النهضة العربية للديمقراطية والتنمية
Arab Renaissance for Democracy & Development

ARDD

Localization

Strengthening Localization in Jordan

Localization: Reinforce and support do not replace or undermine

ARDD

October
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I. PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

Arab Renaissance for Democracy and Development (ARDD), a Jordanian civil society organization, initiated this research to create clarity, momentum, focus and meaningful action around "localization" in Jordan. The broad question underlying this research is whether and how the large presence of international aid agencies in Jordan over the past two decades has significantly reinforced the country's collective capacities to deal with refugees and with (socio-) economic shocks.

No research on localization can escape the question: What does one mean by localization? Four years after the World Humanitarian Summit and 13 years after the "*Principles of Partnership",* it remains a confused, perplexing and contested policy and practice issue. Different people use the term "localization" with different understandings. As a result, it understandably becomes difficult to put any policy commitments into practice and pure research would only offer a diagnostic of the confusion. This paper seeks to be action research and offer clarification, structure and direction. It uses different frameworks for interpreting what was read and heard from many sources and offers them for use in the localization policy and practice conversations in Jordan. It works with an interpretation of localization, in line with the intent of the Grand Bargain, based not on ideological but on compelling strategic reasons, applicable to Jordan.

The Grand Bargain is an outcome document of the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit. Its ten commitments, signed up by all the major humanitarian actors, constitute an agenda for reform of the international relief sector, to make it more cost-effective and more inclusive, with a much better distribution of power. One of the commitments is to provide "more support and funding tools for local and national responders". This is now commonly referred to as 'localization'.

II. THE RESEARCH

Focus: The main focus is placed on the interaction between international assistance actors and Jordanian agencies. Among the latter, some attention is paid to government institutions and more to Jordanian non-governmental organizations. It is known that there are forms of organization and association among the various refugee populations in Jordan, as well as interactive ways of engaging these populations. For refugee populations globally, organizations belonging to the "host country" are not "local" actors. This merits dedicated attention in its own right. More is to be understood about the policies and practices of bilateral donors, including non-Western ones, and of different central and local institutions of the Government of Jordan. Different perspectives and experiences may also exist among some faith-inspired associations in Jordan, which play an important role in "social protection" without necessarily calling it a form of "humanitarian action".

The research did not aspire, and does not claim to have covered, comprehensively, all possible aspects of the localization question at all levels in Jordan, and with the required nuance and detail to do justice to the significant variations in relations, dynamics and experiences that undoubtedly exist. These will emerge and find their place once the policy and practice conversations are based on a sufficiently shared understanding.

Sources:

Interviews: The research was conceptualized and initiated at a time when Jordan was still in comprehensive lockdown to contain the COVID-19 pandemic. Because of the lockdown situation, all interviews had to be conducted remotely and on a single agency basis. Under

"normal" circumstances, a start-off meeting with different stakeholders would have been held, as well as a validation workshop before finalizing the report. While the researchers do not think that more interactive and collective reflection would have fundamentally altered the key insights and messages, they expect that it would have brought additional insight, more examples and greater nuance. A survey was considered but not deemed hugely helpful for an issue around which there is significant confusion and for which there are very different interpretations. In addition, given the difficult circumstances and stresses linked to the COVID-situation, it was felt that the response rate might be too low. The research therefore relies on qualitative conversations, in English or Arabic, with 50 individuals, of which 48 belong to 38 organizations (evenly balanced, with 19 Jordanian and 19 international), and two speaking in their individual capacity. A majority of interviewees were women. For detail about the interviewees, see Annex 2.

Literature review: A range of English-language documents, most of them in the public domain, related to Jordan or localization more globally.

Comparative insights, observations and learning: GMI in particular has been involved in localization-related conversations, research and action since 2005, and very intensively since 2015. It is engaged in constant listening and conversing with a broad range of INGOs and directors of local and national CSOs, but also with international colleagues in, e.g., the Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response, ICVA, Charter 4 Change, the Grand Bargain Workstream on Localization, and some bilateral donors.

III. THE JORDAN CONTEXT

1. Challenges

By comparison with the turbulence and violence that has affected its neighbors, Jordan has remained a place of "stability". However, since its recognition as an independent, sovereign state by the UN in 1946, almost 75 years ago, it has been facing - and continues to face - serious challenges, internal and external.

While the international relief sector over the past years has heavily focused on the large Syrian refugee population, and its impact on Jordan's economy and host population, it should not be forgotten that Jordan has been hosting refugees almost from its creation. Palestinians have found refuge in Jordan since 1948, with a major second wave following in 1967. Many are Jordanian nationals, but a significant number of Palestinians remain registered as "refugee" (2,175,491 according to UNRWA, of which nearly 370.000 in "camp settlements". A number of Iraqis also sought refuge in Jordan after the first Gulf War and then particularly after 2003. In April 2020, UNHCR (it is already mentioned, no need) counted 60,075 registered Iraqi refugees, but more live in Jordan. Large numbers of Syrians fled to Jordan after 2012, with almost 656,500 registered as refugees in April 2020, 81.1% of which live in urban areas, and only 18.9% in camps. There are other refugee "minorities" as well, e.g., from Yemen and Sudan.

Jordan has also faced significant security problems, from militant Palestinian factions in the past, and Al Qaeda and ISIS/Daesh in recent decades. Not surprisingly, its approach to preserving itself as an "island of stability" in a turbulent neighborhood has a strong "security" dimension to it.

Notwithstanding the sustained political stability, the country has been facing serious economic challenges for quite some time now. Although having a population of little over 10 million people, some 65% are under 30 years of age. Unemployment or underemployment, which reached 19.1% in 2019 compared to 18.6% in 2018 (World Bank, 2020), and job insecurity in

a significant informal sector are a longstanding challenge. The country has a significant public debt which needs to be serviced. Reducing the debt typically requires reducing government subsidies, leading to higher prices, or increased taxes. With an already high cost of living for its citizens, reducing subsidies or increasing taxes have on several occasions been meet with protests (e.g., in 1989, 1996 and 2018). Yet, its openness to hosting refugees has been much larger than in Western countries. Jordan is dependent on foreign aid. Some foreign assistance partners have their own concerns and priorities in the region.

As most of the world, Jordan also had to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic. It drew significant international attention and praise for the firmness with which it took early action and imposed a comprehensive curfew to reduce the spread of the virus. The number of COVID-attributed fatalities has been small so far. But the rapid economic impact of the lockdown measures, and the anticipated global economic depression, will make themselves felt more deeply and longer.

2. Collective capacities

a. *Government of Jordan*

Jordan is a constitutional monarchy, with legislative, executive and judicial institutions and a hereditary monarchy. The Kingdom has 12 governorates: Ajlun, Aqaba, Balqa, Karak, Mafraq, Amman, Tafilah, Zarqa, Irbid, Jerash, Ma'an, and Madaba. Governors are appointed by the King.

Despite not being a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention, Jordan has been an exceptionally generous host to refugees. It does not have a dedicated refugee or disaster management governmental administration, as can be found in some other countries. Some directorates that deal with refugee issues are found in different ministries, depending on these ministries' specific mandates. The Humanitarian Relief Coordination Unit is part of the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation (MoPIC), that manages and directs international aid for Iraqi and Syrian refugees. The Department for Palestinian Affairs is connected to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates, the Syrian Refugee Affairs Department to the Ministry of Interior. The Ministry of Interior also has responsibility for the Public Security Directorate, the Civil Defence Directorate, the Civil Status and Passports Department and the General Directorate of Gendarmeries. The intelligence services are under the Ministry of Defence.

Most civil society organizations are registered with the Ministry of Social Development. That also holds for many faith-based associations and organizations, though a number of those are registered with the Ministry of Awqaf Islamic Affairs and Holy Places. Some associations are registered as not-for-profit companies with the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Supply. Several, generally referred to as "Royal NGOs", were established by Royal Decree rather than being registered under a ministry.

Since 2015, Jordan has embarked on a process of decentralization, with the first ever local elections held in 2017. So far, de facto, decision making and control over financial resources remain very centralized. (OECD, 2017a) Whole-of-government coordination remains a challenge.

Important strategic frameworks for Jordan are the successive Response Plans for the Syrian Crisis (the current one covers 2018-2020) and Jordan 2025: A National Vision and Strategy. There is no overarching national strategy document that covers all the Sustainable Development Goals, but thematic ones, like the "*National Water Strategy 2016-2025*" that focus on specific goals. In 2017, Jordan published a first national voluntary review on its engagement with the SDGs.

b. *Civil society*

Reportedly, the term "civil society" was first used in Jordan in 1923, in an article in the journal of the Arab Middle East newspaper. (Awad and Saraya, no date). The first manifestations were, not surprisingly, in the forms of charities and community-based organizations. Restrictive laws of the then colonial British power did not encourage the development of a strong civil society. In the years following independence in 1946, it is believed that some 50 CSOs emerged, mostly as sports, cultural and social clubs. (Ibid). The Jordanian Women Federation was created in May 1945 (under royal patronage). In the context of anti-colonial sentiments and rising pan-Arab ideology, the Women's Awakening League was established in 1952.

The prolonged period of martial law/state of emergency (1957-1989) was not conducive to the further development of a robust civil society. 1989 is generally considered a turning point. Partially under IMF encouragement, Jordan adopted policies of economic reform and liberalization. Economic reforms made it easier to start up a business, reduced red tape and encouraged foreign investment. At the same time, they also led to a withdrawal of the state from various basic social services and social safety nets, increases of certain taxes and reductions of subsidies for a number of products. With it also came a new political relaxation. Martial law was ended, and political parties were allowed. There was also new space for CSOs, whose number started increasing rapidly in the 1990s.

A second growth curve took place, starting, more or less, in 2008. From some 1,500 registered CSOs in that year, the number increased to over 4,600 in 2015. (Denoeux & Toukan, 2016) By 2017, there were 5,966 registered CSOs. (International Center for Not-for-Profit Law et al, 2018) The 2018 CSO Sustainability Index sees 6,051 societies registered with the Ministry of Social Development. There were 1,143 civil, not-for-profit companies in 2018 registered with the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Supply, and 15 trade unions in that same year, registered with the Ministry of Labor. (International Center for Not-for-Profit Law, FHI360 & USAID, 2019).[1]

Though these are significant numbers, Jordan's is still a young "civil society". The development of its individual components and of a networked "civil society" has been hampered by a limited space.

In 2015, CIVICUS (the World Alliance for Participation) and the International Centre for Not-for Profit Law (ICNL) conducted a review of the environment for civil society in Jordan, using the Enabling Environment National Assessment methodology. The overall conclusion was that the Jordanian legal provisions often fall short of international standards. In addition, there is significant scope for discretionary interpretation by government officials.

1 Noting that labor and trade unions, professional associations and academia, among others, are typically considered part of «civil society», the type of organizations typically envisaged in conversations about '«localization» are 'NGOs' (non-governmental organizations, which only describes them by what they are not) and 'CBO's (community-based organizations).

Civil society in Jordan: most relevant laws

Penal Code and freedom of expression (Articles 149 and 191) (1960)

Law on Protecting State Secrets and Documents (1971)

Labor Law no 8 (1996) regulating trade unions

Companies Act no 22 (1997) regulating not-for-profit companies ((areas: education, health, capacity building, micro-finance)

Press Association Law (1998)

Chamber of Commerce Law (2003)

Law on Public Gatherings (2004) (esp. Article 4) amended in 2012

Chambers of Industry Law (2005)

Anti-terrorism Law (2006), amended in 2014

Press and Publications Law (2007) amended in 2012 (esp. Articles 5 and 38b)

Law on the Protection of the Right to Access Information No. 47 (2007)

Law on Societies and Social Bodies No. 33 (1966) as amended into the Law on Societies/ Associations No. 51 (2008) and amended again in 2009

General Statistics Law (2012)

Cybercrimes Law No. 27 (2015)

Audiovisual Media Law No. 26 (2015)

The Societies Law also holds that associations cannot have religious or political goals, as this would mean they would classify as political parties. There is no clear definition of what counts as "political". This is left to the interpretation of government officials. In practice, this has not prevented the registration of associations with goals such as the promotion of democracy, human rights, political participation and decentralization of governance. On the other hand, CSOs have been closed (or threatened with closing) for engaging in issues deemed "political".

Operationally, the government can exercise close oversight. Associations need to inform the government two weeks in advance of the dates of their general assembly, and delegates of state authorities can (and sometimes do) attend these meetings. Copies of any decisions of a general assembly need to be sent, for information, to the Registrar for Societies. They also need the registrar's permission to amend their by-laws. The government, through the Ministry of Social Development, has the power to dissolve an association's board of directors and appoint an interim board, or to fine or dissolve an association if it is deemed not to conform to the regulations. It can also merge two associations.

Jordanian CSOs need prior government approval to do domestic fundraising or receive international funding. Domestically, the main source of government funding is the Society Support Fund of the Ministry of Social Development. The challenge is that it has no clear and predictable policies and frequently changes procedures. Should a CSO wish to organize a domestic fundraising campaign, it needs to provide all details one month in advance and prove that the fund will be spend solely for charitable purposes. It is not allowed to hold more than

two fundraising campaigns a year for the same activity. The full amount raised must be deposited in its bank account and the ministry must be informed of the amount and the date of deposition. Domestic sources of funding therefore being limited, many CSOs seek international funding. A detailed request needs to be submitted in advance to the Council of Ministers via the Registrar of Societies. It must provide details of the intended project, the sources and amounts of financing and an indication of how the funds will be spent. A decision from the Council of Ministers should come within 30 days – but the 30-day response period only begins when the Office of the Prime Minister has received the request from the registrar. Administrative delays here can mean the CSO misses deadlines from international agencies. The overall difficulty to access funding means many CSOs have only limited activities.

A 2017 CSO stakeholder survey indicated that only 5% had been denied permission to raise funds domestically, while 54% signaled that they had never been denied such permission. 47% reported that their organizations received foreign funding, with 53% of those reporting that they had had no difficulties. Yet in qualitative conversations, participants indicated that the process of obtaining foreign funds, controlled by the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, is lengthy and burdensome, and that the funding received barely covers their expenses. (International Center for Not-for-Profit Law, FHI360 & USAID, 2018).

While the Jordanian Constitution (as amended in 2011) guarantees freedom of expression and opinion, and of the media, other laws limit this. One is Article 161 of the Penal Code that makes punishable "actions that are deemed to be illegitimate". Other restrictions were introduced in the 2012 amendments of the Press and Publications Law, including the need for prior authorization for electronic publications, giving the government more power over a larger set of online material). Also the Anti-Terrorism Law (as amended in 2006 and 2014) provides multiple bases to limit media freedom. The Cybercrime Law has been criticized when it was introduced in 2015, among other reasons for too vague categories of "rumors", "fake news" and "hate speech", which are open to abuse. (International Center for Not-for-Profit Law, 2018) Amendments were brought forward in 2018 and again in 2019, but renewed criticism has not been effective in reducing problematic terms and clauses. (CIVICUS Monitor, 2019)

c. *International assistance actors*

With a sluggish economy, a significant rate of unemployment and around 30% of the population within the national territory being refugees, the Jordanian government has been running a budget deficit for a long time, leading to a national debt which is expensive to serve. It is strongly dependent on foreign aid. The biggest donors are the US, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, which also have significant political interests in the region. Others, such as the European Commission, Canada, the Netherlands, Sweden, Norway, the UK, Germany, Switzerland, Spain, etc., provide aid for humanitarian purposes and for development (and governance). There is currently a very large number of international aid actors in the country. Some have been here for a long time, others came at the time of significant influx of Iraqi refugees (and also provided remote assistance to Iraq from Jordan), around 2003. The latest major influx or expansion of their activities corresponded to the influx of Syrian refugees since 2011.

IV. REINFORCE AND SUPPORT: WHY, WHY NOW, AND TO WHAT OUTCOME?

Since the World Humanitarian Summit four years ago, the conversation about localization, as a policy and practice issue, has remained complex, more so for international aid agencies than for local and national actors.

Four years after the Grand Bargain commitments and notwithstanding the conference on localization, organized by the Grand Bargain Workstream on Localization in Amman in 2019, many staff of international agencies that have signed up to the Grand Bargain (and the INGOs signatories to the Charter 4 Change) are not aware of or not familiar with the specifics of these commitments. Overall, Jordanian agencies have not been briefed by their international partners, although these commitments concern them directly.

Also, in Jordan, and with all types of actors, Jordanian and international alike, there is no clear understanding and perspective on "localization". It is not clear why it got prominence at the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit and in its outcome document, and what the intent or purpose of those commitments is. The same holds true, generally, for Jordan-based staff of INGOs that are signatories to the Charter 4 Change.

The commitment to localization is 25 years old. The 1994 Code of Conduct for the Red Cross and INGO contains a commitment to "*build on local capacities"*. The 2007 Principles of Partnership were another major expression by a cross-sectoral set of relief agencies. There are further relevant references in the Sphere and CHS standards. The Grand Bargain therefore does not introduce something new but gives it greater strategic impetus and urgency.

> "The Grand Bargain recognizes that, faced with the reality of our woefully under-resourced humanitarian response, the status quo is no longer an option."

What problem is localization supposed to (at least partially) address? The Grand Bargain is strongly influenced by the "Agenda for Humanity" and the report of the UN High Level Panel on Humanitarian Financing. The latter highlighted the global "*humanitarian financing gap"*. A major purpose of the Grand Bargain, then, is to make international humanitarian action more cost effective. It focuses on the humanitarian economy. Many other stakeholders, however, also relate the economics of the sector (currently with an annual turnover of about $28.5 billion) to its political economy: who holds most power in the international humanitarian sector, and to whose benefit is that used? Not explicitly considered a few years, but put starkly front stage by the global changes now accelerated by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, is whether that international humanitarian sector, or relief industry, can continue financially and politically in the way it has done for the past 20 years?

Localization is a policy and practice issue at different levels. This GMI diagram signals that localization is not just an issue in the *operational* practice of individual international organizations and their local "partners". As mentioned, the Grand Bargain is a sector-wide reform agenda. Localization also plays out at the level of a collective crisis response, e.g., to a large-scale influx of refugees, as has been the case in Jordan. It has operational implications for individual international relief agencies. But these have institutional implications: some more used to working in genuine, equitable partnerships than others.

What 'problem' does 'localization' address?						
Local responders are the first and stay	Financially overstretched	Decision making is too centralised	Hierarchy and fragmentation	Oligopoly of first receivers	Financially unsustainable over time	Polically unsustainable in changing world

How the international aid system and national governments respond to a particular crisis creates an overall environment that is more or less enabling for localization. If there is a crisis, and donors support, and a national government allows large-scale deployment of teams of international experts, then the *overall crisis response* is likely to lead to rapid internationalization. If national governments contain the numbers and influence of international assistance actors, local actors have the space (and responsibility) to step up.

It is relevant here to recall the four archetypal "models" of collective humanitarian action, identified in a think piece for the Montreux XIII Donor conference, in November 2014. The text box summarises the four types of approaches. (Ramalingam & Mitchell, 2014)

Comprehensive	The mainstay of the humanitarian sector and the result of a large-scale international mobilization. "*It is based on the notion of limited or no capacity, and a central role for international agencies in managing, coordination and delivering assistance. There are many issues with this model in terms of its insensitivity to context, lack of engagement with local and national actors, and a tendency to be supply driven rather than needs oriented*."
Constrained	An approach found where humanitarian space is limited by encroaching political interests, which can manifest themselves as legal, procedural but also security challenges. This creates complex, ambiguous and challenging settings.
Collaborative	The international response works hand in hand with national and local actors. Domestic response capacities for coordination, management and delivery are of major importance. "*This model currently leads to numerous tensions with the international system, because of the strong tendencies and preferences to work in the comprehensive model*."
Consultative	Found in countries where there is considerable domestic capacity to respond to disasters. The international actors are called upon to fill specific gaps and niches in domestic capacity and are incorporated into the architecture of domestic response."

Is it fair to say to the influx of large numbers of Syrian refugees triggered an international response that leans towards the "*comprehensive*" approach? Should, eight years on and in a protracted situation, the approach not evolve towards a "*collaborative*" and eventually "*consultative*" one? If a prerequisite for a consultative approach is considerable "domestic capacity" (which is a collective capacity, of different governmental and non-governmental actors), should the strategic objective of the international sector not be to strengthen that? A large-scale international mobilization and presence is also very expensive: is that the best "value-for-money" over time? How does that relate to the Grand Bargain's strategic objective to make global humanitarian action more cost-effective?

Localization is the reduction and reversal of a prior process of internationalization
Historically and globally, under fairly normal circumstances or confronted with modest challenges, local and national actors tend to manage largely with their own capacities and resources. Affected households exercise agency to adapt, communities mobilize as do private sector actors. State institutions (with a national Red Cross or Red Crescent Society as auxiliary, sometimes also a civil protection force and other emergency services, perhaps also with help from the army) and non-governmental civil society actors often are key actors. That is the normal state of affairs. International assistance actors and humanitarian aid tend to come in, at scale, when local and national capacities are (temporarily) overwhelmed, typically following a request from the national government. Such "comprehensive response" may lead to "internationalization", a situation in which "assistance" actors more or less take over and work in parallel to or replace local and national actors. (See also Scheper et alii 2006) "Localization" then is the policy and practice effort to reduce and reverse excessive or too prolonged "internationalization".

Contextual dynamics of internationalization and localization Localization and internationalization are dynamic movements, over a longer period, in the relationship between different actor groups. The graph below shows key actor groups. Non-NGO type civil society organizations refers to community-based associations and self-help groups, trade unions, academia, faith-communities, professional associations, etc. Each actor-group is of course not homogeneous: there are internal variations and differences that can be examined. There are also other actors, not visualized here, that can exercise influence, such as national and international media or other political forces in the aid-giving and aid-recipient countries.

Factors that influence the changing dynamic between these actor groups are, for example, shocks and stresses within the aid-receiving country and how different actors interpret and respond to them; political ideologies that shape national policies and international relations; national legislative and administrative regulations that define the space for civil society; evolving donor interests, priorities and country

strategies; and volatility elsewhere in the world that draws away international attention, funding and experienced people.

This country-wide and more historical perspective sees localization not through the lens of an operational project, but as a dynamic process, playing out over years, between actors and factors that sometimes strengthen local capacities and leadership, sometimes do the opposite. In some situations, where a major crisis is very geographically contained to a specific sub-national area, both trends may coexist in the crisis zone: internationalization takes place, while in the rest of the country local capacities and leadership prevail.

Localization can be a contested issue: This is because of the questions of power and control over resources at the heart of it. Localization is sometimes wrongly imagined as an "anti-international aid agencies" agenda (e.g., Cox Bazaar in Bangladesh), an argument to get rid of international aid agencies. That is not correct. The Grand Bargain talks about the need to "*reinforce*" and "*replace"*, not "*get out"*. It is fundamentally an agenda about roles, but also about the intentional evolution of these roles. Tensions arise particularly when international aid agencies are perceived to operate with a perennial command and control attitude, based on "*power over"* but not "*power with"*, prioritizing their own organizational survival and growth rather than really investing in local and national capacities. Contestation can also occur between socio-geographically more "local" actors (local CBOs and CSOs, local administrations) and "national" CSOs that have entered that more "local space" in response to a particular crisis. Lacking in all this is a broader strategic and systemic vision of collective and collaborative capacities to manage crises effectively – even though this is the only way for the world to deal with increased shocks and crises.

Different interpretations of localization – not all valid. There are at least nine interpretations of "localization", one reason why a conversation about the issue remains very confused. Different interpretations lead to different visions of "*what success looks like"*. Summarized briefly, these are

- *Decentralize decision-making*: making strategic operational and financial decisions closer to the at-risk or affected areas.
- *Nationalize international agency office:* promoting more national staff within the country offices of international agencies, to the point that they are entirely managed by nationals.
- *Multi-nationalization*: The strategy of several INGO federated structures to create more and more national members that are nominally independent but part of the international alliance or federation. It is similar to the global set-up of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. Not only do they have the advantage of being able to rapidly receive financial and other resources from other federation members in case of a crisis, but they can also benefit from the experience and expertise of their international colleagues with public communication, fundraising, policy and advocacy work in their respective countries.
- *Working with partners:* Rather than direct implementation.
- *Working in complementarity with local/national actors**:*** National and international actors alike bring valuable contributions needed to achieve a joint goal and objectives.
- *More extensive engagement with affected populations:* Humanitarian action is about crisis-affected people, not about local organizations. "Localization", therefore, is achieved when international agencies engage directly and actively with these popula-

tions. Reducing the vulnerabilities and strengthening the "resilience" of affected households is the objective, not strengthening the organizational capacities and/or supporting the leadership of national and local actors.

- *Led and managed by affected populations and their own associations:* Crisis-affected people are put in the driving seat, whether in relation to international or local/national assistance actors. This interpretation gives primacy to the Grand Bargain commitment to a "*participation revolution*". It goes beyond "*accountability to affected populations"* or "*communicating with communities*", but fully respects (or restores) agency to crisis-affected people.
- *Locally led:* An unspecified local actor, or an actor in geographical proximity, "leads" an unspecified aspect of the crisis response.
- *Transformation:* An intentional strategy, when a degree of internationalization was justified because local capacities were indeed overwhelmed, to reverse roles again with international actors, revert to a reinforcing role, also invest in a stronger collective and national capacity to handle future crises.

Not all economic or political economy interpretations are in line with the spirit and intent of the Grand Bargain. From an economic interpretation point of view, the "*decentralization*", *"nationalization*", "*extensive engagement with affected* populations" and "*led and managed by local populations"* interpretations make at most a marginal difference to the cost of a strongly internationalized response, and the humanitarian financing gap. Pursuing "resilience" only at the level of "households" and "communities" is not, however, a viable strategy. The responses to major humanitarian crises require a combination of governmental, para-statal and non-governmental capacities, organized individually and collectively. If there are no strong, collective national capacities, the next crisis will require again an expensive international mobilization. In a one-off and short-term perspective, this may be cost effective and offer value for money; in scenarios of protracted or repeat crises, it does not. (see GMI, 2019)

Neither do the above interpretations address the structural dominance-subordination relationship between international and national actors, from a political economy point of view, with the possible exception of "*led and managed by local populations"*. Although there are some global experiences with the latter approach, by and large, the international relief sector is structurally unable to be responsive, at scale, to the agency and capacities of crisis-affected populations.

"Complementarity", "*working with partners"* and "*locally led"* are all vague expressions, silent about the power dynamics. The word "*partner*" is habitually abused to describe also collaborations in which local and national agencies are instrumentalized, and "*kept on a tight financial leash*" (as one interviewee put it), unable to develop into sustainable organizations that can attract and retain quality resources. "*Complementarity*" sounds highly appropriate, were it not that research, globally, has shown that the "valuation" of respective capacities is controlled by international agencies, who may also interpret it as looking for who else can "complement" them, rather than how they can "complement" local and national actors. (Barbelet, 2019)

"*Multinationalization"* can be a strategy that reduces costs in a more structural manner while maintaining capacities. Like "nationalization" of international agency country offices, "multinationalization" is contested, however, by local and national CSOs that are not and do not want to be part of such international alliance. (For a strong expression of this, see Open Letter , 2020). It gives the members of an international alliance a strong competitive advantage that may enable them to replace rather than reinforce other local/national CSOs that are not part of

such alliance. In addition, by starting to capture financial resources in the domestic market, they deprive other CSOs of the possibility of reducing their financial dependence on international aid - which further reduces their space for viable existence and development.[2]

From an economic, political economy and "global politics" perspective, the longer-term and strategically more promising interpretation is one of "*transformation*": International agencies come to assist and may, very temporarily, "take over" when local and national capacities are overwhelmed. They intentionally operate in ways that seek to reverse the roles and bring local and national actors back in the driving seat. The strategic goal is not just to alleviate the short-term humanitarian suffering of crisis-affected people, but also to reinforce a national infrastructure of collective capacities to better manage the continuation or recurrence of a crisis. This will reduce the need for a continued or repeated, expensive, internationalization. If the COVID-19 pandemic creates a severe global economic downturn, then a reduction of official development aid among the traditional donors is a possible scenario. How to make the international assistance in Jordan more cost effective and less dependent on international organizational and technical capacities is a question on the doorstep now.

Localization can happen by design or by default.

It happens by default when security, legal or other constraints limit the presence and operational freedom of international aid agencies, so that they start working more with (or through) local and national ones. It also happens by default when international funding decreases and international agencies need to scale down and consider leaving and "*handing over"* to local actors. Localization "*by design"* happens when international relief agencies deliberately seek to support and reinforce local and national actors, as a programmatic or even strategic objective, so that it can reduce its role or even leave, as it knows it eventually will have to. Here, relief agencies collectively engage in legacy planning.

> "What legacy, in terms of more resilient communities and strengthened organizational and inter-agency capacities, will we leave behind?"

V. LOCALIZATION IN JORDAN-OPERATIONAL LEVEL

The following diagram highlights seven dimensions of the relationship between international relief actors and local and national actors, from the perspective of local actors. (For more elaboration see Annex 7) They related to each other, but the quality of the relationship is central. If it is constructive and intentionally evolves towards an equitable collaboration where local actors can be "*decision-making partners"* rather than just "*sub-contractors"* or "*implementing partners"*, much of the rest becomes easier. As funds are being raised for the alleged benefit of affected populations, a genuine say by the latter, about what is being done for their benefit, is also key, and often a challenge for international and local/national actors alike. The research dealt with all dimensions but focused especially on the ones dealing with relationship, funding and capacities, which are closely interconnected.

2 The phenomenon described here can already be seen in, e.g., India

RELATIONSHIP QUALITY	PARTICIPATION REVOLUTION	FUNDING & FINANCING	CAPACITY	COORDNATION MECHANISMS	VISIBILITY	POLICY
• respectful and equitable • reciprocal transparency and accountability	• deeper participation of at-risk & affected populations	• better quality • greater quantity	• sustainable organizations and collaborative capacities • stop undermining capacities	• national actors greater presence and influence	• roles, results and innovations by national actors are visible and reported on	• national actors have greater presence and influence in international policy debates

1. The quality of relationship

FINDING: "Decision-making partners", a rare species. The most common terms used by international actors to describe the relationship with local and national Jordanian CSOs are: "*sub-grantees"*, "*sub-contractors*", "*implementing partners"*, and *"strategic partners"*. These terms express different qualities of relationship. The first three, which make up the majority, clearly reflect an unequal relationship. The Jordanian agency is largely an instrument to implement an intervention or project designed and controlled by international actors. An "implementing partner" may have a bit more say, perhaps in the selection of participants or beneficiaries, or decisions about schedules and logistical arrangements. The partnership is not grounded in a broader, shared objective, is bound by the project time frame and does not exist if there is no money transfer.

FINDING: Those with deepest context knowledge receive least resources. Several interviewees from international agencies underscored the value of more CBO-type, local, organizations, in terms of their exceptional knowledge and understanding of local communities, its leaders and influencers, its vulnerable families and individuals. Yet, international agencies generally prefer to work with national CSOs as they have the capacity to meet their due diligence and compliance requirements. In short, those with greatest insight do not have the organizational forms and procedures that international actors are comfortable with and require, and therefore receive least resources.

FINDING: Stronger Jordanian agencies are in a better position to negotiate terms.
Next to the so-called "Royal NGOs", there is now a small number of other, larger, stronger and solid CSOs. That makes them attractive "partners" for international agencies and also puts them in a better position to negotiate the terms of collaboration. The ability, or simply the courage, to say, "well perhaps, but not on these terms" can be leveraged to insist on a more equitable partnership, with proper sharing of benefits, risks, resources and capacities.

> " Some Jordanian organizations have flourished and have confidence and voice. Now more international organizations want to work with them in a more equitable partnership. International organizations can learn from them to enrich their intervention designs."
>
> National staff of international agency

Smaller and more vulnerable organizations are more reluctant to do so, as they fear losing the funding opportunity. "*Don't rock the boat*" anxieties are an indicator of an unequal power relationship – not a "*partnership*".

FINDING: Higher "status" confers greater credibility. The international aid sector tends to create an informal yet very observable class system. In it, CBOs are at the bottom of the status pyramid, followed by local/national NGOs; a qualitative step up the ladder is becoming a national, then an international staff from an INGO. Status is further enhanced by joining a UN agency. The highest position of power (if not necessarily of material benefits) is to be staff of a bilateral or multilateral donor administration. The following quote illustrates how status in the aid system confers credibility.

> When I as working with a local organization and made points at coordination meetings, I did not feel listened to; now that I work for an INGO and I contribute in its name, it is taken into consideration. With the agency name of an international organization you have a voice and influence. It is a sad reality that the same view is heard more when I represent an INGO than when I speak from a national organization. This happens at the level of government as well."
>
> National INGO staff

Similar experiences are reported from other countries, which demonstrates it to be a structural issue, not Jordan-specific. A national staff member of an international agency who set up her or his own national CSO is likely to experience a decline in credibility, simply because of status reduction.[3]

FINDING: National staff attitudes count. Two perspectives were heard on attitudes and behaviors of Jordanian "national" staff of international agencies towards local/national CSO actors. Some Jordanian national staff members see themselves as very well placed to play the role of connector. Some mentioned that local/national actors may prefer to approach and speak with them, not only because of the language but also because they understand Jordanian society and where Jordanian actors come from. They are also conscious that they want this big international presence to leave a lasting positive legacy in Jordan. Other interviewees signaled that some Jordanian staff of international agencies can also treat local/national actors with disrespect.

FINDING: Staff turnover on all sides hampers relationship building. Local and national actors find it difficult to develop stronger relations when there is significant turnover among expatriates – who often hold senior decision-making power or, even if not so high ranking and experienced, have the easier ear of those. (Reem, 2020). There is however also turnover of staff among Jordanian CSOs.

FINDING: Local and national CSOs do not have a uniform view about what relationship they want with international actors. This is normal, as they have different organizational strengths and limitations, and therefore different priorities and needs for support and reinforcement, if at all. There is however broad consensus that being used instrumentally as a "sub-contractor" or a mere "implementing partner" of someone else's agenda and program, does not heightens their status in a meaningful manner.

3 " When I was coordinator in (INGO), I could talk. I was co-led of the logistics cluster. Now as the coordinator for (a national NGO), I cannot talk anymore. The fact of going from an INGO to a national NGO, do I lose my capacities"? Quoted in Barbelet, V. et alii, 2019

FINDING: A trust problem also in Jordan. Lack of trust is the key factor that, globally, emerges in conversations, research and tentative processes for more effective localization. As long as there is low trust, other key components of a more collaborative and consultative configuration between international and local/national actors will be hampered: a fairer sharing of financial resources, effective capacity sharing, a more meaningful participation of local and national actors in coordination mechanisms, the interpretation of generic global policies and standards into ones that are fit for the Jordanian context, and visibility for the contributions of each.

The research confirmed that, in Jordan as well, trust or rather the lack thereof is a significant issue. Various interviewees, from different sides, noted that there used to be quite some tension between international aid agencies and Jordanian actors, certainly Jordanian CSOs. Respondents from international agencies recalled instances when Jordanian actors appeared to have acted with unnecessary pride, or apparently driven only by economic interests ("*what can I get out of this?")*. Jordanian actors, on the other hand, refer to unwelcome attitudes of assumed superiority among internationals but occasionally also national staff of international agencies.

> "She was a young and, frankly speaking, not very experienced, expatriate employee at one of our international partners'. One day, she sat in on one of our senior management meetings and told us we had to conduct it in English, for her convenience."
>
> Director of a national CSO

FINDING: Unhelpful negative narratives. The conversations with staff of international agencies (including at times Jordanian national staff) showed the existence, in Jordan as well, of a more globally prevalent negative narrative about local/national actors. It can be summarized as "*deficit thinking"*, in which the perceived weaknesses, shortcomings and gaps of "the other" are constantly emphasized. In such narrative, local and national actors, especially non-governmental ones, are per definition a "high risk" of fraud and corruption, driven by economic interests, unable or unwilling to act with impartiality and neutrality, organizationally weak and unable to meet international standards. This stands in sharp contract with a very positive image and narrative of international aid actors about themselves: they are professional, apply international standards, are well organized, occupy the moral high ground, deliver results fast and at scale, and overwhelmingly report success stories.

Critical (self-) awareness and examination of the formal and informal discourses about "*us*" and *"them"* is required. Negative narratives about local and national capacities, globally and in Jordan, are not innocent: they serve to justify the establishment and continuation of relationships of dominance and subordination. Is this an attitude of "*shared humanity"* and the role of someone who has come to "*assis*t" and claims to be a "*partner*"? Applied to other social groups, such generalizing negative portrayal would be named for what it is: "*prejudice*". Prejudiced discourses may exist on all sides: each has the responsibility to correct its own. That can be most difficult however, for those who have power and privilege.

Discussing systemic prejudice in the relief sector may become easier now that the "Black Lives Matter" resurgence, with its spotlight on racism, is also affecting the international aid sector. Organizations like Save the Children (Save the Children UK, 2020) and MSF (Guardian, 2020) have already acknowledged that racially motivated prejudice exists within their institutions as well.

Criticism of local and national CBOs and CSOs: an invitation to reflection

Is it fair to criticize Jordanian CBOs and CSOs for not having "capacities", without taking into account that:

- Government legislative and political restrictions limit their roles, growth and access to domestic and international funding?
- International "partners" often only provide them with direct project implementation costs, denying them core costs/ICR/management fee (while insisting on the same for themselves) and at times unilaterally reduce the salaries of the local CSO's staff or deny their equipment requests (computers, printer, motorcycles, etc.) for a joint project?
- By offering far higher salaries and benefits, they pull away the most experienced and "trained" staff of local/national CSOs?
- The goalposts keep shifting, as internationals (not involved in operational work) develop new standards, guidelines, etc., and donors add more compliance requirements that even well-resourced INGOs and UN agencies struggle to meet, even though they can afford dedicated staff?
- Even if local/national CSOs have become more capable and sophisticated, there is no "graduation" and fundamental change of roles – they remain the junior partner under the tutelage of the international agency?

Is it fair to criticize Jordanian CBOs and CSOs for running from project to project, rather than pursuing their strategy, without taking into account that:

- By denying them a reliable prospect of longer-term financing, pushing their costs down and encouraging them to compete with each other to the point that they may undersell themselves, international assistance actors contribute to the CSOs' constant struggling for survival? Is it like criticizing a day-laborer for not having a career plan?
- INGOs have also become more dependent on institutional grants and work more in tandem with the donors?

Is it fair to criticize Jordanian CSOs and CBOS for struggling, at times, to adhere to core humanitarian principles without taking into account that:

- Internationals have contradictory demands: If they are well connected to certain social groups and communities, they are challenged for being partial; if they are not connected to certain social groups and communities, they may be challenged for not being sufficiently accountable to their "beneficiaries", or for lacking "legitimacy" in the absence of a "constituency"?
- There is a heavy reliance on institutional funding from bilateral and multilaterals who have their own regional and country strategies, and focus areas of interest, and that many international aid agencies are not "independent"?

Is it fair to portray Jordanian CBOs and CSOs as a "high risk" of fraud and corruption, or being driven by economic self-interest without taking into account that:

- International aid agencies incur huge costs for their global office and management infrastructure?
- There is cost for international staff coming for relatively short-term contracts and needing housing, flights, "rest and relaxation", and other services and benefits?
- There is cost involved for repeat international conferences on the same topic or on global summits at which commitments are made that subsequently are hardly implemented?

- There may be an occurrence of fraud and corruption; sexual harassment and abuse; bullying and intimidation etc., in INGOs and UN agencies as well?[4]
- Despite their professionalism, international aid agencies also risk behaving like "corporates" whose business interests seem the top priority?

It is fair to criticize Jordanian CBOs and CSOs for focusing on service delivery and not on policy and advocacy, without taking into account that:

- Policy and advocacy work requires quite a bit of flexible and longer-term funding in order to be able to attract and retain capable staff and respond to the, at times, unpredictable policy agendas and policy-making processes – a quality of funding they are generally denied?
- In Jordan, "policy" work can be constrained by the government's interpretation of CSO legislation that puts restrictions on CSOs engaging in "political" or "religious" activities, without defining this more clearly.
- International agencies do not brief Jordanian counterparts and "partners" about the policy commitments they have made on, e.g., in the Grand Bargain or C4C, even though this has implications for the latter?
- International agencies feel discomfort and may become defensive when local CSOs conduct advocacy work that questions the dominance and control by international aid agencies?

Is it fair to criticize Jordanian CBOs and CSOs for not seeing themselves as "civil society" with a role to play, on behalf of citizens, towards the state and the private sector, without taking into account that:

- International relief agencies undermine civil society development by turning them into service deliverers and mere "implementing" rather than "decision-making partners"?
- The self-confidence of local CSOs may be undermined by a constantly negative narrative that they have no capacities, are a high risk, are not sufficiently organized, etc.?
- Many INGOs are often themselves not acting as a "civil society" actor in their own home countries, engaging with the key socio-economic and governance issues there?

Is it fair to criticize Jordanian CBOs and CSOs about their not being collectively organized, while applying changing goalposts as:

- When there is no platform or forum of local/national CSOs, they get criticized.
- When there is one, they get criticized for not being "inclusive" and "representative".
- When they have a large membership, most of which is passive (for various reasons), they will be criticized for that?

Many coordination forums, working groups, task forces, advisory and decision-making bodies that deal with matters that directly affect local and national actors fail to include these local or national or have them only as a minority?

What has happened that internationals who come to assist local and national actors in a time of crisis perceive or portray them so negatively and as a "risk"?

4 At the time of this research, large-scale fraud and sex-for-jobs had been discovered among INGOs and UN agencies in the Democratic Republic of Congo, which is under further investigation.

FAITH-BASED HUMANITARIAN ACTION AND LOCALIZATION

Faith-based or faith-inspired organizations, globally, have become very prominent actors in humanitarian action. The importance of funding and financing from Islamic sources, be it private individuals or wealthy Islamic states and foundations is also increasingly recognized and attractive, even to secular agencies. The literature on the role of faith in humanitarian crisis management is rapidly expanding, and now also includes more reflections on references to localization.

A question, that this research could not systematically explore, is whether the collaborative relationships between international and local/national faith-based or faith-inspired organizations are different from those between secular ones or with a secular international organization.

There are differences in the modus operandi of different faith-inspired international agencies. For some, direct implementation is the primary approach, for others it is working with partners. Some, usually part of global alliances, such as CARITAS or the ACT Alliance, tend to "partner" with national and local members of that alliance, although such choices are not always the rule. Anecdotal evidence from interviews suggests that "direct implementers" are not all comfortable with the localization commitments. Also that collaborating within an alliance does not automatically lead to equitable and strategic partnerships. Short term, instrumentalizing, project-based collaborations can and do occur. Local and national alliance members do not find it easy to accept and adjust to the heavy administrative requirements, when in previous decades they might have received quite substantial funding with only light reporting and some photos expected in return.

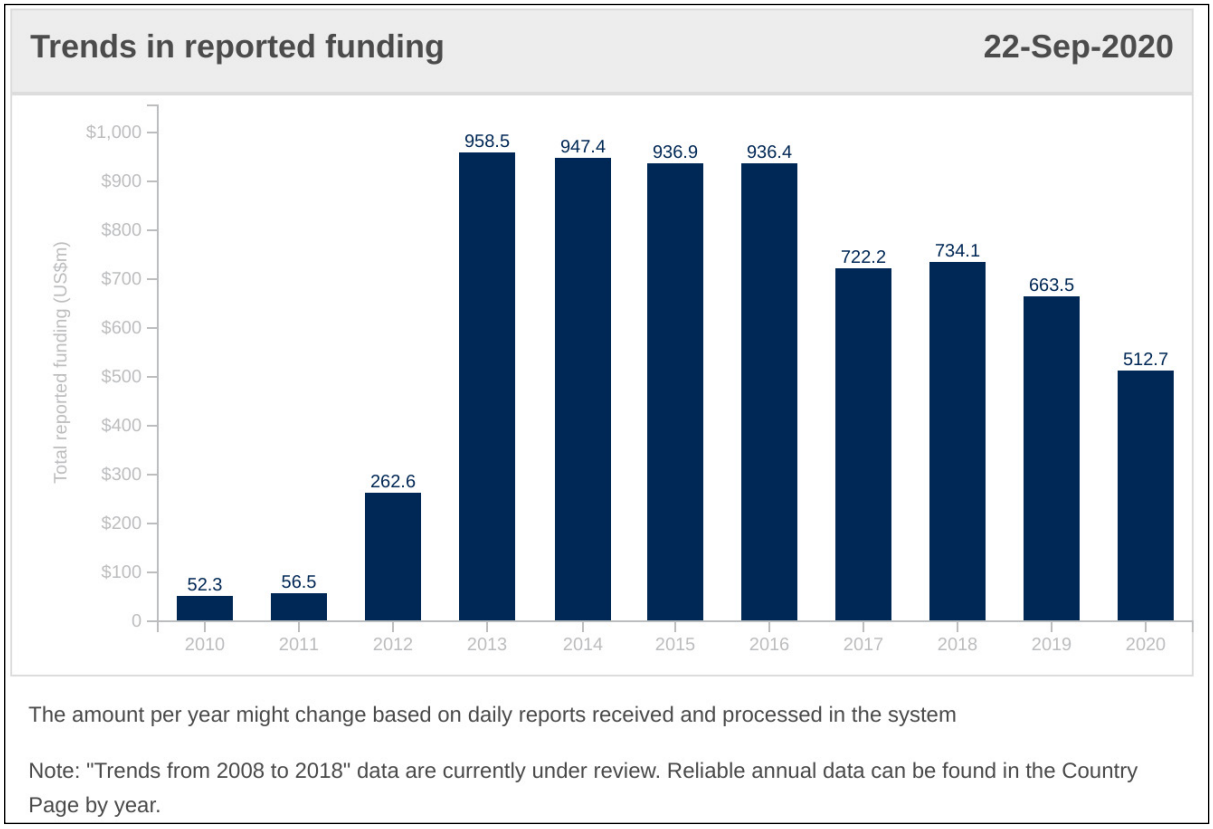
For one, larger, Jordanian Islamic CSO, the "Islamic identity" is not a distinctive marker on its programmes and partnerships. As Islam embraces and promotes universal values, including humanitarian ones, it does not introduce anything specific. More important to them was that the funding and grants, including from international sources, be handled in accordance with the "m*urabaha*" principles of Islamic finance. They were able to discuss this extensively with their UN partner, and find an acceptable formula.

One relevant study (commissioned by World Vision, Islamic Relief, Tearfund and Lutheran World Federation) on the interaction between faith-inspired organizations in Irbid, in 2014 or 2015, is worth summarising. (El Nakib & Ager, 2015). If found that local faith-influenced organizations had often played very important roles in providing support to incoming refugees and vulnerable individuals and households in the host-community. Obligations of charitable giving, zakat in the first place, but also Sadaqa, provided resources. Their premises were freely available for this social work, and their deep knowledge of local communities meant that they might not have to conduct expensive and time-consuming surveys to identify "the most vulnerable". At the same time, not all of them were formally registered nor did they necessarily keep detailed accounts. Most of them were not used to writing sophisticated proposals and reports, certainly not in English. International agencies tended to feel that they were lacking in professionalism and transparency (on finance but also selection of beneficiaries), and questioned their adherence to humanitarian principles, as they do not separate religious from social work. Some were kept under close watch by the government.

The interactions evolved along differentiated paths. Some such local faith-based associations welcomed the opportunity to learn from international aid agencies. Others stepped away from collaborating with them. Different factors could influence that distancing: a discomfort with the Western approach in which religion is limited to the private sphere; frustration with being confronted repeatedly with an attitude of skepticism and distrust; the realization that they incur the anger of a local community when an international partner unilaterally changes or prematurely stops a project, etc. There had been concerns when rumors circulated that some Christian organizations had been involved in proselytizing. Some or more of them also had access to alternative funding (e.g., from the Gulf states) that did not call their integrity and modus operandi into question, as Western aid agencies tended to do. Some had reservations about a broader Western culture of secularism and modernization being imported also via humanitarian aid. It should not automatically be assumed that this are signals of of conservative paternalism. Many offered workshops and seminars addressing women's rights in Islam, using a language more acceptable to their audiences than Western secular gender-rights discourses.

2. Funding: access, quantity and quality

Humanitarian funding to Jordan, according to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) Financial Tracking Service (FTS), reduced from US$959 million in 2013 to US$679 million in 2018. Between 2013 and 2016 it was consistently above US$900 million (DI and NRC, 2019). Below are the latest trends in reported funding from the FTS.



The above figures must to be treated with caution because it is well known that not all funding is reported through the FTS. The way multi-year funding is reported is sometimes ambiguous as it is a protracted crisis, sometimes, the humanitarian and development is reported together.

One of the biggest challenges is that there is no transparent detailed reporting on the funding going to local and national organisations. On the FTS system it is reported that only five national organizations had received funding in 2019, there is no reporting on how much funding has been passed to other local organizations and CBOs by INGO and the UN.

By signing up to the Grand Bargain (and the C4C) international relief agencies, donors, UN, Red Cross and Red Crescent and selected INGOs commit to providing more funding to local and national actors and reduce transaction costs. Belatedly, recognition has also dawned that the quality of funding is as important for local and national actors as the quantity. (Canada, UNICEF, ICRC et alii, 2020) Quality of funding refers to the ability to cover core costs, a degree of flexible funding, longer-term or more predictable funding, reporting and disbursement cycles that avoid significant cash flow interruptions, etc. No organization can function, attract and retain capable people, develop its systems and procedures, and become sustainable, without a core of quality funding. Globally, international organizations negotiate and obtain such, yet often deny the same to local and national actors who are offered little more than direct project

implementation costs. Intentional or not, that means treating them as cheap and possibly casual labor. Under such regime, investing in "capacity building" is unlikely to bring value for money, as it may be pouring water in a bucket not always solid enough to hold it.

FINDING: Reports and interviews confirm that there are significant barriers for Jordanian CSOs (other than the Royal NGOs) to access quantity and quality of international funding. Overwhelmingly, the available funding goes to international agencies. In "passing on" funding, a distinction needs to be made between sub-grants that go "through" and "to" local organizations. "Interviewees from international NGOs working in close partnership with national NGOs clearly pointed out the need for long-term funding and technical assistance so their national partners can sustainably localise the response. Perhaps unsurprisingly, short-term funding to national and local actors that is often tightly earmarked to specific deliverables does not allow for investments in administrative capabilities and staff capacity" (Bruschini-Chaumet, et al., 2019).

> "We do not give core funding to local partners. They are asked to complement funding if there are any gaps".
> INGO international staff

A grant to a local agency that is limited to direct project costs is little more than money spent, under full control of the international agency, "through" a local partner – possibly at cheaper cost. If core costs of the local agency are not fully covered, and no part of the grant is flexible, the cash flow does not contribute to building a sustainable organization or developing its capacities. Meanwhile, international agencies negotiate a management fee/ICR/NICRA precisely for that purpose. Some share part of it (some INGOs, like CARITAS Internationalis, have now developed an institutional policy in that regard, (CARITAS Internationalis, no date), others do not.

Various factors contribute to this situation. Some are structural and beyond the control of staff in Jordan, even beyond that of staff of donor administrations. Others, however, are within the spheres of control or influence, and improvements are definitely possible.

FINDING: In many other countries, south-central Somalia being one example, pooled funds are more accessible to local and national CSOs and help them deal with concerns about fiduciary risk and capacity limitations. They also offer the same management fee to local/national actors as to INGOs. The JHF, however, is comparatively late and slow in making itself more accessible.

FINDING: Staff of bilateral or multilateral donor administrations operate under certain policy and procedural constraints they cannot change themselves. Within those, they have however areas of influence and space for creativity that is not made full use of. They also fail to exercise oversight over the terms regulating grant sharing between the UN agencies and INGOs they fund, and their respective Jordanian "partners". Largely beyond the control and influence of staff of donor administrations are fixed allocation choices and the compliance tax.

The Jordan Humanitarian Fund

The JHF was already open in principle to local actors, but since the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) it is more explicit and focused on localization. Most INGOs who receive funding from the JHF implement directly. If a local organization collaborates closely with an INGO receiving a grant from the JHF, it is encouraged to register with the JHF. It is also invited to be part of the coordination groups. Once it is actively taking part in coordination groups for six months, and passes a due diligence process, it can apply for funding. The JHF currently allocates some 30% of funding to local organizations. Funding remains dependent on Jordanian CSOs' being well placed and organizationally equipped for specific actions.

Over time, there has been a slow increase in the number of local organizations. Now there are about 20 registered with the JHF, 12-15 of whom have been able to get funding. In the words of a staff member: "*We have taken baby steps.*"

Local actors now are present in all processes. They are part of the governance advisory board, which sets the parameters and decides on strategy, and of the technical review committee, which reviews proposals. The fund has a capacity-building element and an accompaniment process for local actors. JHF coaches them through the process, from developing the proposals to formulating priorities. JHF representatives have regular one-on-one meetings on applications, reporting, formulation of budget, etc.

Fixed policy choices: Various donors have fixed allocation policies, which may mean that a percentage of their funding automatically goes to the UN (which can be as much as 30%). That remains the case even if, in practice, these UN agencies will rely on INGOs and Jordanian agencies to do the actual work. Some, though not all, also have a fixed policy choice to allocate part of their budget to Western INGOs, and cannot provide funding, at least not humanitarian funding, directly to local/national actors.

The compliance tax: The increasing drive to avoid all risk, particularly fiduciary and reputational, because of serious incidents among national and international agencies alike, has massively increased the cost of control and compliance in the last decade. The true cost of this "compliance tax" does not show up in individual accounts and would require a broader economic analysis of different delivery chains. Economically, it may not turn out to be cost effective, as a way of managing reputational risks, perhaps, as long as the media and general public in donor countries do not focus on the cost of compliance.
There are areas where donors have more leeway or can find ways to reduce and overcome the obstacles. Application processes, pressures to spend, multi-year funding and nexus approaches are such areas.

Complex proposal and application procedures and fixed deadlines Donors interviewed, who, in principle, can directly fund Jordanian CSOs find that, in practice, few are able to handle the complex proposal and application processes. Even if they do, and have the operational experience and capacities, they may get disqualified because they do not have in place all the organizational policies that donors want to see nowadays. Smaller CSOs and CBOs are struggling with this and find themselves left out in the funding allocations. In addition, there have been reported case when Jordanian CSOs presented solid proposals but lost out on funding when the relevant government authority took too long to approve the project, making them miss the donor

deadlines. Some donors lack the procedures needed to deal with this type of administrative delays.

Pressure to spend: Some Jordanian interviewees with long experience in social activism and aid sector report changes, over time, in donor attitudes. "*Participation*" and "*participatory approaches"* were in vogue in the 1990s, and de facto enabled local or national ownership. In the almost one decade between 2003 and 2011, the international aid community, notably donors, invested a lot in reflections on aid effectiveness. National ownership and leadership were high on the agenda and found expression in the Busan Partnership for Development Cooperation. Yet, the perception is that international donors have shifted back to their old modalities. The pressure to spend and the urgency to "deliver" quick "results" at scale are seen to override other commitments and agreements. "Are we meeting the spending targets" is a more important management concern than "has this been designed or decided with meaningful participation" and "is this likely to have deeper and more lasting impact"?

Interviewees in a 2015 assessment of the state of civil society in Jordan criticized international donors for a lack of strategic approach to strengthening the sector, and project- and activity-centered programming. They *"…consistently expressed criticism of donor engagement, citing lack of a strategic approach to supporting the sector and programming that is overwhelmingly project- and activity-centered, as opposed to outcome driven. Civil society analysts were particularly critical of what they viewed as donors' emphasis on merely "moving money out of the door" – doling out grants and technical assistance with little thought given to impact or a shared understanding of what success in funding the sector might look like. One could repeatedly hear that donors "just want to check the box", "spend their civil society budget", "satisfy their own reporting requirements" and use funding to signal their support for particular issues (including some that backfire in the Jordanian context), but seem indifferent as to whether their civil society programming is actually making a difference on the ground.*" (Denoeux & Toukan, 2016)

Donors have a responsibility and opportunity to do more to address this:

- In the various "high-level" processes on aid effectiveness, from Rome in 2003 to Busan in 2011, they committed to reducing the administrative burden, in the first place on governments receiving development aid. The Grand Bargain also contains explicit commitments to more aid and less paperwork (notably commitment 9, but also commitments 7 and 8, and details in commitment 2 related to Localization: "*Understand better and work to remove or reduce barriers that prevent organizations and donors from partnering with local and national responders in order to lessen their administrative burden."*
- Jordanian CSOs may fully accept the responsibility for good stewardship of other people's money, but are faced with two dilemmas they cannot overcome alone:
    - They cannot develop the financial, and monitoring and reporting systems needed to meet the requirements without more quality financing. Even if some of their staff get trained, they will lose them to other agencies who offer higher salaries, a bigger title or more job security. The objective is for capacities gained to also be retained.
    - They may have decent systems in place, but the size of the grant offered is not worth the administrative burden.
- Accept proposals in Arabic. Writing sharp proposals is an advanced skill, but significantly more challenging if it must be done in a foreign language.

- Focus support and accompaniment not on meeting the donor formats, but on conceptualizing what a relevant and strategically smart intervention in a certain context and for a certain issue would be. The quality of the idea remains more important than the writing skill and mastery of formats.
- Do not overstate the importance of internal organizational policies, e.g., codes of conduct, addressing fraud, corruption, PSEAH, whistleblowers, security (with "racism" to be added now that the Black Lives Matter movement has gained global resonance, including in the aid sector). In most instances where misconduct happened and still happens, the policies and procedures are in place. The issue is whether they are followed, which is more a matter of organizational culture and active, collective, responsibility. Audits of organizational policies do not substitute for audits of organizational practices.
- Review the value-for-money equation. The value-for-money appreciation may change when recurrent expenditures, made with successive short-term perspectives, are considered from a medium-term perspective rather than from an investment perspective. At system level, compare the cost of maintaining five capable mid-sized INGOs over a period of seven years to that of five mid-sized Jordanian organizations invested in to reach a similar level of capabilities. (See GMI, 2019)
- Engage more actively with the relevant Jordanian authorities around the processing of proposals, if indeed these correspond to identified needs. It is in everybody's interest to allow donors to have the full choice of good proposals.
- Learn from experiments elsewhere around the world with, e.g., tiered approaches, where lesser requirements are demanded for access to small grants, and for more larger sizes of grants, or from the Humanitarian Grant Facility tested by Oxfam in Bangladesh and Uganda, that takes a multi-actor approach per district, and directly connects capacity support with access to funding. (Oxfam NOVIB, 2018)

Multi-year **funding:** Commitment 7 of the Grand Bargain is for "*increased, collaborative, humanitarian multi-year planning and funding"*. Intermediary agencies, like the UN and INGOs, argue that short-term funding is one factor preventing them from entering into more strategic partnerships.

Already in 2017 Oxfam-commissioned research in Lebanon and Jordan (conducted by the Phenix Centre), which concluded that aid effectiveness would increase, among other factors, with a longer-term perspective, greater alignment with national strategies, and extensive consultation with affected populations and civil society. (Joint Agency Briefing Note, 2017)

In 2019, Development Initiatives conducted a study on the implementation and perceived benefits of multi-year funding in Lebanon and Jordan. Some donors, like Canada, Australia, the German Federal Foreign Office and DFID supported the regional Syria response or specific responses in Jordan (and Lebanon) with multi-year humanitarian funding. The proportion of multi-year humanitarian funding for Jordan and Lebanon increased from 2016 to 2017, possibly because of the World Humanitarian Summit momentum, but decreased between 2017-2018 (Rieger, 2019). It is not certain, then, that it will become a more common practice. (For a recently published catalogue of quality funding practices see FAO, DI and NRC, 2020)

Multi-year funding in Jordan and Lebanon. Main findings of a 2019 study

There is no common understanding among donors: For some, "multi-year funding" means 'longer than 12 months, for others "at least three years".

Potential benefits of multi-year funding

- Reduced administrative burden by reducing the investment in fundraising and contract negotiations. In Jordan, given the, at times, very lengthy approval processes of the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, multi-year funding has additional time and cost-efficiency gains.
- Improved staff retention, and more time and opportunity to invest in organizational capacity strengthening.
- Potential for a longer start-up phase, with more investment in context and stakeholder analysis, relationship and building trust, and better baselines. More opportunity for participatory approaches.
- More ability to monitor and evaluate longitudinal outcome indicators.
- More opportunity to work on structural factors of vulnerability/marginalization, and more sustained resilience or durable solutions.

The potential efficiency and effectiveness gains of multi-year funding do not come automatic. They can be significantly reduced by:

- Continued high burden of reporting requirements. The reporting burden remains particularly affected by the different requirements from donors.
- A multi-year timeframe that de facto becomes annual, when the continuation every year is highly conditional (and therefore uncertain) on reported performance for the previous year
- Heavily earmarked funding, eliminating the possibility of adaptive programming based on changing circumstances and priorities, and learning from the program.

In other words, the potential gains in cost-effectiveness from Grand Bargain commitment 7, can be partially or wholly undone by lack of progress on commitment 8 (reduce earmarking) and commitment 9 (harmonize and simplify reporting requirements).

The 2019 study makes some noteworthy observations:

"*Out of all the interviewed public donors, only one required its implementing partners to transfer the terms from the initial grant to all related sub-grants. Some other donors that provided MYHF in turn encouraged their implementing partners to also provide multi-year sub-grants, but they did not monitor whether this was the case. The remaining donors left the decision on which terms to apply to sub-grants entirely up to the implementing partner*" (Canada, DI and NRC, 2019,).

"There was a variation across NGOs on whether and how multi-year sub grants are provided. Partnership-based organisations carefully screen their local and national partners and tend to fund their long-term cooperation by default. Other international NGOs referenced the three preconditions above as limiting their ability to provide long-term funding to downstream partners, while recognising that more could be done to enable this." (Canada, DI and NRC, 2019).

The humanitarian and development nexus in Jordan

Commitment 10 of the Grand Bargain envisages enhanced engagement between humanitarian and development actors. The Workstream in this commitment has since be dissolved, because the conclusion was reached that such "nexus" approach needs to be applied to all nine other commitments. The Grand Bargain is more specific about what this must imply in practice.

- ✓ Use existing resources and capabilities better to shrink humanitarian needs over the long term, with the view to contributing to the outcomes of the Sustainable Development Goals. Significantly increase prevention, mitigation and preparedness for early action to anticipate and secure resources for recovery. This will need to be the focus not only of aid organizations and donors, but also of national governments at all levels, civil society, and the private sector.
- ✓ Invest in durable solutions for refugees, internally displaced people and sustainable support to migrants, returnees and host/receiving communities, as well as for other situations of recurring vulnerabilities.
- ✓ Increase social protection programs and strengthen national and local systems and coping mechanisms in order to build resilience in fragile contexts.
- ✓ Perform joint multi-hazard risk and vulnerability analysis, and multi-year planning, where feasible and relevant, with national, regional and local coordination, in order to achieve a shared vision for outcomes. Such a shared vision for outcomes will be developed on the basis of shared risk analysis among humanitarian, development, stabilization and peace-building communities.

FINDING: Unresolved disconnects. The research suggests that the question of if and how humanitarian and development aid can be connected remains unresolved within donor administrations, even when both components may be handled by the same teams in Jordan. Some appear to accept this as a given and continue working with a "humanitarian" perspective and funding approach long after the acute emergency has turned into a protracted crisis. Other donor administration staff recognize it as a donor-problem that is the donor agencies' duty to resolve.

Some donor staff see that a transition from "relief" to "development" had started in Jordan ("*we are in the nexus phase"*), but they also perceive a "*missing link"* and some expressed fear that the COVID-19 crisis will create a new "emergency" mindset. The feeling is that there is still too much "humanitarian" funding and focus; more investment is needed to tackle structural issues that are required if Jordan is to remain a place and example of stability in a turbulent region.

Challenges are posed not simply by different procedures for humanitarian and development aid. Perhaps more important is the difference in mindsets, perspectives and approaches. The table below expresses this, in a rather stark form for the sake of argument.

The humanitarian way	The development/governance/ peacebuilding way
• Deals with symptoms, consequences of structural problems • Short-term perspective • High impatience • High pressure to spend • Narrow project-focus • Output/delivery oriented • Technical considerations • Unit of action is the household • Focus on what is not there: needs, weaknesses, gaps • Negative image of local/national CBOs and NGOs • Use local/national CBOs and NGOs as contractor/service provider/implementing partner • Encourage competition among local/ national actors • Concerned about "humanitarian access" from their own perspective • Depoliticize action on basis of "neutrality"; uncomfortable with activism and social movements/mobilization	• Deal with structural problems • Longer-term, sector and systems perspective • Contextual socio-cultural, institutional, political, as well as technical considerations • Program approach/with advocacy/policy work • More patient • Comparative lesser pressure to spend • (Collective) outcomes focus • Unit of action is the interface between people/citizens, government institutions and non-governmental actors, possibly also private sector • Focus on potential and strengths • Civil society has role to play • Work with civil society actors as genuine partners • Encourage within and cross-sectoral collaboration • Concerned about space for civil society • Recognition that societal development is "political" • More comfortable with activism and social movements/mobilization

As the following quotes show, some donors are critically reflecting on this. More decisive and collective shifts are still needed, though.

"*Humanitarian funds are to deliver, not to talk to one another."*

"*We created the disruption in the normal evolution of civil society in Jordan. We came seven years ago because of the Syrian refugee crisis and wanted service providers. We used Jordan civil society for our own purposes. We overwhelmed existing civil society and stimulated the creation of fake civil society organizations. Civil society should not only be delivering services, it should be involved in policy work*."

"*We as donors are not yet eager to reflect and change; we should stop and think differently. Instead we continue with business as usual*."

"*Donors are not accountable to the Jordanian people and the Syrians on Jordanian soil*."

Two points worth noting here: Nexus-work requires also development donors to move into situations with higher degree of instability and uncertainty, and not all humanitarian funding

can be dedicated to the pursuit of development outcomes. Emergency response requirements will not go away. (Rieger, 2019).

In Jordan, a more strategic "nexus perspective" could lead to the following type of questions:

- How do we support Jordanian actors, at policy and practice level, to turn mixed migration and refugees into an opportunity, instead of a burden?
- How can the humanitarian assistance in Jordan also contribute to Jordan's efforts and strategy to reach the Sustainable Development Goals?
- How do we support and reinforce the collective and collaborative capacities of Jordanian governmental and non-governmental actors, and of the private sector, to manage the current and future shocks and challenges, thereby improving the overall cost effectiveness of the available international aid?

This obviously requires also an active and strategic involvement of different government ministries and institutions, under the strategic coordination of the Ministry of Planning, and international and national cooperation. A nexus perspective also implies recognizing that the COVID-19-induced economic depression likely means impoverishment of larger sections of the population, but cannot be framed and addressed as a "humanitarian crisis"; it will be a "poverty" crisis that risks to significantly reverse development gains. It raises questions about social protection and inclusion, taxation and public expenditure choices, and national public debt management. Humanitarian actors are singularly ill-equipped to deal with this, and international agencies lack the legitimacy that citizens and elected authorities have.

3. Capacity development, capacity convergence and capacity sharing

International relief (and development) actors help individuals develop important organizational capacities and competencies. But their deep knowledge of the societal dynamics of local and national actors, their ability to operate in it and their longer-term perspectives are also relevant capacities, often vital to achieving a common objective in a given context. How are both brought together more effectively? What is left behind, in terms of stronger local and national capacities, when the international actors, by design or by default, reduce their engagement or withdraw altogether?

Any country that can lead the prevention and responses to various challenges has a configuration of individual and collective, governmental and non-governmental organizational capacities that, together, constitute a sort of more or less coherent and coordinated "infrastructure". Individual institutions and organizations need to be sustainable, and able to attract and retain financial and human resources. Equally important are collaborative capacities, within governmental and non-governmental sectors, and among them.

For some international agencies, the "localization" agenda and strategy is an opportunity for another round of building the capacity of local and national actors. Yet "capacity building" has been part of project proposals for decades. Why have not all the previous efforts led to a greater impact, and what will be different now to avoid the ineffectiveness of the past?

> " I have been hearing about capacity development for years now, but I do not see any significant results."
>
> National staff of international bilateral donor

Attention must be paid to the power dynamics of "capacity building". Narratives or discourses not only describe but also create images of "reality". The notion of "capacity building" in the

international humanitarian sector can also be used to establish and maintain a power asymmetry between those who define which capacities are critical and which are not, and those who have them and who reportedly do not. Generally, the capacity to meet donor requirements nowadays tends to be rated higher than that of working effectively and structurally in a particular context. Globally, increasing discomfort is being expressed by local/national actors (and some internationals) about the use of the one-sided "capacity-building" discourse. (e.g., Stephen, 2017) Proposed alternatives are "*capacity convergence"* and "*capacity sharing"*. These start from the assumption that each brings to the collaboration some capacities relevant to the real objective, which is alleviating suffering in a particular context. (See also Barbelet et alii, 2019).[5]

QUESTION: Did and do international agencies undermine Jordanian capacities?

Globally, there are several ways in which international agencies, particularly during a large-scale surge, but also afterwards, undermine local and national capacities. Well-known structural ways in which this happens are: hiring away the best staff from local organizations; driving up the overall cost of operations by causing inflation; eroding volunteering and undermining the self-confidence of local and national actors. "*Stop undermining local capacities"* is an explicit commitment of the Charter 4 Change.

Several interviewees commented on the pull factor of higher salaries and benefits offered by international agencies, which draws away many capable CSOs and CBOs staff members. Anecdotal evidence of inflationary pressures, particularly in Amman, where international aid workers became a desirable market for renting apartments at higher rates, was also heard. Presumably, particularly in the surge period following the large-scale influx of Syrian refugees, the cost of offices, warehouses, rental vehicles and various supplies went up due to the increased demand, with international aid agencies having the resources to pay and local/national ones often struggling to meet higher operating costs. Several CBO and national Jordanian staff of INGO interviewees referred to the decline in volunteering, if no stipend or other modest compensation is offered, which was often an important component of CBO functioning, but also part of their connection to a local constituency.

Today, international aid agencies employ thousands of Jordanians as national staff, including in many responsible positions. In addition, Jordanians are used as consultants and resource persons for a variety of roles, including research, training and mentoring/accompaniment. There does not, therefore, seem to be an acute shortage of Jordanian capacities in terms of experienced, talented and qualified people. Unfortunately, in some organizations, "national" staff may find that they remain structurally subordinate to foreign staff. In that sense, as Farah observers, the humanitarian sector is one in which international economic migrants find the top positions reserved for them, even if they lack many contextually essential skills (e.g., Arabic language). (Farah, 2020)

> "We see young international interns with master's degrees but no experience get promoted over Jordanian staff who may have years of experience. You know, as a Jordanian national staff, that you can only go so far."
>
> INGO national staff

5 GMI, 2020 offers an approach to assessment and equitable appreciation of the diversity of value-contributions that are required to achieve an objective, beyond money.

What would become possible if those human resources were more intentionally and primarily dedicated to supporting and reinforcing the individual Jordanian governmental and non-governmental organizations, and their collaborative capacities, rather than to aiding the performance of international aid agencies?

FINDING: Limited donor and INGO interest in organizational development

According to our interviewees, only some donors are interested in the "organizational capacity development" of Jordanian CSOs. Part of this inevitably implies increasing the financial sustainability of an organization. Diversification of international sources of funding is one option, but probably not a realistic one for organizations that do not already have a solid capacity to handle the burden of diverse formats and procedures. Sharing part of the "management fee" is only fair if the Jordanian organization does a significant part of the work (and ethically inevitable for international agencies that also campaign around fair wages, labor rights, fair trade, etc.). A third avenue is to develop the ability to attract private donations and/or set up an income-generating activity (as social enterprise).

Some donors, like USAID and the European Commission, invested in recent years in Jordanian civil society through multi-year programs. A few INGOs, like ACTED and IM Sweden, are also adopting more of a civil society perspective. (ACTED 2018, IM Sweden, no date) They seem to be a minority among the INGOs.

Theory of change

Social justice organizations face well-funded and well-organized opposition, yet often lack flexible funding or reserves to innovate, learn, take risks and develop their work for the long term. The restrictive funding practices of many foundations contribute to this problem, preventing organizations from investing in strengthening areas that are vital to their impact-strategic vision and clarity, leadership, management systems and financial stability, to name a few.

We believe that funders can do more to help social justice organizations become more durable, more resilient, more effectively networked with each other, and better able to enact real change over time.

Building strong institutions for long-term social change

BUILD is a focused initiative to strengthen select organizations and networks that are central to our overall strategy to reduce inequality. In doing so, we seek to enhance the evidence base about "what works" when it comes to non-profit institutional strengthening. We do this through flexible grant making, collaborative relationships with grantees and holistic support for institutions. By strengthening civil society organizations and networks, we help them become more effective at achieving their core missions. And we hope to encourage other donors to adopt flexible institutional strengthening support as an effective, long-term, systemic approach to social change.

If the BUILD initiative is successful, in 10 years we will have supported hundreds of strategically vital civil society organizations in strengthening themselves to better advance their social justice goals. These organizations will have demonstrably improved their management, resilience and impact. Moreover, they will have greater capacity to collaborate, promote peer learning, and develop a shared and coordinated agenda to address inequality. Finally, the Ford Foundation and many of its peers will have fundamentally changed their approach to grant making - adopting a long-term, collaborative and flexible approach as the norm in funding the fight against inequality.

The Ford Foundation has gradually shifted away in the last few years from project-based funding to long term investments in institutions, when it realized this would never support

strong and sustainable capacities, and therefore offered little return on investment, seen from a medium-term and strategic perspective. Although it previously had a focus on forced migration and refugees, its current focus in the MENA region is on structural inequalities, social inclusion and social justice. A key strategy in pursuit of its vision and goal is to support the development of sustainable and capable civil society organizations. The text box summarizes the approach under its "BUILD" program.

Notwithstanding decades of "capacity-building" by relief agencies as well, there is a remarkable lack of (documented) interest in and understanding of how organizations get out of the "capacity trap", i.e., the vicious circle of "*you have no capacity, therefore you get no funding, therefore you cannot grow and retain stronger capacities"*. The 2018 global study sheds an interesting light on this but is not known within the relief sector (Renoir & Guttentag, 2018). Its multiple case studies show that external financing is important but not the only factor in building a viable organization. CBOs and CSOs find different ways of attracting or generating other kinds of income. And quite consistently, the "human factor" turns out a strong element. This relates not only to the quality of leadership, but also very much to the commitment and loyalty of staff and volunteers associated with the organizations, that sustain it through difficult times, including through financial difficulties.

How do local/national organizations survive and thrive?

The Jordan Paramedic Society started by collecting donations from local people and organizing fairs/bazaars. It now has 74 employees and many volunteers and constitutes a significant national capacity in the health sector. Key drivers of success mentioned were: core values lived in practice that lead the organization to treat its staff and volunteers fairly and with loyalty; in turn, that generates loyalty among employees and volunteers, and contributes to staff retention. Other important competencies have been networking to become known but also to gain informal or formal recognition of the quality of its work; the delivery of an internationally recognized training approach for a course fee, and automation and digitization, which improved the organizational cost efficiency. Its technological skills also allowed it to develop and manage online data and other services for international aid agencies and for sectoral public services in Jordan (via apps it developed itself). For Covid-19, it also deployed teams of qualified personnel in direct support of the Ministry of Health and ambulance services. Reportedly, this constituted the first real emergency medical team that can deploy in times of crisis. The combination of all this has led to sustained trust of government institutions and some key international agencies (bilateral and UN).

The Jordan Hashemite Organization (JHO) has now a 30-year track record; it was designated as the main provider of aid kits during the Covid-19 lockdown. It has a large number of employees but also of volunteers. Factors driving its programmatic effectiveness are the experience of the staff and the extent and quality of its connections. These include local authorities (governors, social development directorates), the Public Security Directorate, but also a wide network of CBOs. Careful documentation of who got what, to avoid duplication, is also seen as a factor increasing its efficiency and credibility.

"*We shouldn't ignore the role of any local organization, no matter how small it is. One small organization can provide us with insight more valuable than others connected to international organizations, due to their direct engagement with the local society for years*."

The JHO has no guaranteed funding but is in constant connection with various donors (including in the Gulf Cooperation Council countries), as a result of which it gets immediately informed about calls-for-proposals and is one of the few who knows about the pooled fund. It also implements programs and projects in other countries, Palestine in particular. It underscores the importance of providing donors with results, and operating with transparency and accountability, a key message related to greater self-reliance.

"*We have to learn lessons in sustainability from the Covid-19 crisis, by depending on ourselves rather than on foreign aid. This implies building our own community's and organizations' capacities to operate businesses that generate income*."

FINDING: Limited interest in supporting collective capacities and a humanitarian infrastructure

Over the past 20 years, Western countries where most international relief agencies retain their main source have built up an extensive "humanitarian" infrastructure, with M.A. university courses, dedicated training and capacity-support centers, research institutes and think tanks, professional publications with more academic or more practitioner-oriented flavor, and a regular stream of conferences that bring together policy makers and practitioners from governments, INGOs, academia, the UN and the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. This is further complemented by a big offer from service providers and consultants, including several operating according to private sector principles. Donors also fund "Humanitarian to Humanitarian" trade

fairs that bring together mostly international agencies and service providers.

One interviewee felt that, given the professional talent available in Jordan, it has the potential to be more of a regional resource hub (like or together with Lebanon, perhaps). Yet serious challenges exist for Jordanian actors and international assistance agencies to develop more collaborative capacities, within and across sectors.

The Jordan CSO Sustainability Index of 2018 observed that overall, Jordanian organizations remain weak in building stronger coalitions, except for a limited period of time around particular issues. Collaboration tends to be heavily dependent on good relationships among key individuals and an absence of competitive factors. Examples mentioned in the literature are the INSAN Alliance UPR (formed to submit a Universal Periodic Report) to the UNHCHR (2012), a network of 12 women rights CSOs that issued a shadow report to the government's to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), or the Himam coalition, established in 2015 (with 17 members) on democratic values, human rights, sustainable development and empowering CSOs. (Reference Enabling Environment, no page numbers, but section IX and CSO Sustainability report 2018 p. 29) In 2018, "*no umbrella organization provides the overall sector with information or facilitates dialogue across issues areas*". (International Center for Not-for-Profit Law, FHI360 & USAID, 2019). Himam, however, remains an active, functioning network, and JONAF is now also emerging as a viable platform.

After decades of refugee presence that attracted more and more international agencies over the past 15 years, would it have been cost-effective to invest in a similar type of Jordanian infrastructure, with centers of expertise for example on organizational development, business entrepreneurship or refugees? Yarmouk University in Irbid has a "*Refugees, Displaced Persons and Forced Migration Studies Centre"* which, according to its website, has received support from some INGOs, various UN agencies and some Jordanian organizations. Yet, according to one source, it does not have enough resources to be a centre of excellence and influence. The Phoenix Centre does play an important convening role and is engaged by and also engages with INGOs. But other civil society actors do not easily get the ear of government policy makers. More influence has the Centre for Strategic Studies at the University of Jordan, which functions in an advisory capacity to the government.

A few years ago, one INGO started investing more in livelihood support for affected refugee communities in Jordan but called on a European "business college" to teach it how to set up a micro-enterprise or start up a business. Even if that European college provided its services for free, is there no such resource centre in Jordan or the MENA region that might bring deeper contextual insight?

To our knowledge, the international humanitarian sector is not in the habit of assessing the collective capacities for crisis response in a country (except through the disaster risk reduction lens, actively practiced in Asia). Rare exceptions are successive exercises in south-central Somalia and Bangladesh, using the Humanitarian Country Capacity Analysis Methodology (HUCOCA).[6]

FINDING: Emerging alternatives to historical approaches to "capacity-development"

The weaknesses and reasons for the ineffectiveness of the relief sector's historical approach to "capacity building" are well known. Among them: a limited focus on meeting international

6 Believed to have been developed by Fernando Almansa and supported by Oxfam NOVIB

compliance and technical standards requirements, neglecting helping develop sustainable organizations, hence the inability of organizations to retain the "capacity" that was "built"; supply-, rather than demand-driven efforts, often uncoordinated and hence not achieving cumulative impact; offering generic, rather than context-specific, training and not providing trainees ongoing support when they try to apply their learning; input and output rather than outcome and impact-oriented management of "capacity building"; little recognition that "capacity development" requires a certain competency and that neither international organizations nor their individual staff can simply be assumed to have such; no "graduation" from a subordinate to a more leading role, even if the capacity is supposedly built, etc. Organizational development accompaniment, as a "*capacity to support capacity development"* is largely unknown in the international relief sector, and not recognized as a gap. (For a useful resource see Ubels et al, 2010).

This research has not sought to map, let alone evaluate, the undoubtedly large number of capacity-building activities undertaken over the past decade or two. However, some characteristics of alternative approaches, which are more collaborative and take a mentoring/accompaniment approach, deserve to be mentioned. Interviews with different INGOs representatives working collaboratively, stress the foundational importance of relationship and basic trust building. That requires an investment of time, which will generate returns. It also requires strong interpersonal and possibly cross-cultural skills, and a willingness and ability to listen. With CBOs, the ability to work in fluent Arabic is critical. One organization started working in this manner with the Union of CBOs in a governorate, but only had 12 months of initial funding. It is now seeking additional funding. For another, larger, INGO, this seems to be a structural program component, and it has developed a significant network of Jordanian resource persons who, between them, can provide mentoring support on a range of issues.

An INGO interviewed is trying out (in a regional program, not just in Jordan) the secondment of international staff to a local partner, to mentor from within. A key challenge is to find people with the technical/thematic competences and the required interpersonal skills. Interestingly, a few Jordanian CSOs have also themselves brought in some international staff, who may provide internal mentoring support. In some countries, it has been noted that if a CSO puts forward an international staff member in the engagement with other internationals, it receives quicker attention and credibility.

Several UN and INGO agencies have their own "capacity assessment" frameworks. Though there are some variations among them, by and large they tend to reflect the form and functioning of an INGO type of organization and are geared towards donor expectations and compliance requirements. When used as the primary instrument for "partner selection" (a unilateral process), they can de facto conduct a "*risk assessment"* more than a "*capacity assessment"*. One INGO interviewed noted that its own organizational capacity assessment, used as starting point for a mentoring/accompaniment process, would not necessarily take the local partner to the point where it would pass a contemporary "due diligence" process. Internal organizational reflection ponders now whether the format should evolve.

No "capacity support" will be impactful, however, if local and national actors are not able to attract and retain capable and committed people, and make the required investment in developing a broader income-generating strategy that will make them financially more sustainable. "Capacity support" cannot be dissociated from funding and financing. (See Renoir, M. & Guttentag, M., 2018 and Koob, A., Ingulfsen, I. & Tolson, B., 2018 for the results of multi-country research into CSO financial sustainability)

The same capacity assessment format may be used for local and less formalized CBOs and for national and more structured CSOs. Obviously, CBOs stand little chance of passing. A more constructive alternative is the earlier mentioned tiered approach that correlates current capacities with access to grants of different sizes, but also sets up an organizational development path.

FINDING: Supporting Jordanian CBOs

The researchers regularly heard a negative perspective on the "capacities" of Jordanian community-based organizations from internationals, but also, at times, from staff of better established, Amman-based Jordanian CSOs. Reality is probably more nuanced, but also very varied. Interestingly, a so-called "Royal NGO" like the Noor Al Hussein Foundation works with and provides training for many local CBOs in order for its programs to cover the whole Kingdom. The learning from this is not necessarily well known among international agencies.

But there are relevant experiences. One example was the Danish Refugee Council's "Tadneem" program that ran between January 2015-December 2016. Implemented by the council together with the Arab World Centre for Democratic Development (Uni-HRD), it sought to support the informed inclusion of women towards improved participation in local social, economic and civil life. It had formalized partnerships with six local CSOs in Karak, Ma'an and Tafileh, three of which received sub-grants from DRC to develop their capacities. The approach seems to have centered around training, with EU guidelines on human rights at local level, and on combating discrimination against women, as one important reference. It also supported local civil society coordination to explore synergies and speak with one voice to the authorities. One feedback from the CSO partners was that the project grants provided were too small to have real impact on their capacity to operate. Another was that the impact of training was diluted because these CBOs operate with a significant number of volunteers who do not necessarily stay for long. (Danish Refugee Council, 2017)

GIZ has the ability (and a network of consultants/mentors) to engage with young or not very formalized associations, accompany them to the point of registration and help them develop their ideas and write proposals good enough to get funding.

ACTED had a project of work with the Union of CBOs in Al Mafraq. After an initial conversation it learned that the union has existed for over 30 years but was not functioning in a way that added significant value. It did not have much substantive capacity, could not be a capacity-strengthening resource for its members, and was not an effective interface between the CBOs and government institutions. Such unions need to register with the Registrar of Associations (under the Ministry of Social Development) and will be supervised by the relevant ministry/ies, depending on their aims and objectives. ACTED provided support to strengthen "advocacy" skills (through four workshops). (See also ACTED, no date) A former senior government official, speaking in general about unions, pointed out that at times, their management is monopolized by the same group of people who do not necessarily carry out their duties as required.

Though a collective planning and programming capacity at governorate level, bringing together local authorities and non-governmental actors, makes sense, the continued centralized nature of governance in Jordan means that strong connectedness must also exist with national authorities.

FINDING: Cross-sectoral connectedness and collaborative capacities: Jordanian government and civil society.

The earlier mentioned 2015-6 assessment of civil society in Jordan found difficult relationships between the government and civil society.

"Civil society regards the government as generally unsupportive of its role and unwilling to engage in a true partnership with it. It views government as bent on controlling or co-opting the sector rather than helping it grow and resents government officials' tendency to paint it in a bad light, including to score points with public opinion.

"*Government officials tend to be dismissive of the motivations of civil society activists, how they approach their work, and most importantly, the impact of their activities. They repeatedly complain that civil society activists are more preoccupied with promoting the agendas of donors that do not always reflect local priorities. GoJ officials are willing to grant civil society a limited part in providing social services and in furthering development objectives, but they do not recognize a legitimate role for it in areas such as oversight, policymaking, or advancing political reform. In general, they believe that civil society's role should be limited to helping government provide services and alleviate poverty. (...) it was clear that the 'partnership' relegates civil society to a subservient role.*

"*Government officials were consistently and openly critical of the way in which the donor community had conducted its civil society assistance activities. Their primary criticism was that donors have been lax in monitoring their programs and in demanding accountability from recipient organizations; that they have been insufficiently concerned with impact; and that flooding the sector with funding, combined with lack of coordination among themselves, has contributed heavily to corruption, duplication of activities and waste. In addition, they uniformly complained about donors channeling funds to CSOs without adequately coordinating with the GoJ. They argued that this situation has fueled opacity within the sector and is largely responsible for the 'chaos' that prevails in it – and which, in their opinion, it is now the responsibility of the GoJ to 'clean up'*." (Denoeux & Toukan, 2016)

"Too focused on service delivery and not engaging in policy work and advocacy" is part of the general critique of international agencies about Jordanian civil society. It is not certain, however, that mere training on "advocacy" would be necessary and sufficient to create some breakthroughs here. The real policy- and decision-making circle in Jordan seems to be small and tight, without involvement from various sectors of society and not easily accessible even for certain government institutions. Capacities to provide evidence-based research and make constructive proposals are needed. But a more subtle and longer-term strategy may be required to gain access to and the trust of the key policy and decision makers. For CSOs, that also means the careful navigation of the Law on Associations that forbids them to engage in, otherwise unspecified, "political activities". Furthermore, in the view of one very senior former government official, JONAF's willingness and ability to be a cross-sectoral platform, that also includes government actors, is a positive characteristic.

4. Coordination

The presence and meaningful participation of Jordanian CSOs in aid coordination systems could not be explored in depth. Anecdotal comments suggest that presence is limited but those who go through the JHPF assessment are obliged to attend coordination meeting. The prevailing use of English (and the extensive use of sector-specific acronyms) prevents the participation of some capable Jordanians. Until 2019, Jordanian were not invited to meetings, they have had to fight for their right to be join the Humanitarian Partnership Forum, reportedly after quite some internal discussion. On the other hand, Jordanian CSOs lack the human and financial resources to attend the many time-consuming meetings. They also fail to always see great value in carving up realities on the ground into different sectors and issues. Several feel that they can coordinate

much faster and more effectively through their networked action than via the cumbersome international coordination structure.

5. Visibility

Regarding the visibility of their work, the CBO and CSO respondents expressed different views. These may reflect their relative size and position within the Jordanian organizational landscape. Some felt that their work was well highlighted to the government and several international actors. Even then, what they actually achieve on the ground is more than what is communicated or known. Many others know that they do not have a clear public image and need to work more on that. One respondent however stated that she and her organization did not do their work to get profile, so did not treat it as an issue of concern. Another shared the observation that the focus was on meeting people's needs and demands, without concern for one's visibility. A third observed that those who were trained or otherwise benefitted from the organization's programs were its best promoters.

Taking visibility as an organizational development objective requires people with communication expertise and the ability to invest time and resources in it. Most donors fail to recognize this as a valid expense and, if included in the budget, cut it out.

Important is not only visibility for one's work, contributions and achievements among international audiences, but also among the Jordanian public. Some years ago, the Jordanian public generally had a negative image of civil society organizations, which also hampers the sector's development. (Denoeux & Toukan, 2016). That also requires more work with the Jordanian media. Some noted that their work did get decent coverage in these media.

Another respondent commented on the desire and even necessity of some international agencies to make themselves very "visible" by branding goods and activities they fund with their logo. For certain international brands, this did not always go down well with sections of the population in Jordan.

6. Meaningful influence on policies and standards

In an "internationalization-Localization" perspective, this dimension relates to the presence and influence of national actors in the development of generic policies and standards, and their operational application in specific contexts. Even after years of international presence, few Jordanian CSO actors seem familiar with the international spaces and processes where this takes place or are part of it.

When asked about policy engagement and policy influencing, all Jordanian interviewees said they responded to national ones, set and applied by the government. The general observation was that there is little openness or receptiveness in government to policy messages and proposals from civil society, or to feedback about how the implementation of government policies plays out in practice.

VI. GENDER, HUMANITARIAN ACTION AND LOCALIZATION IN JORDAN

1. Gender in International Aid

Gender sensitivity and gender equality are prominent policy and practice concerns in international aid - donors ask for gender-disaggregated data from needs assessments to reporting on project activities and - results. Some ask questions about the gender balance and gendered allocation of roles and responsibilities in international and national/local agencies. Occasionally, a gender audit of the organizational culture is suggested or called for. (Mollett, 2016). Some agencies, such as ActionAid and the Government of Canada, publicly embrace "f*eminist leadership"*.[7]

While most donors expect "gender sensitivity", some are more insistent that even "humanitarian action", with its perennially short-term perspectives, pursue "gender transformation" objectives. In theory, that should also provide a counterweight to the still prevailing portrayal of women and girls as disproportionately, but also rather passively, carrying the burdens of crises and disasters, including COVID-19 and the consequences of lockdowns. Women have agency, and generally want more of it.

Notwithstanding, within a cluster-system, the Protection Cluster is often the poor member of the family, with the sub-cluster on gender-based violence (GBV) even more underfinanced. (Action Aid, 2019) The "*Call to Action for the Prevention of GBV in Emergencies*", a multi-stakeholder initiative launched in 2013, tries to rectify that, with modest success.[8] Another key reference, notably in conflict-affected situations, is UN SC Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, adopted in October 2000.

The Grand Bargain has been criticized for not being "gendered". A group of informal "friends of gender group for the Grand Bargain" came together to address this. UN Women has been one of the driving agencies to address this. In 2018 and 2019, CARE, ActionAid and UNFPA (as lead of the Protection Cluster "GBV Area of Responsibility) ran a project on "*GBV and Localization"*. It included a regional meeting for the Middle East, held in Amman in June 2019. Participants came from Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Yemen and Iraq.

The issue of gender and localization has drawn particular attention to local/national organizations focused on women's rights and/or women-led (the two, however, cannot be automatically equated). CARE and ActionAid have commissioned several relevant studies.

"Engaging more national and local actors in national and sub-national coordination mechanisms, with a particular focus on women-led organizations, aligns with the commitments undertaken by the Call to Action partners. A localised, women-led approach promoting the engagement and leadership of women and girls themselves in protection prevention and response depends on a shift on many fronts, including participation in all aspects of funding. The Call to Action Commitments are a great call to arms in the localization agenda, but it must be shaped and informed with evidence and input from field-based actors and other local stakeholders to have legitimate and sustainable impact, as well as to build on momentum in terms of policies and funding. Creativity and relationship building at the grassroots are also

7 The meaning is easily misunderstood. For a useful clarification see, e.g., https://www.actionaid.org.uk/about-us/how-we-practise-feminism-at-work?

8 https://www.calltoactiongbv.com/

needed to enable national and local actors to participate with confidence in accessing protection funding." (ActionAid, 2019)

Local and national women-focused organizations are sought out not only because of their suitability to work on GBV. In different countries, they can also be "encouraged" by international actors to play a significant part in the prevention of radicalization and violent extremism. Many of these organizations are deeply uncomfortable with this, as it can place them under the spotlight of radical elements, their own government and international actors who, at the same time, want to be assured that aid does not contribute to "terrorist financing": too many pressures to handle.

2. Access to funding in Jordan

Of the total amount of funding approved under the 2017 and 2018 Jordan Response Plan, 2.2 per cent and 4 to 53 per cent respectively had a principal focus on gender. The majority of funding approved with a principal focus in 2017 was for health (62 per cent) and social protection (35 per cent), with liveli hoods/food security (3.5 per cent) and health (0.3 per cent) accounting for some of funds. The majority of funding in 2018 was for social protection (48 per cent) and livelihoods (32 per cent), with some funding for local governance and municipal services (13 per cent) and health (7 per cent) (UNFPA and UNWOMEN, 2019). The challenges faced by women's rights and women-led organizations in accessing international funding exist in Jordan as well.

"*Our findings (...) suggest that the biggest challenge for women-led organizations in both Jordan and Lebanon is access to sustainable funding, especially in the context of a high level of competition among local NGOs. INGOs provide project-based funding when they should also invest in capacity building. The interviews evidenced the fact that INGOs are still reluctant to share decision-making power regarding project allocation, location, beneficiaries, and budget allocation. Local NGOs are considered as implementing partners. Cultural norms further prevent women-led organizations from effectively participating in the humanitarian efforts."* (Bruschini-Chaumet at alii, 2019)

UN Women manages a Women Peace and Humanitarian Fund. INGOs and Jordanian CBOs and CSOs can all apply. Even if INGOs work with Jordanian organizations as "partners", de facto there is competition. Because of Grand Bargain-related donor encouragement, INGOs here are expected to strengthen the capacities of their partners. But as it is "easier" to work with stronger Jordanian CSOs, which can meet the administrative and reporting requirements, there is the temptation to choose the larger, Amman-based ones as "partner" – which can also be led by women. If CBOs get involved in implementation, it cannot be assumed that they have had input into the conceptualization and design. This dynamic also carries a risk of creating tension between "national" CSOs and socio-geographically more "local" ones. A call for proposals was issued recently by this fund for responses to the negative impacts of the COVID-19 and the resulting lockdown on women and girls. Proposals this time could be submitted in Arabic. Of 47 proposals received, nine were shortlisted. It is recognized that further efforts are needed to make the fund more accessible to Jordanian CSOs.

UN Women is active in localization. Following a regional event on gender equality and localization, in the summer of 2019, a task force was formed involving Jordanian and international actors. It also commissioned a study on the relationship between women's movements and localization, The preliminary findings are currently being reviewed.

3. The 'Women's Movement' in Jordan and international influences

The first "modern" women's organization, the Jordanian Women Federation, was established in May 1945 (under royal patronage). In the context of anti-colonial sentiments and rising pan-Arab ideologies, the Women's Awakening League followed, in 1952, as the women's group of the communist party. It had to go underground soon after and re-emerged in 1967 as the Arab Women's Society. In the meantime, in 1954, politically active women in Amman set up the Arab Women's Union, under the leadership of the first female lawyer in Jordan. In this period, the women activists and the Jordanian state regarded their work as "political". When martial law was declared in 1957, the Arab Women's Union was shut down alongside all political groups. Not until 1975, Women's International Year, was it allowed to resume its activities, now under the name of the "Society of Women's Federation (Union) in Jordan". In 1981, however, the Ministry of Interior again ordered it to shut down. It re-emerged another time, in 1989, as the Jordanian Women's Union. By then, most women's rights activism was managed by the Ministry of Social Affairs. This de-politicization is reflected by the place of registration of an organization. Though it resisted a long time, in 2016, the Jordan Women's Union finally shifted its registration from the Ministry of Interior to the Ministry of Social Development, as it had been renamed by then. As a result, it is now governed by the Societies Law of 2008, which prevents it from engaging in work that is considered the realm of political parties. One practical implication is that the JWU, as such, cannot take part in protests; members wishing to do so have to take part in their individual capacity.

Several Jordanian women promoters of women's rights and gender equality that were interviewed acknowledge that women activists largely came from Amman's middle and upper class i and that, unlike, e.g., in Morocco, there never was a more broad-based "movement". Shortcomings are recognized, but also need to be understood in the context of a deliberate de-politicization strategy. Notwithstanding, a recent report on women's political participation in Jordan concludes that "*notable progress has been made in the past 15 years to increase women's representation in elected decision-making bodies in Jordan, but the rate of change is slow.*" (OECD, 2018). A significant number of Jordanian women are also to be found in academia and other civil society organizations.

4. The international discourse on gender and the 'Women's Movement' in Jordan

Ababneh identifies four discourse shifts since the emergence of the first modern Jordanian women's organization in 1945. (Ababneh, 2020)

a. Women are mothers, and women's organizations (led by elite women) provide charity to women and mothers in poverty. Poor, working-class women therefore are not seen as part of a women's movement, but passive recipients of charity.

b. As mentioned, the 1950s and 60s brought strong political emotions in the context of the creation of new Arab states and continued post-colonial influence and interference from Western powers. The Women's Awakening League and the Arab Women's Union called for the right of all women to vote and to be elected to parliament. But they also mobilised for the end of British colonial politics in the Middle East, against post-colonial imperialism and for national liberation and independence in the Arab world and elsewhere. In short, women's rights were part and parcel of a wider national agenda where both genders stood together.

c. Starting with 1974, the discourse shifted to a focus on women's rights as a universal concept. The main trigger for this were the preparations for the UN's Decade of Women

(1976-1985). King Hussein then issued a royal decree, changing the Electoral Law and given all women the right to vote and be members of the (then still dissolved) parliament. In'am al Mufti became the first female minister, of social affairs. This initiated the shift of the women's rights organization to that ministry, which coincides with a process of NGOization and depoliticization of women's rights movement.

d. A fourth shift in discourse occurred in the runup to the 1995 Beijing Conference on Women, prior to which Jordan quickly formed the "National Council of Women's Affairs". That conference conceptualized women's issues as a matter of "development" (notably of "women in development" rather than "women and development"). The "rights" focus now shifted to one in which women had to be liberated from traditionalism and conservatism, or the "tribalism" of their communities and the men in them. It converged with ideas about "modernization". This discourse was further consolidated in the Sustainable Development Goals. NGOization led women's groups to focus on isolated "projects" with no apparent connection to the regime and wider power structures.

In Ababneh's analysis, the women's movement in Jordan has been influenced by three major factors:

- The composition of its most active members and leaders
- The relationship between the state and the women's groups
- Shifts in international discourse concerning women's activism (Ababneh, 2020).

5. Jordanian ownership of the gender agenda

The argument can be, and has been made by some interviewees, that Jordan "owns" its gender agenda. Jordanian women activists were among those who came together in Beijing in 1995 for the 4th World Conference on women to jointly develop its Platform of Action. The Jordanian government has signed up to this and other conventions on women, which technically means it owes it. Over the years, Jordan has had an evolving "national strategy for Jordanian women" (starting with 2006-2010, with the most recent one for 2020-2025 endorsed by the government in March 2020). The government's "National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security" (Nov. 2018-Nov. 2021) is currently in vogue.

"*The Jordanian government has committed to close the gender equality gap by 2030 through a variety of actions, including intensifying efforts to align national legislation with the Kingdom's international and regional commitments, in a participatory manner that ensures gender equality and the elimination of violence against women. The government pledges to accelerate the implementation of resolutions to which it has committed itself before international committees and review relevant national plans and strategies to bring them in line with the Sustainable Development Goals for 2030, as well as provide the necessary financial and human resources to carry them out.*

"Jordan pledges to expand the scope of economic, social, cultural and political support to women and girls, with special emphasis on marginalized adolescents, elderly women, poor or vulnerable women, rural women, women with disabilities, female refugees, displaced women and survivors of gender-based violence. It will address social norms and stereotypes that instil discrimination against women through education, cultural and media productions that promote positive roles of women as active partners in sustainable development and community building."[9]

9 https://www.unwomen.org/en/get-involved/step-it-up/commitments/jordan

A key national actor here is the National Commission for Women. It has gained broad recognition among different sectors of society. Partially because it has some guaranteed core funding, it is able to set and control the agenda and negotiate terms of collaboration and funding with international assistance agencies.

6. Hesitations and criticism

At the same time, several Jordanian women interviewees, all in responsible positions in governmental, CSO or international aid agencies, expressed nuance and sometimes certain reservations about the international engagement with gender in Jordan.

One mentioned how, growing up as a girl, she had become aware of the notion that the honour of her family is embedded in her body, and developed a critical reflection on that. At the same time, she insists that progress needs to come from within. She did not think that there should be a "*white or western liberation of Muslim Arab women; if I adopt that idea, then I undermine by belief in Arab women*".

Other Jordanian women interviewees had critical views on approaches that pursued "women economic empowerment" as the proven "theory-of-change" path to gender equality. They pointed out, sometimes speaking from their own family experiences, that, first, Islam does not forbid women to go out and work as long as the work environment is respectful. More importantly, working women in all walks of life may have a say in decisions affecting the household and the family, but not necessarily to the point that the men in the family will adhere to their views if they differ. Economic independence does not guarantee, therefore, a woman's full decision-making independence or authority. Another Jordanian woman, in a senior position at an international agency, felt that "women empowerment" did not have to be automatically equated with going out of the house to work, but mean self-confidence that reflects the "power within".

At a deeper level, the main criticism is that the international gender agenda falls short of a broader structural and strategic picture. The most common "women's issues" are:

- Fighting gender-based violence (including sexual harassment)
- Increasing women's political participation
- Women's economic empowerment
- Legal reform in favour of equal rights for women

These are utterly valid and require action. But they cannot be seen in persistent isolation from wider socio-economic and policy issues that affect men and women alike in Jordan.

The top priority, for many men and women in Jordan alike, is underemployment or unemployment and poverty. That has an impact on men just as much as it does on women: boys are forced to leave school to go and earn some income, many of the skilled and educated Jordanians of working age, many of them men, emigrate because of a lack of economic opportunities. Such and more are shared problem. So is, e.g., the decline of the agriculture sector that has made Jordan an importer rather than exporter of wheat. Or the decrease in state services, to the point that nowadays teacher training is no longer conducted by the Ministry of Education but by non-governmental organizations or "Royal NGOs". Part of this is related to the economic policies that aid donors promote and leverage, but that a country accepts or not as a matter of political choice. On several occasions, in the past two decades when social unrest caused by economic pressures was made itself felt through demonstrations and public protests (e.g., Day Wage

Labour Movement in 2006, 2018 protests against a proposed new tax law, or the 2019 teachers' union strike), women participated often in prominent roles. But they mobilized behind a broader and more inclusive agenda, on issues that affect men and women alike, not for specific women's rights.

Only looking at the conventional "women's issues" "*depoliticizes women's issues by failing to address the wider power structures which marginalize women. (...) by dismissing communal issues as being unrelated to women, communal and national concerns remain understood as men's issues and are conceptualized based solely on male experiences. (...) focusing on issues women do not share with their communities, Jordanian women's rights activists are able to stay clear of a more radical critique and struggle such as neo-liberal economic structures and the ruling system.*" (Ababneh, 2020)

"Projects" focused on (legitimate and important) "women's issues" are necessary. However, they can also distort and distract from the deeper, and shared, structural challenges that affect a significant percentage of the population in Jordan.

VII. JORDANIAN CSOs and CBOs in the COVID-19 RESPONSE: A SNAPSHOT

Jordan reacted quickly and decisively to contain the risks posed by the spread of the COVID-19 virus and imposed a comprehensive lockdown. As reported, the government quickly established a COVID-19 Task Force. While de facto effective in imposing and enforcing containment measures, it is perceived as not having been very inclusive or accessible, even to some relevant governmental entities, particularly with regard to monitoring and evaluating the other impacts of the lockdown.

Early on, the Higher Population Council did a useful scenario exercise, but whether this got actual attention could not be assessed. JONAF issued a comprehensive concept note "*COVID-19 Emergency Response Plan. Local civil society intervention*". This was accompanied by a provisional budget of just under $1,369,000. The funding was allocated among different CBOs, CSOs and some government bodies, to maximize the collective geographical reach. No major changes were required during the implementation.

The interviews for this research were mostly conducted in May 2020, and a few in the first week of June. The focus was on the experiences of Jordanian CSOs and CBOs in dealing with the impact of lockdowns on their own functioning, and their attempts to respond to the rapid increase in needs. All aspects of their responses, therefore, may no longer fully reflect their situation in July 2020.

Of the 14 agencies interviewed, one is a so called "Royal NGO" (Noor al Hussein Foundation), one a research center (Phenix Center), one focused on media (Center for Defending Freedom of Journalists), and the other 11 national CSOs or local CBOs.

Overall, the view of the 14 agencies about the government's performance was positive, with particular appreciation for the management of the health and security dimensions of the pandemic threat. There was recognition that very strict measures had been pushed through, fast, without prior consultation and with limited advance notice and communication. But there was also explicit acceptance that the need to act fast in the face of a serious threat is almost inevitably going to lead to some mistakes. More critical views were expressed vis-à-vis the government's management of the economic impact of the lockdown, for example, of the government's failure

to intervene between employers and employees, and not really realizing the impact of the lockdown on people's livelihoods and income across different sectors of society. Neither was the social protection program seen as having been handled well enough. The failure to structurally involve the private sector and civil society in dealing with the immediate impact of the lockdown did not cause surprise but were regretted. Hemam, a coalition of 16 organizations issued a request to the government to provide civil society with its rightful space in the mitigation strategy, and include CSOs in decision making, but that was not taken up. Many others also tried to engage senior policymakers, through both informal and formal communication.

Most managed to get authorization for a certain mobility during the lockdown. Connections with government officials were typically an enabling factor. Some CSO people are actually members of, e.g., the board of a Royal NGO or a governorate council. Some agencies got access to vehicles from the local authorities for delivering home relief items.

Most also managed to maintain, without major problems, their internal functioning when working from home. Certainly, in Amman, and in some other major centers where the internet connection is reasonably good, Skype and Zoom meetings became more actively used. In more rural and remote areas, the internet connection is not very good, however, and expensive. For communication with pre-COVID beneficiaries and newly affected people, social media and phone calls usually became the primary means of communication.

Most managed to keep their staff in the first 2 to 2.5 months of lockdown. That finding needs to be clarified however with the observation that many have only a small number of core staff, supplemented by staff on project-bound contracts, and variable numbers of volunteers. Some were able to keep their staff in these initial weeks by continuing to pay them still for a while even when projects were suspended, and no new income was at hand. Some had to make some staff redundant; others feel they will have to do the same in the near future if no new funding becomes available. One had hired extra staff, however, and some increased the number of their volunteers to distribute aid to homes.

The impact of the lockdown on programming was very variable, depending on the type of activities of the organization and evolving needs of people in its sphere of operations. Generally, all programs that required physical gatherings were indefinitely postponed. Other activities could, relatively easily, moved online, e.g., advisory and counselling services, certain types of training, research, psychological and mental health support, etc. Some organizations saw most of their existing programs suspended, others continued smaller or larger parts of their programs, but several also took on new types of activities. Not surprisingly, the latter often concerned an expansion or even an initiating of short-term relief provision, in kind of in cash. This constituted a response to obvious priorities, even if it was not part of the mandate for some. Some also produced information materials regarding behavioral procedures to reduce the risk of contamination. One produced more comprehensive guidance, e.g., for service providers, for service receivers, a back-to-work manual, etc. Others increased their number of hotlines. Several organizations took a positive view of the forced adoption of more reliance on communications technology. For several CSOs, the crisis triggered the realization that, strategically, their future programming needs to be more extensively oriented toward income -and employment-generation for people.

All Jordanian organizations interviewed commented on the rapid rise in demand, certainly among all those working in the informal sector, often as day laborers, but also from regular employees who lost their jobs temporarily or permanently. Although coordination occurred within the JONAF coalition, all commented on their inability to meet the rapidly increasing

needs. Whereas before people in need would come and seek out the organization, now the organization would go do home visits. One commented on the increased difficulty of assessing the financial situation of a household remotely (an evaluation to be able to prioritize those in highest need). Another, providing assistance in situations of gender-based violence, commented on the challenges of communicating with victims in situations where the abuser might be present in the house. Two commented on the increase in human trafficking. Several expressed concern about the rise in communication costs for affected people during lockdown.

During the first two weeks of the lockdown, ARDD's Legal Aid Department received a large number of legal cases which it studied and analysed to produce the research "*The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Women's Access to Justice in Jordan"*. The working task forces in the department communicated with the beneficiaries by phone and other forms of remote service provision, while respecting their vulnerabilities and making sure they not to do them any harm. The same applied to other Jordanian organizations active in women's rights or gender-based violence. The lockdown of the courts, however, interrupted the processing of pending cases or the introduction of new ones.

Some respondents, who used to work with UN agencies prior to the lockdown, expressed appreciation for the effective and regularly updated communication from the UN. In terms of operational responses, however, the perception was that international agencies "*were slow, their bureaucracy hinders their response*".[10]

The Jordanian CSOs and CBOs interviewed were generally not informed, by the international assistance actors in country of various advocacy efforts and policy adaptations by the international community. Examples would be:

- ✓ ICVA March 2020: Reinforce, Reinforce, Reinforce: Localization in the COVID-19 global humanitarian response.
- ✓ OCHA April 2020: Flexibility Guidance. Country-based pooled funds in the context of COVID-19 pandemic.
- ✓ Interagency Standing Committee: May 2020: Interim Guidance. Localization and the COVID-19 response.

Notwithstanding, funding-wise, most reported a fairly supportive attitude from their institutional "donors", with permission to make some budget reallocations and delay reporting. Increases in communication costs would sometimes be offset by savings on transportation and venue hire, for example. One organization, however, saw an project approved by an international donor cancelled. Some also received funding from Jordanian individuals. One got a message from its donor, the day before lockdown, suggesting to stop the project; it was continue largely remotely, however, till its planned end date, partially also to not prematurely deprive the project-based staff of an income. Some realized that their organizations needed some income-generating activity of their own. On the other hand, a few who had one, like a food kitchen or a bakery, saw their income interrupted when these facilities had to go into lockdown.

Several commented on the apparent interruption of regular calls for proposals. With two exceptions, none received any information from the international community in Jordan about new multilateral or bilateral funds being made available for the COVID-response. None heard

10 For a comprehensive overview of the response by ARDD and JONAF members (English version) in various thematic areas, see https://us8.campaign-archive.com/?e=[UNIQID]&u=f81a929f068a1ccd-33f372901&id=6ee604c4bd

about the COVID-19 Global Humanitarian Fund. A local CBO felt that it had no chance of accessing funding because the lockdown had disconnected it from Amman. Not having networks and contacts in Amman is a major drawback to try and access funding. One agency whose work is focused on civil and political rights and freedoms felt it was much harder for it to get some attention and funding than it was for those working on issues concerned with social and economic needs.

Although most of these 14 agencies were not (at least for now) in a dire financial situation by mid-May to early June, the majority of them expressed deep concern for the short- and medium-term future, worrying already about how they would keep paying for basic running costs, such as rent and electricity, without projects.

Mixed views were expressed about whether the COVID-19 situation had strengthened cooperation within the Jordanian civil society. Respondents from several organizations felt that the crisis provided an impetus for greater collaboration. Positive comments were made about existing networks such as Musawat and JONAF. Several experienced JONAF as contributing to their communication and coordination. One interviewee was particularly appreciative of ARDD's efforts to follow, collate and disseminate the successive communications from the Ministry of Defense, translate them into English and explain their practical meaning. Many respondents recognized the disconnect among civil society organizations. One manifestation is the absence of a shared database of people-in-need, and of tracing what they received from whom.[11] Others were more skeptical about the ability of Jordanian organizations to pull together. This would require a common vision, but also a more intentional, connector role, of the Ministry of Social Development in particular. The COVID situation, in the view of one national CSO respondent, has highlighted the need for Jordan to have greater crisis preparedness.

"The crisis fostered cooperation between the civil society organizations." CBO respondent

"More coalitions should be established among Jordanian civil society." National CSO

"The local civil society in Jordan…. should increase and enhance its internal coalitions to grow its power. Without this power, the current dynamic will not change. Besides, partnerships and networks with other parties are required. As for international partners, they should share the same vision to foster the localization process. This comes by opening dialogue between us to cooperate." National CSO respondent

"The biggest lesson is that there should be a real comprehensive strategy, with realistic goals, for the organizations, and proactive plans to respond to crises. We have to make coalitions, exchange ideas and foster collective capacities in general. Unfortunately, there is no trust between the local organizations themselves, our visions are different, sometimes we face materialistic barriers to our cooperation." National CSO respondent

11 The same situation exists among governmental and non-governmental social protection actors in Switzerland, as was highlighted during the social protection efforts against different impacts of the Covid lockdown there. Beyond that, there is of course the issue of data and privacy protection.

VIII. ADVANCING LOCALIZATION IN JORDAN

1. Long-standing commitments and new urgency

Nine years after the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation and four years after all the major governmental and multilateral actors, the Red Cross and Red Crescent movement and some INGO platforms signed up to the Grand Bargain, it is appropriate to vigorously translate things into practice. The argument that international actors cannot do that unless and until national and local actors, governmental and non-governmental, have stepped up, is not convincing. This research in Jordan, and comparable research in many other countries, indicates how the international aid systems holds and wields power, and operates in ways that are not designed to reinforce national and local actors.

One interviewee questioned whether the situation in Jordan was not already "localized", given that the government evaluates and needs to approve all projects and programs, said that this is misunderstanding the issue. From an international perspective, the Grand Bargain seeks to reform the international humanitarian sector to make it more cost effective and more inclusive. From a Jordanian perspective, "localization" is not about "administrative control". The strategic question is whether Jordan has the managerial, operational, and technical capacities to largely handle the shocks and crises it is confronted with, even if it may need international financial assistance.

One Jordanian interviewee stressed that "localization" should not be argued from a "nationalist" sentiment. While an assertion of national pride is an understandable reaction in the face of a perceived international assertion of "superiority", the observation is valid. As this research indicates, there are compelling strategic reasons, for both international aid agencies and Jordanian actors to accelerate localization.

If it was possible to continue with business as usual until now, the health, but especially the economic, social and political impact of the COVID-19 pandemic makes localization a matter of high urgency, worldwide and also in Jordan. Many of the Western core donors of humanitarian (and development) assistance are spending heavily to reduce the economic and social impact of COVID in their countries. A scenario of significant decline in global Official Development Assistance, and possibly even humanitarian aid, is no fantasy.[12] Some interviewees felt that Jordan, given its importance for various donor countries in a turbulent Middle East, may not be too affected. But even a continuation of the current level of international financial support to Jordan may not be enough to alleviate the rise in poverty resulting from a global economic downturn and a rising public deficit. "Humanitarian" aid is not the right instrument to deal with such deep socio-economic and public choice issues.

Neither can INGOs assume that the next few years will not be deeply disruptive. Pre-COVID predictions about possible futures for international humanitarian NGOs by 2030 had already invited their strategic management to consider possibly serious organizational reforms and adaptations. (IARAN, 2017) That 2030 foresight exercise has now been brought forward, with a medium-term one (2022) based on three different scenarios related to the COVID pandemic. (Oxfam and IARAN, 2020). One very experienced practitioner and consultant anticipates a sharp decline in funding for INGOs and sets out the options in stark language: "*Transform, die well or die badly.*" (Tallack, 2020)

12 DFID, following its integration into the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, is already making budget cuts, although this is also strongly related to the expected economic impact of Brexit.

If COVID-19 will indeed be a catalyst for disruptive change, globally, then the question of "localization" takes on strategic significance and urgency. (See also Alexander, 2020). It is as important a matter to the government of Jordan as it is to Jordanian non-governmental actors and to the large numbers of non-Jordanians benefitting from the hospitality and protection of the country.

2. Conversation moments and spaces

The research identified three such conversations. There may be also an informal conversation space among some donors.

a. ***JONAF***

Although still a young coalition of Jordanian organizations, JONAF is one driver of the localization conversation. On 31 January 2019, JONAF issued a "*Call to Support the Localization Agenda*" in Jordan, addressing actors in both the humanitarian and development sectors. On 21 July 2019, it organized a first roundtable event under the heading "*What will Jordanian civil society look like if localization is achieved?*" Various government officials attended, as well as members of Jordanian CSOs and some INGO colleagues. It issued a statement on the occasion of the June 2020 annual conversations of the Grand Bargain. Its current coordinating entity, the Jordanian CSO ARDD, commissioned this research. Interestingly, it is a cross-sectoral coalition that also includes some governmental and semi-governmental entities.

b. ***Grand Bargain workstream on localization***

On 20-30 July 2019, a "*Middle East Regional Conference on Localization of Aid*" was organized by the Grand Bargain workstream on this commitment. This was one of three such regional conferences on localization, the two other covering Africa and Asia Pacific (Latin America is generally absent from global conversations about localization). The workstream is co-chaired by the IFRC and the government of Switzerland. The event was hosted by the Jordan Red Crescent.

FINDING: A review of the program shows many speakers from international organizations, none from national governments, and no civil society actors from Jordan. The "*Conference Highlights"* provide many relevant and insightful observations and recommendations – all of which were known however before the conference and very few on which international agencies have acted between the May 2016 World Humanitarian Summit and the July 2019 conference. The report confirms that, three years after the WHS, international agencies had largely failed to brief and inform local and national actors on the commitments they have undertaken. Attendants at the conference, interviewed for this research, remember that conversations had been confused, and that few Jordanian CSOs were present.

c. ***Gender and localization***

UN women also organized a regional event, in the summer of 2019, that focused on gender equality and localization in the region, highlighting the current situation in countries like Egypt, Iraq, Palestine and Lebanon. The discussants agreed on the relationship between maintaining women rights and encouraging women leadership in civil society and fostering localization in the region. A task force was formed by local and international organizations to push forward the localization agenda in Jordan. It meets every two months.

d. ***Jordan INGO Forum and 'Localization working group/task force'***

Localization is one of the strategic issues of the JIF, which has a localization working group.

FINDING: By mid-2019, not much tangible action or progress was noticed, and, in the eyes of an INGO observer, there "*didn't seem to be much will*". Analyzing the various reasons for that was not an objective of this research, but some factors that may have contributed are: lack of clarity and different understandings of "localization"; the large number of Jordanian CSOs and the INGO concern with who actually "represents" them; turnover among internationals in the task force; the perceived difference between Jordanian CSOs that have a longer-term, and wider, developmental perspective and INGOs that came to help with the Syrian refugee crisis. The latter should not be an argument as JIF claims to bring together INGOs involved in humanitarian and development work. Some interviewees see the lack of progress as unwillingness among INGOs to engage in a conversation that could ultimately reduce their income stream. The task force was not active during the months strong COVID-19 containment measures were taken, in the spring of 2020. Several interviewees feel now there is new momentum and a more conducive atmosphere for discussing the terms of collaboration between INGOs and Jordanian CSOs. On the other hand, interviewees also suggested that only a handful of the 60 INGO members of the JIF show real interest in the localization conversation.

3. Intermezzo: separate or joint NGO platforms and the questions of inclusiveness and representation

a. Are we not one "NGO family"?

Globally, the pattern has been one of local actors stepping out of a joint forum to set up (also) their own (e.g., the Somalia NGO Consortium) or refusing to join an INGO Forum (e.g., Cox's Bazaar NGO and CSO Forum in Bangladesh). Partially this is related to their wish to have conversations in their own language, set their own agenda and run meetings according to their socio-cultural practices. More fundamentally, because they are aware of the power differences and the structural subordination to international actors, including INGOs, they experience. They also have a different relationship with their local and national authorities. In other words, their interests and those of INGOs do not entirely overlap, and at times they will need collective action to negotiate ("grand bargaining"!) with international agencies, including INGOs. The JIF's objectives include "*represent the interests of its members"*.

> "One of the main strengths of the INGOs is that they are united under the INGO Forum, which is something that we lack as local organizations."
>
> CSO interviewee

One of JONAF's objectives is "*coordinating intervention efforts and focus on refugee and migration issues between members in Jordan and representing members before regional and international actors and stakeholders including the international donor community."* (Charter) Representing its members before international actors, therefore, is also one of its roles. The sense of inequality is greater than that of belonging to one "NGO family", which explains another JONAF objective: "*Advocating for equal treatment of national actors in the humanitarian response and long-term development efforts in Jordan Highlighting the importance of national actors taking on a role in designing aid efforts from the very beginning based on their unique knowledge and experience, rather than functioning as mere implementers and service providers*." (Charter)

INGOs have sometimes encouraged the creation of a "national humanitarian forum" (e.g., in Ethiopia and Bangladesh). In other instances, the catalytic trigger had come from a key government official who wanted "one number to call" to reach local and national CSOs (e.g.. the National Humanitarian Network in Pakistan). Problematically, INGOs (alone or in small coalitions) have sometimes intentionally created additional or alternative forums of local/national CSOs, as an output of a time-bound project. The additional cost of this (also possibly an indirect cost in terms of further fragmentation of the local CSO sector) is clear and the added value not so quickly guaranteed. It can be a reaction to the dysfunctionality of an existing forum. But it would only be legitimate if there had first been a sincere attempt to make the existing forum more functional, or if the creation of another one were driven by a number of local CSOs, rather than by an international agency.

b. The questions of inclusion and representation

Networks and coalitions of local/national organizations are sometimes challenged by international relief actors for not being "inclusive" or "representative". This can become an argument in questioning their "legitimacy". The implicit claim is that coalitions and forums of international aid agencies are inclusive and representative.

This argument needs to be dealt with. Different considerations can be taken into account here:

- Diversity of membership and frontstage faces of a coalition, network or "forum" is important. Different actors have different positions, and therefore have different priorities. But "inclusion" and "representation" must not be stretched to an absolute.
- Not all coalitions and forums of international agencies are "inclusive". International agency forums at times come up with joint statements, which is relevant and valuable. But on various issues, including localization, there is not necessarily a consensus, and agencies have their own views. Furthermore, changes in positions and policy that are observable sometimes when a country representative changes suggest that a view expressed may have been more "personal" than one of the agencies. Power differences also play out within them, with bigger agencies setting the agenda and occupying the front stage.
- Localization as a strategic objective, rather than a set of fragmented, single-agency initiatives will fail to attract buy-in from all international or even all local/national actors. In practice, progress will come from a coalition of the willing. Networks and coalitions of different types do, and have chosen quality rather than quantity, opting for committed and active partners or members rather than expanding "the numbers", with many of them passive.
- More inclusive "infrastructures" of CSOs in general, or those working on humanitarian issues, with a national and multiple sub-national "chapters" are exceptional. Where they exist, as with the National Humanitarian Network in Pakistan, they take a long time to build up – and active effort to sustain. A more inclusive forum, or network of forums, of CSOs in Jordan, with "distributed leadership" can be an envisaged outcome of a localization process. It need not be a precondition.
- To contribute to that objective, international agencies need to stop considering certain Jordanian organizations as "my partners", and be encouraging of, and create incentives for, collaboration among Jordanian actors.
- A coalition focused on purpose is willing and able to accept thoughtful contributions even from individuals that do not "represent" anyone else if they add value to achieving the purpose.

4. A Localization or partnership task force: walking the talk

Localization working groups, task forces or platforms are also looking for ways of working in countries other than Jordan, e.g., Myanmar and Bangladesh (focused on the Rohingya refugee situation). Key questions are: Who is involved in shaping their terms of reference, setting their agenda and leading or facilitating their proceedings? Does it have to be made up of "representatives" of the whole collective of international and local/national agencies, or can it advance with a coalition of the willing? How does it assess its own effectiveness? Who will it be accountable to and how? Should aid donors be included, as regular members or observers? How does it take decisions? What role for the national authorities in this conversation? Should there be a third-party facilitator?

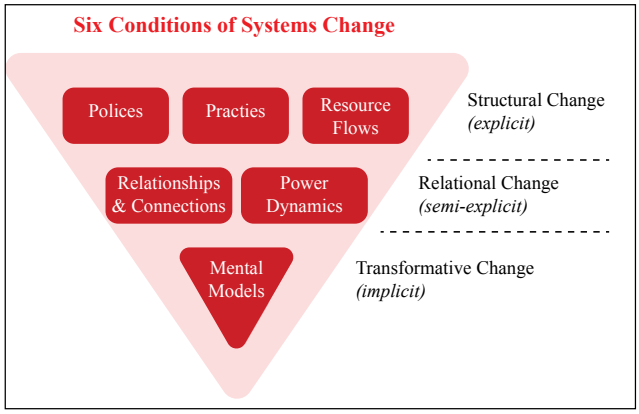
They also face common challenges: Is there a common understanding of localization? What language(s) will it operate in, and how will it ensure that all core participants have the same information and insights to be able to participate meaningfully and on equal terms?

These are no easy questions to answer. To be productive, it will also require a group of core people to be able to familiarize themselves thoroughly with the issues and dedicate time to the task force, but also to conduct prior consultations, disseminate regular information and hold briefing among wider stakeholders.

RECOMMENDATION: Annex 5 provides a set of key questions that can help think through the design and functioning of such task force.

5. How system change happens

Developed by FSG, a consultancy group, the "*six conditions of systems change"* diagram brings to attention the fact that international actors reinforcing rather than replacing local/national actors is not just a matter of policies and resource flow, which is where the Grand Bargain and Charter for Change stop. It also requires active attention to behaviors, relationship management and responsible handling of power. These, in turn, are, at a deeper level, influenced by mindsets. These mindsets also reveal themselves in discourses and narratives, sometimes most clearly in informal settings. (Kania et alii, 2018). (See also Green 2016, particularly chapter 12 on power and systems analysis)



6. Acknowledging and analyzing power

Localization invites a shift from "power over" to "power with", giving a greater "power to". Two frameworks, The Powercube and The Power Awareness Tool, have been found helpful to analyze power in societal dynamics, but also in the interaction between international and national/local actors:

- The Powercube: Developed by the Institute for Development in Sussex (UK), it enables the analysis of power across different levels and spaces of power and how power is exercised in different ways. (www.powercube.net)
- The Power Awareness Tool: Very recently published, to analyze power in partnerships. (The Spindle, 2020).

7. Donors need to drive the agenda more intentionally

Most donors to Jordan have signed up to the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation and/or the Grand Bargain. Improving the cost effectiveness of global humanitarian action is in everybody's interest. That requires a broader perspective, beyond value-for-money assessments for individual projects or even programs.

FINDING: Mixed views about donor interest. Internationals interviewed for this research had mixed views on donor interest in "localization". Some felt that INGOs only pay it some attention because donors are pushing it, for example by asking that they work with partners. One interviewee, however, felt that donors do not care about "localization" as long as a project is delivered with big results that are well reported on. Even if Jordanian "implementing partners" played a major role in the delivery, the perception is that this is irrelevant in the eyes of (certain) donors. Certainly, donors need to look harder at the actual incentives and disincentives in their funding practices. In Jordan (as elsewhere) operational aid agencies argue that donors do not walk their talk. Their requirements and incentives are still such that they are impossible to meet except for a small number of mid- and larger-sized national and sub-national organizations that in their form and functioning resemble INGOs. That is not an enabling environment for effective localization.

FINDING: Encouragement is not enough. Our conversations with some donors showed that this is not a general attitude, but that donors seem uncertain and unclear about what they can do more to encourage their international grant recipients (who are also their "partners") to advance on the issue of localization. Several are indeed "encouraging" international partners (INGOs but possibly also the UN) to develop a "strategy for engagement with", "more sustainable" ways to collaborate with local partners, perhaps with a "graduation plan" or even a "3-year exit plan". Some make working with Jordanian CSOs in a meaningful role a condition of funding INGOs and even some GoJ institutions (e.g., Ministry of Justice, because CSOs are better placed to work on improved access to justice), even if this requires long conversations. Others mention it to their international grant recipients, but do not push for it. As they have no formal, legal, basis for this, there remains reluctance among bilateral donors to ensure that their international grant recipients do this energetically. There is also hesitation to ask INGOs to develop a phasing-out strategy. Ultimately, then, it is left at their "discretion". This is not enough: international relief agencies would not have taken up the gender equity or the accountability to affected populations agendas as seriously as they do without stronger donor activism and oversight. One interviewee pointed at the example of Canada which, since adopting "feminist leadership" as a core value and objective, actively checks how its first-grant recipients work on this in practice.

RECOMMENDATION: Donors engage more actively. Donors who have signed up to the Grand Bargain as a set of policy and practice commitments can actively demand their international grant recipients to help advance progress towards its objectives. They can ask questions about sharing the management fee/ICR, about the quality of the partnership, about the effectiveness of the "capacity building". They can ask for a localization strategy and plan, progress of which is monitored and reported on. Donors can more actively involve Jordanian agencies in meetings and quarterly reviews, and engage them in direct and separate conversations, e.g., during monitoring trips. This does happen, but more ad hoc rather than systematically, as part of a deliberate strategy.

RECOMMENDATION: Pursue a "localization by design" rather than "localization by default" strategy

As mentioned earlier, most "localization" around the world happens by default, because there was never a large-scale mobilization of international assistance agencies, as it is too dangerous for them to operate in certain areas or governments impose restrictions on international operational presence, or because funding is declining. Global experience shows that "localization by default" rarely yields satisfactory outcomes. Many "exits" happen brusquely, and "hand over" to local and national actors rarely works because they never felt real ownership and were not able to strengthen their individual and collective capacities. "Localization by design" sets collective outcome objectives for Jordanian capacities, and the intentional role changes for international agencies, from replacing to supporting.

8. The government of Jordan and the localization policy

The government has, over the years, asserted its leadership and authority over the international assistance provided by setting policy and insisting on giving prior approval of projects and programs. Government institutions obviously have leverage in negotiating terms of engagement, which non-governmental organizations do not have. It also deserves appreciation for its ability, over several decades, to navigate serious regional and internal challenges. There is room, however, for greater coherence among government institutions and for smoother functioning.

Interviews with Jordanians with senior government experience signal clear awareness about the possible longer-term economic impact of COVID-19. Some had clear views about the cost of international agencies and the instrumentalization of Jordanian agencies. Ambiguous views about Jordanian civil society could also be heard: on the one hand, recognition of the important and constructive roles played by some, on the other, criticism of poorly managed associations, and a deeper concern to maintain clarity about what is the role, responsibility and authority of government. Whereas, reportedly, prominent individuals from the private sector are present in the inner policy-discussion circle where the consequences of scenarios are discussed, (so far) no civil society representative participates in such discussion.

A possible worst-case scenario, of serious economic depression, after years in which Jordan has already experienced economic stress, un- and under-employment and poverty, with a decline in foreign aid or at least of aid for social protection, certainly causes concern. Active involvement of the government in conversations about a "localization by design" strategy is required. It will also need the support of various sectors of Jordanian society, including civil society organizations. To contribute their full potential, Jordanian CSOs will need an enabling environment from their government.

9. Can Jordanian CSOs step up?

Civil societies around the world can and do play important constructive roles beyond charitable or more structural service delivery. Several factors enable this:

a. Collaborative capacities: the creation of ad hoc but also more structural networks, platforms and coalitions, not only to defend their common self-interest but also a goal that represents a public good.

b. Relationship building with government officials: trust ultimately resides in interpersonal relations, not in paper agreements.

c. A critical but constructive friend: politicians and government officials face difficult

dilemmas on a daily basis and get easily criticized from different angles. Civil society actors that have the ability to make relevant and thoughtful proposals regarding the challenges the government faces are more welcome than those that criticize but offer no solutions.

d. Collaborative and accountable leadership that reduces the competitive and strengthens the collaborative inclinations, and that manages well the need for unity while acknowledging diversity.

e. An articulation, application and promotion of civil society sector standards: without those, standards are set and upheld, formally or informally, by government and international agencies. All national and local civil society actors are vulnerable to general distrust or negative narratives because of those who may indeed operate without basic integrity, effectiveness and accountability. If CSOs and CBOs articulate their own standards of integrity, effectiveness and accountability, there is peer invitation and possible peer review and peer support to live up to them. The HIMAM network produced in 2018 a code of conduct for its members. In Bangladesh in October 2017, a network of CSOs published a set of 17 expectations/demands of international actors: "Our Common Space, Our Complementary Roles. Equitable partnership for sovereign and accountable civil society growth." The 18th point however stated: "*We, national and local NGOs, need to stand on our own feet with an accountable, inclusive and knowledge-based approach*." Subsequently, they issued their own "Accountability Charter" with orientation towards their primary stakeholders: people and the government of Bangladesh.

f. A pooled fund for Jordanian CSOs only can be created. There can be a mixed management and governance set-up, with Jordanian and some international experts. But the strategic and operational framework for it are largely defined by Jordanian CSOs. Examples of national CSOs acting as fund manager exist e.g. in Bangladesh and Myanmar. Such fund could operate with a stepwise or tiered system. Those who meet basic quality criteria can access a maximum amount of grant; as they gain more experience and develop their organizational capacities they can become eligible for larger grants. This creates the connection between organizational development and access to funding, which enables an organization to practice what it learned, and learn further by doing. Capacity-support without access to some quality funding has globally shown not to be working. The two support measures need to be connected.

Note that Annex 6 sets out some questions for Jordanian CSOs

10. Strategic and operational localization

As this research indicates, localization in practice has implications for operational programming, but it happens in pursuit of the strategic objectives of making global humanitarian action more cost-effective and inclusive, and reinforcing the collective national and local capacities to manage significant challenges and crises. The strategic and operational conversations need to be closely interlinked but may not involve entirely the same people.

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ANNEX 2: INTERVIEWS

ACT Alliance: Rachel Luce
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Afaq Al-Readah for Development and Training: Qusai Khazaleh
Al Amal Association for social development: Amal Abu Hattab
Al Karak Castle Center for Consultation and Training: Esra'a Mahadin
Al Kiram Association for chaste families and orphanes: Najah Awedat
Arab Women Organisation of Jordan: Laila Naffa'a
Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration: Kholud Al Edwan
CARE: Maher Musmar and Sawsan Mohammed
Caritas Switzerland: Lukas Voborsky
Centre for Defending Freedom of Journalists: Nidal Mansur
Centre for Strategic Studies: Dr Sara Ababneh
Children Care Charity: Farea' Al Masaeed
Finn Church Aid: Jehan Zaben
Ford Foundation: Ghada Abdel Tawab
Former Minister of Social Development: H.E. Reem Abu Hassan
Former Minister of Trade, Industry and Supply: H.E. Maha Ali
GIZ: Zareefeh Shreeteh
Higher Family Council: Dr. Ibrahim Aqel
Higher Population Council: Dr. Abla Amawi
ICVA: Eman Ismail
INGO Forum coordinator: Baptiste Hanquart
International Rescue Committee: Noor Qwaider and Sofia Tekidou
IM Sweden: Salam Shebli
Islamic Center: Fawaz Al Mazrawi
Jordan Hashemite Charity Organisation: Eng. Marwan Hinnawi
Jordan Paramedic Society: Dr. Mohammad Tobal
Jordanian National Commission for Women Affairs: Dr. Salma Al-Nims
Justice Center for Legal Aid: Hadeel Abdil Aziz
Noor al Hussein Foundation: Areej Samreen
OCHA Jordan Humanitarian Pool Fund: Amani S.M. Salah
Oxfam: Nivedita Monga
The Phenix Center for Economics & Informatics Studies: Ahmad Awad

Spanish Cooperation: Vicente Ortega Camara

Step of Hope Jo: May Abu Idad

Swiss Cooperation: Simone Troller-Alderisi, Aye Maraqa, Ala'a Ziyad Abdullah Maayta

Tamkeen for help and support: Linda Kalash

UK Department for International Development: Rana Nassar

UNRWA: Sana Jelassi

UN Women: Tamar Tavartkiladze, Rebeca Acin, Bushra Abu Shahout

URDON Al Ata'a charity: Yasmine Zu'bi

Interviews were requested but could not be organised within the time frame of the research with: Jordan Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation; UNHCR; Action Aid; more INGO signatories of the Charter 4 Change

ANNEX 3: PRIMARY DONOR AND INT'L AGENCY COMMITMENTS UNDER THE GRAND BARGAIN

Commitment 7: Increase collaborative humanitarian multi-year planning and funding

Rationale: Multi-year planning and funding lowers administrative costs and catalyses more responsive programming, notably where humanitarian needs are protracted or recurrent and where livelihood needs and local markets can be analysed and monitored. Multi-year planning must be based on shared analysis and understanding needs and risks as they evolve. Collaborative planning and funding mechanisms for longer programme horizons that are incrementally funded can produce better results and minimise administrative costs for both donors and aid organisations. They can identify results which highlight the linkages between humanitarian, development, stabilisation and conflict management initiatives that are fundamental to decreasing humanitarian needs.

1. Increase multi-year, collaborative and flexible planning and multi-year funding instruments and document the impacts on programme efficiency and effectiveness, ensuring that recipients apply the same funding arrangements with their implementing partners.
2. Strengthen existing coordination efforts to share analysis of needs and risks between the humanitarian and development sectors and to better align humanitarian and development planning tools and interventions while respecting the principles of both.

Commitment 8: Reduce the earmarking of donor contributions

Rationale: Flexible funding facilitates swifter response to urgent needs and investment in fragile, potentially volatile situations, emergencies and disaster preparedness, as well enables response to needs in situations of protracted and neglected conflicts. It strengthens decision-making bodies which include

key stakeholders such as affected and refugee-hosting states as well as donors. It supports management systems and the use of cost-efficient tools as well as reduces the amount of resources spent on grant-specific administration, notably procurement and reporting.

Flexible funding requires accountability throughout the length of the transaction chain from donor to the field. Reducing earmarking should be considered as a means to achieving humanitarian collective outcomes. Increasing donors' confidence in the quality of aid organisations' own prioritisation processes will encourage donors to increase the flexibility of their contributions.

Aid organisations and donors commit to:

1. Jointly determine, on an annual basis, the most effective and efficient way of reporting on unearmarked and softly earmarked funding and to initiate this reporting by the end of 2017.
2. Reduce the degree of earmarking of funds contributed by governments and regional groups who currently provide low levels of flexible finance. Aid organisations in turn commit to do the same with their funding when channeling it through partners.

Aid organisations commit to:

3. Be transparent and regularly share information with donors outlining the criteria for how core and unearmarked funding is allocated (for example, urgent needs, emergency preparedness, forgotten contexts, improved management)
4. Increase the visibility of unearmarked and softly earmarked funding, thereby recognising the contribution made by donors.

Donors commit to:

5. Progressively reduce the earmarking of their humanitarian contributions. The aim is to aspire to achieve a global target of 30 per cent of humanitarian contributions that is non earmarked or softly earmarked by 2020.

Commitment 9: Harmonise and simplify reporting requirements

Rationale: Reporting requirements have grown over the years for specific and valid reasons including legal requirements associated with accountability and managing risk, to build trust, raise funds, for diplomatic purposes and to improve quality. A wide range of sectors and organisations report to one another, including institutional donors, UN agencies, IOM, international and national NGOs and the

Red Cross Red Crescent Movement. We have a common interest in ensuring that programmatic reporting is substantive and qualitative while also lean enough to allow for the most efficient use of resources to assist people in need.

Aid organisations and donors commit to:

1. Simplify and harmonise reporting requirements by the end of 2018 by reducing its volume,

   jointly deciding on common terminology, identifying core requirements and developing common report structure.
2. Invest in technology and reporting systems to enable better access to information.
3. Enhance the quality of reporting to better capture results, enable learning and increase the

   efficiency of reporting.

Commitment 10: Enhance engagement between humanitarian and development actors*

Rationale: The High-Level Panel on Humanitarian Financing and Core Responsibility Four of the Secretary-General's Report (change people's lives – from delivering aid to ending need) both articulate the importance of shrinking humanitarian needs while also recognising the humanitarian financing gap. This is particularly important in situations of fragility and protracted crises.

A better way of working is not about shifting funding from development to humanitarian programmes or from humanitarian to development actors. Rather, it is about working collaboratively across institutional boundaries on the basis of comparative advantage. This way of working does also not deviate from the primacy of humanitarian principles.

Aid organisations and donors commit to:

1. Use existing resources and capabilities better to shrink humanitarian needs over the long term with the view of contributing to the outcomes of the Sustainable Development Goals. Significantly increase prevention, mitigation and preparedness for early action to anticipate and secure resources for recovery. This will need to be the focus not only of aid organisations and donors but also of national governments at all levels, civil society, and the private sector.
2. Invest in durable solutions for refugees, internally displaced people and sustainable support to migrants, returnees and host/receiving communities, as well as for other situations of recurring vulnerabilities.
3. Increase social protection programmes and strengthen national and local systems and coping mechanisms in order to build resilience in fragile contexts.
4. Perform joint multi-hazard risk and vulnerability analysis, and multi-year planning where feasible and relevant, with national, regional and local coordination in order to achieve a shared vision for outcomes. Such a shared vision for outcomes will be developed on the basis of shared risk analysis between humanitarian, development, stabilisation and peacebuilding communities.

* This is now to be mainstreamed across all other commitments.

Commitment 2: National and local responders comprising governments, communities, Red Cross and Red Crescent

Rationale: National Societies and local civil society are often the first to respond to crises, remaining in the communities they serve before, after and during emergencies. We are committed to making principled humanitarian action as local as possible and as international as necessary recognising that international humanitarian actors play a vital role particularly in situations of armed conflict. We engage with local and national responders in a spirit of partnership and aim to reinforce rather than replace local and national capacities.

Aid organisations and donors commit to:

1. Increase and support multi-year investment in the institutional capacities of local and national responders, including preparedness, response and coordination capacities, especially in fragile contexts and where communities are vulnerable to armed conflicts,disasters, recurrent outbreaks and the effects of climate change. We should achieve this through collaboration with development partners and incorporate capacity strengthening in partnership agreements.
2. Understand better and work to remove or reduce barriers that prevent organisations and donors from partnering with local and national responders in order to lessen their administrative burden.
3. Support and complement national coordination mechanisms where they exist and include local and national responders in international coordination mechanisms as appropriate and in keeping with humanitarian principles.
4. Achieve by 2020 a global, aggregated target of at least 25 per cent of humanitarian funding to local and national responders as directly as possible to improve outcomes for affected people and reduce transactional costs.
5. Develop, with the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), and apply a 'localisation' marker to measure direct and indirect funding to local and national responders.
6. Make greater use of funding tools which increase and improve assistance delivered by local and national responders, such as UN-led country-based pooled funds (CBPF), IFRC Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) and NGO- led and other pooled funds.

ANNEX 4: CHARTER 4 CHANGE OF SIGNATORY INGOs

Localisation of Humanitarian Aid

We the undersigned organisations, working in humanitarian action welcome the extensive consultations and discussions which have been generated during the World Humanitarian Summit process. We believe that now is the time for humanitarian actors to make good on some of the excellent recommendations arising through the WHS process by committing themselves to deliver change within their own organisational ways of working so that southern-based national actors can play an increased and more prominent role in humanitarian response.

In the case of international NGO signatories we commit our organisations to implement the following 8 point Charter for Change by May 2018.

In the case of southern-based NGOs working in partnership with international NGOs we endorse and support this Charter for Change. We will be holding our international NGO partners which have signed this Charter to account and asking those which are not signatories to this Charter to work towards signing up:

1. **Increase direct funding to southern-based NGOs for humanitarian action:** At present only 0.2% of humanitarian aid is channelled directly to national non-government actors (NGOs and CSOs) for humanitarian work – a total of US$46.6 million out of US$24.5 billion. We commit through advocacy and policy influence to North American and European donors (including institutional donors, foundations and private sector) to encourage them to increase the year on year percentage of their humanitarian funding going to southern-based NGOs**.** We commit that by May 2018 at least 20% of our own humanitarian funding will be passed to southern-based NGOs. We commit to introduce our NGO partners to our own direct donors with the aim of them accessing direct financing.
2. **Reaffirm the Principles of Partnership:** We endorse, and have signed on to, the Principles of Partnership, (Equality, Transparency, Results-Oriented Approach, Responsibility and Complementarity) introduced by the Global Humanitarian Platform in 2007.
3. **Increase transparency around resource transfers to southern-based national and local NGOs:** A significant change in approaches towards transparency is needed in order to build trust, accountability and efficiency of investments channeled to national actors via international intermediaries. We commit to document the types of organisation we cooperate with in humanitarian response and to publish these figures (or percentages) in our public accounts using a recognised categorisation such as the GHA in real-time and to the IATI standard.
4. **Stop undermining local capacity:** We will identify and implement fair compensation for local organisations for the loss of skilled staff if and when we contract a local organisation's staff involved in humanitarian action within 6 months of the start of a humanitarian crisis or during a protracted crisis, for example along the lines of paying a recruitment fee of 10% of the first six months' salary.
5. **Emphasise the importance of national actors:** We undertake to advocate to donors to make working through national actors part of their criteria for assessing framework partners and calls for project proposals.
6. **Address subcontracting**: Our local and national collaborators are involved in the design of the programmes at the outset and participate in decision-making as equals in influencing programme design and partnership policies.
7. **Robust organisational support and capacity strengthening:** We will support local actors to become robust organisations that continuously improve their role and share in the overall global humanitarian response. We undertake to pay adequate administrative support. A test of our seriousness in capacity building is that by May 2018 we will have allocated resources to support our partners in this. We will publish the percentages of our humanitarian budget which goes directly to partners for humanitarian capacity building by May 2018.
8. **Communication to the media and the public about partners:** In any communications to the international and national media and to the public we will promote the role of local actors and acknowledge the work that they carry out, and include them as spokespersons when security considerations permit.

To sign or endorse this Charter for Change please email admin@charter4change.org with the full name of your organisation and the country in which your organisation is based

ANNEX 5: A LOCALIZATION AND/OR PARTNERSHIP TASK FORCE

Four years after the World Humanitarian Summit, and one year before the formal end of the 'Grand Bargain', localisation and/or partnership task forces or working groups is emerging in some countries. Jordan is one of them, Myanmar and Cox's Bazaar in Bangladesh are other cases.

Prior to these task forces or working groups, another issue that may have come up is whether local/national CSOs should have a forum of their own, or whether one 'mixed' or 'inclusive' NGO Forum would not be preferable? And if there is one or more forums, should they be inclusive and representative?

As a localisation/partnership task force is created, key questions are

1. What is its purpose?
2. Who is involved in shaping its design and composition?
3. Who is included and in what capacity?
4. What would make it well-functioning and eventually successful?
5. To whom is it accountable and how?

1. Clarifying Purpose and Composition

Challenges to set up a functioning localisation and/or partnership task force in other countries are:

- There is no clear understanding on why localisation (what problem is it supposed to address?) and why now?
- There is no familiarity with the various references that notably international actors have elaborated over the years, including but not limited to the 1994 Code of Conduct for the Red Cross and INGOs, the 2007 Principles of Partnership, the Grand Bargain, the Charter 4 Change, and other relevant references in e.g. the Sphere and CHS standards.
- There is no clarity whether this is a mere operational question i.e. at the level of projects and programmes of individual agencies, or a strategic and collective one? The Grand Bargain clearly positions this as a strategic and a collective outcomes issue.
- Although different people and agencies all use the term 'localisation', it may be interpreted in very different ways. Different interpretations lead to different visions of 'outcome'. Many of these visiosn are not in line with the intent of the Grand Bargain.
- Even among those agencies that understand 'localisation' in a transformative manner, i.e. as a change in roles from replacing or instrumentalizing local and national actors to reinforcing and supporting them, the various efforts tend to be fragmented. This lack of complementarity and even cross-learning between different localisation initiatives is an obstacle to achieve greater cumulative impact that is more than the sum of its parts.
- There is no critical self-reflection among international agencies that many 'capacity-building' approaches over the past 2 decades have been wrongly conceived and poorly delivered, did not deliver sustained impact and hence have shown little value-for-money. 'More' of the same capacity-building will not change that – only 'different' capacity-support can.

This applies to international and local/national actors alike.

If that is the case, then a first purpose would to ensure that all interested parties have a clear and common understanding of why localisation and why now, what interpretations are in line with the Grand Bargain and which ones are not, and that it envisages a collective outcome, and therefore is a strategic issue.

The second purpose might be to develop a clear vision statement of what strategic success would look like, but also what realistic objectives are within the medium-term e.g. three years.

From that can flow a shared strategy and action plan, with clarification of roles and responsibilities, progress markers and how they will be periodically reviewed and corrective action taken, if needed. Progress towards and achieving the medium-term objectives will be confronted with enabling and constraining factors. Some of the constraining factors are under the control of participating agencies. Others they can and must try to influence.

An outcome statement must be formulated in terms of a set of local and national, individual but also collective, capacities. To illustrate, here some examples of what this might look like: In 2.5 years from now there will be six

more medium-sized CSOs, on a solid footing, with a number of identified capabilities; In 2 years from now, in three Governorates there will be functioning forums involving local governmental and non-governmental actors, that effectively collaborate around a joint programme and action plan; In 2 years from now, a certain existing resource center will have become an effective provider of organisational development support, particularly in the areas of finance and administration for not-for-profits, while in 3 years from now another entity will become recognised as the national 'go-to' place for refugee and migration studies, policy advice, and training. Networked capacities and collaborative practices are a key part of the outcome objective.

Who must be included and in what capacity? Is it an NGO/CSO Task force? Should it include UN agencies, donors, the government of Jordan? As full participants, as observers? One consideration is that a coalition of the willing can advance. It is worth noting that not all international agencies have signed up to the Grand Bargain or the Charter 4 Change, particularly INGOs. But most key donors to global humanitarian action, and most multilaterals, plus the ICRC and the IFRC have, voluntarily, signed up to the Grand Bargain. As there is a degree of finger pointing between these international stakeholder groups about who is 'not walking the talk', a more inclusive composition might make sense.

Should development actors be included, in line with the Grand Bargain commitment for closer connection between humanitarian and development actors (the 'nexus'), and the presence of both in Jordan? Is the composition balanced enough? Many localisation forums around the world, including the Grand Bargain workstream on the topic, have little or no presence of local and national governmental and non-governmental actors. Even if they have a presence, they may be outnumbered, or unable or unwilling to speak with a more independent voice, because they don't want to jeopardise their existing 'partnership' with one or more international 'partners'. Can a localisation task force be credible if, in its composition and functioning, it replicates the majority-minority or power asymmetry that it tries to correct? Should the government be included? Which part of the Government? As full participant or as observer? What are the generic, and contextual, arguments in favour or not? If not included, how will the government be engaged in what is an issue of strategic importance for the country, and not just for 'its 'civil society'? Associated with this is the question of who leads / co-leads the task force? Can it be one chair, two international co-chairs, an international and national co-chair? Is there value to be had in an independent third party as chair, or support from third party facilitators?

2. **Functioning and Effectiveness**

What would make someone say the 'localisation task force' is well-functioning and, eventually, successful?

Some of the possible attention points related to effective function, can be:

- What competencies are required from whoever chairs or co-chairs the task force? Should chair-person-ship be based on agency affiliation, or primarily on individual competencies?
- How will the task force operate to create and sustain basic trust among participants?
- Who is involved in developing the ToR of the task force? Only or primarily internationals?
- How is the agenda for meetings set?
- How is it ensured that all members have access to the same information? (a level playing field)
- What are the expectations about responsible and constructive participation?
- What language(s) are the meetings in?
- Does the localisation task force talk about power, the power asymmetry of ^power over', and the un-tapped potential of 'power with'?
- How does the task force take decisions?
- What protocol is there when there is a possible or actual 'conflict of interest'?
- What concrete (SMART) medium-term changes objectives will it set? What becomes the allocation of tasks and responsibilities so that collective efforts take place in a concerted and complementary manner? When, how and by whom will progress be reviewed?
- How will the task force periodically assess its own effectiveness?
- To function, the task force will incur some costs. How will these be covered?

3. **To Whom is the Task Force Accountable and How?**

How does the task force handle its internal accountability, i.e. of participants towards each other?

What external stakeholders is the task force accountable to? How will it exercise that accountability in practice?

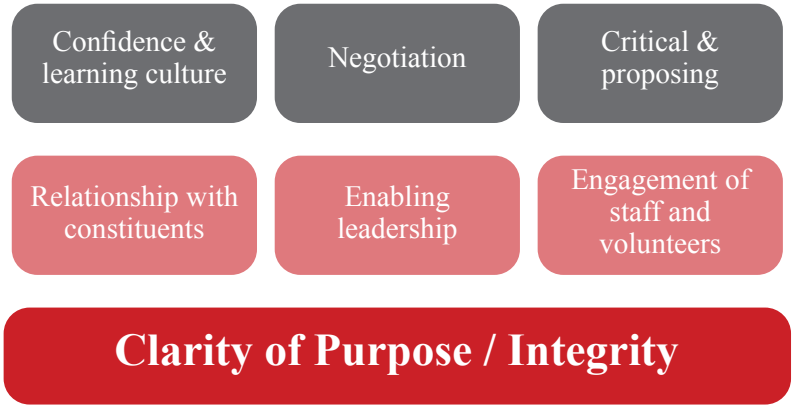
ANNEX 6: JORDANIAN CSOs IN THE LOCALIZATION CONVERSATION

a. Learn the Issues

- Familiar with key international references such as 1994 Code of Conduct, Principles of Partnership, Grand Bargain, Charter 4 Change, humanitarian principles; fundamentals of refugee law
- Familiar with Jordanian government key legal and policy frameworks
- Learn/demand briefings on the structure and functioning of international relief system, and key acronyms/references
- What else?

b. Clarify Roles and Identity

- What is our current role in Jordanian society? What future role do we wish to play?
- What is our ambition (charitable work at smaller scale or at larger scale; rights-based assistance; policy engagement?
- What are our core values?
- What standards of integrity, quality and effectiveness do we set for ourselves, that can apply equally to smaller and larger, less and better resourced organisations
- Who are we accountable to, how are we accountable?



c. Collaborate

- Develop a joint agenda, joint negotiation positions, joint advocacy, collective communications
- Look for complementarities with other Jordanian CSOs
- Share resources
- Support each other with organisational development
- Create and use joint learning exercises
- Set some collective standards for each other and hold each other accountable
- Show collaborative leadership
- Strengthen JONAF, balance expansion in numbers with depth of commitment and active involvement

d. Get Seats at the Table

- In the autumn of 2019, there were no Jordanian actors in the HCT
- Around the same time, the Humanitarian Partners' Forum (HPF) only had INGOs and UN present. It has taken more than 6 months to come up with a proposition on how to incorporate local actors.

e. Develop Your Arguments

- Be prepared, once you have a seat at the table, so you can engage knowledgeably with the issues, articulate clear views, come with proposals…
- Have the arguments about why localisation; arguments about the economics of localisation and the value-for-money; arguments about the political economy and the power dynamics in the international 'assistance'…
- Insist on practical actions

f. Be proactive and propositional

- Set localisation agenda, the understanding, priorities, mid-term objectives, progress indicators and how it will be monitored
- Use frameworks to assess the current state of collaboration (against various dimensions) and negotiate priorities and plans to be jointly agreed
- Stand firm around red lines

g. Communicate

- Individual and collective work and achievements but also learning
- To media, wider public, government, international agencies and donors

ANNEX 7: OPERATIONAL DIMENSIONS OF LOCALIZATION

1. The Interaction between Local/National & International Relief Actors

The global consultations prior to the May 2016 World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) resurfaced the lack of recognition and resources for local and national actors, who are typically the first responders but also continue when the international attention and funding have shifted elsewhere. During the WHS, some initiatives were initiated to address their challenges. These became known under the banner of "l*ocalisation*". The Grand Bargain, in its ten commitments, contains a significant reform agenda for the international relief sector. The second commitment in particular is for more support and funding for local and national actors. "*We commit to support local and national responders on the frontline, improve the use of cash and increase flexible funding*", An understanding inherent to the Grand Bargain is that "*benefits are for all partners, not just the big organisations*." "And the need was acknowledged "*to move from the present supply-driven model dominated by aid providers to a demand-driven model more responsive to the people we are assisting*"

The Grand Bargain puts a central emphasis on the funding available to local/national agencies (L/NA). This is appropriate as weak finances regularly create challenging situations and prevent the development of more robust organisations. However, listening to over 250 local CSOs from Asia, Africa and the MENA region, GMI in 2015-2016 identified five other areas where local/national actors often find the relationship with international relief agencies frustrating – and where they want to see change: the quality of the relationship, the ineffectiveness of 'capacity-development', the lack of visibility of their roles, contributions and achievements, the inability to influence policies and standards for the global humanitarian sector/system, and the inability to influence the same at operational level.

Combined, these various dimensions of the interaction between international and local/national relief actors often generate a situation of structural subordination of the latter to the former. Bringing the six dimensions together also enables a systems-perspective that shows their interconnectedness: challenges in one dimension will not be resolved if those in other dimensions are not also addressed.

To this, GMI further added the Grand Bargain commitment to enable a '*participation revolution'*, giving those affected by or at risk of a major crisis, a greater say in what is done for their benefit. This is justified, as the ultimate purpose is to effectively help crisis-affected people survive and regain control over their lives. Since we want L/NA to be able to respond to the needs of the affected populations, with less need for international mobilisation and deployment, they too need to master approaches such people-centred and participatory approaches.

2. Seven Dimensions of Operational Localization

In 2017, the Global Mentoring Initiative (GMI) developed the 'seven dimensions' framework for localisation during its work with the START Fund of the START Network, and identified a set of 'emerging indicators' during its subsequent work with the Disasters and Emergencies Preparedness Programme (DEPP) of the START Network. The seven dimensions framework draws on the Grand Bargain commitment 2 to localisation and commitment 6 to a participation revolution, Charter4Change commitments, and consultations with local, national and international actors.

The original version put the '*Funding and Financing'* dimension first, adding the quality of funding to the quantity reference of the Grand Bargain. Subsequent testing and reviewing with local/national CSOs led us to put the primary emphasis on the relationship quality. International agencies have roles to play, but local actors want equitable partnerships, with mutual respect and accountability. If there is a good collaborative relationship between international and local/national organisations, a lot of the challenges and friction points in the other dimensions become much easier to deal with. We have also given greater prominence to a 'participation revolution', because crisis-affected people want to regain control over their lives, also when they are assisted by local/national actors.

RELATIONSHIP QUALITY	PARTICIPATION REVOLUTION	FUNDING & FINANCING	CAPACITY	COORDNATION MECHANISMS	VISIBILITY	POLICY/ STANDARDS
• respectful and equitable • reciprocal transparency and accountability	• deeper participation of at-risk & affected populations	• better quality • greater quantity	• sustainable organisations and collaborative capacities • stop undermining capacities	• national actors greater presence and influence	• roles, results and innovations by national actors are visible and reported on	• national actors have greater presence and influence in international policy debates & standards setting

- ***Relationship quality:*** National and local actors are tired of being instrumentalised and of the prevailing sub-contracting relationship that many international agencies impose on them.[13] They acknowledge the value of international agencies, and do not want to get rid of them. But

  they want to see more genuine and equitable partnerships. They want to be 'decision-making' and not just 'implementing' partners. [14]

- ***A 'participation revolution'***: Fuller and more influential involvement of crisis-affected people in what relief is provided to them, and how. As some displaced people in the Philippines put it: '*Nothing for us without us*!' Genuinely participatory approaches are very rare: Although crisis-affected people around the world want to regain some control over their own lives, humanitarian actors tend to portray them as 'vulnerable', 'in need' etc. In other words, they are helpless and dependent on humanitarian assistance. In the 1990s, humanitarian actors talked about 'vulnerabilities and capacities assessments'. The contemporary emphasis is only on 'needs assessments'. The move, over the past decade, to more 'accountability to affected populations', has reduced this to feedback and complaints mechanisms, satisfaction surveys, and communicating with communities. There is little, early and effective, participation in decision-making by crisis-affected people, and little attention to their social organising beyond the household level. In recent years, a number of humanitarian actors have experimented with community-led relief approaches, with participatory budgeting and 'voices to choices' approaches – but this remains marginal compared to the mainstream approaches.

- ***Funding:*** The commitment to ensure that at least 25% of internationally raised funding reaches national and local actors 'as directly as possible'. 'As directly as possible' has been interpreted as no more than one grant intermediary. The Grand Bargain largely refers to *quantity* of funding, although it does call for less earmarking. For local actors however, just as for international ones, the *quality* of funding (flexible, longer-term, covering core costs, predictable, maintaining cash flow etc.) is as important as the quantity. They also feel they cannot easily compete with INGOs if a grant is offered on condition of the grantee providing a percentage of co-funding. Advancing the funding, to be reimbursed for real and justified costs, is obviously impossible, as they are unable to build up any reserves. Furthermore, in emerging economies and countries with expanding middle classes, local and national CSOs are now looking at more domestic fundraising. They are deeply worried about the entry of international agencies (or their national affiliates) as competitors into these 'emerging markets'.

- ***Capacities:*** More effective support for strong and sustainable institutional capacities, and less undermining of those capacities by international actors. A long and contentious topic: Some of the key issues are: a narrow understanding of capacities by international actors that results in

  lack of recognition of various capacities and competencies that local/national agencies have; an assumption that local/national actors lack capacities and that international agencies have them; uncoordinated and ineffective capacities that rely to much on generic and one-off training and is not tailored to the con

13 The 2007 '*Principles of Partnership'* are, more than a decade later, little known and even less practiced.

14 There are now many relevant references to reflect on and assess the health of a partnership, such as the principles of the Partnership Brokering Association, the framework and questionnaire developed by Keystone Accountability, or the Partnership Maturity Matrix of the Cooperative Capacity consultancy group.

text or the agencies (the preference is for mentoring and on-the-job learning via accompaniment); too much emphasis on technical and compliance capacities which is a priority for international agencies but not necessarily so much for local/national ones; undermining capacities e.g. by hiring away the best staff of national actors, causing inflation when large numbers of international agencies come in, and maintaining financially fragile local/national organisations who cannot attract and keep experienced staff. Local/national actors point out that even as they get stronger in many ways, the internationals shift the goal posts, so there is no finishing line. That then also means there are never significant role changes: they are not allowed to take on roles that the international agency kept to itself. In other words, there is never a 'graduation': they remain eternal students.

- Particular problems arise during general surge, when internationals rapidly hire large numbers of local for their own capacity, and then tell local agencies they do not have the capacity. A related issue is how to maintain capacities for emergency response, during long periods when no emergency takes place.
- ***National actors leading in coordination mechanisms:*** More presence, influential participation and (co-) leadership of national governmental and non-governmental actors in 'coordination' mechanisms and forums such as clusters.[15] Obstacles are the ability (and cost) to attend large numbers of meetings; meetings in a European language only, not understanding the complex architecture, jargon and acronyms of the international humanitarian system etc.
- ***Visibility***: Greater public recognition and visibility for the role, effort, contribution, innovation and achievements of local actors.[16] A particular irritation can arise when a local/national agency has been creative and innovative, and an international agency ('partner') takes up the idea, and publicises it as its own.
- ***Policy and standard-setting influence:*** Increased and meaningful presence of national actors in international policy and standards-setting discussions and taking into account of their views and proposals. Standards are typically developed in Western countries by groups of internationals. They may not be realistic for particular contexts. There are far too many of them for even well-resourced INGOs to take up, let alone financially fragile local/national ones. Though several are framed as guidance, internationals may use them normatively towards local actors i.e. '*must* meet'. If they then cannot meet them, they do not qualify for funding.

3. Are there Dimensions Missing?

Transparency and accountability? These are indeed not explicitly listed but are present in different dimensions: 'transparency' comes into play, for example, in the dimensions of 'funding & finance', 'relationship', 'participation revolution', and 'visibility'. So does 'accountability', which can also be invoked under the 'coordination & collaboration' dimension.

Humanitarian principles? A major concern continues to be raised about 'localisation' in conflict-settings. International agency staff tends to assert, in generalising manner, that L/NA may be less willing and able to abide by fundamental humanitarian principles. Deeper reflection and actual observation show a much more nuanced picture, including about the alleged ability of international agencies to be totally independent, neutral and impartial.[17]

15 Which is not so easy, given that international coordination mechanisms are complex, slow and very time consuming. Not all national actors want to be burdened by them or can afford the staff time required.

16 A recent study that looked at 28 projects implemented by 5 ECHO partners (3 UN, 2 INGO), found that the reporting provided some descriptive information about the roles of national actors in programmes and projects, but not much on their added value. The report also continues to refer them as 'implementing partners'. Mowjee et alii. (2017). From Grand Bargain to Beneficiairy, London, ODI, HPG p. 2/20-21.

17 In 2017, the ICRC held an internal workshop to 1) take stock of the institution's experience in engaging with and supporting local and national actors, within and outside the Movement; 2) identify areas where the ICRC could improve its own practice; and 3) draw from its operational experience in order to inform the localisation discussion as it moves forward. While recognising challenges, it did not see a fundamental obstacle to localisation in conflict.

The ability to operate in accordance with humanitarian principles is seen here as the outcome of organisational capacities: sufficient financial autonomy, a strong ethical foundation and the skills to navigation complex political and military/security waters.[18] Several researchers and analysts have pointed at the exceptional ability of local/national actors to navigate very complex environments in order to protect principles. The question has also been raised whether impartiality requires that every agency is able to work across divides, or whether it is achieved at aggregate level, i.e. different local actors providing similar services to the different, divided, social groups. There is also the not-recognised question of 'constituency'. If local organisations have no 'constituency', they can be accused of being just an income-generating venture of the founder(s) – if they have a particular constituency, they can be accused of not being 'impartial'.

Gender? The Grand Bargain as a whole, and preceding references to the interaction between international and L/NA relief actors (e.g. 1994 Red Cross and INGO Code of Conduct; 2007 Principles of Partnership) are all weak on gender. A sub-theme in the broader localisation debate therefore has emerged that draws particular attention to L/NA working on women's rights, and/or women led. This is being reinforced by stronger voices for gender equality and women leadership in in humanitarian action.[19] Gender can play a role in the relationship between international and L/NA actors, but also within each group. Women's organisations, often more local, have challenged what they perceive as 'male-dominated' national CSOs and international relief sector. Although they may be very strong in terms of 'participation' of affected people, women's rights and women led organisations often find it harder to access quality funding, be active in coordination mechanisms, and get visibility for their work. At the same time, it cannot be assumed that a male-led organisation would not be working effectively for equal rights and the protection of women and girls. Local women-led organisations are also cautious about a division being created between them and male-led local organisations. The purpose is to mainsteam gender equity, not to locate in in a block of women-led organisations.

Risk: Risk perception is a key issue in the interaction between international and L/N relief actors. Typically, the internationals portray all L/NA as a 'risk', of fraud and corruption, political or social-group bias, inability to achieve international standards etc. Beyond GMI, very few acknowledge the risks to a L/NA of engaging in close collaboration, and becoming financially rather dependent on, an international actor. Risk too is present in different dimensions. For 'funding and finance', there is indeed the risk of fraud and corruption, but also the risk – for L/NA- of not being able to cover its real costs (and hence operating at a loss). There is also always a risk of wastage, not really necessary expenditures. International agencies may be reluctant to risk reducing their own perceived importance and achievements, by giving too much visibility to the role and contributions of their local/national 'partners'. L/NA may be at risk if their politically sensitivity work is given to much visibility. In terms of the quality of relationship, at the opposite end of the spectrum of course stands 'trust'.[20] Using the dimensions framework as support in constructive conversations between L/NA and international relief agencies, is likely to increase the trust.

Leadership: Localisation is sometimes framed as 'locally-led' crisis response. 'Leadership' has therefore sometimes been added as another key dimension in the interaction between L/NA and international relief agencies. GMI prefers to see stronger local/national leadership as the outcome of changes in the key dimensions, rather than a dimension in itself. Which also requires a willingness of international agencies to relinquish some of their very tight control.

4. Influence of the Seven Dimensions Framework

The framework has been tested with various local and national CSOs. It is actively used as such, or has been the source of inspiration for, e.g. the START Network, the Dutch Relief Alliance, the Humanitarian Advisory Group in Australia and PIANGO (Pacific Islands Association of Nongovernmental Organisations), UNICEF, the NEAR network and others, and in localisation conferences in e.g. Jordan, Bangladesh, Ethiopia and the DRC.[21]

18 Elsewhere, GMI has argued that the question of humanitarian principles is very relevant but is too easily generalised by stereotypical assertions that local and national actors are unable or unwilling to work with neutrality and impartiality, and that international agencies, as a category, are far superior in doing so. GMI. (2017) *Understanding the Localisation Debate* p.p. 6-7 https://www.gmentor.org/localization/ For an insightful study see Stephen, M. (2017). *Partnerships in Conflict*. London/Oxford, International Alert & Oxfam; see also Bennett, C. (2016). *Time to Let Go*. ODI, HPG p. 50-53.

19 Canada has adopted an explicitly 'feminist' approach to humanitarian action. So too does ActionAid.

20 See GMI. (2019). *Prepared-for-Partnership? Trust and distrust in international cooperation.*

21 HAG and PIANGO maintain seven dimensions but dropped visibility and added leadership. NEAR reduced seven to six dimensions by merging visibility into policy and influence.

5. Uses of the Seven Dimensions Framework

The framework provides a comprehensive overview that captures critical aspects of the relationship between national/local actors and international relief actors, that national and local actors -often for years- have been concerned and at times critical about. What is its utility?

a. *A framework for individual agency review and reflection.*

Local and national and international agencies each can use it to reflect on their current practices with regard to the various dimensions (and cross-cutting issues, if we want to call them such), and the internal and external enabling and constraining factors they experience.

b. *A framework for review and development of the collaboration.*

The framework can help to structure the conversations between agencies planning to collaborate or already doing so. Rather than jumping from one topic to another (as there are systemic interconnections), it provides a visual landscape through which to move in a more step-by-step manner.

	Where are we now?	What needs to change?	What obstacles can we anticipate & how will we overcome them	What would success look like?	What progress markers can tell us whether we are advancing?
Relationship quality					
Participatory approaches					
Funding and financing					
Capacities					
Influencing coordination & contextual policies and standards					
Visibility					
Influencing international policy and standards					

If there is willingness for changes in various dimensions of the current interaction, then the framework can again be helpful in identifying priorities. Perhaps the financial vulnerability of the L/NA needs to be reduced first, before investing in strengthening its capacities, as it will not be able to retain its best staff if it cannot regularly pay them. Perhaps some more trust-building is needed, before the difficult conversation about sharing the management fee for a project can take place. This can then lead to an agreed 'localisation plan' in that particular collaboration.

c. *A reference for evaluation*

The framework also provides a practical reference for an internal or independent review or evaluation, as was done e.g. by UNICEF in 2019.[22]

22 UNICEF Humanitarian Policy Section, (2019). *A Review of UNICEF's Approach to Localisation in Humanitarian Action. Executive summary*. New York.

The Arab Renaissance for Democracy and Development (ARDD)

Founded in 2008 in Amman-Jordan, Arab Renaissance for Democracy and Development (ARDD) is a civil society organization seeking to reinitiate a new Nahda (Renaissance) project to contribute to addressing the challenges faced by the Arab World, building on the achievements and ideas of the Arab Nahda and aiming to open the door for future participation in formulating concrete actions to achieve the desired change and development. ARDD supports marginalized individuals and communities -including refugees and migrants- in acquiring and enjoying their social, political and economic rights, through legal aid, psycho-social support, media and grassroots mobilization, and research and advocacy to raise local, regional and international stakeholders' awareness about the challenges that vulnerable persons face in Jordan and the Arab region.

GMI is a value-based and purpose-oriented consulting and advisory group set up by experienced practitioners and working out of Switzerland. One of its core areas of expertise are collaborative relationships and partnerships within teams, between teams or units within organizations, between organizations or between organizations and social groups. Within that broader area of action, over the years, GMI has also developed long and comprehensive expertise on the relationship between international and local/national actors in different types of crisis-situations with humanitarian consequences. Regarding localization, a GMI core member was involved in the ground-breaking evaluation of "*The Impact of the International Response on Local and National Capacities*", one of the several multi-agency thematic evaluations in the year after the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami. A GMI core member was also present at the May 2016 World Humanitarian Summit. GMI is in constant connection with a diverse set of international relief agencies, notably in the UK, the Netherlands, Switzerland and Germany, but also with Charter 4 Change, ICVA, the Steering Group for Humanitarian Response, the Grand Bargain Workstream on Localization, and some bilateral donors. At the same time, it is in constant connection with CSO leaders from different countries. By coincidence, while supporting this research in Jordan, GMI is conducting, with national associates, comparable research in eight other countries, thus bringing a relevant comparative perspective.

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