



WOMEN-LED ORGANIZATIONS' (WLOs)

Leadership in GBV Coordination Resource Package



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The co-creators of this package extend our collective appreciation to the Participatory Action Research participants who were the key informants to this research and who found time to take part in the data collection and analysis process: Amina Abdullahi, Protection Coordinator with Trócaire; Yusra Ali Adan, Director of Active in Development Aid; Anna Tazita Samuel, Executive Director of Women for Change; Fanta Wondimagegn, Lead with the GBV Area of Responsibility-South Sudan; Betty Kade Kenyi, Program Officer for Protection, Women Empowerment & Peace Building with CAFOD and Trócaire in Partnership; Jackline Bage, Project Manager with CARE-South Sudan; and Gloria Soma, Executive Director of Titi Foundation.

We express deep appreciation to the team that supported the data analysis and review exercises — Anna Tazita Samuel, Faima Sika Duku and Bakhita Aguek Ajak with Women for Change-South Sudan; Yusra Ali Adan, Fatuma Ali and Marlia Muhammed Ibrahim with Active in Development Aid-Somalia; Nasteha Omar and Sadia Dahir with Trócaire-Somalia; Helen Kangiri with Trócaire's Global Hub on Partnership & Localization; and Jennifer Chase, Global GBV AoR Coordinator.

Much appreciation to Martha Tureti, Program Lead-GBViE Learning Coordination with Trócaire and Vicci Tallis, Senior Humanitarian Advisor with Trócaire for leading the data analysis process and drafting and writing this resource package.

Many thanks to Michael Solis, Global Director Partnership and Localization with Trócaire and Helen Nic an Rí Humanitarian Manager (Technical) with Trócaire for reviewing and editing this resource package.

This work could not have been possible without the funding from USAID-Bureau of Humanitarian Assistance. We are deeply grateful to the Global GBV Area of Responsibility Coordination Team (Jennifer Chase, Stefanie Lorin, Astrid Haaland, Inna Martin and Shiva Sharifzad) for conceiving the idea of supporting WLOs' leadership in GBV coordination, alongside Fiona Shanahan from Trócaire.

ABBREVIATIONS

ADA	Active in Development Aid
AWID	Association for Women's Rights in Development
BHA	USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance
CAFOD	Catholic Agency for Overseas Development
COP	Community of Practice
CTP	CAFOD and Trócaire in Partnership
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GBV AoR	Gender-Based Violence Area of Responsibility
GBViE	Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies
GPC	Global Protection Cluster
HCT	Humanitarian Country Team
HNO	Humanitarian Needs Overview
HRP	Humanitarian Response Plan
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
IRC	International Rescue Committee
KII	Key Informant Interview
NGO	Non-governmental organization
PAR	Participatory Action Research
REGA	Regional Emergencies GBV Advisor
UN	United Nations
WCO	Women-centred organization.
WFC	Women for Change
WLO	Women-led organization
WPS	Women Peace and Security
WRO	Women's rights organization

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FORWARD

In the face of the unprecedented global need and the current volatile global context, the Gender-Based Violence Area of Responsibility (GBV AoR) continues to advocate for the increased attention to life-saving action for preventing, mitigating risk and responding to all forms of GBV in humanitarian crises. There is wide consensus on the need for renewed focus on **supporting strong and effective coordination of GBV action in humanitarian contexts** (GBV AoR strategic objective 1) and **supporting a strong, diverse and inclusive GBV community that continues to innovate and work in partnership across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus** (GBV AoR strategic objective 4). This aligns further with the Call-to-Action Roadmap (2021-2025)¹, which addresses **the need to scale up localization initiatives by promoting “the Principles of Partnership and institution-building, including the participation, leadership and decision-making of local actors within GBV coordination groups through capacity strengthening and advocacy by 2025”**.

While local actors are at the heart of humanitarian response, often providing lifesaving GBV prevention and response services as the only operational actors able to access populations in need in volatile security settings, they continue to have a marginalized role in leadership and decision making. Local actors

in general, and women-led organizations (WLOs)² in particular, are rooted in communities, are most affected by the problem and are instrumental in driving transformational change. The COVID-19 pandemic and related movement restrictions further reinforced the critical role of local actors in responding to humanitarian crises. Despite collective efforts toward the Grand Bargain commitments, there remains a lack of significant progress to shift power and resources into the hands of local actors. Findings of the *GBV AoR Localization Task Team Global Mapping Study* (2019) suggest a **systemic gap in meaningful participation of local actors in the development and implementation of emergency responses**. Moreover, findings also suggest that “localization has not been formally operationalized at the global level, making its effectiveness—or lack thereof—highly dependent on country contexts rather than relying on recognized standards of good practice.”

This resource package is developed from on-the-ground, local experience of women-led organizations (WLOs) that have assumed leadership and coordination roles in GBV structures. The package provides insights into key barriers faced by WLOs entering leadership roles and provides solutions for improving the experience of WLOs in leadership positions. It also addresses gaps in opportunities—at a local and national level for WLOs.

¹ Call to Action on Protection Against gender-based Violence in Emergencies: www.calltoactiongbv.com

² The term *women-led organization* (WLO) is used throughout this document to cover both women-led and women rights organizations. Women's Rights Organization (WRO) are defined as: 1) An organization that self-identifies as a woman's rights organization with the primary focus of advancing gender equality, women's empowerment and human rights; or 2) an organization that has, as part of its mission statement, the advancement of women's and girls' interests and rights (or where 'women', 'girls', 'gender' or local language equivalents are prominent in their mission statement); or 3) an organization that has, as part of its mission statement or objectives, to challenge and transform gender inequalities (unjust rules), unequal power relations and promoting positive social norms (Source: Grand Bargain Work Stream 2 Localization (2019)). Women-Led Organization (WLO) is defined as: An organization 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 percent or more occupying senior leadership positions. Source: Grand Bargain Work Stream 2 Localization (2019).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Trócaire in partnership with the Gender-Based Violence Area of Responsibility (GBV AoR), and funded by USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA), implemented a participatory action research project focusing on:

1. How to dismantle barriers to women-led organizations' (WLOs) participation and leadership in GBV coordination
2. How to foster meaningful leadership of local WLOs in the GBV coordination structures/mechanisms
3. Understanding what is needed for GBV coordination structures to better follow the leadership of WLOs
4. How to leverage spaces for WLOs' voice and influence
5. How to measure local women's leadership in GBV coordination

Two WLOs, Active in Development Aid (ADA) in Somalia and Women for Change (WFC) in South Sudan, were supported to take on the role of co-chair of their local GBV working group. This support included peer-to-peer exchange; mentorship; capacity strengthening; joint monthly coordination meetings; and financial support. The experiences of each organization were documented over a 12-month period through self-reflection, interviews, and two workshops. The data was supplemented by interviews with key stakeholders, including the Titi Foundation-South Sudan, National GBV AoR-South Sudan and Care South Sudan.

Based on learnings drawn from the experiences of ADA and WFC, a Women-Led Organizations' Leadership in GBV Coordination Resource Package was developed that captures the local co-leads' challenges and successes. The package contains recommendations and resources on how to establish more equitable and meaningful co-ordination and how to create space for women's leadership. The package includes the overview of research findings; short case studies of the learning journeys; interactive and practitioner-friendly materials; monitoring and evaluation tools; and videos on ADA's and WFC's leadership experiences.

The resource package contains specific recommendations that respond to the barriers to the participation and leadership of WLOs in GBV coordination. Key learnings from the research are summarized as follows:

- The value of WLOs in strengthening GBV coordination must be recognized. The various skills and rich experiences that WLOs already possess and bring to the GBV response should be acknowledged and valued.
- Humanitarian actors should increase their own knowledge and awareness of GBV coordination and leverage their positions to influence change by enabling and advocating for the participation and leadership of WLOs. This includes implementing their localization commitments.
- The multiple barriers to WLOs' participation and leadership must be acknowledged and addressed. This means anticipating barriers to participation and proactively putting measures in place to ensure that WLOs are able to participate (for example, understanding challenges relating to travel, providing adequate resources, and advocating for diverse representation).
- Capacity strengthening and sharing should be multi-directional. Capacity strengthening should involve developing plans through the joint identification of what support (operational or technical) is needed to enhance WLOs' participation. Capacity sharing should be encouraged in a way that supports the sharing of WLOs' knowledge, skills, and experiences with other stakeholders.
- It is necessary to address the barriers that prevent WLOs from accessing multi-year funding sources that cover operational and program costs and provide organizations with adequate resources to take up leadership positions.

1

INTRODUCTION

About the Women-led Organizations' Leadership in GBV Coordination Resource Package

The Women-led Organizations' (WLO) Leadership in GBV Coordination Resource Package is intended for WLOs, GBV co-ordinators, government partners, coordination group members, Global Protection Cluster (GPC) and its Areas of Responsibility at global and national level, humanitarian leadership and donors. Based on reflections from the local WLO co-leads, GBV working group coordinators, Regional Emergencies GBV Advisor (REGA) and the GBV AoR Coordination Team, as well as the experience of WLOs in co-chairing a GBV working group, the package captures the local co-leads' experiences, challenges and recommendations. The findings relate to how the coordination structures need to adapt to enable WLOs' leadership, how their leadership might differ and what key skills and perspectives they bring to the leadership role.

The package contains recommendations and resources on how to establish more equitable and meaningful co-ordination and how to create space for women's leadership. This includes:

- ✓ Overview of Research findings
- ✓ Short case studies of the learning journeys
- ✓ Interactive and practitioner-friendly materials: do's and don'ts, infographics and flow charts
- ✓ Checklists
- ✓ Monitoring and Evaluation tools
- ✓ Video testimonials (available xxx)

1.1 Project overview

The development of this resource package is part of a wider GBV AoR project funded by USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) to:

- A. Develop a GBV AoR Capacity Development Strategy 2021-2025.
- B. Coordinate and implement the GBV AoR's capacity development portfolio.

- C. Strengthen the participation and leadership of local actors with a focus on WLOs, in coordination structures.

In partnership with Trócaire, the GBV AoR enabled support to the WLOs Women for Change (WFC) in South Sudan and Active in Development Aid (ADA) in Somalia to co-chair GBV working groups at sub-national level (ADA in Dollo in Gedo Region and WFC in Warrap State). Trócaire funded staff time and operational costs while providing ongoing technical support and accompaniment to the two WLOs to take on leadership on quality service provision within the GBV working groups. Based on the learning from the two target countries, this WLO Leadership in GBV Coordination Resource Package has been developed through a participatory action research process to support other WLOs that consider taking on co-leadership and to provide guidance to various stakeholders on how to better facilitate WLOs' leadership.

1.2 Key partners

Women for Change (South Sudan)

Women for Change (WFC) is a national non-governmental organization (NNGO) formed in 2016 and legally registered in 2018 with RRC registration Number: 1725 by a group of South Sudanese women from various diversity and experiences, with a feeling of supporting the wellbeing and economic stability of widows, school dropout and children suffering from intentional and unintentional cause. As a women and child-centred humanity driven organization working for and with women, children affected by the crisis and embarks on women, child and general protection, Gender Base Violence AOR, Child Protection AOR, education (formal & non-formal), reproductive health, livelihoods and food security, peace building, organizational capacity strengthening, advocacy and visibility in the states of Central Equatoria State, Eastern Equatoria State, Warrap State and Western Bahr El Ghazel.

WFC are envisioned to see all women live a liberated life from world free of poverty and injustice through objectively advocating for women rights thereby facilitating their full access to basic and fundamental social needs and mobilize women in socio-economic development through engaging them in livelihood (agriculture, small business and vocational etc.), GBV, reproductive health& sanitation, etc. Our mandate is to support humanitarian and development assistance in South Sudan. We are committed to the well-being and economic stability of widows, school dropouts and children rights from the intentional and unintentional causes. To date, we continue to offer financial and technical support for widows and youths, mainly school dropout, together with training within the different states of South Sudan. WFC targets assistance to its beneficiaries to obtain durable solutions, addressing their food security, livelihood and education including their social issues.



VISION:

All women need to live a liberated life from world free of poverty and injustice



MISSION:

To serve the un-served in the war affected countries, focusing toward serving the women who have no voice and to help support them through sustainable program. We exist with the essence of humanity where women have to be free and all their rights are achieved.

WFC upholds the following values in its daily work and in delivery of this strategy: *Transparency and accountability; Diversity; Mutual respect; Equity and equality and Integrity*

Active in Development Aid (Somalia)

Active in Development AID (ADA) – previously known as Active in Development Association was founded in 1992 by a group of Somali professionals. It was a non-profit community-based organization which later transformed to become a women led non-governmental organization working in Somalia, Kenya and is also registered in UK. The organization has enhanced its mandate by working with the support of Intergovernmental relations of the Horn of Africa toward the realization of the Sustainable Development (SDG).

The main **goal** of ADA is to help in preventing of poverty and provide livelihood support to the people of Somalia. The organization's objective is supporting vulnerable communities in targeted project locations through the provision of essential services in education, health, nutrition, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), protection, food security and conflict prevention. ADA's **core prevention work** includes the prevention and mitigation of right based issues such as GBV, FGM, violent extremism, child labour etc.



VISION:

ADA's vision is to have a prosperous and peaceful society where every individual has access to quality Education, Health, Food, Shelter, Protection and Water with the aimed of achieving self-reliance in all aspects of life and human dignity.



MISSION:

ADA's mission is to promote the accessibility of Education, Health, Food, Shelter and Water for all beneficiaries without discrimination, to enable the community it serves to become self-reliant.

ADA Core values include: teamwork, stewardship, transparency, accountability and passion,

ADA employs highly competent, experienced and skilled human resources who are able to execute and design thematic programs that are gender sensitive in all spheres of programming.

GBV AoR

The GBV AoR Strategy (2021-25) includes a specific focus on supporting the leadership of local actors, including women-led organizations (WLOs) and women's rights organizations (WROs). The GBV AoR also follows the recent Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Guidance on Strengthening Participation, Representation and Leadership of Local and National Actors in IASC Humanitarian Coordination Mechanisms, to strengthen and formalize the meaningful participation of local actors. The GBV AoR, with funding from BHA, has partnered with Trócaire to support WLOs to co-lead GBV coordination mechanisms in humanitarian contexts. Trócaire and the GBV AoR have made specific commitments under the Call to Action on Protection from Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies to increasingly support WLOs to co-lead GBV working group coordination mechanisms.

Trócaire

Trócaire works in partnership with local organizations, including WLOs, supporting communities in twenty countries across Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East and more recently in Ukraine. Trócaire has a strategic focus on the Protection of Women and Girls in Emergencies, including specialised GBV response and prevention programming, and is a GBV AoR Core Member and Call to Action partner. Trócaire has operational presence in Somalia. In South Sudan, Trócaire shares a joint office with fellow Caritas Internationalis agency, the Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD), which is known as CAFOD and Trócaire in Partnership (CTP).

1.3 Methodology

Participatory Action Research (PAR) is a context specific method that focuses on social change and is targeted on the needs of a particular group. It is an iterative cycle of research, action and reflection that is solution based³. The PAR process for the project, resulting in the WLO Leadership in GBV Coordination Resource Package, included:

- ✓ Online questionnaire to ADA and WFC
- ✓ Documenting the experiences of ADA and WFC in their co-chairing roles through monthly peer-to-peer support meetings and written reports—May 2022 to March 2023
- ✓ Key Informant Interviews—21st July to 10th September 2022
- ✓ Two-day reflection and analysis meeting—9th and 10th November 2022
- ✓ Package review and capacity strengthening workshop 20 - 22nd March 2023
- ✓ Documenting ongoing mentoring and accompaniment—June to April 2023

The research focused on the following key questions:

1. How to dismantle barriers to women-led organizations' (WLOs) participation and leadership in GBV coordination
2. How to foster meaningful leadership of local WLOs in the GBV coordination structures/mechanisms
3. Understanding what is needed for GBV coordination structures to better follow the leadership of WLOs

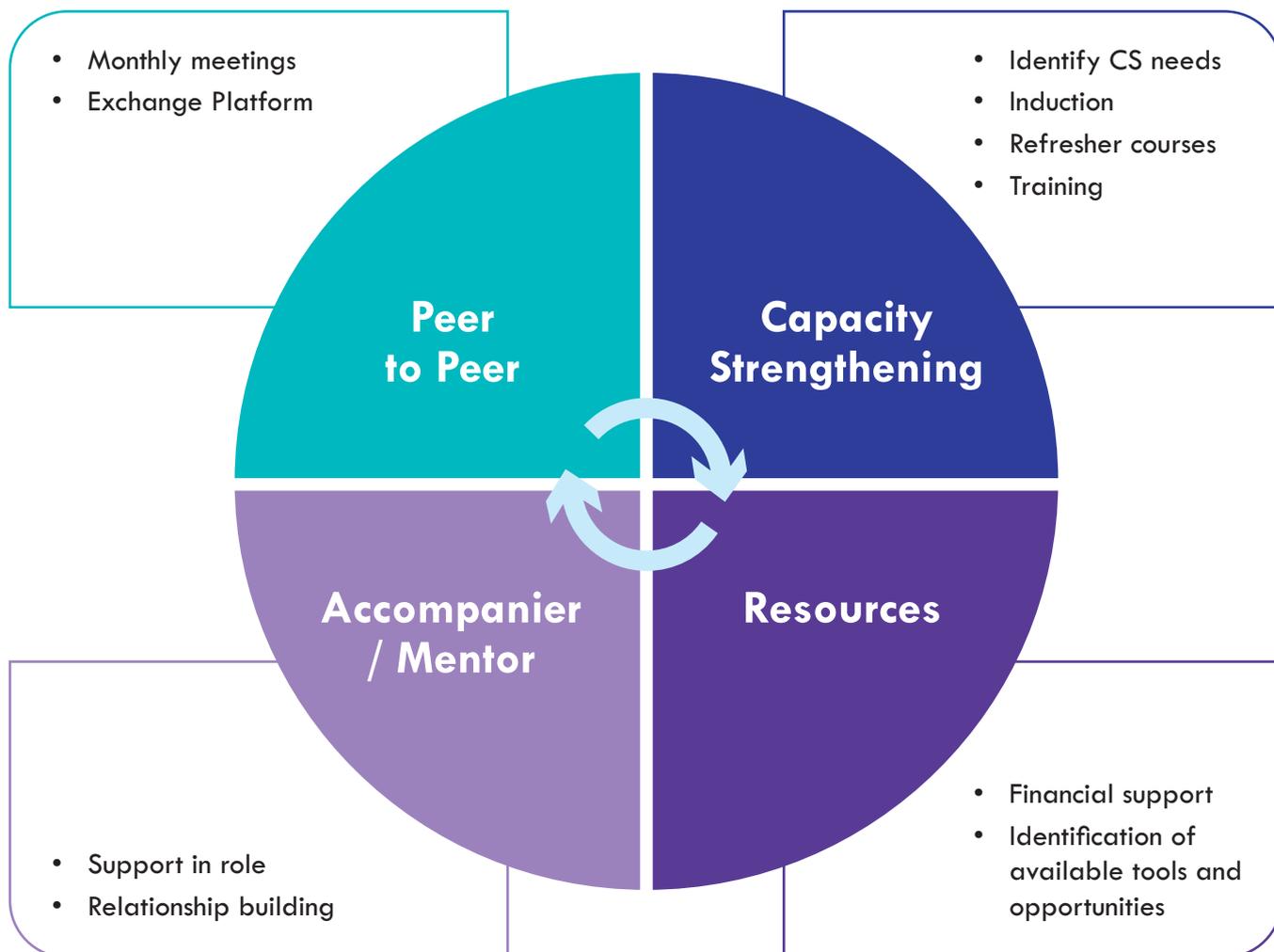
4. How to leverage spaces for WLOs' voice and influence
5. How to measure local women's leadership in GBV coordination

Support to the WLOs was a key component of the PAR process (see graphic below). This included:

- **Peer to peer exchange:** As part of the efforts to advance the localization agenda in GBV coordination and further the meaningful participation of local organization members, the Global GBV AoR established the Peer to Peer Exchange platform. This is a platform where WLOs in co-chairing roles from Afghanistan, DRC, Iraq, Myanmar, Somalia, South Sudan and Yemen, meet every two months to facilitate information sharing, communication and sharing of resources and opportunities. This space is moderated by Trócaire and GBV AoR.
- **Accompanier/mentor:** One-to-one support was provided to WFC staff by the Protection Coordinator of CTP and to ADA by the Protection Coordinator of Trócaire Somalia to take on leadership roles. Support also included assisting in relationship building between WFC, ADA and other key stakeholders. The accompaniers also reviewed reports and meeting minutes for quality reporting.
- **Capacity strengthening:** Three staff from ADA benefited from a training on resource mobilization strategy development and proposal writing organized by Trócaire. Refresher training and induction on GBV programming and coordination was provided for WFC in South Sudan. ADA and WFC were inducted to the GBV coordination role through an introductory session on the GBV AoR and sessions on the core GBV Coordination functions (for example, interpersonal and managerial skills, such as fostering collaborative leadership, effective communication and managing meetings). ADA and WFC attended remote training (6th September to 25th October 2022) provided by International Rescue Committee (IRC) and the GBV AoR in *Inter-Agency Minimum Standards for Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies Programming*, (UNFPA, 2019)
- **Support to register on the GBV AoR Community of Practice:** This involved linking the ADA and WFC teams to the Community of Practice (COP), which is a resource and sharing space for technical support on GBV programming and coordination.

³ [Participatory Action Research | Participatory Methods](#)

- **Joint monthly coordination meetings:** Trócaire's Program Lead continued to give technical support to ADA and WFC through monthly GBV Coordinators meetings. They used this space to share updates on project implementation, upcoming activities, challenges and how they are mitigating them. They have also been able to share experiences and best practices in GBV coordination work.
- **Financial support:** This included support for travel, utilities, communication and internet connectivity. These costs were included in the WLOs' budgets and were funded through the BHA project. Funding opportunities and links to prospective donors were shared with ADA and WFC.



2

GLOBAL COMMITMENTS TO LOCALIZATION AND WLOs

There are various processes and commitments to increase local leadership and participation. While the intention to focus on WLOs is implied in these commitments, there is still a long way to go before we reach the critical mass needed to make real impact. Understanding and monitoring commitments is critical.

2.1 Localization Mapping Study

The findings of the GBV AoR Localization Task Team Global Mapping Study (2019) suggest a systemic gap in meaningful participation of local actors in the development and implementation of emergency response. Key challenges highlighted in this study included favoritism of a small number of organizations coupled with the centralized power structure of the humanitarian system, which contributed to the exclusion of WLOs and the erosion of the building of women's movements. *"Many [WLOs] are small and it is the director who goes to the working group meetings or maybe one person pulled from the field to attend national meetings"*⁴ which limits WLOs' active participation in humanitarian response.

2.2 The Grand Bargain and WLOs' Leadership in Humanitarian Action

The Grand Bargain, launched during the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016, is a unique agreement between humanitarian agencies and donors to reform and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of international humanitarian action. At its launch, a

commitment was made to meaningfully shift resources and decision-making power to women's rights organizations (WROs) and women-led organizations (WLOs) as leading actors across all stages of the humanitarian cycle.

To build meaningful change, the Grand Bargain 2.0, its second phase, as well as any subsequent phases, must ensure three things:

- WROs and WLOs must meaningfully engage at all levels of the Humanitarian System and in the Grand Bargain.
- WROs and WLOs must be able to access sufficient and consistent funding as a key component of localization.
- WROs and WLOs must hold equal and equitable partnerships with international humanitarian actors.

2.3 Call to Action on Protection from GBV in Emergencies

In 2013, world leaders, convened by the governments of the United Kingdom (UK) and Sweden, came together to launch the Call to Action on Protection from Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in Emergencies (hereafter referred to as the Call to Action)—a multi-stakeholder initiative aiming to drive change and foster accountability from the humanitarian system to address GBV, particularly against women and girls.

The objectives of the Call to Action are:

1. Establish specialized GBV services and programs that are accessible to anyone affected by GBV and are available from the onset of an emergency.

⁴ Gender-based Violence (GBV) Localization: humanitarian Transformation or Maintaining the Status Quo? A Global Study on GBV Localization Through Country-level GBV Sub-clusters, December 2019, P.41

2. Integrate and implement actions to prevent GBV and to mitigate GBV risk across all levels and sectors of humanitarian response from the earliest stages of an emergency and throughout the program cycle.
3. Mainstream gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls' throughout humanitarian action.

The Call-to-Action Road Map offers the opportunity to advance Grand Bargain commitments to increase the participation of and support for WLOs. Six priority outcomes² capture the changes that must occur throughout the humanitarian system to truly transform the way GBV is addressed in all emergencies:

- **The Right Policies:** Actors in GBV have institutionalized policies and standards on GBV and gender equality throughout their organizations and have established accountability systems.
- **Effective Coordination:** Effective and accountable inter-agency and inter-sectoral GBV leadership and coordination are in place.
- **Quality Assessments and Planning:** Needs assessments, analyses and planning processes support the effective integration of GBV prevention and response and gender equality into humanitarian efforts.

- **Sufficient Funding:** Funding is available for GBV prevention and response for each phase of an emergency.
- **Specialized Services:** Specialized GBV prevention and response services are implemented in each phase of an emergency.
- **Reducing GBV Risks/Promoting Gender Equality:** Humanitarian leaders and managers have the knowledge and skills to foster gender equality and mitigate GBV risks across the response.

⁵ [Call to Action on Protection from Gender Based Violence in Emergencies \(calltoactiongbv.com\)](https://www.calltoactiongbv.com/)

3

RESEARCH FINDINGS: BARRIERS TO WLO PARTICIPATION

“WLOs can bring a quick change to the lives of women beneficiaries who are the more vulnerable and majority and they are also women centered and work directly with the people from the grassroots” (Online Questionnaire ADA).

Structural barriers to leadership and coordination opportunities for WLOs are evident in literature and across the two country case studies. Understanding the many barriers to women’s participation highlighted the ongoing, daily struggles in patriarchal society for women to take their rightful place in decision making spaces. The key purpose of the research was to identify the barriers to participation based on the experiences of ADA and WFC as well as other actors. The research process included a literature review, an online questionnaire, key informant interviews, focus group discussions and a two-day reflection meeting attended by ADA and WFC staff, GVB AoR and Trócaire, which resulted in rich experiential data. The research participants noted the same barriers repeatedly and suggested concrete steps to dismantle these.

A starting point to tackle women’s exclusion from leadership spaces was to identify and analyse the key barriers to WLO’s leadership and meaningful participation in GBV coordination mechanisms.

3.1 Structural Barriers

Patriarchy, Power and Culture

Patriarchal sociocultural values and their associated gender ideologies are negatively related to the perception of women’s leadership and decision-making abilities in spaces, including GBV coordination. Negative stereotypes of women’s leadership are often perpetuated, and this includes women being perceived as incapable of leading coordination mechanisms.

Patriarchal norms are reflected in coordination structures. Even when working on an issue that disproportionately affects women, such as GBV, men are at the forefront of coordination and leadership. GBV coordination meetings in both Gedo in Somalia and Warrap in South Sudan are male dominated, which impacts women’s comfort and ability to express themselves. In South Sudan, women are considered property and are not supposed to sit alongside men in leadership positions. This may have helped explain the initial reluctance on the part of male leadership within the GBV working group to collaborate with a WLO co-chair.

“It is a challenge for WLOs to occupy space in South Sudan as a male dominant society. With men co-leading the GBV working group it is a challenge for the WLOs. WLOs need continuous encouragement to take up a full role in co-leading the coordination mechanism” (Online Questionnaire CTP).

Power dynamics and hierarchies—both within organizations and externally—impact on leadership and coordination. It is well documented that there is a need to move beyond tokenism when increasing the voice and participation of marginalised groups, including women in leadership positions. This was highlighted by survey respondents with a call for increased representation of women in meetings.

“Having a critical mass of women in the coordination meetings/in the room provides an environment that promotes gender balance. It is not possible that the GBV coordination spaces will be women only, but more women in the room enables women to be more comfortable to participate” (Amina Abdullahi, Protection Coordinator, Trócaire Somalia).

Protection and GBV, especially forced marriage, is very sensitive in Somalia, and advocacy on women’s rights is linked with feminism and is not widely seen as acceptable.

Lack of financial investment and support for WLOs

The experience of research participants is that WLOs in Somalia and South Sudan experience challenges in accessing funding. There are financial costs for any organization that takes on the coordination as a co-chair, and these are too high for many WLOs to cover with their own funds. However, strict donor requirements make it difficult for WLOs to access institutional funding for these costs. Both WFC and ADA highlighted challenges in resource mobilisation—and how this directly impacts on their ability to participate in leadership positions.

The GBV AoR Coordinator South Sudan confirmed that very stringent due diligence is exercised by donors focusing on governance, programming capacity and ability, procurement procedures and financial management, and this has denied many WLOs' opportunities to access donor funding. In some extreme cases, this has contributed to WLOs closing offices in some locations where they had previously led GBV coordination functions. It was clear that some local WLOs do not have knowledge of or are unable to meet donors' due diligence requirements, which would enable their proposals to pass the review stage.

The CARE South Sudan's Women Peace and Security team have been conscious in supporting WROs. They suggest that donors should *“provide direct funding to Women's Rights Organizations (WROs) for joint activities and provide linkages to funding opportunities, showcasing the work of WROs. It is also critical to provide specific training on communication and advocacy”* (Jackline Baga, Project Manager WPS-CARE South Sudan).

There is a need for donors to level the playing field to enable WLOs access to funding. For example, the CARE representative noted *“we are very intentional about budgeting, ensuring there is an affirmative budget (35%) that goes to WLOs. Making this kind of commitment to ensure that 35% of our budget goes to this.... and that the criteria for selection of national organizations and WLOs ... are flexible and simplified”* (Jackline Baga, Project Manager WPS-CARE South Sudan).

The Global Mapping study¹ identified a 'blessed few' phenomenon in which a small number of local organizations have access to most of the funding and opportunities. The study notes that this process is replicated from donors who have preferred INGOs and this is replicated down to favored NNGOs, with the same organizations receiving multiple UN grants due to their connections. Respondents in this report noted that this occurs in both contexts and is a major barrier to localization, coupled with the centralized power structure of the humanitarian system and exclusion of WLOs that seems to erode the building of a women's movement. The 'blessed few' dynamic can be addressed by allocating specific leadership slots to WLOs (that have funding attached), capacity strengthening to WLOs in areas where specific gaps have been identified, including accompaniment and mentorship, and setting up a capacity development plan with the WLOs. Facilitation of WLOs' participation in public spaces, along with a learning component to enable them to develop through exposure, keeps them actively participating in GBV coordination specifically and the women's movement more generally.

There is an ongoing process in South Sudan, led by the GBV working group, to address the lack of WLOs in GBV coordination mechanisms generally and in leadership/co-chairing roles. Discussions include who should take responsibility, how to increase involvement, what resources for capacity strengthening are needed and how to measure success.

Another particularly challenging issue is WLOs' access to and engagement with Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) and Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) spaces, especially in leadership positions. Organizations need to be active in at least two sectors in order to be considered for humanitarian funding, and most WLOs only have the resources to engage in one sector. (See box below on the work of the Titi Foundation in South Sudan to challenge this).

⁶ Gender-based Violence (GBV) Localization: humanitarian Transformation or Maintaining the Status Quo? A Global Study on GBV Localization Through Country-level GBV Sub-clusters, December 2019

CHALLENGING EXCLUSION

Titi Foundation, a WLO in South Sudan, called on the Humanitarian Coordinator to have the advisory board (to the Humanitarian Country Team) endorse a special allocation of South Sudan Humanitarian Funding to WLOs, including a special space at the HCT, without using the NGO platform (given that WLOs have limited space and voice on the platform). A special fund has been approved in South Sudan for national non-governmental organizations (NNGOs), but the proposal to have WLOs get a slot in the HCT has been turned down as it was felt that the space could become too complex. For WLOs to be competitive, they need to demonstrate an understanding of the context, knowledge of gaps and experience in the sector, in addition to proving that they measure up to the leadership task. The need to be intentional in having all WLOs at national and State level mapped out was also emphasized; this is possible if the humanitarian architecture sets aside resources to undertake a national WLOs mapping exercise. (Interview)

When WLOs do access funding, it is often in the form of small grants. WLOs in both Somalia and South Sudan tend to be classified in the medium or high-risk funding category. The higher the risk of funding a local organization, the lower the funding to that organization tends to be. Most funding to WLOs is project funding. There is limited flexible core funding given that could support organizational staffing and development, coordination costs and operational costs. Not only would the availability of such funding support greater engagement or leadership in coordination spaces, but such investment over time could also reduce the level of perceived funding risk associated with WLOs.

In resource-scarce settings with multiple needs, there is often competition for resources within the GBV sector and across other sectors. This impacts on sustainability and often sets organizations against one another.

3.2 Engagement, access and opportunity

WLOs face many challenges in getting access to leadership, coordination and decision-making roles – in some sectors. However, WLOs are connected to, and form part of, multiple other structures and architectures (both informal and formal) and the value this experience

and connection brings to the GBV working group and other spaces is often not acknowledged or valued.

Effective leadership and participation are built upon experience both at the personal and professional level. Lack of opportunities and access to funding impacts on the capacity of WLOs. Increasing access needs to happen at both a macro and micro level, ensuring that space is given goes beyond tokenism and invests in individuals and WLOs to build confidence, skills and expanded experience.

Current policies and practices do not provide sufficient opportunities for GBV working groups and coordination spaces to be led by local WLOs as the system is biased toward UN agencies and INGOs, with limited efforts to open these spaces to local WLOs. In shared coordination models, power needs to be negotiated and shared, and there can be issues with ownership and entitlement that need to be resolved.

In the Somalia and South Sudan contexts, there are only a few WLOs in GBV working group meetings. Setting the priorities for the GBV working group so they align to the priorities that WLOs have as frontline responders is critical. In some coordination mechanisms, the focus is on extracting information from local actors to serve international priorities and agendas, which feeds into low attendance of local actors as they do not see the value in the spaces.

A worrying trend raised in the research was that with an increased focus on the need for more WLOs in leadership positions, some organizations position themselves as WLOs when in fact they do not meet all the requirements to be classed as such. This may block opportunities for genuine WLO leadership.

Due to limitations in some mapping processes, not all WLOs are identified and therefore are not on the radar for leadership, capacity strengthening or resources opportunities.

3.3 Capacity Challenges

The issue of capacity is complex—it goes beyond skills needed to coordinate, implement, monitor and evaluate and includes the capacity that an organization has in terms of physical, human, technical and financial resources. There is often the perception that WLOs, and women activists, do not have capacity to coordinate and lead. In many instances, this is linked to having a lack of opportunity and access to mentoring and support to develop

skills. Donors also perpetuate the issues surrounding capacity—WLOs are considered not to have operational and programming capacity and skills set by donors to implement projects (for example, financial management, monitoring and evaluation). The key to addressing capacity needs to also look at the context—what needs to change to enhance participation rather than blaming women for “not having what it takes” to lead.

Inadequate engagement in GBV working group meetings has been noted as one of the barriers to WLOs’ participation in GBV coordination. WLOs that regularly participate in coordination forums are on the mailing list and have access to information and updates on upcoming events and key messages. WLOs that are inconsistent in participation and attendance of the coordination meetings have missed key updates and messages, much to their detriment. It was clear from the research that at national and sub national level, some WLOs are often not aware of these meetings. When they are present, the meeting environment does not provide a welcoming space for women to fully participate. There is an assumption that people who are new to a space have the background information on topics being discussed and adequate context is not given.

The research found that women often feel an initial anxiety to lead, coordinate, or even speak in meetings, which reflects challenges that relate to their individual confidence. Women also lack the experience in participating in leadership at national and regional level, and they are not provided with opportunities to develop the skills that would support them to do this. Further, WLOs can face human and financial constraints that prohibit women’s participation. For example, WLOs might not have the office spaces or internet connectivity that would enable participation in online meetings, or the funds to support participation in in-person meetings. WLOs with limited financial capacities may face challenges in recruiting experienced staff who could strengthen organizational capacity from within. Language is another barrier, particularly when meetings and documents are not in their native language. Often, meetings are conducted in English and documentation (including proposals) are developed in English. As a result, women who do not know English are often unable to communicate, participate, or engage.

3.4 Dismantling Barriers

Dismantling barriers is the path to increasing the number of WLOs that are active in leadership positions and GBV coordination specifically and in women’s rights spaces more generally. The research process identified specific strategies for dismantling the barriers to WLOs’ participation and leadership:

Patriarchy, Power and Culture

- **Acknowledge the realities of women’s lives:** Women often have many different roles—household, community and work related—as well as personal circumstances that can hinder participation in coordination spaces. Understanding these dynamics is critical. This could be as simple as looking at optimal timings and locations for meetings or arranging childcare to enable women’s participation.
- **Resistance to WLOs’ leadership from existing GBV coordination structures:** A key component of the project has been time invested in managing change through building relationships, trust and respect and defining roles and responsibilities between the co-chairs. There is a need for co-chairs, particularly from organizations led by men, to understand the added value of WLOs in coordination spaces and to set aside preconceived notions, stereotypes or other insecurities that act as barriers to WLOs’ participation. Male staff, whether they are chairs or members of coordination mechanisms, should put their organizational and programmatic commitment to women’s participation into practice by applying it in coordination spaces.
- **Address Power Dynamics:** Understanding how power plays out in every aspect of women’s lives and addressing the specific power dynamics in GBV coordination spaces is the first step toward power sharing. It is important for local organizations working together in coordination spaces to move away from unhealthy competition and also to understand that WLO co-leadership is an example of power sharing, not power takeover. Building transparent systems and sharing information can help with this.
- **Mobilize allies:** Those who have the most power are critical in pushing for change. Getting men in leadership to play a supporting

role as allies who can help change narratives and perceptions is important. This also entails engaging local leaders in governments and community organizations as well as religious leaders as agents of change who are committed to challenging the status quo and who believe in the rights of women.

Lack of financial investment and support

- **Call to Donors:** WLOs are calling for flexible donor funding where donors cover organizational overheads and Indirect Cost Recovery (ICR). Creative solutions are urgently needed to address stringent due diligence requirements that limit WLOs' access to donor funds. Donors should commit to funding WLOs, addressing the barriers to accessing funding and setting up systems to support organizations to grow.
- **Capacity Strengthening Support to WLOs:** It is necessary to invest in the capacity strengthening supports required to not only support WLOs to comply with due diligence requirements (including constitution, board of directors/ advisory board, financial management, human resources, safeguarding policies; and statutory requirements, such as government registration at national and sub national level), but also to strengthen their institutional capacity beyond donor requirements. Long-term capacity strengthening that responds to WLOs self-identified needs should be factored into budgets to support WLOs' growth and sustainability.
- **Leverage Partnerships:** In instances where WLOs are categorized as medium or high-risk organizations (in terms of financial and organizational systems), which impacts negatively on their ability to access funding, establishing partnerships with an International Non-Governmental Organization (INGO) or UN agency that may be able to support with capacity strengthening and risk absorption could help level up institutional capacities while increasing WLOs' access to funding opportunities.

Policies and commitment

- **Challenge the Humanitarian Architecture:** Since many coordination mechanisms are coordinated by UN agencies and INGOs, there is need **to change the mindsets, policies and targets** of the humanitarian architecture so local leadership is understood as the norm rather than the exception.
- **Political will:** At the outset there needs to be political will (including from UN Agencies, government structures and INGOs) to promote and implement localization policies that identify the need for women's leadership in key structures and a greater role in decision making for WLOs.
- **Coordination between clusters:** GBV AoR can lead on encouraging participatory meetings and joint planning with other cluster members, in addition to encouraging local partners to take on leadership at the sub national and national level.
- **Advocating for localization:** WLOs advocate for local actors, including WLOs, to have seats at decision-making tables and to not be left out of important processes. GBV AoR should actively promote the co-sharing/lead model where power is shared both with INGO/UN bodies and between NNGOs and WLOs. The success of localization depends on the role local actors play in a sector that has not shared power and resources with them on equitable terms. Participation and leadership of local WLOs will enrich and contextualize discussions and decision making. There is a need to achieve humanitarian aid coordination and local government level leadership acceptance and buy-in for the role of WLOs in co-chairing coordination mechanisms at both national and sub national levels.
- **Mapping Local Women Led Organizations:** The National GBV AoR needs to identify new local/grassroots level WLOs, provide support through mentorship and involve WLOs in GBV coordination activities. A mapping exercise needs to be invested in for such purposes.

4

FOSTERING WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP: PROMOTING PARTICIPATION & LEVERAGING SPACE

“Women being the most affected by GBV, WLOs are better placed in co-leading in the coordination of GBV risk mitigation initiatives, provision of lifesaving GBV response services, community based GBV response and prevention and capacity building of GBV actors. WLOs can lead the GBV working groups, they only need to be given the opportunity. We need the space to be created, and we will see them participating” (Kade Betty Kenyi, Program Officer-Protection, CTP).

There is an assumption that WLOs do not have the capacity to assume leadership in GBV coordination, even where they have successfully engaged in coordination in different fora. There is need to invest in documenting success stories to build up an evidence base and to change the narrative around WLO leadership in contexts where WLOs face barriers. More and equal opportunities to lead are needed to ensure the voices and contributions of WLOs are entrenched in GBV coordination from sub-national to national level. As a starting point, encouraging WLOs to attend meetings is a critical step to enhancing their visibility and showcasing their capabilities and knowledge.

4.1 What have we learned from the research?

The research revealed key areas for attention on fostering leadership and participation in GBV working groups:

- The process of onboarding and inducting a WLO as a co-chair
- Mechanisms to support women leaders in their role (where needed and considering the experience and skills that organizations already have)

- Mobilizing and encouraging greater participation of WLOs in GBV coordination processes
- Identifying and opening of spaces to WLOs to amplify their voices.

The South Sudan GBV AoR Coordinator revealed that WLOs are not all at the same level and have different needs and thus fall into three different categories: a) high institutional capacity, extensive programming experience, being known, having established networks at national, regional and international levels and accessing resources; b) mid-level capacity, with some institutional capacity and programming experience and being based at the sub-national level; c) recently established, with less developed experience at the programmatic level, with networking and in accessing funds. For the three categories, disparities in access to financial resources, programming and needs-based capacity strengthening exist.

The GBV coordination function requires that any actor taking up leadership in this space has a good understanding on the six GBV coordination functions and the key deliverables under each function. These functions include:

- Supporting service delivery
- Informing strategic decision making
- Planning and implementing strategies
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Advocacy
- Contingency planning and preparedness

Resources have been developed by the GBV AoR like the GBV Coordination Handbook¹ among other

¹ https://gbvaor.net/sites/default/files/2019-07/Handbook%20for%20Coordinating%20GBV%20in%20Emergencies_fin.pdf

coordination tools and resources,² to build skills across the six functions. The project focused on some of these areas to enhance skills. Both ADA and WFC had extensive experience in supporting service delivery and had been involved in advocacy at various levels. Making assumptions on levels of knowledge, experience and skills of WLOs often leads to organizations being sidelined, and thus the sector loses out on opportunities for strong leadership.

The CTP Program Accompanier/Protection Officer highlighted that holding a leadership position is one way of building confidence, but support from other organizations is also critical: *“Local organizations require accompaniment in the work they do both in management of finance and program implementation, trainings and set up of financial systems”* (Kade Betty Kenyi, Program Officer-Protection, CTP).

Power dynamics and hierarchies in organizations often impact women’s participation. It was felt that the presence of senior people and colleagues (often men) in meetings may inhibit the participation of more junior staff. It was clear from the research that power dynamics in the room contribute to who speaks and who does not, but arguably the presence of senior staff can also help with decision making. A good example of how to counter this was highlighted in the interview with ADA. The Executive Director consciously took a less dominant role, introduced the coordinator and shared her experience and credentials, including the coordinator’s deep understanding of the context and her on-the-ground experience.

Language was raised as a significant barrier to participation and voice for the WLOs and other local organizations. Starting meetings in English in contexts where other languages are spoken presents the coordination space as “international” while starting it in a local language promotes ownership of the space by the representatives of local organizations. In the Somali context, it was asserted that WLOs identify with the space when meetings are started in Somali—it enables better participation as people feel more comfortable and can express themselves better when they speak in their mother tongue. It is critical to question whose space it is, review language, group composition and individual beliefs around who can participate. This enables the co-creation of an environment that encourages participation and, in

doing so, makes people comfortable to engage in and own the space.

Spaces can be digital or physical. WLOs can use social media platforms to raise issues and engage in digital advocacy through a website, Facebook, Twitter or WhatsApp groups. It was acknowledged that not all WLOs had experience in media and communication, and skills development and funds would be needed to optimize their engagement with online spaces. Access to physical spaces (assuming WLOs were aware of and had been invited to these) often came with a financial cost that hindered participation.

The research uncovered positive implications for WLO visibility within spaces. For example, through their participation in the project as co-chairs, both WFC and ADA have accessed different funding opportunities and partnerships:

“WFC has a big space now, from co-leading the GBV working group with this project they became recognized at the national level. Right from the time WFC got selected I think it was a small organization at the corner, but from then they got emergency funding And with this identity now they are attracting more funding” (Kade Betty Kenyi, Program Officer-Protection, CTP).

“On the ground we have other donors knocking asking us to submit proposals and trying to bring us on board” (Anna Tazita Samuel, Executive Director, WFC).

As mentioned, within the GBV coordination space, it is important that roles for the organizations that are co-chairing are clearly defined. A key role that was mentioned through an interview was that the WLOs represent the GBV coordination mechanism in other spaces. *“Specific terms of reference for the WLO taking up this role are needed so that it’s not only to be taking minutes but also chairing, managing the meetings, and very important to see the WLO representing the GBV coordination group in other sectors”* (Yusra Ali, Director-ADA Somalia).

On the issues of membership in both the protection cluster and GBV working group, it was recommended that separate meetings and meeting times for the protection cluster and GBV working groups (or reference groups) be set to avoid an overlap and, where necessary, that they occasionally join together.

⁸ <https://gbvaor.net/co-ordination-tools-resources>

There are short-term simple fixes for some of the exclusions experienced by WLOs, for example, inviting and encouraging women to participate, sharing information in a timely manner and identifying central locations that are accessible to more people, especially WLOs who may not have access to transport.

“Female GBV officers should be attending meetings; don’t just send men to meetings! Women should be there and speak on their own behalf. It is also recommended that the female staff are informed ahead of time on the meeting’s agenda, so they are adequately prepared to participate in the meeting proceeding” (Yusra Ali, Director-ADA Somalia).

However, some barriers are more complex and require advocacy at different levels to achieve access. A frustration articulated was the complex route to participation in the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT). The current path has multiple stages that include being in the NGO forum and then being selected to form part of the steering committee. Some steering committee members are then elected on to the Advisory Committee. With only one space for an NGO (either national or international) on the HCT, the chances that WLOs will be represented are extremely limited.

It was strongly noted that international actors need to increase local WLOs’ visibility and cede space to create opportunities for local leadership. There is often resistance from stakeholders who block the participation and leadership of WLOs.

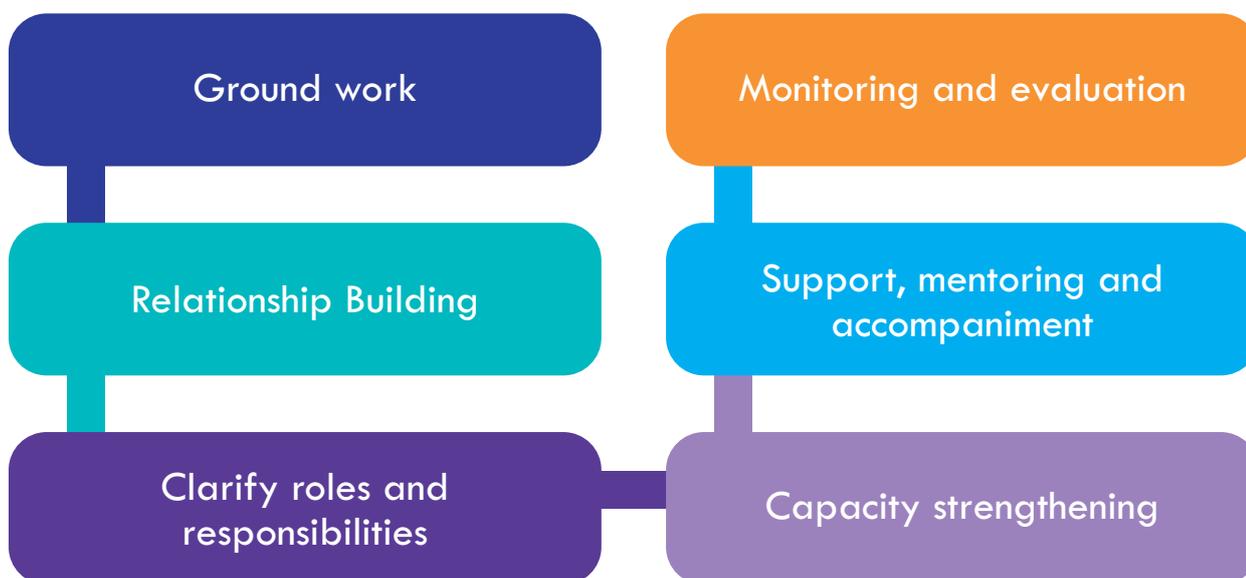
4.2 Key actions to foster participation and leadership.

Onboarding

Based on the journeys of WFC and ADA, the following steps are useful to introduce a WLO 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-chairs is vital—the relationship needs to be based on trust, mutual respect and equality—with an acknowledgement of what each organization 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-chairs (and their mentorship and accompaniment needs) is important. The existing co-chair 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, barriers and ways to address any issues that arise.

Steps in introducing a WLO as co-chair in a GBV coordination structure



Capacity strengthening

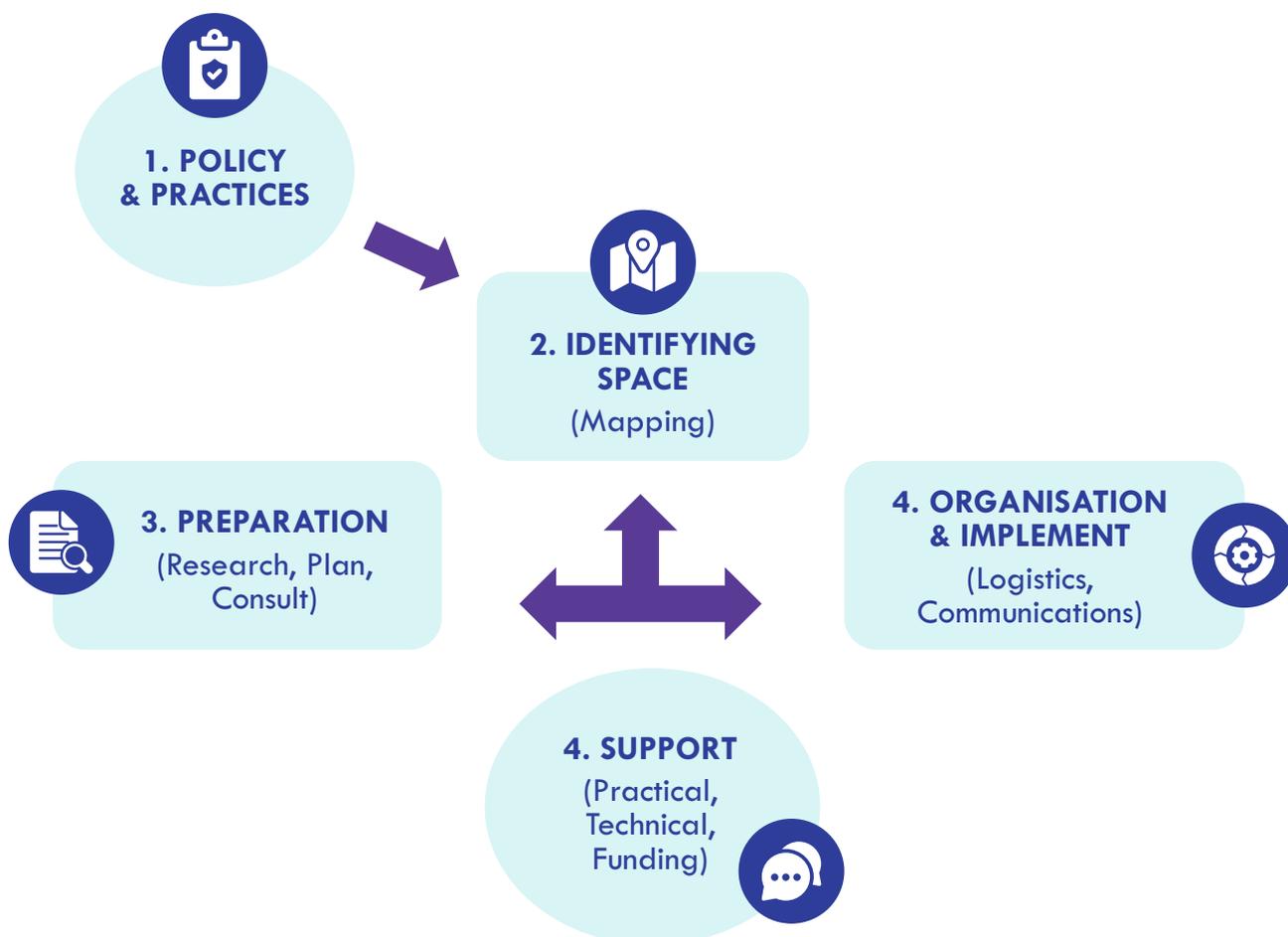
As noted, the issue of capacity is sensitive. Understanding the individual strengths, experiences and needs of the WLOs is a first step. Where appropriate, a capacity strengthening, mentorship and support plan can be developed, costed and implemented—this would include identifying who would be best placed to provide various layers of support. Recommended key elements by WLOs to enhance capacity and acknowledge experience include:

- Peer-to-peer learning and sharing platforms and opportunities as a key strategy for growth: This involves linking WLO co-chairs at a national and sub-national level globally, virtually and face-to-face, resources permitting.
- Accompaniment: This should be based on need but could cover project management, finance, program implementation, set up of systems (finance, HR, safeguarding) and supporting co-chairing activities.

- Skills development: This involves facilitation of processes to develop core skills needed for coordination.
- Identify support needed to ensure sustainability of the WLO: For example, this could include linkages to resource mobilization opportunities and assistance in developing resource mobilization strategies.
- Support from the National GBV Coordinators and their teams: This could involve giving space and time to WLOs, supporting the documentation of activities, sharing online links or portals to resources and learning opportunities and promoting WLOs on social media.

A strong message from the WLOs was that support and mentorship plans should be clear with a finite plan to strengthen capacity and then plan for a proper and timed phase out. It was also emphasized that skills sharing is not linear—knowledge and experience from local actors needs to be acknowledged and valued.

How to Leverage Space



The research process identified five key stages in leveraging space for greater participation and voice of WLOs:

STAGE ONE: POLICY AND PRACTICES

INGOs, UN agencies and donors should advocate for spaces for women’s leadership through policy change and policy implementation. This involves:

- Developing criteria that promotes diversity in accessing spaces and opportunities that consider gender, age, disability and local voices.
- Understanding participation and engagement as a process, as meaningful engagement needs long-term funding.
- Developing a plan to mitigate risk and manage security and safety risks of WLOs and GBV activists that come with increased visibility.
- Providing adequate resources to WLOs and the partners who support their capacity strengthening processes.

STAGE TWO: IDENTIFYING SPACES

Mapping out spaces (physical and virtual) and planning on how to engage is a key step. This can be done annually by individual WLOs or collectively and should be carefully monitored so opportunities are not missed. It is useful to develop a plan to access these spaces—this may include advocacy to ensure a space is dedicated for women’s participation and leadership. Engagement can include having a **voice, advocating, peer exchange, learning and training** at global, regional, state/national and local/sub national levels. (See example of mapped spaces for South Sudan and Somalia). Spaces can include:

- Policy and decision-making spaces
- Coordination meetings and forums
- Global summits, conferences and meetings
- Mainstream and social media
- Global campaigns – such 16 Days of Activism, International Women’s Day and Regional and National days

Example: Mapping Women’s Rights and GBV coordination and engagement spaces³

GLOBAL	REGIONAL	NATIONAL/LOCAL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UN Commission on the Status of Women • Participation in 16 Days of Activism at both National and Subnational level to advocate for Women’s Rights linked to Global Campaigning • GBV AoR Core Group and working groups • Membership in a global, feminist platform like the Association for Women’s Rights in Development (AWID⁴) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • African Union Humanitarian Summit • East Africa Women Leaders Forum • Regional Emergency GBV Advisor • WLOs’ representation and voice at the African Union • African Feminist Forum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NGO forum • Strategic government advisory groups including GBV groups • Document review as an opportunity to influence • Working group coordination mechanisms (GBV, protection cluster; child protection, WASH) • Coordination in SRHR, HIV and other sectors • National feminist / WCO platforms • Inter-agency working groups at national level • Donor round tables at national level • Inter-cluster coordination Group-(ICCG) South Sudan • START Network Hub-South Sudan

³ Exercise Analysis workshop Nairobi November 2022

⁴ AWID is a feminist, membership movement that support organization working to achieve gender justice and women’s human rights worldwide.



STAGE THREE: PREPARATION

Meaningful participation means more than just showing up. It is important for WLOs to prepare for any meeting attended. Preparation can also build confidence, thus inspiring a higher level of engagement.

- Ensure that the voices and experiences of other WLOs and key players are known and are represented. This could involve having a specific position on an issue that has been discussed and agreed upon. If appropriate, there should be a mandate from the organization/structure being represented and feedback mechanisms in place.
- Identify the background information needed to ensure the context and issues to be addressed are well understood.
- Identify personal and organizational goals and objectives for engagement.
- Strategize on how to use the space: Meetings/spaces are context specific and can have multiple gains for an organization. For example, the 16 Days of Activism can be used for visibility, awareness raising, advocacy and involvement of local leaders.
- Planning feedback and information sharing processes: A critical part of participation and representation is sharing messages, issues and outcomes with other WLOs and GBV actors who were unable to attend.



STAGE FOUR: SUPPORT

Once there is access to a space it is important to identify what support is needed to enhance meeting or event attendance and facilitate maximum participation. This could include:

- Practical support to identify what resources are available and what is needed.
- Funding for logistics, preparation costs,
- Assisting in material /presentation development
- Identifying what mentorship and coaching is required on how to strategically engage in a space. This could include accompaniment, feedback on presentation, talking through how the space works, what to expect and planning how to navigate (especially events such as CSW)



STAGE FIVE: ORGANIZATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

In planning for and holding meetings, organizers need to take into account potential barriers at a personal and organizational level that could impact on participation. This includes:

- **Accessibility:** Meeting organizers should hold forums and conferences in accessible locations (being mindful of accessibility issue ranging from visas and identifying the needs of women and girls with different disabilities) and holding meetings at times that would allow for women's participation.
- **Communications:** Clear and timely communications on meetings and events are needed to provide opportunities for adequate planning and support WLO participation. Meetings also need to be held in local languages.

How to enhance women's leadership

The following simple tips were recommended by ADA and WFC to fast-track greater participation and increase access to multiple spaces for WLOs:

DO

- ✓ Recognise potential and value the experience that WLOs bring to a space.
- ✓ Respect people's time and giving adequate notice for requests, meetings etc.
- ✓ Move away from patriarchal notions of leadership to more humane and collaborative leadership.
- ✓ Allow speakers to start from the known (i.e. what does your organization do). Make people comfortable and build confidence.
- ✓ Encourage WLOs to have confidence and courage them to contribute during GBV meetings.
- ✓ Provide feedback on performance that is non-judgemental and supportive.
- ✓ Ensure capacity strengthening goes hand in hand with mentoring.
- ✓ Listen to and respect contributions.
- ✓ Share information on opportunities at global, regional, national and local level and guidance on how to engage.
- ✓ Provide mentoring to support women to navigate new spaces

DON'T

- ✗ Assume that WLOs do not have capacity.
- ✗ Continue to run meetings in the same way without questioning or changing the status quo.
- ✗ Characterize WLOs as 'lacking capacity' – all organizations and leaders go through a development and growth processes, but some are given more opportunities, support or resources.
- ✗ Disregard women's contributions.
- ✗ Underestimate the power of women's lived experience.
- ✗ Cancel meetings or switch venues on short notice.

Building from within

Finally, while it was acknowledged that organizations in leadership and influencing roles needed to play a key part in relinquishing power and providing more space for local voices, it was also acknowledged that WLOs needed to push for space. Some recommendations included:

- ✓ Creating a network of WLOs to build solidarity, develop strategies and advocate for greater voice and participation in coordination roles.
- ✓ Building WLOs' organization profiles, identifying opportunities to grow the organizations and being clear on long-term goals.
- ✓ Motivating WLOs to partner with other agencies.
- ✓ Establishing a sustainability plan in partnerships and handing over of responsibility to the WLOs, so they can transition from sub-partners to lead agencies. Investing in human resources— identifying skills and experience needed and looking at individual career paths.
- ✓ Recognizing power within the organization – acknowledging the value of knowledge, skills and experience (including lived experience) and what the organization has achieved and what it has to offer.

5

MEASURING CHANGE IN THE SYSTEM

“There was a change in dynamics, a moment where WFC led the mapping of the GBV referral pathway on their own without interference and shared the findings later with the chair and co-chair for approval” (Anna Tazita Samuel, Executive Director, WFC).

The engagement of WLOs in the GBV working group coordination roles had a noticeable impact at an individual, organizational and sector level, with the ultimate goal being more efficient service delivery and access. To measure change in the system, stakeholders were asked to identify what they considered to be the most significant change resulting from the intervention.

At an individual level, the women from ADA and WFC who co-chaired the GBV working group highlighted increased confidence to participate and lead, in addition to acquiring new skills.

At organizational level, the WLOs were seen to have greater capacity to coordinate and lead; this went beyond GBV to broader humanitarian and development forums. The co-chairing roles afforded the WLOs greater visibility, resulting in greater access to other fora, processes and opportunities. The WLOs were even approached by donors to submit proposals, resulting in access to direct funding. Further, the WLOs felt their co-ordination and leadership in the working group helped improve the quality of their organizations’ GBV responses at a local and national level.

At sector level, the WLOs felt their level of engagement and collaboration with institutional stakeholders, including the Ministry of Gender and local government, were strengthened. By virtue of being involved in such a project, WLOs were able to influence and observe improvements in coordination of GBV services.



“The coordination role is giving me the confidence to do something and ability to understand the global context.” Anna Tazita Samuel

Through the Participatory Action Research, research participants identified their vision for what positive changes in WLOs’ participation and leadership roles could look like. These include:

- Increased levels of collaboration among GBV actors (local, national and global).
- Increased engagement between national and sub-national coordination mechanisms, with WLO co-chairs at sub national level receiving regular updates and making presentations at national level GBV coordination meetings.
- Strengthened institutional and individual capacity, particularly regarding individual competencies for GBV coordination leadership.
- Acceptance of WLO representatives in co-chair positions in GBV coordination mechanisms at sub national level.
- New policies by the humanitarian coordination mechanisms that promote WLOs’ co-leadership in GBV coordination at national and sub-national level.

- WLOs being involved throughout the Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) and Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) process.
- Enhanced equity of partnerships and relationships between the co-chairs of a working group.
- The quality and quantity of funding to local WLOs, with an increase observed in the amount of funding to the local partners.

The key goal of WLOs taking a leadership role was to support improved knowledge of available services and compassionate quality service delivery – “people know where to go for GBV service and updated and functional referral pathways are in place” (Group discussion during the two-day reflection and analysis meeting)

Project participants sensed that this was achieved in practice. Serving as co-chairs opened opportunities for the WLOs to advocate for and influence change at a national and sub-national level. This included the ability to influence on improvements in GBV service provision, including having rape treatment and kits available in hospitals and dealing with stock-outs through the working group commitments to service providers. Being in a leadership role also meant that there would be increased shared coordination of GBV programming, including “joint audits and interventions and in conducting key advocacy activities like the 16 Days” (Group discussion during the two-day reflection and analysis meeting). According to the WLOs, having WLOs in a leadership role meant that they were better

plugged into these shared processes, and this increased their own visibility and experience. There was also a sense that engaging in these shared processes made them more effective because WLOs were leading them.

Looking at the longer-term impact of increased visibility, it was believed that “more WLOs would become members of the Humanitarian Country Team and other humanitarian leadership platforms” and that WLO leadership led to “increased integration of GBV in other clusters, sectors and where there is individual and institutional capacity to support GBV integration” (Group discussion).

5.1 Measuring Progress

As highlighted throughout the research, ADA and WFC’s leadership in co-chairing GBV working groups had an impact at an individual, organizational and sector level. The research highlighted priority actions for international, national and local actors to open up spaces for WLOs to participate in and lead GBV working groups and other coordination spaces.

Tracking progress against such achievements is important for understanding the change at various levels that is brought about through WLO leadership. The following is a menu of possible indicators that can help organizations measure progress in relation to WLO leadership. These indicators can help in holding the sector to account, and they are meant to be explored, tested and revised over time.



5.2 Menu of Success Indicators

LEVEL	SAMPLE INDICATORS
Individual level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # and % of women occupying seats in GBV coordination mechanisms # and % of women occupying leadership roles in GBV coordination mechanisms # of women occupying seats in GBV coordination mechanisms who feel their contributions are valued by the coordination mechanism. # of women occupying leadership roles in GBV coordination mechanisms who report increased confidence in co-chairing # of women occupying leadership roles in GBV coordination mechanisms who feel they can influence change within the coordination mechanism
Organizational level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of WLOs participating in GBV coordination mechanisms # of WLOs co-chairing GBV coordination mechanisms # of WLOs that express increased confidence in co-chairing GBV working groups. # of WLOs accessing direct funding from donors # of WLOs receiving overheads/indirect costs from intermediaries/donors # of WLOs reporting satisfaction with overheads/indirect costs received # of WLOs in GBV working groups with capacity strengthening plans in place # of WLOs participation in the GBV AoR peer-to-peer platform Evidence of gender transformative progress at organizational level
Sector level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of gender transformative progress at sector level (including within GBV coordination mechanisms) % of WLOs who report that they can influence donor/sector level policies or practices # of donors who include criteria for WLOs in proposals/grants, or have a special allocation to support WLOs # of intermediaries/donors who allocated overheads/indirect costs to WLOs % of donor funding allocated to WLOs Evidence of changing donor practices that promotes greater inclusion of WLOs in funding mechanisms (e.g. new practices on due diligence) # of GBV coordination mechanisms that actively promote WLO leadership/co-chairing # of documented improvements in GBV service provision attributed to WLO leadership

5.3 Tracking Tools

GBV Service Mapping Tool (IRC 2011) <https://gbvresponders.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/2-Service-Mapping-WEB-A.doc>

Global GBV AoR 3-4-5W Template <https://gbvaor.net/coordination-tools-and-resources/supporting-service-delivery>.

Checklist

Actions to build WLOs and increase participation and leadership in GBV working groups

ACTION	DONOR	INGO	GBV COORDINATION
Acknowledge that WLOs are not homogenous and develop flexible funding models to increase access to grants.	✓		
Commit to funding WLOs identify the barriers to accessing funding and set up systems to support organizations to grow.	✓		
Provide flexible, long-term funding mechanisms that go beyond project funding and include communications, operational costs and indirect costs.	✓	✓	
Strengthen capacity in WLOs to match donor requirements and attain due diligence		✓	
Invest in mapping out women led organizations to identify strengths and areas of operation, capacity gaps and support needs.		✓	✓
Increase local actors' visibility and cede space to create opportunities for local leadership.	✓	✓	✓
Highlight/showcase the work of partners to attract other donors and encourage sustainability.	✓	✓	
Invest in strengthening technical, financial, and institutional capacities to support long-term resilience.	✓	✓	✓
Promote policies/approaches that support having a local WLO as a co-chair (plan, implement, monitor).		✓	✓
Strategy in place to increase the participation of WLO in GBV coordination mechanisms at local and national level.			✓
Foster peer-peer learning as a strategy to strengthen capacity in WLOs in co-chair positions.			✓
Support and mentor WLO in co-chair positions with a clear and finite plan to strengthen capacity and plan for a proper and timed phase out.		✓	

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