

Report

ACCELERATING LOCAL AND NATIONAL NGO LEADERSHIP IN HUMANITARIAN COORDINATION MECHANISMS: A CASE STUDY OF NIGERIA CHILD PROTECTION AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY

Good Practices from IASC Task Force 5

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Accelerating local and national NGO leadership in humanitarian coordination mechanisms

A case study of Nigeria Child Protection Area of Responsibility (CP AoR)

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Geographical coverage

Nigeria



Context

The Child Protection Area of Responsibility (CP AoR) within the Protection Cluster is the forum for coordination and collaboration on Child Protection in humanitarian settings. The group brings together non-governmental organizations (NGOs) (international, national and local), UN agencies, academics, donors and other partners under the shared aim of facilitating a more predictable, accountable and effective Child Protection response in complex emergencies, disasters and other humanitarian crises.

One of the dimensions in the [localization conceptual framework](#) developed by the Global CP AoR, the Global GBV AoR, the Global Protection Cluster and the Global Education Cluster is leadership and governance. The framework recognizes the need for Local and National Actors (L/NAs) to have equitable opportunities to perform representation and leadership roles at national and sub-national levels; and have a seat at the table when strategic decisions are made.

On this basis and in line with its Localization Strategy and [IASC Guidance on Strengthening Participation, Representation and Leadership of Local and National Actors in IASC Humanitarian Coordination Mechanisms](#) that the Nigeria CP AoR engaged its members through dialogue on having a national NGO (NNGO) co-leading the CP AoR at National level. The NGO co-leadership model was critical for North-East Nigeria to strengthen operational effectiveness, technical minimum standards, accountability to affected populations, inter-sector linkages and ensure implementation of sector-based advocacy. Evaluations and research have found that, when sector leadership is shared, partnerships, advocacy and information transfer tend to improve.¹



Implementation and objective

The aim of this initiative was to promote representation and leadership of LNAs in CP AoR humanitarian coordination spaces.



Methodological approach

[Nigeria CP AoR](#) under the leadership of the Government of Nigeria, Ministry of Women's Affairs and Social Development and UNICEF, reached a consensus with other CP AoR members on the need to have a NNGO co-coordinate the CP AoR in 2019. A Terms of Reference (ToR) was developed to actualize this agenda through a participatory process. One of the requirements included in the ToR was that the applicants should be from NNGOs and be active in the CP AoR coordination mechanisms.

¹ This good practice was identified and documented through a template developed on the basis of the [2021 IASC Guidance on Localization](#), which aims at supporting efforts to strengthen the meaningful participation, representation, and leadership of local and national humanitarian actors (L/NAs) within IASC humanitarian coordination structures. Its objective is to share knowledge and inspire progress and positive change regarding the meaningful participation of local actors in Humanitarian Coordination platforms. The original draft of this good practice template was developed by the [KORE \(Knowledge Platform for Emergencies and Resilience\) team](#) in the Office of Emergencies and Resilience of the [Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations \(FAO\)](#) and was tailored to the needs of this IASC initiative.

Through a competitive, open, and transparent process, [Grow Strong Foundation](#), a NNGO was selected to co-coordinate the Nigeria CP AoR in 2019. This was the first time a NNGO had been selected to co-coordinate the CP AoR mechanism in Nigeria. After Grow Strong Foundation's term as co-coordinator elapsed, another NNGO co-coordinator, [Goal Prime Organization Nigeria \(GPON\)](#), was elected in August 2022.

[Nigeria Humanitarian Fund](#) set aside a Localization innovation fund to support localization initiatives in Nigeria. The NNGO Co-coordinator was able to apply for funding to support in the delivery of the co-coordinator role.



Results and impact

NNGOs co-coordinating the Nigeria CP AoR have increased their visibility. In 2020, for instance, Goal Prime Organization Nigeria was among the few organizations recognized by the State Government and issued with an Exemption Pass to continue service provision even during the COVID-19 lockdown.

NNGO co-coordinator organizations have strengthened their leadership capacity to coordinate the Child Protection (CP) humanitarian response. This has been through mentorship, coaching and training in order for them to deliver on their co-leadership mandate.

Due to increased visibility of their work, the NNGOs co-coordinators have also increased the funding they receive for the humanitarian response. NNGOs have been the highest recipients of the Nigerian Humanitarian Fund Second Reserve allocation 2021 with five national NGOs, i.e., GOAL Prime, Grow Strong Foundation (GSF), CPLLI, Restoration of Hope Initiative (ROHI) and Yobe Peace and Community Development Initiative (YOPCODI), independently securing 80% of the 1.2M allocation alongside two INGOs—Plan International and Translators Without Borders—and one UN Agency, UNICEF.

Representation of Local and National Actors (L/NAs) within Nigeria CP AoR leadership has improved. GOAL Prime organization Nigeria and GSF having been co-coordinators have been able to present and represent Local and NNGOs interested in the CP AoR leadership and other humanitarian coordination spaces.

To advance the localization participation pillar under the localization principles, the co-coordination role of the L/NA has increased trust in the AoR and helped build the capacity of local partners in coordination roles. The representation of local partners is also present in the Strategic Advisory Group (SAG) of the Nigeria CP AoR with four out of the eight SAG members being local partners, which means that they are fully represented at the decision-making table, and this creates sustainability for the sector.



Sustainability

The practise of having a NNGO co-coordinating the Nigeria CP AoR has been embedded in the leadership structure of the coordination space. After [Grow Strong Foundation](#) ended its term as a co-lead the same process was applied and another NNGO, i.e., [Goal Prime Organisation Nigeria \(GPON\)](#), was selected to continue with the co-coordination role.



Replicability and upscaling

Accelerating L/NAs representation and leadership in coordination structures through the co-coordination model has been replicated in South Sudan Education Cluster. South Sudan team learnt from Nigeria CP AoR and customized the ToR for having a NNGO co-coordinate cluster / AoR adapted to the South Sudan context.

Central African Republic CP AoR is also in the process of selecting a NNGO to co-coordinate its coordination space at the national level.



Key learning

The selection and recruitment of a NNGO co-coordinator in Nigeria CP AoR ensured transparency in the CP AoR leadership and decision-making process because local partners and the government ministries are fully represented in leadership roles. As such there is no friction in the AoR or any sensitivities that usually happen in a humanitarian setting.

The selection of a Local or NNGO co-coordinator needs to be conducted in a transparent and open manner. The process should not be left to only Cluster / AoR lead agency. All members need to be involved in the development and validation of a ToR for the co-coordinator and the process needs to be competitive to provide an opportunity to all Local and NNGO members of a cluster / AoR a chance to apply if they meet the qualifications.



**Related
resources**

- [A conceptual framework for localization in protection and education coordination](#)
- [Nigeria CP AoR Annual Report, 2021](#)
- [Northeast Nigeria CP AoR 2019 Localization Strategy](#)



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