

Report

SUPPORTING WOMEN-LED ORGANIZATIONS IN LEADERSHIP ROLES: SOMALIA AND SOUTH SUDAN

Good Practices from IASC Task Force 5

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Supporting Women-led Organizations in Leadership Roles: Somalia and South Sudan

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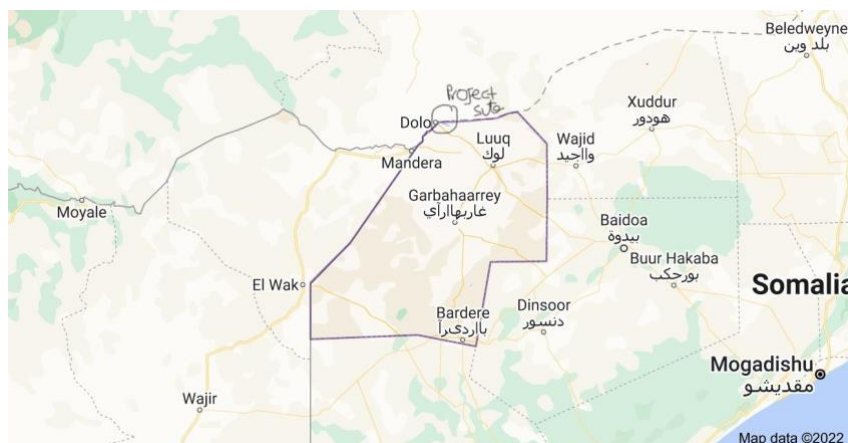
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Geographical coverage

The project is being implemented in Dolo-Gedo region of Somalia and Warrap State of South Sudan



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.



Actors and Stakeholders

Financial partners/donors

USAID’s Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA), through Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Area of Responsibility/United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

Implementing partners

The implementing partners for this project are Women for Change (WFC) in Warrap State of South Sudan and Active in Development Aid (ADA) of Gedo region in Somalia supported by Trócaire.

Women for Change (WFC) is a women-led, national non-governmental organization (NNGO) formed in 2016 by a group of South Sudanese women from various diverse backgrounds and experiences, to work for all women to live a liberated life in a world free of poverty and injustice. WFC advocates for women’s rights, facilitating their rights to fully access basic and fundamental social needs. WFC mobilises women in socio-economic development through engaging them in livelihoods (agriculture, small business and vocational training etc.), gender-based violence (GBV) response, reproductive health, and sanitation. WFC works in the states of Central, Warrap and Western Bahr el Ghazel.

Active in Development Aid (ADA) is a non-profit organization that works in Somalia. It was founded in 1992 by a group of Somali professionals. The main goal of ADA was to help in fighting poverty and ignorance, and providing livelihoods support to the people of Somalia in the fields of education, agriculture and rural development, food security and livelihoods support, human rights, and water, sanitation and hygiene. ADA’s vision is to be a prosperous and peaceful organization in which every individual has access to quality education, food, shelter and water, which is aimed at achieving self-reliance in all aspects of life.

Partnership Context

Trócaire has played the role of intermediary between GBV Area of Responsibility/United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) with funding from USAID’s Bureau of Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) being channelled through Trócaire to two local women-led organizations (WLOs)—ADA and WFC—from Somalia and South Sudan. The objective of this has been strengthening the WLOs’ participation and leadership in GBV coordination structures at the sub-national level over a 14-month period. As a funding agency, Trócaire provides technical support and capacity strengthening, ensuring donor compliance and reporting, overseeing project and programme implementation, and assuming the financial risk linked to project implementation. Trócaire also plays a mentoring and accompaniment role to

support the WLOs to effectively co-lead coordination structures. Further, Trócaire has led on participatory action research to understand the barriers to WLO leadership and to draw lessons and recommendations from their lived experiences.



People of Concern

The project prioritizes the staff of two local WLOs as the primary target group with the objective of enabling WLOs to take on leadership in GBV coordination mechanisms at the sub-national level. Indirectly, the project impacts the GBV sub-clusters as a whole, GBV actors and service users.



Gender

The inclusion of local women and WLOs is crucial to effectively addressing issues of gender inequality and harmful social norms that contribute to the occurrence of GBV (IRC, 2017). The project strengthened the capacity of individual women and their organizations, built confidence, and provided opportunities to amplify women's voices and advocate for women's rights.



Context

Humanitarian emergencies disproportionately impact women and girls yet their needs and the role of WLOs are underrepresented in emergency programming. Despite collective efforts towards the Grand Bargain commitments, there remains a lack of significant progress to shift power and resources into the hands of local actors, particularly WLOs. In line with the GBV Area of Responsibility's (GBV AoR's) commitments to the Call to Action, this project seeks to support meaningful leadership of WLOs in two countries and to capture the process in an effort to contribute to larger sector-wide learning on how coordination mechanisms need to be adapted to enable meaningful engagement of local leadership.

Earlier consultations conducted under the auspices of the GBV AoR localization task team identified WLOs' co-leadership as one critical mechanism to amplify opportunities, open space for the voice of local actors and foster an environment of inclusion, trust and support. WLOs can conduct meetings in local languages, expand reach, enhance a contextualized approach and ensure that the knowledge and operational experience of local actors are brought into the coordination and response.

In the case of Somalia and South Sudan, local WLOs are not involved in GBV coordination mechanisms due to key barriers that include structural barriers, patriarchal norms, lack of visibility of WLOs, lack of resources, and lack of opportunities to build skills and gain experience. Financial and technical support to local WLOs is necessary to foster meaningful participation and leadership in GBV coordination mechanisms and other decision-making spaces. The findings and learnings about the barriers on the WLOs' engagement and participation in the decision-making fora in these two contexts will contribute to addressing these barriers in other contexts and on the global level.



Implementation and objective

- 14 Month project – total cost €173,983
- The aim of the best practice is to strengthen participation and leadership of the local WLOs in GBV coordination structures.



Methodological approach

1. Participatory Action Research: Identification of partners, relationship building, tool development, research, capacity strengthening, GBV SC co-chairing, accompaniment, verification workshop, resource pack development.
2. **Supporting local actors and initiatives**
The project facilitates peer-to-peer exchanges between local actors co-coordinating coordination groups to support capacity strengthening. Following a suggestion by the national NGO in Afghanistan coordinating GBV AoR on the national level, a peer-to-peer exchange platform has been initiated by the GBV AoR and is co-facilitated by Trócaire. This brings together local organizations co-coordinating GBV coordination groups at the national and sub-national levels in contexts such as Central African Republic, Iraq, Democratic Republic of Congo, Myanmar, South Sudan, Somalia, and

Yemen. This is a space where local organizations including WLOs connect and share experiences across contexts.

The participatory action research that has been conducted as part of this project involved the active ongoing participation of the WLOs themselves, to ensure that the research methodology, data collection, analysis, and findings have been influenced by the WLOs' experiences.

The project is specifically for local WLOs in Somalia and South Sudan.

2.1 Leadership

It is critical to have women leaders influencing the GBV sub-clusters as women are most directly involved and affected by GBV in emergencies. The GBV AoR has conceived the project as part of its commitments to strengthen the leadership of WLOs in coordination groups and capture learning to increase the number of GBV sub-clusters co-coordinated by WLOs. Trócaire serves as an unobtrusive partner in the background and provides ongoing coaching. Trócaire also supports the WLOs in the sub-clusters when they face certain barriers, such as patriarchal social norms that seek to limit the WLOs' leadership. WFC and ADA are the local WLOs that are co-chairing the GBV coordination mechanisms at sub-national levels.

GBV AoR has been engaged in the project both from the global level, and also through the GBV AoR Coordination Teams on the national level in the two contexts. GBV AoR has facilitated the participation of the WLOs in the coordination decision-making groups, including the GBV AoR Global Annual Retreat of coordinators. GBV AoR has also provided induction and orientation calls for the WLOs.

ADA and WFC are women-led organizations in Somalia and South Sudan (respectively) who are now co-leading GBV coordination groups at sub-national level. ADA and WFC also co-chaired the GBV reference group and GBV working group respectively in their specific locations. ADA is co-chairing with Socio-Economic Development and Human Rights Organization (SEDHURO) in Dolo, Gedo region in Somalia and WFC is co-chairing with The Organization of Children in Harmony (TOCH) in Warrap State of South Sudan, both of which are male-led organizations.

2.2 Capacity strengthening

As part of the GBV AoR's ongoing remote support, the new sub-national level co-coordinators received induction calls upon taking up their role as sub-cluster co-leads. The GBV AoR's Global coordination team, REGA and National GBV AoR-South Sudan provided induction through in-person sessions and ongoing remote support to local WLOs co-leading at the sub-national level. The coordination induction package for local organizations helped tailor the support specifically to the needs of local organizations. The national GBV coordinators are to take on a leading role in supporting GBV co-leads at sub-national level. The project has also supported the membership of the WLO representatives in the GBV AoR Community of Practice so they can form part of this sharing and learning space.

A GBV specialists from Trócaire's country offices in each context provides accompaniment to the women-led organization in taking on co-leadership through mentoring and ongoing training related to: i) women's leadership (including collaborative leadership, negotiation, conflict resolution); ii) technical GBV response (including GBViE Minimum Standards, peer-to-peer support and supervision); and iii) coordination skills (development of referral pathways, Standard Operating Procedures, resource mobilization). Efforts have been complemented by provision of internet, communication, staff salaries, laptops, printers, and travel cost as needed. The project also covers a modest portion of indirect costs.

2.3 Partnership

The partners are: ADA, WFC (Implementation/Co-leadership of the coordination mechanisms), Trócaire (Support, mentoring, accompaniment, creating spaces for capacity sharing, leading on participatory action research), CAFOD and Trócaire in Partnership (CTP)

(mentoring, accompaniment.) The project is short-term, but Trócaire has an ongoing relationship with the partners that will remain in place after the project is completed.

2.4 Resourcing

This is a 14-month project that provides funding to the WLOs. There is a modest amount included as indirect costs/overheads for each WLO; the project funding is unique as it covers salaries and operational costs for the WLOs and focuses on the organizations themselves, rather than community activities.

2.5 Preparedness, response, and humanitarian-development-peace collaboration

Strengthening local women-led leadership in humanitarian coordination is key to the effectiveness of such a coordination. The WLOs have been able to receive induction from the national GBV Coordinators, REGA and the Global GBV AoR coordination Team on GBV coordination in humanitarian response. A women's leadership resource package is under development to support other WLOs that consider taking on co-leadership in the future. A peer-to-peer exchange platform has been established for learning and experience sharing among the local actors co-leading on GBV Coordination work. This practice calls for the WLOs to take on a key role in coordination work and to not be limited to activities such as taking minutes. This practice aims for the WLOs to be chairing the meetings and leading GBV assessments, among other activities.



Results and impact

REPRESENTATION: ADA and WFC have successfully co-chaired the GBV sub-clusters in their respective regions. A follow on from this has been each organisation has been approached to participate in other global, regional and local decision-making spaces.

PARTICIPATION: For example: ADA is now a member of Trócaire Partners Advisory Group (Global), a structure that influences Trócaire's strategic direction on localisation; WFC participated in PSVI conference in UK and have become an endorser of Charter for Change (C4C) and recently had a guest speaking role at the Global Charter for Change Annual Meeting in January 2023. ADA and WFC participate in the BHA MHPSS Consensus project.

LEADERSHIP: The project contributed to WLOs' co-leadership in GBV sub-clusters in South Sudan and Somalia.

PARTNERSHIP: The project promotes capacity sharing through cross learning and support between the two WLO and connections with other local organizations, including WLOs who are co-chairing GBV sub-clusters in different countries through the peer-peer learning exchange. The project places significant trust and responsibility in the hands of WLOs. It demonstrates the ceding of space of an INGO (such as Trócaire) and deliberate efforts to transform key coordination structures in a way that challenges normal practices and creates opportunities for WLO leadership. The project is based on the expressed needs of the WLOs and provides them with significant autonomy by covering their organizational needs, in addition to facilitating their participation in coordination structures in a deliberate manner through project funding.

CAPACITY STRENGTHENING: The WLOs now have more visibility and they have been included in other platforms and processes. For example, WFC were included in the Inter-Agency Floods assessment and planning in Warrap State where they took the lead on the protection issues and integrated GBV into the response.



Sustainability

Visibility (included opening spaces) and relationships are established. Peer-to-peer exchanges and membership in Global GBV AoR Community of Practice (CoP) is ongoing. Capacity enhancement on WLOs coordination role will be sustained beyond the project. Ongoing financial support will be needed, as well as technical support for resource mobilisation.



Replicability and upscaling

Based on the journeys of WFC and ADA, the following steps are useful to introduce a WLOs into a co-leadership position. A critical initial step is thorough groundwork that cements the need for a WLO to co-lead – it is important to identify and address barriers and to get buy-in from all players, especially the current leadership. Building the relationship between the co-leads is vital – the relationship needs to be based on trust, mutual respect, and equality – with an acknowledgement of what each organisation brings to the table.

Clarifying the roles and responsibilities and how leadership roles will be shared ensures that the organizations take equal responsibility for communication, chairing and minute taking. There is often an assumption that only the WLO needs capacity strengthening; however, identifying the capacity strengthening needs of all co-leads (and their mentorship and accompaniment needs) is important—the existing co-lead may also have capacity areas that can benefit from strengthening. Support and mentoring from various structures (regional and national level coordination staff, donors, etc.) with a clear path to look at more responsibilities at a higher level is important to deepen skills of the individuals and organizations in a co-leadership role. Ongoing check-ins and monitoring can identify challenges and barriers and ways to address any issues that arise.

To replicate this practice, there is also a need to factor in financial support that includes operational costs for the local WLOs.



Key learning

- When given the opportunity, WLOs can play a critical role in GBV coordination.
- Key barriers prevent access for WLOs to play leadership roles in GBV coordination (including structural barriers, patriarchal norms, lack of visibility of WLO, lack of resources, lack of opportunity to build skills and gain experience).
- Increased visibility through one leadership role can lead to other opportunities.
- Building relationships and clearly defining roles and responsibilities at the outset of a new co-coordination role is critical to a successful ongoing partnership.
- Funding is critical to strengthen WLOs—and this needs to include organizational costs (overheads, communications, staffing).
- To replicate this practice, there is also a need to factor in financial support that includes operational costs for the local WLOs.



Related resources

- List of references about the practice (training manuals, guidelines, pictures, video, websites, etc.). Project documents and reports, including monitoring and evaluation studies are also an important source of information to highlight evidence of the project impacts.
- <https://careevaluations.org/evaluation/global-mapping-study-on-gender-based-violence-2/>



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