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Localisation in numbers – funding flows and local leadership in Syria

As the process of implementing the 2016 WHS Grand Bargain commitments on localization continue at varying speeds, Local2Global Protection (L2GP) is publishing a series of country briefs based on available data on humanitarian leadership, coordination and funding flows to national and local actors. L2GP is publishing these briefs in order to make relevant country level information readily available and thus hopefully help stimulate continued country level dialogue about the Grand Bargain commitments including the commitment to support the role of national and local humanitarian actors.

Increased funding to local and national actors is one of the stated goals of the Grand Bargain, as expressed for example in workstream 2: "More support and funding tools for local and national responders" and particularly the commitment to increase, by 2020, the level of funding to national actors to 25% - "as directly as possible." Even though the global level data presented in this overview note a slight increase in funding to local and national actors since the start of the Grand Bargain, direct funding to local and national actors in Syria is still under 1% (2019 figures). This includes funding allocated through the UN administered country-based pooled funds (CBPF). In Syria 23% ($12 million) of the CBPF was directly allocated to local and national actors (2019). An additional $9 million were sub-granted to NNGOs via CBPF funding first received by INGOs and UN agencies. CBPF funding is often referred to as an important vehicle for increased direct funding to local and national NGOs - even if CBPFs only account for a modest part of total humanitarian funding. In 2019, global funding through CBPFs accounted for 4% of total humanitarian funding.

The above said, L2GP's research indicates that globally and in actual dollar value by far the largest funding flow for local humanitarian action comes from secondary (indirect) funding via UN agencies, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and INGOs. While country specific data on secondary funding is not readily available for Syria, global level data for UNHCR, UNICEF, UNRWA and the ICRC suggest that these four organizations globally allocate about 16% of their funding to local and national actors. This data of course does not speak to the quality of partnership – another important goal under the Grand Bargain – it only speaks of magnitudes and volumes.

Not only do these numbers mean that funding to local and national NGOs globally speaking remains low and far below the targets set in the Grand Bargain, the fact that most of the funding is received through secondary channels puts local and national organizations in a position often comparable to that of a subcontractor responding under program goals set by the first level organization. In addition, data on funding gaps presented in this overview shows that the funding gap experienced by national NGOs is considerably wider than for UN agencies and INGOs in Syria.

The participation of local and national actors in the structured coordination of humanitarian activities is another important parameter when assessing progress under the Grand Bargain commitments - including the one on localization. Data on humanitarian leadership is global level data as L2GP, at the time of publication, could not verify complete and disaggregated data on humanitarian leadership for Syria. Looking at the global average of cluster leadership for 27 operations surveyed in 2019, national and local NGOs held 8% of co-chair positions of national clusters and 8% of leadership positions of subnational clusters. No national or local NGO was recorded as holding a lead or co-lead position of a national cluster for the 27 operations surveyed. The global average of national and local NGOs as cluster members is 43%.

Please see the last page for a more detailed explanation of the methodology behind this brief.

Notes

[1] Based on OCHA FTS data, downloaded June 2020

- Shows only "new money", amounts larger than zero, commitments and paid amounts.
- Data for which recipients were not provided in FTS were categorized as "Unknown."
- Funding from donors to pooled funds were replaced in the data presented with data on relevant pooled funds allocations to implementing organizations, i.e. only funding reaching implementing partners is shown, but not the allocations from donors to the pooled funds.
- Overall the categorization was done by OCHA FTS, which was simplified in the following way:
  - "National+Local NGO/CSO": National and local NGOs as well as Red cross/crescent societies operating in their home countries are included in this category.
  - All other NGO types were considered "INGO" (except "un-categorized" NGOs).
  - "UN" as categorized by FTS.
  - "Red Cross/Crescent" include the ICRC, the IFRC along with all Red Cross/Crescent societies operating outside their home country.
  - "Other" include all other types of organization that are not part of any of the above.

[2] Country-level leads and co-leads at the national level generally mirror global cluster lead agency (CLA) arrangements established by the IASC, with UN agencies and two international NGOs holding most positions.

Based on data shared by OCHA and collected from Global Clusters and country-level cluster/sector coordinators in late 2019. Data was collected by OCHA on cluster/sector coordination for 27 humanitarian operations in late 2019 by rapid survey; an assessment of coordination performance, quality and impact were outside of the scope of the data collection. As with any data collection, and particularly one which collected a high volume of data quickly, there is the possibility of errors or inaccuracies. Every effort was made to reduce these to a minimum and to provide as accurate an accounting of coordination structures as possible. Finally, please note that coordination structures and capacities change quite rapidly in some contexts.

Cluster leadership at national level National leadership of clusters falls into 3 categories: lead, co-lead and co-chair.

- A lead agency is designated by the Emergency Relief Coordinator to lead a cluster based on the recommendation of the Humanitarian Coordinator . The cluster lead is responsible for providing cluster staffing, is accountable to the Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator for the functioning of the cluster and serves as provider of last resort.
- A co-lead is either one organization that supports the lead, or two or more organizations that share equal responsibility for leading a cluster. The co-lead(s) is/are also endorsed by the Emergency Relief Coordinator based on the recommendation of the Humanitarian Coordinator. Where two or more organizations share equal responsibility for leading a cluster, the responsibilities are the same as the ones listed for a lead agency.
- Co-chair/Co-facilitator (also sometimes called "co-coordinator" and not to be confused with the term cluster coordinator): An organization that supports the lead/co-lead agency or agencies in coordinating a cluster. It is recognized as a good practice that this role is carried out by NGOs if the cluster lead agency is a UN agency.

For a complete set of provisional definitions for these 3 categories of cluster leadership, please contact OCHA and the Global Clusters Coordination Group.

[3] Based on data from annual reports and Grand Bargain reporting of UNICEF, UNHCR, ICRC and UNRWA:

- Note that percentages were calculated by Local2Global based on financial data presented in these reports.
- Data shown includes NGOs, Red Cross/Crescent organizations as well as government actors.
- Based on previous L2GP findings, it was assumed that UNRWA is only working through self-implementation.
- According to annual reports, funding flows among the four organizations are less than 0.2%, hence double counting of funding flows is negligible and was not considered.

[4] Based on OCHA CBPF data, downloaded June 2020:

- Red Cross/Crescent organizations are not shown (1% on a global level).
- Only direct funding is shown (no pass-through funding).
- Note that several CBPFs have increased the number ofadvisory board seats held by NNGO in 2020.

[5] Based on OCHA FTS data, downloaded Feb 2020:

- Ratio between *Funding* and *Current requirements* is shown.
- Categorization by FTS.
- Only funding gaps for National NGOs, INGOs and UN are shown. Funding gaps for other actors, including local NGOs are not shown.