Children from a People's Postcode Lottery fund from Save the Children where local education actors were able to use flexible funds to respond timely to EiE needs. An expression of interest (EoI) for this fund was shared and completed by local and national actors, afterwards an [application process feedback form PDF\(21.4.\)](#) as created and completed by applicants to understand the ease of the process and how accessible process had been for local actors, to support future improvements to the EoI process.

⇒ IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING



Case Study 24:

In early 2023, the Nigerian CPAoR implemented the process of assessing their progress on localisation by using their Global CPAoR tool, to produce their own localisation dashboard. This process was led by the CPAoR Nigeria Localisation Working Group, with support from [Goal Prime Organisation Nigeria \(GPON\)](#), and engaged members of the CPAoR. The result was that the cluster both had a snapshot of where they were currently at, across a range of localisation dimensions, as well as outlining other areas of opportunity to work more on. The impact of this was that the Nigerian CPAoR was able to create a localisation strategy/ workplan that was informed by the data that came out of [this dashboard\(24.\)](#).

Similarly, at the global level, nutrition cluster was able to develop its [Localisation Roadmap 2024-2025 & Summary\(25.\)](#) to provide an overview of the GNC's current efforts contributing to localisation while articulating activities required to support a more enabling environment for a locally-led humanitarian response at a country-level.

At the global level, the Health Cluster developed its [Localization Strategy\(25.1.\)](#) in 2024 and will launch its results monitoring framework in early 2025. The GHC will publish, on its [dedicated localization webpage](#), biannual public reports on its achievements and is compiling a suite of tools to support the contextualization and operationalization of the Localization Strategy. Currently, four health clusters and sectors ([Chad](#), [Burkina Faso](#), [Central African Republic](#) and [Northeast Nigeria](#)) have developed localization action plans, with contributions from more than 120 LNAs. These LNAs are actively engaged in advancing localization within their health clusters at both national and sub-national levels.

Measuring Localisation in coordination mechanisms	CPAoR Localisation Dashboard Tool and Guidance in English, French, Spanish and Arabic(25.2.)
Global Dashboard across all cluster countries	Global Nutrition Cluster Localisation Dashboard(25.3.)

7. Localisation Leading the Transition to Cluster Deactivation

Local and national actors play a key role during cluster deactivation, from a sustainability and continuity perspective. Based on experiences in Iraq and Libya, it is essential that local and national actors are brought in early to plan for transition



Case Study 25: Honduras Shelter Cluster – Transition and deactivation towards a L/NA

The Shelter Cluster in Honduras was activated in January 2021 under the leadership of IFRC with Global Communities (GC) as co-coordinator. Global Communities hired a national individual for the Co-ordination role, who had previously been working with authorities. He invited the Ministry of Development and Social Inclusion, the Association of Municipal Governments and Mayors of all affected municipalities to join the regular Shelter Cluster meetings. As they shared their pressing humanitarian needs, key alliances were built, and a strong local coordination system was established. IFRC’s mandate rooted in the support to National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, drove the Shelter Cluster localisation efforts in Honduras. [Fundación Nacional para el Desarrollo de Honduras](#) (FUNADEH), was one of the active national organisation and cluster members who participated in a coordination training led by the Global Shelter Cluster, Regional Focal point for the Americas. This enabled FUNADEH to fundraise and hired coordination focal points. In 2024, the HC/HCT handed over humanitarian coordination to LNAs and therefore deactivating the cluster system. FUNADEH is taking over the coordination leadership for the Shelter Cluster jointly with national authorities.



Case Study 26: Humanitarian Transition Overview in Iraq

During 2023, the efforts of the Iraq Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) focused on enhancing Government ownership by progressively handing over humanitarian operations and the coordination role to the line ministries in the Government of Iraq (GoI) and the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG). This followed the complete deactivation of the Humanitarian Cluster system in December 2022, which was replaced by sectors, forums, and working groups, co-chaired with the relevant line ministries. The GoI has assumed leadership in its respective sectors, with the UN and NGOs remaining actively involved as co-chairs and continuing to provide technical guidance and expertise.

Many international actors have made progress in advancing their localization strategies, empowering local actors to lead humanitarian, peace and development efforts. Capacity building was provided to Government actors, with a notable example being the training delivered to Department of Education personnel to identify at-risk children and children with additional needs. Capacity building has also been provided to local NGOs on social cohesion, advocacy and communications. Furthermore, international actors continued to partner with local organizations leading on the implementation of social cohesion and protection programming.⁸

Challenges and recommendations of LNAs leadership in humanitarian coordination mechanisms

Challenges and risks	Recommendations and mitigations
<i>There are barriers to LNA access of longer-term funding in emergency response. This can make it difficult for them, without support, to host roles for an extended period of time, especially when these roles are not responsible for direct project implementation.</i>	• Consider including in the selection criteria that the prospective LNAs demonstrates capacity to actively seek funding opportunities for the continuity of supporting the co-coordinator position. • Financial sustainability of Co-Coordinator role is a major consideration. The Cluster Coordinators and CLAs need to strategically support the National Co-Coordinating Partner in this as well as supporting the advocacy⁷ with donors for any relevant funding application. UNICEF and Save the Children (Education CLAs) advocacy support in South Sudan led to the CCP receiving multi-year funding through the Education

⁷ Check out [Inter-Agency toolkit on localisation in humanitarian coordination](#) Page 50 - Advocacy tool regarding direct and multi-year funding for LNAs

⁸Iraq Humanitarian Transition Overview 2024 - <https://reliefweb.int/report/iraq/iraq-humanitarian-transition-overview-2024-june-2024-enarku>

	Cannot Wait Multi-Year (ECW MYRP). The GBV AoR has tested different funding models to sustain WLO Co-coordination roles. In Yemen and Sudan, UNFPA has raised funds for the WLO Co-Coordinator position. In Somalia and South Sudan, the GBV AoR has partnered with Trocaire; Trocaire both provided the funds to the selected WLO Co-coordinator and ongoing support and mentoring to the WLO Co-coordinator.
<i>Humanitarian coordination positions have historically been held by international organisations and therefore there could be a challenge of inclusion and access to information for national organisations taking up these roles, requiring cluster coordinators to actively work on facilitating the process for inclusion of L/NNGO co-coordinator to be included in inter-cluster processes.</i>	• Review the accessibility of coordination mechanisms to LNAs, including location, language, and timing of meetings with LNAs to increase participation in cluster meetings • To institutionalise the role, the Cluster Co-Coordinator role should be included into the Cluster ToR and the Cluster Co-Coordinating Partner should sign an MOU or Coordination Partnership Agreement with Cluster Lead Agency (CLA) • Cluster Coordinators to support the co-coordinator to be included and recognised in inter-cluster structures to allow them to meaningfully engage including introducing them to different stakeholders at different levels. This requires cultivating trust, open communication, and mutual respect among all stakeholders. • The co-coordinator should receive appropriate orientation for the role from the Country and Global Cluster Teams
<i>After a long capacity-strengthening process, the national co-coordinator can transfer to another organisation before the end of his/her term, which could lead to a loss of knowledge retention in the role.</i>	• Arrangements should be made for the cluster lead agency or a member of the cluster (e.g. an INGO) to support the L/NA Co-coordinator. This should include capacity strengthening, including technical support and mentoring for the L/NA Co-coordinator, along with longer-term institution strengthening for the organisation and funding for the Co-coordinator position. • The tenure of the Co-Coordinating Partner should be at least two to three years due to the length of the process to appoint the organisations and the investment made to recruit the co-coordinator. After the agreed length of service has elapsed, then the Cluster should go through the same process of an Expression of Interest (EiO) to seek for new LNAs to become the Cluster Co-Coordinating Partner.

Countries may have active HCTs without fully activated clusters, but with sectorial working groups which remain active even after the emergency phase. These groups support with contingency planning and anticipatory action, but often lack expertise in humanitarian coordination or have limited mandate for inclusive coordination. For example, their mandates do not account for the total affected population: migrants, displaced populations, refugees, returnees, host communities, etc.

- Adapting to local coordination mechanisms is essential to ensure sustainability and local empowerment of coordination mechanisms. This includes both mapping and understanding any existing coordination structures. This may imply training, linking global resources with national and subnational coordination bodies, advocating for additional resources, production of guidance material in local languages, etc.

Some clusters and AoRs do not know where to start when it comes to increasing local leadership within their cluster because of a lack of understanding of their current progress or do not know how to achieve what they want to do.

- To improve the leaderships and participation of local and national actors, it is recommended that capacity sharing sessions are set up to hear and learn from other clusters at the sub-national, national, regional and global levels.
- To allow clusters to understand where they are across the different dimensions of localisation, it is recommended that clusters assess themselves using a localisation dashboard. This can then inform future localisation action and activities.

Generally, and in addition to measuring localization progress, the performance of co-coordinators—whether from international organizations or LNAs—remains a critical issue across clusters. It is also important for co-coordinators to provide feedback to the cluster lead agency on the factors enabling or constraining their performance.

- When recruiting and selecting co-coordinators, within the EOI, TOR and MoU clearly specify mechanisms to assess performance of the co-coordinator (e.g. frequency of review, objectives to achieve and support required). Likewise integrate mechanisms for two-way feedback, providing clarity of support required from Cluster Lead Agency to ensure integration of the co-coordinator and any support required. Ensure dispute resolution mechanisms are integrated into MoU.

Logo's of Local and National Actors referenced in this paper:



Additional Resources

1. To improve the leaderships and participation of local and national actors, it is recommended that capacity sharing sessions are set up to learn from other clusters at the sub-national, national, regional and global levels. The Global Cluster Coordination Group's Localisation Working Group facilitated a number of webinars for different geographic regions where cluster colleagues shared how to promote localisation and gave recommendation of how to replicate this in other countries.

Experience sharing webinars

- [GCCG LWG 2023 MENA inter-cluster localisation capacity sharing \(English recording\)](#)
- GCCG LWG 2024 [Latin America and Spanish speaking contexts GCCG localisation webinar recordings](#) (available in English, Spanish and French)
- GCCG LWG 2023 Francophone inter-cluster lessons learned webinar- [PowerPoints in FR & ENG](#) (no recording)
- GEC Localisation Community of Practice [Webinar- Lessons from South Sudan \(English recording\)](#)
- GEC Localisation Community of Practice [Webinar- Lessons from Yemen \(English Recording\)](#)

Documentation of localisation initiatives

- MENA Best Practice Report ([ENGLISH](#)) ([ARABIC](#))
- [IASC Good Practices on Localization\(26.\) Document](#) & [Country Examples](#)

2. **Inter-Cluster Localisation in Humanitarian Coordination E-learning Module:** [English, French, Spanish & Arabic](#)
3. [Inter – Agency toolkit on localisation in humanitarian coordination- English, French, Spanish and Arabic\(2.\)](#)
4. **CPAoR Localisation dashboard toolkit:** [CPAoR Localisation Dashboard Tool & Guidance in English, French, Spanish & Arabic](#)
5. [GEC Guidance on how to mainstream localisation into HNRP and Cluster Strategies\(27.\)](#) and the [GEC Localisation in the HPC Tipsheet \(28.\)](#)
6. [The Global Health Cluster Localization Webpage](#) includes the [GHC Localization Strategy](#) (available in English, French, and Spanish), a [localization baseline study across health clusters](#), [case studies](#) and [articles highlighting clusters' achievements](#). In 2025, it will also feature a suite of tools, the results monitoring framework, public reports and additional resources.(29.)