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# “BREAKING THE LOCALISATION DEADLOCK” REVIEW OF HUMANITARIAN CAPACITIES, POWER RELATIONS AND LOCALISATION IN THE SOMALI HUMANITARIAN SYSTEM

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This analysis finds that local and national NGOs (LNNGOs) and the government’s humanitarian agencies are growing their capacity and influence, whilst the humanitarian system continues to be dominated by the UN machinery and a large number of international non-government organisations (INGOs). There is a positive evolution in terms of contextual humanitarian capacity, but new challenges may increase the gap between needs and response capacity.

This participatory analysis follows up on work done in 2014 and uses the Humanitarian Country Capacity Assessment (HUCOCA) methodology. It adds new areas of analysis such as power relations among different humanitarian actors; evolution of the localisation agenda; and gender perspectives and their inclusion as part of the humanitarian capacity assessment.

## CHANGES AND EVOLUTION IN THE HUMANITARIAN CAPACITIES OF LOCAL AND NATIONAL NGOS:

When comparing the LNNGOs that were assessed in 2014 and 2019, the results show positive progress. Humanitarian capacity of the eight NGOs has increased an average of 20 percent, but with significant differences in the three territories. With the exception of two parameters, (leadership attitudes and knowledge management), all other metrics (including Technical specialisation and standards compliance) have experienced a significant increase.

The overall capacity of Somali LNNGOs is strongest in networking and alliance building, conflict sensitivity approaches, connectedness and resilience building. The weakest areas are

analytical and strategising capacity, institutional risk management and geographical outreach. Essential components such as leadership, advocacy, analytical and strategising capacity, and knowledge management require an urgent investment and commitment.

## **CHANGES AND EVOLUTION IN THE HUMANITARIAN CAPACITIES OF STATE INSTITUTIONS:**

The comparative analysis from 2014-2019 of the three states' humanitarian institutions shows an average increase of 63% of overall capacity. This is mainly due to the effort done in Somaliland and at FGS, but also the low baseline of 2014. The areas of major growth are on leadership and coordination, and the weakest in humanitarian standards compliance, financial resourcing and logistical capacity.

Federal Government of Somalia (FGS), Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management (MHADM): This new Ministry of the Federal Government of is a big step forward within the FGS to articulate all the humanitarian work in Somalia, has great networking capacity and it should be prioritised in the allocation of regular resources and capacity to develop humanitarian policies and strategies for Somalia. At present, the Ministry has significant limitations and lacks both resources and strategic direction and needs to gain recognition and leadership within the humanitarian sector quickly in order to be taken into account on humanitarian strategies' design and resources allocation.

Puntland Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management Agency (HADMA): Over the last five years HADMA has gained knowledge and experience in logistical management, technical skills (vulnerability analysis, assessment and planning capacity), monitoring and evaluation, use of quality standards and networking, and coordination with other humanitarian stakeholders. These gains could be lost if insufficient investment is made to consolidate the knowledge and experience acquired over the last years. HADMA's humanitarian capacity needs attention in terms of financial management, qualified human resources and logistics. More robust support and a clear strategic plan is needed

by the Puntland government and International Humanitarian Actors (IHAs).

Somaliland has different ministries and agencies involved in humanitarian work. The most relevant humanitarian agency is the National Disaster Preparedness and Food Reserve Authority (NADFOR). NADFOR's plays a strong humanitarian leadership role with clear strategic direction, substantial networking, coordination and communication capacity and the work on disaster management will deliver very positive results, if consistently developed. The work of NADFOR with IDPs and refugees is still unclear, leaving many vulnerable people out of humanitarian assistance and financial and human resource capacity is still low and knowledge management mechanisms are not in place while humanitarian standards compliance mechanisms are largely absent. NADFOR has big potential and more investment on quality standards, more openness to cooperation with LNNGOs and peer institutions in neighbouring countries, and more government resources allocated with a long term perspective will benefit humanitarian capacity enormously.

## **GENDER ANALYSIS OF ORGANISATIONAL HUMANITARIAN CAPACITIES:**

Most LNHA include gender justice values in their documents and narrative, but this appears to be more of a rhetorical exercise than a practical one. In the case of international agencies, this seems to be more explicit. Women are still a significant minority within humanitarian organisations. Women are more likely to be in secondary administrative roles within humanitarian organisations. With the exception of Women's Rights Organisations (WROs), less than 30% of LNHA leadership are women; this also applies to several INGOs. WROs do not play a very significant role in the humanitarian sector. Gender inclusion in the humanitarian system is still weak. Women are gradually taking more prominent roles in the system, but more on the operational level than on the strategic and policy making level.

## **POWER ANALYSIS OF HUMANITARIAN ACTORS**

The assessment explored three key elements related to power analysis: relevance, power and influence. In general, international actors have more power, relevance and influence in how the humanitarian system operates in Somalia. Some

state actors such as the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management (MHADM) do not have a capacity for influence proportional to their potential power. This analysis indicates that the power some state agencies have is still more in theory than in practice, and that international actors are the main influential group into the Somali humanitarian system.

Many LNHA play a relevant and influential role in the humanitarian system, but this doesn't always translate to power. For LNNGOs, influence is more related to the operational implementation than on analytical and advocacy capacity, although there has been significant progress in LNNGOs advocating in recent years, but this is often framed primarily around the localisation agenda, rather than broader strategic areas.

Local communities can have strong influence over the LNHA through clan leaders and elders. Other less articulated communities such as urban IDPs have minimal capacity for influence.

## ORGANISATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Relations among the different actors have been analysed at three levels: information sharing, activity based relations, and strategic relations. The assessment shows that most of the state-based local humanitarian organisations keep limited relations within their own peer state LNNGOs. In most cases, relations are set on the basis of acceptance and mutual understanding instead of content.

INGOs tend to establish an ambivalent relationship with LNNGOs as subcontractors in risky areas and as competitors in areas where they can implement programmes directly. Relationship perceptions are generally asymmetric. Relationships are frequently based on information sharing or joint activities. The low analytical and strategising capacity of LNHA translates into a low level of relationships between LNHA. International agencies do not seem to set relations with LNHA in a way that could help to overcome this deficit, instead perpetuating operations-based dialogue, which tends to perpetuate the status quo.

## HUMANITARIAN LOCALISATION AGENDA

The analysis shows a double bind, leaving localisation at an impasse: there are strict restrictions on the way LNHA are funded, with no flexibility and no institutional building costs included, that has a direct effect in the managerial quality and technical competence of the LNHA. This occurs because of a lack of financial capacity to hire and retain competent staff and to develop adequate management mechanisms. This is translated into poor performance in terms of quality delivery, which reduces trust and throws into question the engagement with the humanitarian core values, thus reinforcing the tight restrictions in funding mechanisms and compliance measures. It becomes a vicious cycle that creates a deadlock for advancing the localisation agenda.

The obstacles and potential opportunities for the implementation of the localisation agenda in Somalia and Somaliland have been assessed around five main factors: humanitarian values and approach; technical and managerial capability of LNHA; funding autonomy, fundraising capability and funding conditions (by donors) for LNHA; mutual trust and relations between LNHA and international agencies; and political agendas of LNHA, international agencies and donors. The results indicate that LNHA and international agencies have a very similar understanding of the relative importance of the five factors.

International agencies and LNHA agree that the most conditioning factor to make progress in the localisation agenda is funding issues. International agencies are more concerned than LNHA about the different understanding of humanitarian values and approaches, as well as on the managerial capacity of LNHA. LNHA are more concerned than international agencies on funding and trust issues.

Other aspects emerging from the analysis indicate that the localisation debate is too focused on organisational interests, rather than on increasing positive impacts on people affected by humanitarian crises. There is also a perception by LNHA that the attribution of successes and failures from the international agencies towards LNHA is unfair.

## RECOMMENDATIONS & INVESTMENT ACTION PLAN:

1. All actors must commit and take action to genuinely address the persistent, structural barriers to advancing the localisation agenda, recognising that despite significant progress in recent years, many of the issues highlighted in this report are the same as five years ago.
2. The discussion on localisation agenda should be articulated around the greatest humanitarian impact and its efficiency, not on organisational interests or financial needs.
3. Issues around women's empowerment and gender equality must be more clearly articulated and addressed throughout the humanitarian architecture, including addressing various issues raised in this analysis, such as the need to support women's humanitarian leadership.
4. All humanitarian actors should agree on one single common evaluation/assessment system to assess the humanitarian impact of INGO and LNNGO actors. A common framework of assessment of impact, efficiency, risk management and accountability must be in place for all humanitarian actors with no distinction between national and international actors.
5. Humanitarian actors should collectively assess the different "value chain" options and related costs attached to the different models. Humanitarian actors should make decisions on how to make "value chain" options based on impact and cost-effectiveness.
6. LNHA and IHA should work together on analysing and sharing how humanitarian values and principles are implemented in the complex contexts of Somalia and Somaliland, and the dilemmas they raise in practical terms, particularly the principles of neutrality, impartiality and independence.

Please find the full Humanitarian System Analysis on the Oxfam HECA website.

**Note:** This report analyses different aspects of the Humanitarian system in South Central Somalia, Puntland and Somaliland. The way in which this analysis is presented does not reflect any political stand vis à vis the different territories and their status.



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